

IV^e Séminaire interaméricain
sur la gestion des langues

IV Seminario Interamericano
sobre la Gestión de las Lenguas



IV Inter-American Languages
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sobre a Gestão das Línguas

Multilingual Voices for the Americas

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Table of Contents

Introduction – More Than Ever the Time Is Right

1. Languages and Supranational Institutions
 - 1.1 Identifying issues, comparing approaches
 - 1.2 Bringing inter-American organizations on side

2. Languages in Economic Exchanges
 - 2.1 Protecting consumers in an era of globalization
 - 2.2 Ensuring linguistic adaptability of international standards
 - 2.3 Making best use of the potential of new information and communication technologies (NICTs)
 - 2.4 Protecting states' rights to legislate

3. Plurilingualism in Language Teaching and Education
 - 3.1 Adopting a flexible, proactive approach
 - 3.2 Targeting best practices
 - 3.3 Making use of new information and communication technologies (NICTs)
 - 3.4 Taking action to combine languages and science

Conclusion – Acquiring Tools for Taking Action

More Than Ever The Time Is Right

During the months prior to the I Inter-American Language Management Seminar, negotiations of the terms of a free-trade agreement involving Canada and countries as far south as Tierra del Fuego were in full swing. Out of this context emerged the idea of developing an inter-American linguistic strategy. Although these trade negotiations in 2005 foundered, it is nonetheless relevant to address linguistic issues across the Americas.

On the one hand, the need to work at an international level with respect to linguistic issues reflects the growing importance of languages in a world that is increasingly globalized, interconnected and knowledge-based. In this context, linguistic diversity is clearly becoming a development tool for individuals and societies, as well as a democratization tool for international organizations. But in order to take full advantage of this, we need to build strategies based on these tools.

On the other hand, geography, history, economic ties and the international organizations that bring us together support the notion that we need to work on a continent-wide level. Indeed, our relationships are not as developed as they could be and have not brought us together to the same degree as, for example, in Europe; nonetheless, our cultural, linguistic and economic ties extend past our borders and demonstrate the need to take action together in areas where we can pool our efforts.

Aside from the fact that the prospect of an inter-American free trade zone has faded, what are the economic, technological and political factors that may have had an impact on the context that we have been faced with and, specifically, on the dynamics of languages¹ in recent years? Without presuming to set out a complete list, we are listing a few of the factors in order to review what has to be taken into consideration for the purposes of our discussion.

Economic factors:

- The growing importance of the knowledge economy has accelerated the demand for education, which is considered the main driver of development that will enable us to remain competitive internationally.
- There is a growing trend to outsource jobs offshore, particularly in the service industry (an economic sector that is expected to keep expanding), which could affect an increasing number of research and development-related jobs.
- The hubs of economic and political influence are shifting because of the growing economic weight of the four countries comprising the BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India and China), whose economic performance as a unit is expected to exceed that of today's six largest economies by 2050², which will have an impact on the dynamics of languages.
- Within the Americas, the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) has given way to a strengthening of regional integrated free-trade areas, such as the

¹ Reference is made here to the dynamics in a broad sense, ie, to the position of one language in relation to another and not to the internal evolution of a language.

² In U.S. dollars. Source: Goldman Sachs Group Inc., *Dreaming with BRICs: The Path to 2050*, 2003. Online at <http://www2.goldmansachs.com/ideas/index.html>.

countries associated with the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), the Southern Cone Common Market (MERCOSUR), the Andean Community, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (CEPALC) and the Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM), as well as to the signing of bilateral free trade agreements.

Political factors:

- Increased international migration is resulting in greater linguistic diversification within host societies and more frequent contact between speakers of different languages.
- The number of international travellers (for purposes of business, tourism, education, and migration to other countries) is increasing.
- The adoption and ratification in 2005 of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions sets a precedent for the recognition of cultural rights on the international stage (however, its linguistic scope is very limited).
- The influence of English, characterized by some as a hypercentral language or hyperlanguage, is growing under the impetus of globalization and information technology.

Information technology and communication factors:

- The development and rapid expansion of free (or inexpensive) methods of communication, such as email, Facebook, MySpace, Skype, text messaging, etc.) are multiplying interconnectivity opportunities, regardless of geographic distance;
- These new modes of communication increase the opportunities for plurilingual communication;
- The burgeoning number of continuous information networks, such as Cable News Network (CNN), TeleSUR, British Broadcasting Corporation World (BBC World), Al Jazeera, France 24 and EuroNews, disseminating information around the world, gives increased influence to the languages for which they are a vehicle.

The above list is a rough outline of the most significant developments that have occurred in recent years. Although quite diverse, all of these factors point in the same direction from a linguistic point of view; in other words, opportunities for which multilingualism is required are increasing, and multilingualism has become a true economic enabler because it is increasingly sought after in a world of services, networks, communication and information. It is becoming clear that unilingualism restricts or limits, whereas multilingualism opens doors, gives us a better understanding of the world we live in and helps us take advantage of the opportunities it offers.

According to the adage, the future belongs to the early birds. But henceforth, it may be necessary to say that the future belongs to those who speak several languages because they are the people who will adjust to change most easily in a world where the hubs of growth and influence will be distributed among various zones of the planet. They are the people who will

be able to tap into sources of information and knowledge originating in a variety of linguistic areas. They are also the people whose language skills will be the most prized by companies operating in various regions of the world and serving clients with very diverse language profiles.

The same applies to international organizations, which in this era of globalization, communication and transparency must reflect the linguistic diversity of the countries they represent while becoming more democratic and accessible in the process.

Starting with these findings, we will focus throughout this document on the issue of how to handle linguistic issues in the field of communications and in supranational organizations with a view to identifying issues and comparing approaches. We will then examine the influence that languages have as well as the issues they raise in the economic sphere before continuing with the theme of foreign-language teaching in the educational institutions of the Americas. For each of these themes, we will suggest a few possible discussion topics for the next Inter-American Language Management Seminar before drawing any conclusions relative to the issue of intervention tools we could adopt.

1. Languages and Supranational Communications

1.1 Identifying issues, comparing approaches

The context of accelerating globalization in recent years has resulted in a delegation of power to international organizations at the expense of nation states. Examples of this trend at the international level are the founding of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the signing of the Kyoto Protocol, and at the regional level, the expansion of the European Union, the establishment of MERCOSUR and the signing of NAFTA. These authorities are adopting a broad range of approaches to culture and language. The following table outlines the characteristics of the three regional blocks of NAFTA, MERCOSUR and the European Union and includes a brief description of how they treat language issues.

	Type of Agreement	Treatment of Linguistic Issues
NAFTA	<p>Free trade zone supplemented by parallel environmental co-operation and labour agreements and a partnership for security and prosperity</p> <p><u>Member countries:</u> Canada, United States, Mexico</p>	<p><u>Approach:</u> Essentially an economic and security-based approach. Voluntary exclusion of linguistic and cultural considerations.<u>Official languages:</u> Tacit official trilingualism based on the fact that “The English, French and Spanish texts of this Agreement are equally authentic.” (Section 2206).</p> <p><u>Languages of work of regional authorities:</u> Variation depending on the institution concerned.</p> <p><u>Translation of documents:</u> No translation service within the NAFTA Secretariat. Each country looks after its translation requirements.</p> <p><u>Teaching of regional official languages:</u> No mention is made in the Agreement.</p>
MERCOSUR	<p>Customs union leading gradually to a common market</p> <p><u>Member countries:</u> Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay and Venezuela (which announced its membership in October 2005)</p> <p><u>Associated states:</u> Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru</p>	<p><u>Approach:</u> Importance of the language dimension recognized in the Agreement. Willingness to promote regional official languages.</p> <p><u>Official languages:</u> Tacit recognition of bilingualism because there are Spanish and Portuguese versions of the treaty: “the two versions are equally authentic” (s. 24, Treaty of Asunción; s. 53 of the Ouro Preto Protocol). Later addition of Guarani (national language of Paraguay) as an historic language (II Reunión especializada de Cultura del MERCOSUR, 1995), and later as an official MERCOSUR language (2006, CMC/DEC 35/06).</p> <p><u>Languages for dispute settlement:</u> Spanish and Portuguese, “depending on the case” (s. 36 of the Protocol of Brasilia on Dispute Settlement and s. 56 of the Protocol of Olivos). Decisions published in the <i>Boletín oficial</i>, etc. are in Spanish and Portuguese only.</p> <p><u>Translation of documents:</u> There are no translation services within the Secretariat, but there is a “standards and documentation” division that revises texts and ensures consistency between various language versions.</p> <p><u>Languages of work of regional authorities:</u> Spanish and Portuguese (even after inclusion of Guarani as an official language, s. 2 CMC/DEC 35/06).</p> <p><u>Teaching of regional official languages:</u> Adoption of mandatory Spanish and/or Portuguese second-language teaching programs. Agreement on mutual recognition of Spanish and Portuguese second-language teaching diplomas.</p>

EUROPEAN UNION (EU)	<p>Economic, political and monetary union</p> <p>Expansion and greater entrenchment of the Union over the years</p> <p>Six founding countries; number of member countries in 2008: 27³</p>	<p><u>Approach</u>: Great importance given to cultural and linguistic issues. Promotion of regional linguistic diversity. High degree of concern about teaching the Union languages. Multilingualism is an EU value and one of its founding principles: “unity in diversity”.</p> <p>Chronology of key EU dates pertaining to linguistic issues: <i>1992</i>: Adoption of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages in order to protect and promote European languages having this status.</p> <p><i>2000</i>: Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (s. II-81: no discrimination based on language; II-82: respect for linguistic diversity).</p> <p><i>2002</i>: Creation of a language task force as part of the “Education and Training 2010” program. Recommendation by the President of the Council of the European Union (Barcelona, 2002) that at least two foreign languages be taught at a young age.</p> <p><i>2005</i>: Adoption of the “new strategic framework for multilingualism” to promote multilingualism in society, business and the European Commission.</p> <p><i>2008</i>: Submission of the Maalouf Report proposing the development of trilingualism in young people based on a first language, an international language of communication and a personal adoptive language⁴.</p> <p><u>Official languages</u>: All national languages are official languages (s. 1, Regulation No. 1 of the Council on April 15, 1958, amended with each new membership). Council’s authority to establish the language regime: s. 290, Treaty establishing the European Community, unanimity required (27 member states, 23 official languages⁵). The various versions are equally authentic: s. 314 (formerly, s. 248 of the Treaty establishing the European Community).</p> <p><u>Translation of documents</u>: Member candidates must translate all legislation prior to becoming members (at their own expense, but with the General Translation Directorate of the European Commission technical support). Each institution has its own translation unit. One-of-a-kind system in the world. Various units co-operate with one another through the Interinstitutional Committee for Translation and Interpretation, 1995 + interpretation for oral communication.</p> <p><u>Languages of work of regional authorities</u>: The languages of work are the official languages (s. 1, Regulation No 1 of the Council, April 15, 1958). In practice, the common languages are English and French, although this may vary depending on the institutions.</p> <p><u>Teaching of regional official languages</u>: See chronology of key events.</p>
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Source: Jimena Andino Dorato and Christine Fréchette, Université de Montréal, August 2007.

³ (1951) Six founding countries: Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg and Netherlands. (1972) Denmark, Ireland and United Kingdom (9). (1981) Greece (10). (1986) Spain and Portugal (12). (1995) Austria, Finland and Sweden (15). (2004) Czech Republic, Estonia, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Malta, Poland, Slovenia and Slovakia (25). (2007) Bulgaria and Romania (27). (2005) Membership candidates: Croatia and Turkey.

⁴ Group of intellectuals for intercultural dialogue, *A Rewarding Challenge – How the Multiplicity of Languages Could Strengthen Europe*, European Commission, Brussels: February 2008. Online: http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/lang/doc/maalouf/report_fr.pdf

⁵ German: 1958 – English: 1973 – Bulgarian: 2007 – Danish: 1973 – Spanish: 1986 – Estonian: 2004 – Finnish: 1995 – French: 1958 – Greek: 1981 – Hungarian: 2004 – Irish: 2007 (2005 decision came into force on January 1, 2007) – Italian: 1958 – Latvian: 2004 – Lithuanian: 2004 – Maltese: 2004 – Dutch: 1958 – Polish: 2004 – Portuguese: 1986 – Romanian: 2007 – Slovak: 2004 – Slovene: 2004 – Swedish: 1995 – Czech: 2004.

This table shows that the more governments increase their degree of integration—starting, for example, with a free-trade zone and progressing to a customs union, or starting with a customs union and going on to a common market—the more the linguistic management regime developed by the multinational regional block becomes complex.

Does this mean that only countries when participating in a process of extensive integration should look at linguistic issues? No, the linguistic issues raise democratic issues as soon as the integration process is launched. This is so because the linguistic character of international organizations raises the issue, in particular, of the right to be heard and recognized in the official language of one of the member states. All international organizations, regardless of whether or not they are involved in an integration process, facilitate the exercise of democratic rights when they accord a language official status. They also recognize the importance of language areas and language speakers and foster respect for the right to information and to be served in a given language.

The inclusion of a variety of languages as official languages, languages of work and languages of virtual communication also ensures greater equity given that the speakers in a language area are not given advantages at the expense of other groups. If one language is systematically given priority when people are hired to fill vacant positions, a situation of language discrimination results. The power of one language group in the relationship can be enhanced if, for example, one of the official languages is systematically used in negotiations.

Economic issues are also involved because, despite the absence of a free-trade agreement, there is still a desire among the countries of the Americas to expand trade links. And it goes without saying that fulfilling this desire is made easier if citizens become proficient in more than one language of a continent or region of the Americas.

Notwithstanding the above, it is necessary to recognize that in order for a regional integration zone to enter a phase of greater integration, there is an increased need to develop a sophisticated linguistic plan, which must, from many perspectives, reflect the linguistic dynamics of a multilateral zone. When it is a question, for example, of setting up a customs union, the perimeter around the union area becomes the *de facto* actual border of the member states. It is therefore important to define in which language(s) services will be provided for citizens arriving at this border. Will they be provided in all of the official languages of the Union? If they are, does that mean that each person working at the border crossing of a customs union must be proficient in the various languages of the Union? Should there instead be linguistic complementarity among the various border officers? Should it instead be up to the citizen arriving at the border crossing to adjust to the linguistic context of the entry point where he/she arrives? In these cases, is security provided nonetheless for citizen members of the common economic or political area?

In addition to the linguistic dilemmas arising from the creation of a customs or political union, it should be pointed out that it may not be necessary to go that route to provide multilingual services. In a pilot project conducted in August 2007, integrated Canadian-American patrols were set up along the maritime border. The project gave rise to linguistic issues, although Canada does

not have a customs union with the United States⁶. For two months, 50 Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) and United States Coast Guard (USCG) officers patrolled together. French-speaking Quebecers were intercepted (on Quebec territory) by American officers speaking to them in English, to the astonishment of the inspected individuals. According to the findings of the experiment, the pilot project proved to be “safe and constructive” and full-time teams were set up on the east and west coasts and along the St Lawrence River and Great Lakes Seaway⁷. It will be important to monitor the degree to which linguistic issues will be taken into consideration in the aftermath of the project.

Course of action?

1- Document and analyse the types of issues that arise with the pooling of work teams or the movement of workers across borders between countries with different official languages.

1.2 Bringing inter-American organizations on side

How can the linguistic responsibilities of inter-American organizations be defined at a time when the world is seeing an internationalization of issues and stringent requirements for transparency and democratization? How do we reconcile the shift of centres of decision making to international hubs with the access-to-information expectations of populations? In what ways can international organizations demonstrate leadership in linguistic matters?

In the following we will attempt to shed light on a few responsibilities that inter-American organizations could assume if they wish to contribute further to developing the potential inherent to linguistic challenges.

Embracing diversity

One of the challenges facing inter-American organizations is the need to embrace the linguistic diversity of the countries they represent because governments have delegated powers to them in that regard. This [TRANSLATION] “delegation of political power to supranational authorities confers on those authorities a share of the control (and responsibilities) formerly exercised by the state”⁸ and involves issues of democracy, access to information and equity.

In carrying out their duties, international authorities are indeed partially taking over from countries the responsibility, for example, of managing trade disputes, implementing assistance programs or promoting co-operation between countries. Because they are taking over these

⁶ RCMP, *Cross-border policing and the “shiprider” program*, Brad Kieserman, *Gazette magazine*, Vol. 70, No. 1. http://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/gazette/vol70no1/partner_e.htm

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ LABRIE, Normand, *Vers une stratégie intégrée en Francophonie visant la promotion du français comme condition au maintien du plurilinguisme dans les Amériques*, (towards an integrated strategy in the Francophone community to promote French as a condition for maintaining plurilingualism in the Americas), unpublished document, Toronto: Centre de recherches en éducation franco-ontarienne, 1998, p.6.

responsibilities, it is their duty to respect the linguistic character of the countries they represent, where possible. The devolution of powers does not mean that there has to be a dilution of those powers; it would not be in keeping with the spirit of the agreements that led to the founding of the intergovernmental organizations.

This finding has multidimensional repercussions for intergovernmental organizations. In fact, the latter must embrace this linguistic diversity in various aspects of institutional activity, such as their Internet sites, in the work of official authorities, in their day-to-day operations and in their language criteria for hiring. This is done first of all by adopting a variety of languages as official languages and languages of work. Since this involves achieving an ideal situation and taking representativity, politics, efficiency and operating costs into account, one can understand that it is sometimes difficult to strike a balance.

Within organizations with operations across the Americas, the choice of official languages has focused on the four so-called international languages (English, Spanish, French and Portuguese). However, French and Portuguese were not chosen by three out of seven inter-American organizations, and, although Guarani and Haitian Creole have official language status in two of the countries of the Americas, these languages have not been selected as official languages by the inter-American organizations.

Official Languages (OL) of Inter-American Organizations And Languages Used on Their Internet Sites (IS)	
Organization of American States (OAS) ⁹	OL and IS: English, Spanish, French, Portuguese
Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) ¹⁰	OL and IS: English, Spanish, French, Portuguese
Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) ¹¹	OL and IS: English and Spanish
Parliamentary Confederation of the Americas (COPA) ¹²	OL and IS: English, Spanish, French, Portuguese
Inter-Parliamentary Forum of the Americas (FIPA) ¹³	OL and IS: English, Spanish, French, Portuguese
Pan American Standards Commission (COPANT) ¹⁴	IS: English and Spanish
Inter-American Regional Organization of	IS: English, Spanish, Portuguese

⁹ Its members are the 35 countries of the Americas: Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba (member but excluded from meetings since 1962), Dominican Republic, Ecuador, United States of America, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Saint Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, El Salvador, Surinam, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay and Venezuela.

¹⁰ The IDB comprises 47 member states, including 26 in Latin America and the Caribbean that are borrowing members.

¹¹ The 35 countries of the Americas are members.

¹² COPA members include congressional bodies and parliamentary assemblies of unitary, federal, federated and associated states, as well as regional parliaments and interparliamentary organizations in the Americas.

¹³ Members include the legislative assemblies of the 35 countries of the Americas.

¹⁴ The standardization organizations of 27 countries of the Americas are members.

Workers (ORIT)	
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Multilingualism on the Internet sites of inter-American organizations is particularly crucial given that the Internet is often the primary, if not the sole, communication channel for establishing a link between an organization and the populations it serves.

Compared with the situation when the First Inter-American Language Management Seminar was held, it is possible to see some improvements with respect to the languages used on the Internet sites of international organizations.

A notable improvement was made in terms of the extent of multilingualism on the Internet site of the Organization of American States (OAS). The number of articles and sections of the site available in four languages is larger than in 2001. However, large portions of the site are still only in English and Spanish, including the education and culture section, which has a mandate to “highlight the cultural diversity of the member states.” There is also only bilingual information in the major section on the Summit of the Americas, except for a few rare exceptions.

As for the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), an effort has been made to increase the information available in four languages, but the information available in French pertains almost exclusively to issues concerning Haiti. We are therefore faced with selective quadrilingualism. The information available in Portuguese is somewhat more varied, but French-speaking or Portuguese-speaking persons seeking information on IDB projects and activities, research in progress and theme-based projects have to refer to information in English or Spanish.

In the case of the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), the situation has not changed: the site is strictly bilingual (English/Spanish).

The inter-American parliamentary organizations, such as the Parliamentary Confederation of the Americas (COPA) and the Inter-Parliamentary Forum of the Americas (FIPA), are for their part a model of respect for quadrilingualism. All of the information posted on the Internet sites of both institutions seems to be available in the four languages.

The Pan American Standards Commission (COPANT) offers only a bilingual Internet site, although the organization’s name is given in three languages (English, Spanish and Portuguese).

The unions belonging to the Inter-American Regional Organization of Workers (ORIT) offer an Internet site and documentation that are trilingual for the most part (English, Spanish and Portuguese).

The language criteria for hiring also reflect the degree of importance that an organization attaches to the language skills of its employees. They reveal whether an organization considers multilingualism a necessity essentially for translation service employees or for the organization as a whole. In that regard, let us compare the language criteria for hiring adopted by the two largest inter-American organizations, the OAS and the IDB.

At the time of writing, the language criteria for jobs available within the OAS indicates that applicants have to have excellent proficiency in English AND Spanish, and that knowledge of another official OAS language is an asset. Portuguese and French speakers therefore have to be trilingual, unlike the English and Spanish speakers.

The Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) has another less directive-based approach. It states in the section of its Internet site describing vacant positions that proficiency in two of the organization’s four official languages (with none specified) is required for most available jobs. Upon reading the descriptions of the vacant positions, one learns that knowledge of Spanish OR English is required, as well as proficiency in a second official language (with none specified) of the institution. This approach shows greater equity towards French and Portuguese speakers.

In terms of the responsibility to embrace linguistic diversity, we are faced with either a situation of stagnation or, at best, a slight improvement if we compare it with the situation in 2002. In order to properly assess the degree of multilingualism of the Internet sites of inter-American organizations, it would be appropriate to submit them to the various indicators developed by the firm *Linguo Responsable*¹⁵, which has developed four categories of indicators for assessing the plurilingualism of the Internet sites¹⁶.

Within regional organizations, the same logic applies across the Americas, with the exception of MERCOSUR where a change in linguistic policy was introduced in 2006. In fact, the main regional international organizations have selected the languages with international status that are spoken on their territories in order to define what their official languages are. A similar approach was taken within MERCOSUR, but in 2006, a year after awarding “historic” language status to Guarani, a decision was made to make it an official language of MERCOSUR. Despite this promotion, it is clear that Guarani is not enjoying the same privileges as the other official languages because it cannot be used in dispute settlement procedures and does not appear on the Internet site of the organization’s Secretariat two years after the adoption of this decision.

Official Languages of Regional Organizations in the Americas	
NAFTA (Canada, United States, Mexico)	English, Spanish, French
MERCOSUR (Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay, Venezuela)	Spanish, Guarani, Portuguese
Association of Caribbean States (ACS)	English, Spanish, French

¹⁵ A firm promoting “diversity where possible each time that a site requires a translation into a foreign language, thereby promoting plurilingualism.” Internet site: <http://www.linguo-responsable.org/QuiSommesNous.php>.

¹⁶ 1) spectrum of languages represented; 2) aggregative index of multilingualism; 3) percentage of general multilingualism; and 4) percentage of advance multilingualism.

- Courses of action?*
- 2- Ask inter-American organizations to periodically submit a report on the status of multilingualism within their organizations, along with an action plan.*
 - 3- Develop indicators for comparing the status of multilingualism within an international organization.*

Encouraging the development of multilingualism

The notion that inter-American organizations may be able to promote learning of the languages of the Americas, as shown in the cases of MERCOSUR and the European Union, is an area where everything must be developed from zero.

In fact, inter-American organizations involved with culture have thus far not promoted the concept of multilingualism on either an individual or society-wide level. Their linguistic contributions have been limited to recognizing the valuable assets of ancestral cultures and languages that are threatened or marginalized, or, as was the case during a seminar organized by the OAS in October 2007, highlighting the economic contributions of cultural industries¹⁷. Certainly these messages must be heard, but they ignore a broad range of linguistic measures that could be proposed.

However, some regional international organizations, particularly MERCOSUR and the Association of Caribbean States (ACS), have a good understanding of the types of challenges that have been arising and have implemented linguistic initiatives to tackle them.

These two regional blocks have adopted mandates to start promoting official languages within their areas. Within MERCOSUR this meant the adoption in 1991 of a memorandum of intent affirming the desire to promote the learning of Spanish and Portuguese within its member states.

The 1993 constitution of MERCOSUR resulted in a linguistic policy of regional integration based on the widespread teaching of Spanish and Portuguese (Hamel 2003). Argentina and Uruguay experienced a veritable stampede to take Portuguese courses during the 1990s, to the point that these countries were unable to meet the demand. Brazil for its part passed a law in 2005 (Law 11.161/2005) making the teaching of Spanish mandatory in secondary schools. However, the schools cannot meet this requirement for the time being owing to a scarcity of Spanish teachers.

To make it easier to implement this decision, a diploma recognition agreement for the teaching of Spanish and Portuguese as foreign languages was signed on June 19, 2005, by the MERCOSUR countries¹⁸ to facilitate the mobility of Spanish teachers across borders.

¹⁷ Seminar entitled "Culture as an Engine of Economic Growth and Social Inclusion in the Americas."

Online: www.oas.org/OASpage/Events/default_ENG.asp?eve_code=22

¹⁸ The agreement is on line at

http://www.mrree.gub.uy/Mercosur/ConsejoMercadoComun/Reunion28/AnexoII/ANEXO_DEC_9-05.htm

Furthermore, an innovative initiative to create “cultural corridors” has been promised by the MERCOSUR ministers of culture. Echoing the concept of “trade corridors”, the cultural corridors are a [TRANSLATION] “tool for setting up alternative networks for the movement of cultural assets revealing a broader cultural geography than that established by the United Nations”, and this “new cultural geography” is essential to strengthening regional integration”¹⁹.

The Association of Caribbean States (ACS) also shows initiative and vision. In 1998, the Council of Ministers of the regional block adopted the objective of [TRANSLATION] “eliminating language barriers within the region by enhancing the skills of Caribbean nationals through knowledge of a second or third language”²⁰, for example, English, Spanish and French. Thus “the search for a community identity became officially predicated upon the learning and functional use of several languages”²¹.

In 2003, the ACS also initiated a [TRANSLATION] “language training project” with the objective of “forming a base group of public servants and managers that as a group could do business and enter into negotiations with neighbouring countries.” According to the ACS, “the ability of the business community, teachers and public servants to communicate fluently in French and Spanish will mark a new era in the development of the countries of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS)”²². Some analysts believe that these measures promote the “cultural reterritorialisation of the region”²³, that is, a form of cultural reappropriation of a territory that had been subject to foreign influences over a long period of time.

These linguistic initiatives undoubtedly help to strengthen developing relationships between the populations of the member countries of these regional blocks that are MERCOSUR and the ACS. In a way, they [TRANSLATION] “recognize the plurilingual reality of the regional space and the requirements of an identity-oriented project”²⁴. They also help to expand the linguistic skills of young people and give them assets that can make a difference in increasingly interdependent, plurilingual economies.

Through their activities, the member states of these two blocks have transposed a linguistic approach at the multilateral level that is consistent with the post-modern era, as described by David Graddol, that is, an era in which the role of the state in linguistic matters is to provide support for and develop language skills.

¹⁹ Official site of the RED CULTURAL MERCOSUR. Online at http://www.redculturalmercosur.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=75&Itemid=91

²⁰ Association of Caribbean States. *Des centres d'excellence pour l'enseignement des langues officielles de l'AEC*, Council of Ministers (Memo of the), Trinidad and Tobago, 1998.

²¹ Patrick DAHLET. *Adhésion à la diversité et qualifications francophones dans la Caraïbe*, [online], *Diversité Langues*, Vol. V, 2000 [www.telug.quebec.ca/diverscite].

²² Official site of the Association of Caribbean States. Online at http://www.acs-aec.org/PressCenter/NewsReleases/2003/nr084_fr.htm.

²³ Graciela Ravetti, *El español en Brasil: desafíos para contribuir a las nuevas comunidades en formación*. Online at www.letras.ufmg.br/espanhol/ensayo%20el%20espa%C3%B1ol%20en%20brasil1.htm.

²⁴ DAHLET, Patrick. 2000. *Adhésion à la diversité et qualifications francophones dans la Caraïbe*. *Diversité Langues*. Online. Vol. V. Online at <http://www.telug.quebec.ca/diverscite/SecArtic/Arts/2000/dahlet/txt.htm>.

Pre-Modern Era	Modern Era	Post-Modern Era
People learn new languages as they come in contact with other peoples and use different languages for different purposes.	Nation states seek to become monolingual. Regional languages are marginalized and even eliminated.	Multilingualism becomes the standard.

Source: David Graddol, *English Next*, The British Council, 2006, p.19.

The post-modern approach calls for the adoption of a new attitude towards multilingualism, particularly its cost. In this area, one regularly hears talk of the high cost of multilingualism, but less frequently does one hear that there is a cost related to the absence of multilingualism or that monolingualism also has a cost. These costs are unfortunately difficult to quantify nowadays when it is preferable to be able to calculate everything. Just the same, one can cite the loss of international investment in a city or country because the percentage of multilingualism in the labour force is too low. Anne-Claude Berthoud, Director of European Research for DYLAN (*Dynamique des langues et gestion de la diversité*), points out that multilingualism is a very effective way to “combat ready-made thinking” particularly because languages “are spectacles for reading the world and taking action”²⁵.

The Centre of which she is the director has also developed a few suggested slogans to promote multilingualism in Europe, such as “plurilingual citizens: a resource for Europe” or the more daring “monolingualism is a disability that can be cured!”

Course of action?
4- That inter-American international organizations whose mandates include cultural matters promote and support the development of language skills for the citizens of their member states (by launching educational projects or supporting student and teacher mobility).

2. Languages in Economic Exchanges

How are languages important and influential in economic exchanges? Does this influence vary over time? Languages in the trade sector act first and foremost as a communication tool between individuals or groups conducting transactions.

Considering that the context, as described in the introduction, is one of increasingly greater interaction between speakers in various language groups, it appears that the capacity of individuals and organizations to communicate in several languages has become a “natural resource” increasingly valued by companies in the same way that other key skills are prized.

²⁵ BERTHOUD, Anne-Claude, LE TEMPS, *Éclairages : Des citoyens plurilingues : une ressource pour l'Europe*, October 19, 2006. Online at www.unil.ch/webdav/site/ling/shared/TextesEnLigne/Le_Temps_-_ECLAIRAGES.pdf

Evidence of this can be seen in the emergence in recent years of placement agencies specializing in jobs requiring multilingual employees. The firm “multilingualvacancies.com” is one example. Since 2003, it has specialized in recruiting and placing individuals wishing to make use of their language skills in their work. It is not chiefly young translators or interpreters seeking to find their niche in the job market; the employment spectrum is far more extensive. Many industry sectors require their employees to have specific language skills. This particular agency offers its services for a wide range of employment sectors, including:

- Accounting
- Banking and finance
- Construction
- Video games
- Education, training
- Engineering
- Human relations
- Import-export
- Information technology
- Management and administration
- Communications/marketing
- Staff recruitment
- Public relations
- Telecommunications
- Health care
- Tourism

According to telecommunications specialist Miguel Vergara, languages are [TRANSLATION] “an intangible of paramount importance”²⁶. This is attributable to two factors: businesses are having to deal with clients and partners with increasingly varied language profiles, and, as pointed out by Anne-Claude Berthoud, employees realize that [TRANSLATION] “ ‘juggling’ languages to expand knowledge and serve the job market involves the development of multilingual skills that go beyond the mere mastery of English, which is seen as necessary but not in and of itself sufficient”²⁷.

Languages also play a part in economic exchanges, through the level of economic activity in the countries in which they are spoken. Mark Davis, President of the Unicode Consortium, has created a table illustrating the economic weight of the most widely spoken languages²⁸. He has plotted the GDP of various countries speaking the same language in order to evaluate the commercial weight of various language regions over a period of more than 25 years²⁹.

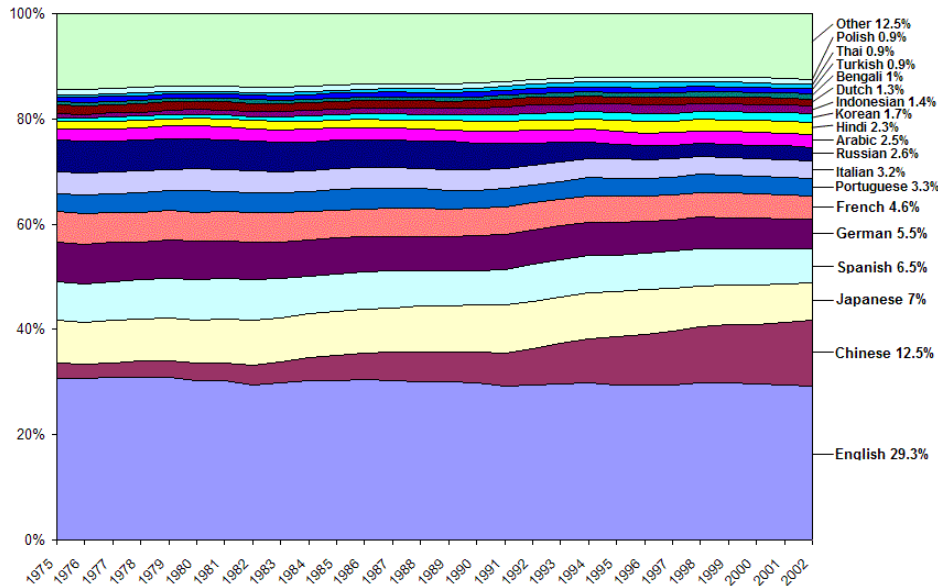
²⁶ VERGARA, Miguel, Tendencia 21, *Economía del español*, March 8, 2008. Online: www.tendencias21.net/teleco/index.php?action=article&numero=28&PHPSESSID=33a72b56bedf57834f1ebf844e521d01

²⁷ BERTHOUD, Anne-Claude, *Regard croisé sur un plurilinguisme à inventer*, Université de Lausanne, p. 2. Online: www.dylan-project.org/Dylan_en/presentation/dissemination/articles/s/UNIL-Berthoud-RegardsCroiseesSurUnPlurilinguismeAInventer.pdf

²⁸ DAVIS, Mark, Unicode Technical Note #13, January 22, 2003. Online: <http://unicode.org/notes/tn13/>

²⁹ Gross domestic product value is expressed on parity with purchasing power to take into account price variations between countries.

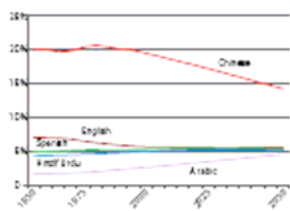
Figure 1: GDP by Language, 1975–2002



From the outset, we can see that the economic share of Anglophone countries has more or less stayed at 30%, dipping slightly over the years. Throughout the study period, the principal change involved the share of global GDP associated with Mandarin, which continued to grow.

The following are a few trends expected to influence the use of English, Spanish, Portuguese and French in future trade dealings.

Figure 2 – Number of native speakers of the most commonly spoken languages, as a percentage of world population³⁰.



On the global scale, English and Spanish are practically equal as regards the number of native speakers (see Figure 2). However, as pointed out by David Graddol, the number of people who use English as a second language is particularly high³¹, owing to the status of English as *lingua franca*. No one can ignore the fact that English is the chief language of international communication—a status that makes its

teaching around the world almost essential. In the Americas, as elsewhere, the importance of English can also be felt, without dampening the popularity of Spanish and Portuguese.

Very soon, Spanish could [TRANSLATION] “overtake English in terms of the number of native speakers”³². Moreover, according to a study by *Fundación Telefónica*³³, Spanish could become the second most important language for international economic exchanges in the coming decade. [TRANSLATION] “Spanish exports to Spanish-speaking countries are tripling, which implies a

³⁰ GRADDOL, David, *ibid.*, p. 60.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 64.

³² MARTÍNEZ, Yaiza, *El español jugará un papel clave en el comercio global en la próxima década*, February 19, 2008. Online: http://www.tendencias21.net/El-espanol-jugara-un-papel-clave-en-el-comercio-global-en-la-proxima-decada_a2085.html?start_liste=0&paa=1

³³ Fundación Telefónica, *Economía del español. Una introducción*, February 19, 2008.

significant multiplier effect associated with Spanish, more significant than in Anglo-Saxon countries”³⁴. In the Americas, the fact that Brazil, which has over 180 million inhabitants, has made the teaching of Spanish mandatory will significantly increase the number of people who speak it.

As for Portuguese, two important factors will contribute to its growing importance in economic exchanges. On the one hand, the fact that Brazil is part of what is conventionally known as the BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India and China – the group of countries expected to experience strong economic growth in the decades to come) means that more trade dealings will occur with Brazil, which will boost the use of Portuguese in commercial circles. The effects of this power boost are already apparent in China, where there is a craze for Portuguese courses. Many Chinese companies wishing to establish or develop trade ties with Brazil have their employees take Portuguese courses, resulting even in a shortage of teachers³⁵.

On the other hand, the obligation to teach Portuguese in Spanish-speaking countries forming part of MERCOSUR will increase the number of people who speak the language, thus disseminating the influence of Portuguese on a scale unprecedented in South America. Over time, Portuguese should become much more common in trade negotiations and business contracts.

French remains a key language on the international economic stage but, as is commonly known, its presence is much more widespread in Europe and Africa than in the Americas. According to a report published by the Organisation internationale de la Francophonie (OIF), there are 200 million Francophones in the world today, including 72 million “partial” Francophones. It is estimated that 42% live in Europe, 39% in Sub-Saharan Africa and 11% in North Africa³⁶.

In the virtual world, English no longer has a quasi-monopoly on the Internet: according to a study carried out by the *Funredes* NGO and the Latin Union, the presence of English on the World Wide Web has fallen by 30%, dropping from 75% to 45% between 1998 and 2005³⁷. French ranks third, with a 4.95% presence rate on the Web, ahead of Spanish, Italian and Portuguese³⁸.

Beyond questions of commercial weight and Internet presence, what linguistic issues are emerging as a result of commercial exchanges? Although many can be discussed, we will focus on three: consumer protection, the adaptability of standards and the protection of states’ rights to intervene with regard to language-related issues.

2.1 Protecting consumers in an era of globalization

We are all consumers. Languages play a crucial role when it comes to consumption, as they enable us (or not) to access information on the nature of the goods or services we wish to purchase or on the risk inherent in their consumption.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ BOAVIDA, Rui, *Jornal Mundo Lusíada* – On Line, November 21, 2007. Online: www.mundolusiada.com.br/ECONOMIA/econ244_nov07.htm

³⁶ Encyclopédie de la Francophonie. Online: http://agora.qc.ca/francophonie.nsf/Dossiers/Francais_langue_des_affaires

³⁷ Source: http://www.20mars.francophonie.org/IMG/pdf/rapport_hcf_2007.pdf

³⁸ Ibid.

The growing number of international exchanges makes it more challenging to linguistically adapt information associated with goods or services. The need for consumers to access information that is clear, intelligible and in a language recognized in their country has to do in part with the right of access to information. This right enables them to be informed of the characteristics of the goods or services they plan to buy and to keep apprised of any risks or hazards that may be associated with their consumption. Labelling, instructions, packaging, advertising or service delivery – it is important to ensure that all these are provided in the language of the country for which they are destined.

The need to address consumers in their own language is also in the economic interest of businesses, which have everything to gain by adapting their products, thus making clients fully able to understand the information being transmitted to them. This is a win-win solution well worth promoting: citizens and consumers can understand the information they are given, states' national languages are respected and businesses can aspire to boost their sales.

Finally, we should note that the significant growth of the service sector makes it even more crucial to ensure the cultural and linguistic adaptability of services, given that language is often a component of 'service' – an intrinsic part of the product being sold.

2.2 Ensuring the linguistic adaptability of international standards

One of the linguistic issues largely unknown to the general public but nonetheless crucial for consumers and users concerns the linguistic adaptability of standardization. By standardization, we mean agreements containing technical specifications or other criteria for systematic use, such as rules, guidelines or definitions of characteristics, designed to ensure that materials, products, processes and services are suitable for their intended use³⁹.

These standards regulate an infinite range of items in common use. Examples are the standards for computer keyboards that must be adapted to various linguistic systems; database management systems, which must take into account national linguistic variants; and cell phone user interfaces.

[TRANSLATION] "One of the goals of standardization is to ensure that products available on the market have three strategic characteristics: 1) interoperability, 2) portability, and 3) cultural and linguistic adaptability"⁴⁰. The lack of adaptability in standards may lead to an inflexible or inconsistent system being imposed on users, and even restricting citizens' ability to use some technologies that have not been adapted to their language.

Yves Neuville, Chairman of the ISO's JTC1/SC 35 International Standardization Committee on User Interface, states that:

[TRANSLATION] The idea of cultural and linguistic diversity is the site of a ferocious battle with considerable challenges. Some businesses try to lower their

³⁹ PREVINOR, *Définition de la norme selon l'ISO*. Online: www.previ.be/previnor/public/news/definition.htm

⁴⁰ Association électronique libre, *Commentaires au Bureau de normalisation à propos de la demande de standardisation ISO du format ECMA 376 (JTC1-Sc34)*, June 25, 2007. Online: <http://www.nooboxml.org/local--files/arguments/AEL20070625.pdf>

costs as much as possible by selling standardized products to ensure commercial hegemony. Other businesses, major players in the international market, have come to understand that human-machine interface issues are a crucial challenge and that growing their market involves standardization and cultural and linguistic adaptability. Some companies do not welcome standardization so as to maintain their assets and closed proprietary logic, while others know that their expansion depends fully on these standards. This is the context of the great cultural diversity battle. In the United States, this problem is now being taken very seriously owing to the considerable importance of Spanish and Asian communities, among others⁴¹.

Cultural and linguistic adaptability needs to be taken into account throughout all the stages leading to the development of a standard, which [TRANSLATION] “takes between five and ten years, on average”⁴². We may believe that the need to ensure the cultural and linguistic adaptability of standards has been accepted for some time within standardization organizations, such as the ISO. But it was only in 1999 that the ISO set up a technical directorate whose mandate was to ensure that standards are adaptable to the needs of a given community of users and to natural language characteristics⁴³.

In the Americas, at least three organizations work in the field of standardization: the Pan American Standards Commission (COPANT), the InterAmerican Accreditation Corporation (IAAC) and the Sistema Interamericano de Metrología (SIM). The mandate of the most significant, COPANT, is to “seek mechanisms for the co-ordination and integration with the activities carried out by sub-regional Organizations (NAFTA, MERCOSUR, Andean Community, ECLAC, CARICOM, etc) so as to unify policies in the field of standardization”⁴⁴. To date, nothing leads us to believe that issues of cultural and linguistic adaptability are being taken into consideration by this organization.

Course of action?
5. Urge inter-American standardization organizations, beginning with COPANT, to develop standards that are culturally and linguistically adaptable.

⁴¹ *Compte-rendu des interventions, Normes et standards pour les activités numériques dans l'enseignement*, Séminaire de Lyon et Saint-Clément-les-Places, October 9 and 10, 2003

Online: <http://www.educnet.education.fr/tech/normes/seminaire-lyon-cr.htm#5>

⁴² *Compte-rendu des interventions, Normes et standards pour les activités numériques dans l'enseignement*, Séminaire de Lyon et Saint-Clément-les-Places, October 9 and 10, 2003

Online: <http://www.educnet.education.fr/tech/normes/seminaire-lyon-cr.htm#5>

⁴³ Report of the CLAUI, Geneva, ISO/IEC JTC/N 5629, July 12, 1998.

⁴⁴ Official COPANT site, Standardization Policy, paragraph (g).

<http://www.copant.org/English/ArticleDetail.asp?CategoryId=14799&ArticleId=223056>

2.3 Making best use of the potential of new information and communication technologies (NICTs)

New information and communication technologies make it possible to bypass geographical and political boundaries but cannot circumvent obstacles created by linguistic barriers. Electronic commerce, distance education, access to online information, government or financial services online – these are only a few examples of the possibilities offered by new information technologies.

While new information technologies increase opportunities for multilingual communication within organizations and companies, and on the Internet, they cannot fulfill their potential if the tools to overcome linguistic obstacles are not developed.

As pointed out by Réjean Roy, [TRANSLATION] “people still prefer that we communicate with them in their usual language.” The four factors that are used to justify contacting citizens and consumers in their mother tongue still apply today⁴⁵:

1. Clients prefer to use their language rather than another.
2. Clients are better able to understand messages in their language.
3. Clients are more likely to remember messages in their language.
4. Messages in their language are more likely to influence them.

It is in this context that multilingual terminology data banks should be developed. The development of such banks on an inter-American scale is certainly a relevant avenue of development, although we should keep in mind that, in order to be viable in the long term, such banks must be based on as many linguistic systems as possible rather than on a predetermined number of languages.

It is to be hoped that information technologies will not lead to the linguistic ghettoization of users and will be used to promote dialogue between various language groups in the Americas. In this regard, the creation of a multilingual inter-American television channel or an increased selection of television channels from various regions of the Americas would promote the building of cultural bridges on the continent. Only such approaches will make it possible to take full advantage of the potential for openness offered by information technologies.

- Courses of action?*
6. *Support the development of multilingual inter-American terminology data banks to overcome linguistic barriers faced by NICTs.*
 7. *Use information technologies to promote contact between cultures and knowledge of inter-American cultures and dynamics.*

⁴⁵ ROY, Réjean, *Le français au Québec, les nouveaux défis*, Les Éditions Fides et le Conseil supérieur de la langue française, 2005, p.126.

2.4 Protecting states' rights to legislate

Globalization is accompanied by a phenomenon that has made it possible for certain economic rights to be protected internationally. The increased protection of economic rights has created an imbalance with regard to linguistic rights, which do not benefit from equivalent protection at the international level.

The adoption of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Convention on Cultural Diversity has made it possible to increase the protection of the right of states to provide support for cultural goods and services. However, the Convention remains of no consequence when it comes to the protection of the right of states to intervene in language-related matters, such as to ensure the presence of a language on the products and services in a given market or in workplaces. Since these types of linguistic requirements may be perceived by international economic bodies as an obstacle to trade, the right of states to intervene in language-related matters remains vulnerable. The adoption of an international convention on linguistic diversity would go some way toward re-establishing a balance between the protections enjoyed by linguistic rights and those enjoyed by economic rights.

Course of action?

8. Draft a convention on linguistic diversity in order to protect the right of states to legislate on language-related matters without this being perceived as an obstacle to trade.

3. Plurilingualism in Language Teaching and Education

The field of language teaching and education is a priority area of interest for linguistic policies not just because it must meet current and future plurilingual communication needs, but also because it instills the type of national and international identity that each state and group of states seeks to achieve.

In regard to language teaching, two questions could be discussed on the occasion of the Fourth Seminar. First, which languages should be given priority in second- and/or third-language courses in teaching institutions? Which approach would we use to define the ideal “linguistic portfolio”?

Second, what foreign language teaching methods are currently used in the teaching of second and third languages? Which have proven particularly effective?

3.1 Adopting a flexible, proactive approach

Countless types of language teaching programs are used in the Americas; every country, state or region has a method of its own. However, it would be interesting to discuss the level of interest in promoting a common approach or philosophy in the Americas.

In 2007, the European Commission set up a focus group chaired by writer Amin Maalouf in order to obtain advice on the possible contribution of multilingualism to the strengthening of Europe.

The proposals stemming from this group's final report are innovative, ambitious, realistic and respectful. The group advocates the idea that Europeans should be encouraged to learn, in primary and secondary school and in university, their mother tongue, a language of international communication, and a language referred to as a *personal adoptive language*. The latter would be:

A distinctive language, different from his or her language of identity, and also different from his or her language of international communication. As we see it, the *personal adoptive language* would in no way be a second foreign language, but, rather, a sort of second mother tongue⁴⁶.

As pointed out by the authors:

By drawing a clear distinction, when the choice is made, between a language of international communication and a *personal adoptive language*, we would encourage Europeans to take two separate decisions when it comes to language learning, one dictated by the needs of the broadest possible communication, and the other guided by a whole host of personal reasons stemming from individual or family background, emotional ties, professional interest, cultural preferences, intellectual curiosity, to name a few.... As regards language of international communication, we are aware that most people would today opt for English. However, some could well choose French, Spanish, Portuguese, Mandarin or any other language. As regards a *personal adoptive language*, the choice is virtually unlimited⁴⁷.

This highly flexible approach makes it possible to promote the interest of plurilingualism on the personal and collective level, all the while offering the possibility of transcending the “everything in English” debate without denying the importance of the English language.

The approach taken by Europe in developing such a language learning philosophy is very different from that taken by the Americas. But there is no need to look to dramatic times in history to justify the necessity of setting shared actionable goals. Fortunately, the mere willingness to act in the interest of progress and the wellbeing of communities should suffice.

⁴⁶ Group of Intellectuals for Intercultural Dialogue, “A Rewarding Challenge – How the Multiplicity of Languages Could Strengthen Europe,” European Commission, Brussels, February 2008, p. 10.

⁴⁷ Ibid, p.11

Courses of action?

9. Promote the teaching of the mother tongue, a language of international communication and a “personal adoptive” language as part of the educational systems in the Americas.

10. Promote student exchanges between countries in the Americas in order to foster language learning.

3.2 Targeting best practices

In the Americas, there is no regulating authority as such that could propose linguistic policies, and the extent to which it is possible to propose shared policies or models is still up for debate.

As a general rule, we can distinguish between the following systems:

1. Foreign language teaching (FLT) programs in public and private schools
2. Programs designed for a minority Aboriginal population: intercultural bilingual education (IBE)
3. Programs designed for a minority immigrant population: various types of bilingual education, notably in the United States and English Canada
4. Programs designed for a minority non-Aboriginal population: immersion (in Canada, including Quebec) and double immersion (United States)
5. Bilingual and multilingual education programs (descendants of European immigrants or not)

3.2.1 Foreign language teaching (FLT) programs in public and private schools

All countries on the American continent are deficient when it comes to the teaching of foreign or second languages as compared with the principal countries in Central, Northern and Eastern Europe, which have a long-standing foreign language teaching tradition. In these countries, foreign languages have a central place in the academic curriculum. In many European countries, the teaching of two foreign languages is mandatory at the primary and secondary school level (grades 1 to 12 or 13).

Although there are significant discrepancies between countries, we can safely say that, with the exception of private bilingual schools, foreign language teaching occupies a very peripheral place in the Americas, and the results are most often disappointing if not outright deplorable.

The United States is the only industrialized country that does not make it mandatory to teach a foreign language, although some states and counties have established regulations as a result of which many schools offer optional foreign language teaching programs. On the whole, the number of foreign language learners is extremely limited, and it is estimated that at least 65% of foreign language skills are acquired in a family setting, having nothing to do with school programs. Accordingly, with the exception of first- and second-generation immigrants, American citizens are for the most part unilingual.

To a lesser degree, a similar phenomenon can be seen in English Canada and, in a differentiated way, in Quebec. Large sections of the population – a majority in the case of Anglophones – remain unilingual. The situation continues, no doubt facilitated by the hegemonic role of English in the world, which enables Anglophones to perform all the relevant communication functions (mother tongue, language of education, international communication, science and technology) by communicating in their own language. Nevertheless, studies on the globalization of languages and the Anglophone community (Graddol 1997, 2006) predict that unilingual individuals, including Anglophones, will suffer negative consequences in their professional lives in the near future.

In the twentieth century, secondary school teaching (grades 7 to 12) ceased catering to an elite studying one or two foreign languages, and began targeting all communities. From that point onward, proficiency criteria became somewhat relaxed. In Brazil, as in Mexico – the two largest economies in Latin America – proficiency in rudimentary elements of a foreign language (generally English), such as the ability to hold a long conversation or read a technical or scientific article, is not a requirement in mandatory public school teaching. In these countries (but also in the United States and in part in Canada), university performs the role of initiating students to language skills essential for graduate work and professional success.

Colombia has created the National Bilingual Program (2004, 2006 law) establishing the mandatory teaching of English beginning in the first primary grades with a view to achieving extensive Spanish/English bilingualism at the end of 15 years of study. This program has faced criticism as it reinforces the teaching of English as a foreign language rather than creating true bilingualism in Spanish and English. Chile and other countries have also set standards for more intensive English teaching.

Owing to the hegemonic role that English has assumed globally in the twentieth century, the teaching of foreign languages is increasingly focused on English. This, in many cases, reduces the traditional multilingual offer (English, but also French, German and Italian) to a single mandatory or suggested language.

3.2.2 Programs designed for a minority Aboriginal population: intercultural bilingual education (IBE)

Aboriginal education has made significant progress in all Latin-American countries with Aboriginal populations, as well as in the United States and Canada. As a rule, under the general concept of bilingual intercultural education, almost all countries have established sub-systems specifically for their Aboriginal peoples and granted them varying degrees of administrative autonomy with respect to educational programs (management, governance). In principle, the purpose of these programs is to provide top quality education tailored to the needs of a given Aboriginal people. Their objective is to achieve additive bilingualism that is likely to be enhanced over time owing to the emphasis on the development of four language skills in both languages, the strengthening of Aboriginal identity and the importance of an intercultural vision.

However, some gaps remain with respect to the objectives and directions of pedagogical and language policies. Generally speaking, programs that have succeeded in effectively creating

enhanced BIE and additive bilingualism while strengthening Aboriginal languages are the exception rather than the rule. All aspects of the educational systems will require analysis so that the obstacles that prevent them from being improved can be identified: explicit and implicit policies, organizational structures, educational programs, pedagogy, curricula, and so on.

3.2.3 Programs designed for minority immigrant populations: various types of bilingual education programs, particularly in the United States and English-speaking Canada

Most bilingual education programs in the United States—which are not designated as such since the expression “bilingual education” is proscribed – are viewed as failures in terms of established performance standards. Schools that implement these programs invariably report achievement gaps. In the United States today, enhancement programs (Baker) and additive bilingualism for students who do not have sufficient mastery of the English language are virtually non-existent; this is a deliberate choice since the objective is linguistic assimilation. Many critics attribute this low success rate to the actual curriculum design.

3.2.4 Programs designed for non-Aboriginal minority populations: immersion (Canada, including Quebec) and double immersion (United States)

The most successful programs are those designated as “double immersion”. In these programs, the first language of half the students is usually English and, for the other half, it is an immigrant language (Spanish, for example). Half the courses are given in English and the other half is given in another language. Students learn in their own language part of the time and help the rest of the group learn their language. They then repeat this learning experience by reversing roles and perspectives.

The very comprehensive evaluations carried out in Canada on traditional, total or partial, early or late, immersion programs must be taken into consideration. It would be timely to analyse general educational outcomes and outcomes achieved in these language courses, as well as the impacts of these programs on social integration in a bilingual and multilingual society.

3.2.5 Bilingual and multilingual education programs (descendants of European immigrants or not)

In Latin America, and to a lesser degree in the United States and Canada, European immigrants have established their own schools. Over time, they have shifted from the status of institutions reserved for people from immigrant communities and which were usually unilingual in an immigrant language to the status of bilingual or trilingual schools that are also open to people born in the host country who are seeking a different kind of education. The teaching methods adopted by these institutions have made it possible to achieve very advanced levels of bilingualism and trilingualism. In Latin America, the most renowned of these schools are British, American, French and German. There are also Italian and Japanese schools in Latin America. Since these schools are private, they are usually available only to the middle and upper classes.

The most reputable are those that offer intensive programs in English (including German and French schools)⁴⁸.

These schools are examples of success since their students attain the highest performance levels on a national scale. At the same time, they manage to develop advanced bilingualism, both among children who are already bilingual when they enter these schools and among unilingual children who are intensively studying a foreign language, often as part of immersion programs. These schools in Latin America are often attended by the children of the economic, political and cultural elites.

The strengths and weaknesses of these programs will require analysis, as will the problems that may arise with respect to the development of an intercultural vision and integration into the respective countries and the challenge of designing curricula in which disciplines overlap and in which the language component may be deficient in comparison with other subjects. It would also be worthwhile to discuss the lessons to be learned from their experience and how they might be applied to other educational systems, bilingual Aboriginal education, general education and the teaching of foreign languages.

Course of action?
11- Document, raise awareness of and assess the transferability of best practices in foreign language teaching in the Americas.

3.3 Making use of new information and communication technologies (NICTs)

The advent of new information and communication technologies (NICTs) has proven to be fundamentally important for all educational systems. In keeping with the spirit of linguistic diversity, the use of NICTs in various languages should be promoted for the purposes of developing teaching materials and finding information. And, of course, over the last decade, some languages have grown in importance, if for no other reason than because of their visibility and multiple representations. In Mexico, the federal government introduced *Enciclomedia* in all primary schools in 2005; this is a computer system equipped with a projector and an interactive electronic board connected to the Internet that makes it possible to carry out much more advanced research, even in Aboriginal languages.

In terms of technology, the most urgent need, however, is the development of teaching materials for all levels of instruction and for all disciplines in the various languages used by educational systems. It is also necessary to use NICTs for the purposes of language learning including specialized functions (understanding, reading, etc).

Course of action?
12- Provide support for the production of multilingual teaching materials

⁴⁸ For an overview, see Hamel 2008.

that make it easier to learn languages.

3.4 Taking action to combine languages and science

3.4.1 Circumventing the trend of shifting from a variety of international languages to an English language monopoly

In the fields of science and higher education, and in any other field of activity with strategic importance, no country or linguistic community can escape the need to formulate language policy. Many scientists and politicians believe that science is universal and can be expressed in any language without adversely affecting its content or the position of a scientific community; but, in actual fact, the situation is not so simple. Countries and linguistic communities that completely relinquish the development of their own language in the fields of science and higher education are sacrificing a strategic resource in terms of human capital that will relegate them to a backseat role and make them dependent on countries at the forefront of scientific activity. Strictly speaking, there is no international language that is not a scientific language as well.

At the beginning of the 20th century, three languages shared the international scientific field: German, French and English. Each language was dominant in a number of disciplines: French in law, medicine and political science; English in economics and geology; and German in medicine, chemistry and philosophy. Thus, experts and students had to study the dominant language in their discipline of choice. Moreover, there was a plurilingual model that allowed the users of these languages to present their papers and publish in their respective languages, provided they understood the other languages.

However, during the 20th century, the international scientific community gradually shifted from a plurilingual model to the hegemonic use of English; the space occupied by the other scientific languages gradually shrank. At the end of the 20th century, the United States and Great Britain alone produced 41% of the world's scientific publications (articles in scientific journals), while the percentage of all publications for scientific dissemination produced in English, according to some statistics, exceeded 74%, or, according to others, hovered around 82% in the case of social sciences and humanities, and 90% in the case of natural sciences. Conclusion: an increasing number of non-English-speaking scientists were publishing their work in English, even though they continued to carry out their research and teach in their own language. In doing so, they contributed to the expansion of English.

The American continent itself reflects the international division of languages in the scientific fields. The United States and English-speaking Canada attest to the new hegemony of English in that their researchers, with a few exceptions, are moving toward English unilingual communications in scientific fields.

However, Quebec and Franco-Canadian universities⁴⁹ are key players in the French-speaking scientific community because of their activities, systematic expansion of French in the sciences,

⁴⁹ University of Moncton in New Brunswick, University of Ottawa, Laurentian University in Ontario and Collège universitaire Saint-Boniface in Manitoba, in particular.

development of specific tools, such as scientific terminology publications, and major annual conferences of the Association canadienne-française pour l'avancement des sciences (ACFAS).

The Ibero-American region also reflects the international breakdown of science, technology and language use. Although, in fact, no Spanish- or Portuguese-speaking country belongs to any of the traditional scientific development communities, the various bibliographies in specific fields (which often differ, statistically speaking) usually attribute to the Spanish language 3.5% of the articles in selected international social sciences and humanities journals, and 0.5% of the articles in natural sciences journals. The numbers are even lower for the Portuguese⁵⁰ language.

In spite of this global trend, national languages still enjoy significant visibility in a number of areas, particularly in the social sciences and humanities. While they are important, scientific publications represent only one aspect of the scientific field. From a public policy and language policy perspective, it would be worthwhile to examine the entire field, which includes not only the scientific research process itself, but also the dissemination of findings (presentations, conferences, publications, disclosure) and researchers' university training.

3.4.2 Maintaining and expanding the conditions for linguistic diversity with regard to languages used in scientific fields

While the use of a single language for scientific communication has its advantages, it also has serious drawbacks, such as the fact that a single language has a monopoly in the fields of science and higher education in the long term.

1. A reduction in diversity to the point where only one language would be adopted for the production of research models, themes and strategies might lead to a dangerous deterioration in scientific development itself, that is, the destruction of a knowledge base characterized by a diversity of models and approaches with strong cultural and theoretical roots. This is the situation in all sciences, but it is all the more prevalent in the social sciences and humanities.
2. The absolute imposition of English would widen existing gaps, both in terms of the conditions for access to international scientific research and the production and dissemination of scientific research findings and technology specific to various countries. With regard to the value of scientific research as a leading means of production, such an approach would eventually curtail economic growth in those countries in the medium and long term.
3. Increasing unilingualism in the Anglo-Saxon scientific community and in some of its satellites presents problems not only for international scientific communication, but also in fields such as culture, international relations, intercultural communication, and the preservation of peace. Non-Anglophone linguistic communities can help to offset Anglophone unilingualism insofar as they keep their languages alive, vigorous and attractive, even for the Anglophone scientific community.

With regard to formulating scientific and linguistic policy in the second-tier language communities (French, German and Spanish), the choice of a unilingual model for the sciences, be

⁵⁰ See CIDOC 1998, 1999, Hamel 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008.

it in English or in the language of each of those countries, seems inadequate. It would be useful to discuss and test a plurilingual model for the production and dissemination of scientific research.

3.4.3 Strengthening linguistic diversity in the production, dissemination and training areas of scientific research

The adoption of a plurilingual perspective should include the following characteristics:

1. Science and higher education policies must not diverge from language policies, quite the contrary: language policies should take the sociolinguistic context into consideration and be designed to promote and improve the development of scientific knowledge, both collectively and individually.
2. A plurilingual strategy in the context of globalization must be based on a realistic and dynamic analysis of linguistic performance and recognition of the hegemony of English. In the short and medium term, it is therefore a question of preventing a shift from the current situation of plurilingualism, despite its limitations and discrepancies, to a situation of English monolingualism in the sciences. To do so, one has to strengthen one's own language in scientific fields, while encouraging proficiency in English and other languages for scientific and technological purposes.
3. Strengthening one's own language means opposing its complete removal from any fields of activity. It must also be kept in mind that linguistic requirements and conditions vary, depending on the discipline.

In the natural and hard sciences, English already has a strong head start. In these fields, it is critically important for two reasons to ensure that a qualitative presence of one's own language is maintained, even if it is minimal in terms of percentage of international publications: first, it prevents the language from atrophying in areas of strategic importance and encourages updating of its terminology; second, as noted above, the presence of a scientific language is essential for producing the results of scientific research, which, in spite of the many myths floating around, cannot be carried out in conditions of total isolation from historical and social contexts.

Any language policy in support of one's own language must focus primarily on social sciences and the humanities, a field with a high degree of linguistic vitality, both in the area of research and in the areas of dissemination of research findings and teaching. A support policy will help reinstate and strengthen the attractiveness of a language in the eyes of other scientific communities, including the English-speaking community. The strategic requirement of preserving one's own language in this area can be justified for two reasons: there are clearly closer ties between the scientific language and the natural language, resulting in a permanent and necessary enhancement of the language based on primary sources; and the existence of cultural models and specific types of discourse requiring an in-depth knowledge of the languages in which they are expressed. What must also be kept in mind is the possible impact resulting from the greater difficulty of writing in or translating into a foreign language the research findings produced by a given linguistic and cultural community.

3.4.4 Concrete measures for developing a plurilingual model to strengthen the fields of science and higher education

These foreseeable concrete measures would include unconditional support from public and private-sector organizations to have scientific publications produced in the contributors' first languages. The criteria used will have to be based not on market economy arguments but on the quality of the publications and theme-based content with significant national, regional and international importance, where the contributions of our researchers are of fundamental importance at the international level. To enter these strategic markets outside their traditional areas, these publications must have a much greater presence than they have had in the past in major international data banks and libraries. We must strive to make our language more present in the electronic media used to disseminate scientific information by including abstracts in French, Spanish and Portuguese in international data banks and other bibliographical publications. This policy includes the production of literature surveys in other languages so as to strengthen the functioning and attributes of these languages as foreign languages.

The second component of a linguistic and scientific policy is the reduction of language barriers, particularly with regard to English, through better teaching of foreign languages, translation and other measures. These initiatives must include the training of researchers and students who have attained advanced proficiency in at least two languages, so that they are able to make oral presentations and draft scientific texts in those languages. An appropriate language policy will tend to create and diversify the supply of language services in order to prevent people from contenting themselves with learning English.

Lastly, it is necessary to support and subsidize a two-way translation policy to enable texts in foreign languages to be translated into French and scientific articles to be translated into English and other languages so that we can remain competitive in the international scientific research market.

Any large-scale bilingualism involving two languages that are not of equal importance and for which there are variations in terms of usage and prestige carries with it the risk that the non-dominant language may lose ground and may encourage the scientific community to choose the dominant language. However, the alternative is not to compartmentalize activities into monolingual scientific areas.

A plurilingual policy must promote day-to-day multilingualism in order to narrow and smooth the gaps between languages. In the key plurilingual areas of science and higher education, knowledge results from the continuous dissemination of information at various stages: receipt of a request (often in English), research and teaching conducted in one's own language, and plurilingual communication of research findings. Interaction with other languages and scientific communities on the basis of a plurilingual model will help strengthen French, Spanish and Portuguese as international scientific languages, as well as enhance the positions of these linguistic spheres in the international scientific community.

Courses of action?

13 - Expand and participate in the development of terminology for multilingual data banks.

14 - Promote the inclusion of Spanish, Portuguese and French language publications in international data banks.

15 - Promote the inclusion of Spanish, Portuguese and French literature surveys in international data banks.

Conclusion – Acquiring Tools for Taking Action

At a time of increasing globalization when communication technologies are redefining the concept of distance, the ability to communicate in several languages is becoming an essential asset for a growing number of individuals, companies and organizations.

Companies and organizations have to deal with clients and partners and even work teams with increasingly varied language profiles. Moreover, the need to adapt information about goods or services into a variety of languages is becoming more and more frequent. In this context, workers and young people realize that developing their language skills is an asset that sets them apart in a competitive labour market.

Whether it concerns the teaching of foreign languages in educational systems, multilingualism in international organizations or language strategies adopted by firms interested in maximizing their competitiveness in global markets, the ability to work in a variety of languages is becoming a valued, sometimes essential, asset that calls for the adoption of innovative strategies.

In particular, it requires that governments, institutions and companies draw up inventories of language skills as well as use and develop the language skills that they have in order to reap all of the potential benefits. By meeting these requirements, they fulfil other political and economic requirements and the need for democracy.

However, it is proving difficult to monitor and attempt to influence the evolution of linguistic issues in the Americas if there is no authority dedicated to that task and if we do not have a tool for taking action in this area.

Moreover, if at each inter-American Seminar, new organizers and partners have to be found and the teams following up on recommendations have to be reformed, the spinoffs will be considerably limited.

In that regard, the IV Inter-American Language Management Seminar can be an opportunity to discuss not only the principles to be put forward, but also the relevance of setting up an Inter-American Centre of Expertise dedicated to developing strategies for promoting and managing multilingualism in educational communities, within intergovernmental institutions and in companies. The Centre would bring together representatives of governments, business communities, associations and universities, draft recommendations, and provide consulting services for all of these players. It could also be tasked with co-ordinating the organization of inter-American seminars and, more specifically, implementing recommendations adopted at the seminars.

This could be a crucial turning point for those wishing to see multilingualism and linguistic diversity given the attention and effort that both require.