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European Linguistic Monitor (ELM)

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Sabine Kirchmeier-Andersen / Cecilia Robustelli / Jennie Spetz /
Gerhard Stickel / Nina Teigland

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Danish summary

I nationale og europæiske sprogpolitiske undersøgelser savner man ofte et tilfredsstillende empirisk grundlag. De tilgængelige data om den aktuelle situation for sprogene i de forskellige lande er heterogene, ufuldstændige og delvist forældede og derfor vanskelige at sammenligne over tid. EFNIL's europæiske sprogbarometer, ELM, er et forsøg på at afhjælpe denne situation. ELM er baseret på et omfattende spørgeskema om en bred vifte af sproglige forhold som er egnet til at danne et billede af sprogenes status og sprogpolitiske praksisser i hvert enkelt land, fx sprogenes juridiske status, sprogenes status i undervisning og forskning, situationen for minoritetssprog, sprogene i kulturen og i erhvervslivet. ELM gennemføres med få års mellemrum. Nærværende artikel beskriver baggrunden og resultaterne af ELM 2 (2007-2011) som omfatter 23 europæiske lande.

In national and European language policy investigations, concepts and measures are still lacking a satisfactory empirical basis. The available data on the present linguistic situation of the various countries are rather heterogeneous, incomplete, and in part outdated. The valuable results of European surveys such as Eurobarometer and Eurydice are only a partial remedy because they are limited to foreign language learning and foreign language competence. Politicians on the national and the European level, language planners, educationalists, linguists, and the general public are obviously in need of a reliable and up-to-date linguistic picture of all the member states, that is, of the European Union as a whole and, if possible, also of the associated countries. In order to create an instrument to provide such an empirical basis for national and European language policies, EFNIL has been conducting as a major project the design and construction of a European Language Monitor (ELM).

ELM intends to establish a rich and complex empirical basis for the development and evaluation of national and European language policies. It is conceived as an online system to collect data and provides detailed up-to-date information on the linguistic situation and its development in the various member states of the European Union and possibly, also, of other European countries.

Target groups of the ELM are primarily policy makers at the national and the European level. ELM should also be of use for linguists, sociologists, publishers, journalists, and other persons who are involved or interested in language development and language policy.

ELM provides detailed information on the use of the various languages in essential national and transnational domains at a given time and on how language use in these domains changes in the course of time.

1.   What is a language monitor?

In some countries reports on the status of its language(s) are presented to policy makers on an annual basis, in others language status reports are created ad hoc, depending on

the political situation. Very few surveys are created in order to compare language data across countries and over time.

In our view, a language monitor thus has to comply with the following criteria:

– It is a scientific review of the language situation in one or more countries repeated in certain intervals.
– The information is comparable over time.
– The information must be comparable across countries.

None of the three criteria are clear cut and easy to apply. It is not at all clear which kinds of data reflect the actual language situation of a country and which factors influence the change of that situation. Neither is it clear whether the data collected for one country are at all comparable to similar data from another, as the political and social conditions vary from country to country.

The development of a language monitor is thus a continuous bootstrapping process where questions are tested and the answers evaluated and adjusted accordingly. A similar process can be observed in other contexts as for instance UNESCO's Guidelines on Language Policies[1] designed by the UNESCO Ad Hoc Expert Group on Endangered Languages, and UNESCO's Language Vitality and Endangerment tool (LVE)[2] which was designed to assist language communities, linguists, educators and administrators to assess the vitality of threatened languages. The LVE method includes six factors that describe a language's vitality or state of endangerment, two factors to assess language attitudes, and one factor to evaluate the urgency of documentation. Like ELM, LVE is also continuously being revised.

Ideally, one might opt for the development of only one monitor that can answer all questions about the world's languages, however, in practice this is not feasible and probably not desirable. As we will see, the questions asked by UNESCO in order to assess the vitality of endangered languages are much different from the questions needed for the assessment of the status of the official languages of a country.

However, since ELM focuses on the language situation of each country as a whole, including endangered and minority languages, the UNESCO data are a valuable supplement.

1.1   History

Since 2004 ELM has been developed in three steps called ELM 1, ELM 2 and ELM 3.

The first pilot project (ELM 1) ran from 2004-2006 as a feasibility study covering France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and Sweden. An interactive web version was created which can be viewed at www.europeanlanguagemonitor.org/.

In 2007-2011 ELM 2 was launched and laid out with the ambition to cover all European countries represented in EFNIL. The questionnaire was revised on the basis of the expe-

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[1]   www.unesco.org/culture/ich/doc/src/00120-EN.pdf.
[2]   www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/CI/CI/pdf/unesco_language_vitaly_and_endangerment_
      methodological_guideline.pdf.

riences of ELM 1, questions that were too difficult to answer or to evaluate were taken out or revised, and the number of questions in general was reduced in order to make the questionnaire manageable for the representatives of the language institutions which were answering the questions on a strictly voluntary basis.

The questionnaire for ELM 2 was answered by 23 countries, and thus represents the largest and most comprising inventory of European language policy measures ever.[3]

In 2011 ELM 3 was envisaged even before ELM 2 was completed. First of all more countries such as Cyprus and Croatia had joined EFNIL and also other language communities such as Greenland and the Faroese, were interested in being part of the monitor. Thus, apart from an even more refined questionnaire, ELM 3 will contain data from more countries than ELM 1 and ELM 2.

2.   ELM in relation to similar projects

Regular language status reports following up on the effects of language policies have been regarded with increasing interest during the last 10 years.

2.1   Eurobarometer

Since 1973 the EU Commission has kept an eye on the development in the public opinion in the member states in order to achieve a better basis for decisions, the development of information material and the evaluation of the work of the Commission.[4]

Three investigations have focused on language in the last years. The standard questionnaire 54.1 from 2001 and 64.3 from 2006 and a specific barometer 243 about attitudes towards multilingualism: "Europeans and their languages".[5]

Parts of the investigation 54.1 and 64.3 are comparable, but this applies to far from all data, first of all because of the extension of the EU and the new member states. Furthermore, focus is on measuring attitudes rather than establishing solid facts. Still, parts of the investigations and some of the questions asked might contribute in a substantial way to ELM or other language monitors, for instance the questions on which languages are spoken except for the mother tongue, and what importance one attributes to the knowledge of more than one foreign language.

2.2   Eurydice

Eurybase is a comprehensive database regarding the educational systems in the countries participating in the Eurydice network. It gives information on all levels in the educational system from pre-primary school to further education. It contains a detailed description of the educational system in each associated county presented in 11 thematic sections. The descriptions are updated every year. All country descriptions are terminated

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[3]   The authors represent the current ELM-group which was appointed by the general assembly of EFNIL. Janis Valdmanis (LA) and Ellen Fernhout (BE) also contributed to the present work as previous members of the group.

[4]   http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/index_en.htm.

[5]   http://ec.europa.eu/education/languages/languages-of-europe/doc137_en.htm.

with an overview of relevant legislation, a list of institutions, a word list and a bibliography. The latest report from October 2008 describes foreign language training at the primary and secondary level and makes it possible to compare data across countries. There are no figures included about universities.[6]

2.3   European Social Survey (ESS)

ESS has three connected goals:

- To measure changes in the attitudes and behaviour of the population across time and borders.
- To improve the quality of comparable quantitative investigations in Europe.
- To establish robust indicators of attitudes that can supplement existing behavioural and factual indicators.

ESS has developed a central questionnaire which is constantly improved in the light of the investigations that are repeated in fixed intervals. In each wave 2,000 persons are questioned in each country.[7]

Particularly interesting in our context is question C25 of the ESS: "On which background does the group that you belong to experience discrimination?" Here language is among the possible reasons for discrimination. Question C 31 asks which languages are most often spoken at home. However, it is not possible to indicate more than two languages.

2.4   Other language status reports

Especially in the Scandinavian countries the debate about English vs. the national language has fostered a number of committee reports in order to pave the way for a political decision on language laws. Initially, ad hoc committees were established to present up to date information about the status of the languages to decision makers.[8] Very rarely the data collected by the next ad hoc committee would systematically follow up the work of the previous one. In Norway and Sweden the following up of language policies now takes place in a more systematic way and the results are presented regularly to the political decision makers.[9]

A number of European projects and organisations also provide language overviews and status reports.

The French EFNIL member, Délégation générale à la langue française et aux langues de France, in 2007 collected status reports on language legislation in Europe. For each country the reports contain information on the legal status of the languages, on institutional bodies with the responsibility for developing, implementing and controlling linguistic legislation, legal provisions regarding the linguistic integration of migrants, pro-

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[6]   http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/eurybase_en.php.
[7]   http://www.europeansocialsurvey.org/.
[8]   *Sprog på Spil*, Denmark 2003; *Sprog til Tiden*, Denmark 2007-2008; *Bästa Språket*, Prop. 2005/06:2, Sweden 2005; *Mål og Mening* St.meld 35, Norway 2008.
[9]   *Språkstatus* Norway 2009 og 2010; *Omvärldsanalys* Sweden 2009 and 2010.

visions for foreign language teaching and provision for regional and minority languages.[10] ELM 2 is expected to be integrated with these reports.

In 2010 the EU project Language Rich Europe (LRE) released a questionnaire on multi-lingual practices in Europe mainly with focus on the teaching of foreign languages and of regional and minority languages.[11] LRE and ELM 2 are partly overlapping since LRE also refers to legislative measures and local regulations, and EFNIL to teaching practices such as the language of instruction. But the results of the two projects are quite complementary since language teaching practices are covered in detail in LRE, whereas legislative measures for each country are covered and documented in greater detail in ELM 2.

In 2011 the EU project META-NET collected a series of whitepapers containing a general status report on each participating EU country.[12] The reports have special focus on language technology and language resources available for each country and contain an overview of the accessibility, quantity and quality of language technology such as speech recognition, information retrieval systems and machine translation. The information on language technology is very important since it describes the prospects for each language to prevail in the information and communication society of the future. Being thus covered in a separate report, language technology was omitted from ELM 2, and the META-NET and ELM reports on each country are also complementary.

The number of data collection initiatives and reports about the linguistic situation in Europe is in itself significant and can be seen as an indication for the growing interest in language issues all over the EU. To get the full picture one has to combine the different reports.

3.   Questions asked in ELM

This section gives a short overview of the types of questions that are asked in ELM 2:

1. **Country situation**. Official, regional, indigenous, immigrant languages spoken within and outside the country, legal status, accordance with conventions.
2. **Legal situation**. Language law, constitutional status, other regulations, language demands for citizenship.
3. **Primary and secondary education.** Languages of instruction, languages offered.
4. **Tertiary education.** Languages of instruction, languages used in publications and dissertations.
5. **Media.** Papers, TV, film, music. Languages used and translations provided.
6. **Business.** Regulations. Company languages, annual reports, websites.
7. **Dissemination of languages.** Official languages taught abroad.
8. **Language organisations.** Official, non-governmental but publicly funded, private.

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[10] www.efnil.org/documents/language-legislation-version-2007.
[11] See the contribution of Martin Hope in this volume.
[12] See the contribution of Georg Rehm/Hans Uszkoreit in this volume.

4.   Questions not asked

A short overview of the questions not asked in ELM 2 is probably just as revealing as the questions in the previous section. In developing questionnaires one is of course always confronted with concerns about the length, the number and the complexity of the questions, as they have a direct bearing on the success of the project which is first and foremost measured in the number of questionnaires that were actually completed, and next on the number of questions that were not misunderstood. Finally, one has to consider whether the questions posed can be answered by all countries and whether it makes sense to ask them at all. This is for instance the case for question 9 and 10 below which we could foresee would pose great difficulties for those who should fill in the questionnaire. In many countries these questions cannot be answered because the information is not registered and the answers cannot be elicited because they are in conflict with the protection of the private sphere.

9.   Language used as mother tongue.

10. Language use in families.

11. Available language technology products such as online dictionaries, spelling and grammar checkers, monolingual and multilingual corpora (covered by META-NET).

12. Foreign language skills and training of language teachers (covered by LRE).

13. Use of interpreters and translators in the EU (covered by statistics obtained by the relevant institutions of the EU Parliament and EU Commission).

In other cases such as 11-13, questions were not asked simply because it was known that the information could be obtained from other sources.

5.   Questions answered

The questionnaire for ELM 2 was completed by the following 23 countries:

Belgium	Italy	Austria
Czech Republic	Cyprus	Poland
Denmark	Latvia	Slovenia
Germany	Lithuania	Slovakia
Estonia	Luxembourg	Finland
Ireland	Hungary	Sweden
Greece	Netherlands	United Kingdom
Iceland	Norway	

Figure 1: Countries participating in ELM 2

In each country the official institution of the national language was responsible for filling in the questionnaire. All are EFNIL members and this may be one of the explanations for the high success rate. Unfortunately, important countries such as Spain, Portugal and

France have not filled in the questionnaire. On the other hand, countries new in EFNIL such as Cyprus and Croatia and associated countries such as Greenland have shown an interest to participate and in answering the questionnaire.

6.   Results

6.1   The individual questionnaires

Each questionnaire constitutes an important source of information for each participating country. The example below shows a question about the role language plays in applications for attaining citizenship. Often it is very difficult to find the actual references to legislative provisions in the various law and other provisions of a country, and even if they are found, they may only exist in the local languages and not in an English translation.

The individual questionnaires make the actual laws and rulings more accessible for contrastive studies and can easily be used by decision makers, government officials, companies, researchers and EU citizens who are interested in language issues. The relevant paragraphs are not in all cases cited in full length, and of course the English translations do not have the same legal status as the source language texts. Nevertheless, the individual questionnaires are a unique tool to make the language legislation in Europe more transparent than ever before.

Figure 2: Example of legislation quotes and their translation from Norwegian

6.2   The European overview

Based on the individual questionnaires, ELM provides a European overview that allows the reader to compare the answers across the European countries. This makes it easy to identify countries that have similar practices and to establish general tendencies across

Europe based on relations between answers for specific questions. The report lists the answers in tables alphabetically for each country and on the basis of the tables is is easy to group countries with similar practices as shown in the examples below.

6.3   Example: Legislative language regulations

2.1 Does **the constitution** of your country state what the official/national/main languages are?

2.2 Is there **a *language law*** stipulating what language is (or what languages are) to be used in official matters?

2.3 Is the use of language(s) in government, public administration, and/or judiciary institutions mentioned in ***legislation other than the constitution or a language law?***

Please quote the relevant article(s) in the original language and in English, including the exact reference.

The diagram below shows that in more than half of the countries in the investigation the language is mentioned in the constitutions. Typically in these countries there are also language laws and other legislation. A few countries have language laws, and the rest have at least other legislative measures. The highly regulated language situations are typical of relatively newly established or re-established sovereign countries, whereas many of the old established countries do not have language issues regulated at the constitutional level.
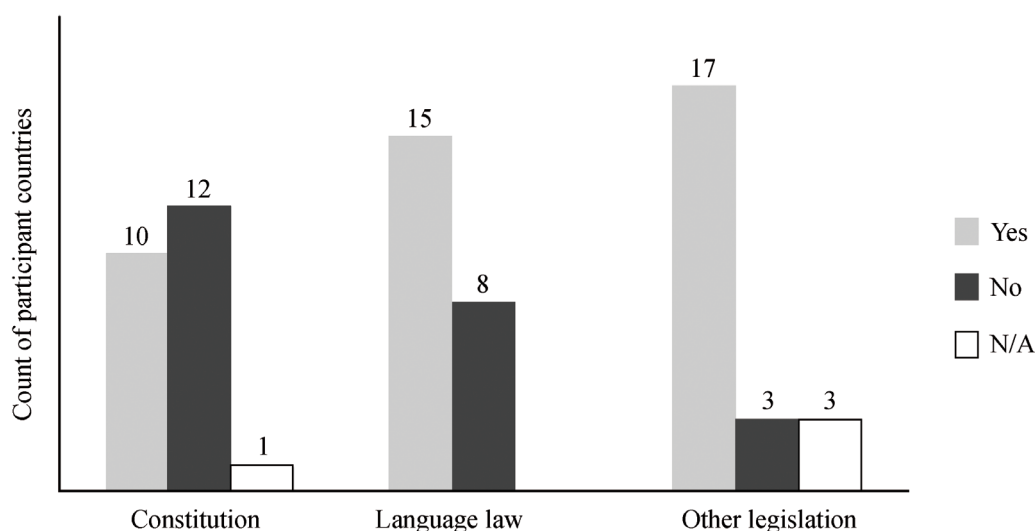

Figure 3: Provisions for the official language(s) in the constitution, in language laws and other legislation (summary graph)
(Explanatory note: *N/A* stands for *No Answer* and *Not Applicable*)

Constitutional language provisions or language laws typically address four basic rights. Two of them are related to human rights: the right to use ones own language, which is derived from the right to liberty of speech, and the right to preserve one's linguistic identity and culture, which is derived from the sanctity of private life. The two others are more extensive and presuppose the support of the state: the right to learn one's own language, and the right to use one's own language in contact with state or local authorities (Arzoz 2007).

The formulation of linguistic rights in the constitution of a country may serve the purpose of ensuring or restoring the trust of the citizens and the outside world to the state after the establishment or re-establishment of a state as we have seen recently in a number of East European countries. It can also serve the purpose of maintaining internal political stability as can be seen in countries like Switzerland, Canada, Finland and Belgium, where large groups of citizens have different languages.

Another purpose is to ensure international stability in border areas such as for instance between Germany and Denmark, where the German minority in Denmark since 1955 has secured their linguistic rights through the Copenhagen-Bonn declaration (Kbh-Bonn 1955).

Finally, the protection of indigenous minorities or minorities emerging from immigration processes may give rise to constitutional provisions or language laws. Thus for instance, languages such as Sami, Finnish, Meänkieli, Romani and Yiddish are protected by Swedish legislation by means of a language law (Språklag 2009, 600). As early as 2000 the right to use Sami, Finnish or Meänkieli in the courts was incorporated in Swedish legislation, whereas Swedish only recently with the latest language law in 2009 was explicitly established as official language. Like in Denmark this reflects that the constitutions of these countries were written at a time where it was so obvious which language was the official language, that there was no need to mention it.

7.   Conclusion and future perspectives

Language monitors are currently met with great interest because they provide a good overview of the total spread of language regulations and present the public with relevant background data that can be correlated with other observations on language development. If they are conducted regularly, i.e. in intervals of three to five years, they may be used to measure whether regulations, conventions and various other initiatives have an effect over time.

The various investigations made in 2011 have different agendas and view the language situation in Europe from different perspectives. LRE focuses on multilingualism and linguistic diversity and on reaching EU's goal of mother tongue + 2. ELM focuses on the status of international, national, regional, and indigenous and immigrant languages, and META-NET focuses on the status of languages in language technology.

Language monitors represent a lot of work, not only from the people filling in the questionnaires and from those verifying and translating the data. Therefore, the number of questions should be kept low and the complexity as manageable as possible. Care should be taken not to have too much overlap between the different projects and to keep an open dialogue between them so that information can be shared and duplicate work can be avoided. As much information as possible should be drawn from existing sources such as the data available from the Eurobarometer, Eurydice and various statistics from EU-institutions. Cooperation with the European Statistical Bureau seems obvious as the next step.

The iterative process of ELM 1-2-3 has turned out to be a good working methodology, since it was very difficult to predict exactly which information would be available in the 23 different countries that participated. More research is required and more experience with the existing monitors is needed in order to establish the optimal and most efficient monitoring procedure. One way to achieve this is through close cooperation between the different initiatives, for instance through joint conferences and a joint website where the results are presented.

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