



Heteroglossia n. 16

Langues et cultures dans l'internationalisation
de l'enseignement supérieur au XXI^e siècle

Volume II. Analyser les politiques linguistiques:
études de cas sur le plurilinguisme et l'anglais

Françoise Le Lièvre, Mathilde Anquetil, Martine Derivry-Plard,
Christiane Fäcke, Lisbeth Verstraete-Hansen (eds.)

eum

Università degli Studi di Macerata

Heteroglossia n. 16

Quaderni di Linguaggi e Interdisciplinarietà. Dipartimento di Scienze Politiche, della Comunicazione e delle Relazioni Internazionali.

Direttore:

Hans-Georg Grüning

Comitato di redazione:

Mathilde Anquetil (segreteria di redazione), Alessia Bertolazzi, Ramona Bongelli, Ronald Car, Giorgio Cipolletta, Lucia D'Ambrosi, Armando Francesconi, Hans-Georg Grüning, Danielle Lévy, Natascia Mattucci, Andrea Rondini, Marcello Verdenelli, Francesca Vitrone, Maria Letizia Zanier.

Comitato Scientifico

Mathilde Anquetil (Università di Macerata), Alessia Bertolazzi (Università di Macerata), Ramona Bongelli (Università di Macerata), Giorgio Cipolletta (Università di Macerata), Edith Cognigni (Università di Macerata), Lucia D'Ambrosi (Università di Macerata), Lisa Block de Behar (Universidad de la Republica, Montevideo, Uruguay), Madalina Florescu (Universidade do Porto, Portogallo), Armando Francesconi (Università di Macerata), Aline Gohard-Radenkovic (Université de Fribourg, Suisse), Karl Alfons Knauth (Ruhr-Universität Bochum), Claire Kramsch (University of California Berkeley), Hans-Georg Grüning (Università di Macerata), Danielle Lévy (Università di Macerata), Natascia Mattucci (Università di Macerata), Graciela N. Ricci (Università di Macerata), Ilaria Riccioni (Università di Macerata), Andrea Rondini (Università di Macerata), Hans-Günther Schwarz (Dalhousie University Halifax), Manuel Angel Vasquez Medel (Universidad de Sevilla), Marcello Verdenelli (Università di Macerata), Silvia Vecchi (Università di Macerata), Geneviève Zarate (INALCO-Paris), Andrzej Zuczkowski (Università di Macerata), Maria Letizia Zanier (Università di Macerata).

isbn 978-88-6056-562-4

Prima edizione: aprile 2018

©2018 eum edizioni università di macerata

Centro Direzionale, Via Carducci snc – 62100 Macerata

info.ceum@unimc.it

<http://eum.unimc.it>

Indice

- 9 Mathilde Anquetil, Martine Derivry-Plard, Christiane Fäcke, Françoise Le Lièvre, Lisbeth Verstraete-Hansen
Introduction
- III. L'anglais dans les contextes plurilingues franco-phones
- Françoise Le Lièvre, May Mingle
- 25 L'anglais et les langues ghanéennes: entre concurrence et complémentarité. Une étude à l'Université du Ghana, Legon
Hugues Carlos Gueche Fotso
- 65 Politiques linguistiques universitaires au Cameroun: le cas de l'université de Bamenda à travers une étude de la cohabitation du français et de l'anglais dans les classes
Jean Chrysostome Nkejabahizi
- 85 La Mondialisation linguistique, pourquoi l'Afrique reste muette?
Dorothée Ayer
- 101 La tentation de l'anglais dans un contexte officiellement bilingue (allemand/français)
- IV. Internationalisations plurilingues
- Cristina Brancaglione
- 125 Internationalisation des études: l'expérience du master franco-italien «Langues, Traduction et Culture»
Angela Erazo Muñoz, Cristiana Vieira
- 143 Le plurilinguisme dans le cadre académique et de mobilité MERCOSUR: le cas de l'Université Fédérale d'Intégration Latino-Américaine

V. L'anglais comme langue-pont vers le plurilinguisme

- Teresa Maria Wlosowicz
 163 L'acquisition du français, de l'allemand et du russe comme L3 après l'anglais comme L2 par les étudiants polonais: les interactions interlinguales et le rôle de la conscience linguistique
- Eftychia Bélia
 183 Une compétence métalinguistique plurilingue au confluent des représentations et savoirs langagiers. Le rôle de l'anglais L2 pour le développement d'une compétence métalinguistique plurilingue dans un contexte d'apprentissage du français L3
- Claudia Elena Dinu, Ioana Cretu, Rodica Gardikiotis, Anca Colibaba
 199 Les projets européens INTEGRA, GLOTTODRAMA et TAKE CARE à l'Université médicale de Iași, Roumanie, ou comment articuler l'anglais au plurilinguisme dans des projets multilingues

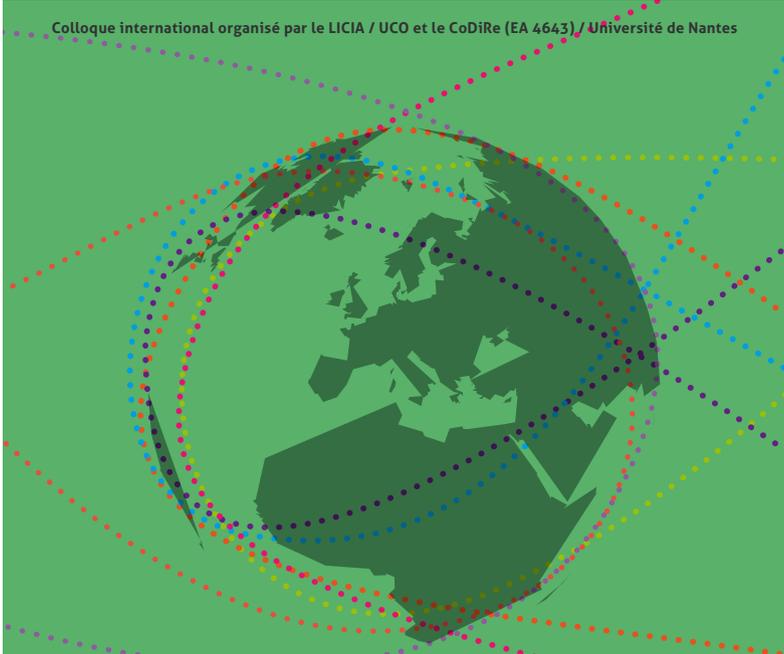
VI. Promotion et outils de l'intercompréhension

- José Manuel Arias Botero
 217 L'intercompréhension comme dispositif de préparation pluri-lingue à la mobilité. Une alternative au "tout anglais"?
- Fabrice Gilles
 233 Analogies interlinguistiques dans le domaine de la santé. Méthodologie d'élaboration d'un interlexique anglaise-spagnol-français-italien portugais
- Jean-Michel Robert
 247 Anglais, intercompréhension et plurilinguisme. Enseignement / apprentissage de la compréhension écrite du français langue étrangère à un public anglophone par l'intercompréhension

VII. Formation des enseignants en anglais international

- Norah Leroy
 265 Recent policy in modern foreign language teacher training-provision in primary education in France: linguistic opportunity or linguistic inequality?
- Lucielen Porfirio
 287 Teachers' education and the concept of ELF: a contribution to the reflection of pre service teacher

Colloque international organisé par le LICIA / UCO et le CoDiRe (EA 4643) / Université de Nantes



LE PLURILINGUISME, LE PLURICULTURALISME ET L'ANGLAIS DANS LA MONDIALISATION

Dispositifs, pratiques et problématiques de l'internationalisation de l'enseignement supérieur européen

7-10 OCTOBRE 2015

UNIVERSITÉ CATHOLIQUE DE L'OUEST, ANGERS, FRANCE

WWW.UCO.FR/EVENEMENTS/ANGLAISUP

Contact : organisation.colloqueanglaissup@uco.fr | 02 41 81 66 00



CoDiRe



Langues et cultures dans l'internationalisation de l'enseignement supérieur au XXI^e siècle

Françoise Le Lièvre, Mathilde Anquetil,
Martine Derivry-Plard, Christiane Fäcke, Lisbeth Verstraete-Hansen (éds.)

Volume I

(Re)penser les politiques linguistiques : anglais et plurilinguisme

Berne : Peter Lang, Editions scientifiques internationales, Collection *Transversales*, n°46

ISBN: 978-3-0343-3016-9

coord. Françoise Le Lièvre

Introduction : Mathilde Anquetil, Martine Derivry-Plard, Christiane Fäcke, Françoise Le Lièvre,
Lisbeth Verstraete-Hansen

I. L'internationalisation et l'anglais

Christophe Charle : *L'internationalisation des universités XIXe-XXIe siècles*

Claude Truchot : *Internationalisation, anglicisation et politiques publiques de l'enseignement
supérieur*

Rosemary Salomone : *The rise of global English. Challenges for English-medium instruction and
language rights*

Gilles Forlot : *English in the Educational Expanding Circle: Power, Pride, and Prejudice*

Pierre Frath : *L'anglicisation comme phénomène anthropologique*

Michele Gazzola : *Les classements des universités et les indicateurs bibliométriques: quels effets
sur le multilinguisme dans l'enseignement et la recherche ?*

II. Relever le défi du plurilinguisme

Konrad Schröder : *Trying to Reconcile European Language Politics and Linguistic Realities in a
World of Globalization*

Marie-Françoise Narcy-Combes, Jean-Paul Narcy-Combes : *De la didactique des langues à la
didactique du plurilinguisme*

Franz-Joseph Meissner : *Eurocomprehension – the possible impacts on European democracy*

Postface : Olga Galatanu

Norah Leroy
Université de Bordeaux, France

Recent policy in modern foreign language teacher training provision in primary education in France: linguistic opportunity or linguistic inequality?

Abstract

Measures to ensure that students sitting the Master's degree in Primary Education: *Master MEEF 1er degré (les métiers de l'enseignement, de l'éducation et de la formation)* at the School of Education (*l'École Supérieure du Professorat et de l'Éducation – ESPE*) demonstrate a minimum B2 CEFR (*Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*) level of Modern Foreign Language (MFL) proficiency before taking up post as primary school teachers in the French education system signal a strong political will to promote foreign language learning in France. Second language acquisition (SLA) research indicates the importance of fluency, good pronunciation and intonation when teaching primary English (Ellis, Brewster, Girard 2002; Ortega 2009). This study sets out to investigate how salient SLA research findings are in the minds of *Master MEEF 1er degré* students. In this context, this paper adopts a qualitative approach combining content analysis and critical discourse analysis of semi-directed interviews conducted with four *Master MEEF (M2)* student teachers: two at C1/C2 CEFR level and two at A2/B1 CEFR level. Results indicate that the C1/C2 level student teachers welcome the legislation requiring a minimum B2 CEFR level of MFL proficiency. They believe that it is essential for future primary teachers to provide a good phonological model of English to their pupils. In contrast, this issue is not addressed by the A2/B1 level student teachers who consider that A2/B1 linguistic skills should not bar them from entering the teaching profession. Moreover, they argue that the legislation is unfair because they have had insufficient opportunity to improve their linguistic skills at school and at university and refuse to accept personal responsibility for their linguistic

competence. The paper concludes with the implications of these findings as regards foreign language learning at primary level.

Résumé

Les mesures visant à faire en sorte que les étudiants de Master MEEF 1^{er} degré démontrent un niveau minimum B2 de compétence en langues vivantes (LV) du CECRL (*Cadre Européen Commun de Référence pour les Langues*) avant de prendre leur poste en tant que professeurs des écoles (PE) dans le système éducatif français signalent une forte volonté politique de promouvoir l'apprentissage des langues étrangères en France. La recherche en SLA (*second language acquisition*) montre que la fluidité, une bonne prononciation et intonation sont essentiels pour enseigner l'anglais efficacement dans le primaire. Cette étude se propose de mesurer l'importance qu'accordent les étudiants de Master MEEF 1^{er} degré à ces compétences et à leur nécessité pour enseigner à de jeunes débutants. Dans ce contexte, cet article adopte une approche qualitative combinant l'analyse du contenu et l'analyse du discours critique d'entretiens semi-dirigés menés avec quatre étudiants Master MEEF en deuxième année (M2): deux au niveau C1 / C2 CECRL et deux au niveau CECRL A2 / B1. Les résultats indiquent que les étudiants inscrits au niveau C1 / C2 pensent qu'il faut exiger un niveau minimum de compétence MFL B2 CECRL car ils considèrent qu'il est essentiel que les futurs enseignants du primaire soient en mesure de fournir un bon modèle phonologique de la langue anglaise à leurs élèves. En revanche, ce problème n'est pas abordé par les étudiants de niveau A2 / B1 qui estiment que des compétences linguistiques insuffisantes en langues vivantes ne devraient pas les empêcher d'accéder à la profession d'enseignant. De plus, ils jugent que la législation est injuste parce qu'ils pensent ne pas avoir eu l'opportunité d'améliorer leurs compétences linguistiques à l'école et à l'université et refusent d'en accepter la responsabilité. La dernière partie de cet article se concentre sur les implications de ces résultats pour ce qui concerne l'apprentissage des langues étrangères au niveau primaire.

In this article we explore the impact of recent language policy concerning primary Modern Foreign Language (MFL) learning and teaching in France from the perspective of students sitting the Master's degree in Primary Education: *Master MEEF 1er degré (les métiers de l'enseignement, de l'éducation et de la formation)* at the School of Education (*l'École Supérieure du Professorat et de l'Éducation – ESPE*). The impetus to improve basic linguistic skills at primary school followed the publication in 2012 by the European Commission of the findings of the

first European Survey on Language Competences (ESLC). The results of this survey indicated that pupils at the end of compulsory schooling in France demonstrated poor levels of proficiency in the first and second languages most widely taught, English and Spanish respectively (Jones 2012). When the European Council met in Barcelona in March 2002, it had called for an improvement in the mastery of basic skills with special regard to the teaching of at least two foreign languages from a very early age. The results of the ESLC revealed relatively little progress in France compared to other EU countries in the ten years following the Barcelona Agreement and was therefore the source of this wave of French educational reform. In order to ensure that students reach a sufficient level of linguistic competence before taking up post, the French Education Reform Act of 8th July 2013 (*LOI n° 2013-595 du 8 juillet 2013 d'orientation et de programmation pour la refondation de l'école de la République*) therefore made it a statutory requirement for Master MEEF (primary) students to validate a minimum B2 CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) level by the end of the two year course of study. Failure to obtain the Master MEEF degree would prevent recruitment as a French civil servant (*fonctionnaire*). In addition, the government lowered the age at which learning a foreign language at school would be mandatory to the age of six whilst strengthening the continuity of foreign language learning between primary and secondary school. The reform concerns all languages taught in France; however, this paper concentrates on the teaching and learning of English.

This study focuses on the beliefs of four Master MEEF primary education students regarding this language policy. The majority of the Master MEEF students attending English classes at the *ESPE d'Aquitaine* where I teach generally demonstrate A2/B1 CEFR level English according to the diagnostic assessment carried out at the beginning of the course of study. Typically, the C1/C2 CEFR level students are not as common (two or three in each class) and often have a degree in English, have lived in an English speaking country for several years or may have grown up in a bilingual environment. To what extent do students believe that the Master MEEF course provides a realistic linguistic

opportunity for A2/B1 CEFR level students to reach the mandatory B2 CEFR level? Do the two groups of students demonstrate any marked differences in beliefs concerning how good primary teachers should be in English before they teach it to young children? And to what extent are students anxious to validate the B2 CEFR level because of the latter concern? And finally what does this reveal about the importance of primary MFL teaching and learning in the minds of future primary education teachers?

To shed more light on these questions, we first consider research which identifies the factors recognised as influencing success in early foreign language learning and then drawing on the work of Bandura (1993) we focus on self-efficacy beliefs in order to gain insight into the attitudes held by the students in this study in relation to the linguistic progress Master MEEF (primary) students are expected to make over the two year course of study and their commitment to early foreign language learning and teaching at primary school. We then move on to an analysis of representative comments drawn from semi-directed interviews. This qualitative research is conducted with four Master MEEF (primary) students from two MFL ability groups: two at A2/B1 CEFR level and two at C1/C2 CEFR level. The paper concludes with a consideration of possible implications for foreign language learning and teaching at primary level.

1. Early language learning: a recipe for success?

The literature informs us of various factors which influence foreign language learning and the one which usually comes to mind when considering early language learning at primary level is the age factor. The belief that 'younger means better' has been commonplace since Lenneberg (1967) put forward the Critical Period Hypothesis suggesting that there is an 'optimum age' during which children are especially amenable to learn foreign languages. The 'younger means better' belief continues to have an impact not only in the public perception but also on language policy. For instance, the notion that early language learning alone is a key factor for successful language learning is clearly expressed in the following statement found in the annex of the

French Education Reform Act of 8th July 2013: «La précocité de l'exposition et de l'apprentissage en langue vivante, étrangère et régionale, est un facteur avéré de progrès en la matière» [There is a clear link between young children being taught foreign and regional language learning at an early age and ensuing success in this field] (my translation).

However, a closer look at the literature reveals that the relationship concerning age and success in second language acquisition (SLA) is not that clear. On the one hand, Oller and Nagato (1974) observe that older learners make more rapid progress than younger learners whilst Johnstone indicates that older learners display 'better general learning strategies; better grasp of grammatical patterns and rule in language; more practice in negotiating and sustaining conversations; more defined purpose in learning the language and greater knowledge of concepts, e.g. time, which can be transferred to the new language'¹. Lightbown, Spada (1993, p.50) point to research revealing that older children do manage to catch up with those who have experienced early language learning as long as certain conditions are in place and stress the necessity for adequate time provision for language learning because 'one or two hours a week will not produce advanced second language speakers, no matter how young they were when they began.' However, it is relevant at this point to note that the French primary school curriculum provides only one and a half hours of MFL per week.

On the other hand, research by McLaughlin (1992) indicates that those learners who begin a foreign language before puberty experience more success at developing native-like mastery in terms of pronunciation, syntax and morphology than those who started after puberty. However, Ellis, Brewster, Girard state remind us that the 'critical age for native-speaker-like pronunciation is six years provided good pronunciation models are available'². Based on their research project with pupils in Croatia, Djigunovich and Vilke (2000) identify the key conditions for successful language learning at school from this early

¹ Johnstone 1994 cited in Sharpe 2001, p. 33.

² Ellis, Brewster, Girard 2002, p. 21.

age. Firstly, starting a second language as young as six is viable as long as the children experience ‘intensive interaction in class’ for at least ‘45 minutes per day for five days per week’. Secondly, small class sizes of ‘10-15 for languages’ are recommended and finally, teachers should demonstrate ‘a fluent command of the language and a good pronunciation and intonation’. The last point is echoed by Deyrich when she states that language teaching cannot be improvised in an ad-hoc way because primary pupils require teachers who have a sound knowledge of the language, are able to use it effectively and are good linguistic role models: *«Il est vrai qu'on ne peut s'improviser professeur de langue, dans la mesure où un niveau de compétence suffisant est requis pour que le modèle langagier de l'enseignant puisse servir de référence»* (2007, p. VII).

Despite mixed research results, it would appear from the above that the overall argument for promoting MFL from an early age is to develop good pronunciation and intonation. Although the objective of primary MFL is not necessarily to achieve native-speaker-like pronunciation, what are the consequences for six year olds being taught English by teachers providing inaccurate language models? Gruson believes it crucial that primary teachers receive extensive training in pronunciation and intonation because younger children are so good at imitating oral language: *«sachant que les jeunes élèves comme les CP s'appuient notamment sur l'imitation orale, il est indispensable que les professeurs des écoles reçoivent une formation solide dans le domaine de la phonologie»* (2014, p. 8). Ortega (2009, p. 79) summarizes SLA research and states that ‘the five environmental ingredients that together contribute to (but do not guarantee) optimal L2 learning are: acculturated attitudes, comprehensible input, negotiated interaction, pushed output, and a capacity, natural or cultivated, to attend to the language code, not just the message.’ In addition, Ortega points to research that indicates that grammatical competence ‘holds a special status in language acquisition’ because ‘grammar (a) requires more interest, attention and hard work than other aspects of the language to be learned; (b) may even require more time to simmer and deploy than the learning of other aspects of

an L2; and (c) can act as a gatekeeper to development in other areas of the L2 beyond formulaic repertoires, particularly sociolinguistic competence' (2009, p. 80). Moreover, Ortega goes on to describe research which indicates that 'negative feedback (or the implicit or explicit indication that some part of an utterance is ungrammatical) is better overall than entirely ignoring errors'. Given these conclusions, it would therefore seem likely that those primary education teachers who cannot identify or explain grammatical errors because they lack sufficient knowledge and expertise in the MFL they are teaching may impair language learning in their pupils. However, Deyrich reminds us that demonstrating a sufficient command of the language will serve no purpose if teachers have not got the skills to teach this language to the children in their classes. Receiving a sound theoretical background in pedagogy during primary teacher training is, therefore, just as essential as expertise in the language itself. *«L'enseignement de la L2 se fonde sur une maîtrise de cette L2 (quel que soit l'âge du public), mais cette maîtrise n'est pas suffisante en soi. L'enseignement doit, en effet, savoir adopter une distanciation critique sur la langue, son enseignement et son apprentissage. Par conséquent, les enseignants du primaire ont besoin d'une formation théorique et pratique solide et adaptée à ses besoins»*³.

2. Confidence, competence or safety in numbers?

There is a consensus that no two learners develop their language skills in the same way or at the same pace. Indeed the following factors have an impact on how long it takes an individual to achieve the desired level of foreign language skills: the individual's background in language learning, the MFL course structure and content itself, personal motivation and investment during lessons and outside of lessons, age as well as exposure to the foreign language outside of lessons. Although it is difficult to pin down the exact amount of time needed to progress from

³ Deyrich 2007, p. 74.

one CEFR level to the next, Cambridge University indicates in its *Introductory Guide to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) for English Language Teachers*⁴ that ‘typically’ approximately 200 hours of ‘guided learning hours’ (lesson time) are necessary for a language learner to progress from B1 CEFR level to B2. However, the number of MFL guided learning hours generally on offer on various Master MEEF primary education courses in France can vary from as little as 12 to up to 72 which according to the above recommendations is hardly sufficient to allow students to move from one level to the next. In addition, the number of hours given over to MFL teaching pedagogical theory and practice is just as disparate. So, it would seem that the success of a language course of study is not only dependent on internal factors related to the psychological make-up of an individual but also on external factors such as the course structure, content and the number of MFL guided learning hours made available to students.

Let us now look closer at the psychological factors influencing students training to teach MFL in primary education. Research conducted by Bandura (1993) suggests that people’s thoughts, feelings, levels of motivation and behaviour towards challenges are influenced by self-efficacy beliefs. Self-efficacy beliefs are those beliefs an individual holds concerning the extent to which they consider they are able to accomplish a specific task or not. Indeed, various psychological and affective processes explain the way in which self-efficacy beliefs can affect how people function and react when faced with certain challenges. He found that when certain individuals visualised the outcome of a specific scenario some people anticipate success whereas others anticipate failure and that there was a correlation between perceived self-efficacy, the nature of the challenge people set up for themselves and the overall performance. Adults are more prone to anxiety in MFL language learning situations possibly because of previous negative learning experiences to the extent that it often takes more time than with children to build confidence. Ely

⁴ Cambridge 2013, p. 4, <<http://www.englishprofile.org/images/pdf/GuideToCEFR.pdf>>.

(1986)⁵ refers to this as ‘language class discomfort.’ However primary teachers need to feel confident about their own MFL knowledge and skills as well as their pedagogic skills ‘to operate effectively’⁶ in the MFL primary classroom. What impact may the additional source of pressure that the minimum B2 CEFR requirement generates have on Master MEEF students in this already challenging context of MFL primary education teacher training in terms of their efforts to improve their linguistic skills? In the knowledge that at least 200 guided learning hours are necessary for B1 level students to progress to B2 level, how do students cope with as little as 60 guided learning hours particularly those A2/B1 CEFR level students who need to improve considerably over the two year course of study? Will they strive to overcome the obstacles before them in order to achieve their ambition of becoming a primary education teacher or are they more likely to dwell on a failure scenario in the face of so few hours available?

An individual’s ability to anticipate events and develop relevant strategies to control the situations they find themselves in requires effective cognitive processing of information particularly in the face of situations that present ambiguities and uncertainties. Bandura highlights that it requires a strong sense of efficacy to remain task orientated in the face of pressing situational demands and failures that have social repercussions – a situation which the A2/B1 level students face in terms of both the Master MEEF and its B2 requirement and the competitive primary education recruitment exam: *le Concours de Recrutement de Professeurs des Écoles (CRPE)*. Do they believe they can do this? What strategies do they adopt to improve their MFL skills?

What also has to be considered is the psychological importance that people attach to being part of a group. Turner (1991) states that a sense of ‘belonging’ to a group makes us conform to its social norms: individuals, who identify with a group, define themselves as having group membership or *category membership* and go on to adopting the values of the group and behave

⁵ Deyrich 2007, p. 25.

⁶ Sharpe 2001, p. 155.

according to these norms. This process is known as *referential informational influence*. We are most likely to be influenced by those who are perceived to be like us (the *in-group*) and less so by the *out-group* (those who are perceived as different to us). In this context, the fear of being negatively judged by an out-grouper is reduced and may indeed not have any impact on performance depending on the level of response to social influence or *conformity*. Kelman (1958) describes three levels of conformity. The first is *compliance* where an individual conforms to the behaviour of the group but maintains his or her own views privately. This is followed by *identification* where the views and/or behaviour are adopted but only maintained in the presence of the group and the final level is *internalization* where a true change of private views to match those of the group takes place and the new attitudes and behaviours become part of the individual's own value system.

Bearing in mind that there are indeed two groups of Master MEEF students in my classes, English experts (C1/C2) and non-English experts (A2/B1), this theory might help us understand any differences in attitudes between the two groups concerning the importance for a primary education teacher to master English. Returning to the research referred to earlier which highlighted how crucial it is that primary MFL teachers demonstrate 'a fluent command of the language and a good pronunciation and intonation,' how salient is this in the minds of the Master MEEF students in this study? To what extent do the two groups consider the B2 CEFR Master MEEF requirement as a linguistic opportunity for primary pupils to gain access to well-qualified teachers and/or to improve their own MFL skills? How far do they believe that the B2 CEFR requirement is a source of linguistic inequality given that those students who fail to demonstrate this CEFR level are likely to be barred from becoming primary education teachers? How dedicated are the four Master MEEF students to developing the MFL skills deemed necessary for effective English teaching in the classroom?

3. *Methodology: Master MEEF student interviews*

The primary data for content and discourse analysis comes from four student interviews. I was aware that as a teacher of these students I also represented the institution and as a social actor I would therefore have to bear this in mind when studying discourse. Before interviewing the students participating in the study, I stipulated that a colleague, rather than myself, would carry out the final assessment of each student's English CEFR level for the validation of the Master MEEF to avoid a possible conflict of interest. I maintained a fairly passive role as a listener and, apart from the three questions I posed, I only interjected to ask for clarification when conducting the interview with the four students from my classes: two students at A2/B1 CEFR level: Julie and Tom, and two students at C1/C2 CEFR level: Liz and David (their names have been changed to protect their identity). I interviewed each of the participants individually.

The participants were selected according to their level of CEFR English, their willingness to participate and a desire to express their views. This was a very important aspect given the personal nature of the study. The choice of language was not imposed and I left it to the student to decide which language they preferred to communicate in. The C1/C2 students chose to speak in English and the A2/B1 students chose to speak in French. The good working relationship with these students permitted a frank, open discussion. I selected students who were at the end of the second year of the Master MEEF degree and had also successfully passed the aforementioned competitive primary education recruitment exam. This allowed greater insight into how the students felt about primary English and their own progress in English after having completed two full years of the Master MEEF (primary) degree. Furthermore, given that these students were also under pressure to validate the B2 CEFR level in order to be permanently recruited as primary education teachers the following September, this study also provided insight into the priorities of the students at this stage of their teacher training. In the following section, I will present the results. The discussion is based on a selection of the most repre-

sentative Master MEEF (primary) student statements generated during interview.

4. *Results and discussion*

Do you think it's a good idea to teach English to children at primary school? Great idea...!

All four students agree that it is a good idea to teach English to young children at primary school. In particular, Liz and David identify the benefits of early learning in terms of pronunciation, vocabulary acquisition and cultural knowledge: 'a good pronunciation, good words and cultural elements'; 'a good level for their future' and 'as soon as you can use your mouth – to make sounds and pronunciations – yes, it's indispensable to start as soon as possible.' Julie and Tom also agree that it is a good idea. Julie considers that English is easier to learn for younger learners than for older ones: '*ils sont jeunes et tout à fait capables d'apprendre une langue étrangère... pas comme nous*' whereas Tom sees the requirement to teach primary English as an opportunity to work on improving his skills '*ça nous oblige à améliorer notre anglais.*' It is interesting that Julie and Tom's comments relate to their own English learning experiences unlike Liz and David's comments which are more focused on the advantages for the children themselves.

What conditions are necessary for successful foreign language teaching at primary school? Great idea as long as...

In answer to this question, the two groups express very different views regarding the conditions necessary for successful language learning. Liz and David describe how important it is for primary education teachers to be highly motivated, patient and to practise English in the classroom on a regular basis: 'it's necessary for the teacher to practise English in class every day and to be very motivated' and 'it's necessary to be very patient with the children as far as the pronunciation is concerned.' Re-

flecting the research findings of Djigunovich and Vilke (2000) described earlier in this paper, they argue that a teacher should provide a good model of pronunciation and that it is important to have as small a class as possible to allow the children to interact more frequently in English. Accordingly, Liz states that it is very important to have ‘very few pupils so that they can really practise language and listen to it’ whilst David considers that ‘a person speaking’ to the children is a priority because it is ‘easier to identify with a person than with a cd or a recorded voice.’ In the same vein he insists on the teacher, as a human being, providing the phonological model rather than a machine: ‘... a proper example is indispensable.’

However, unlike Liz and David who promote the need for listening and speaking activities, Julie and Tom focus instead on the need for good lesson preparation and appropriate language learning resources such as CDs and vocabulary learning activities. The two students state that they can cope with teaching primary level English because it is easy. Tom believes, for instance, that it is possible to teach level A1 level English even if he does not have the mandatory level as long as he prepares his lessons thoroughly: ‘*ça demande de la préparation mais je pense que oui – je peux y arriver [...] il est possible d’enseigner un niveau A1 même si l’on ne possède pas le niveau B2.*’ Having been taught how to set up pair work activities on the Master’s degree course is sufficient for Julie to feel confident in teaching English adequately particularly because she feels that the language content (vocabulary, songs, the weather and the date..) is not too complicated: ‘*justement, ce que nous avons appris cette année en didactique nous permet de mettre les pair works et tout ça en place*’ and adds: ‘*après tout – il s’agit du vocabulaire et quelques chansons – la date et la météo ... ce n’est pas trop compliqué*’. Unlike Julie, David believes that English teaching is difficult and that more is expected than the simple teaching of vocabulary and songs. He makes his point by referring to the requirements set out by the new National Curriculum and expresses his reservations regarding those who lack satisfactory linguistic skills in English in dealing with the challenges of the National Curriculum: ‘[...] the problem is that the national curriculum has

changed and this means that teachers are expected to do more than just teach vocab. Pupils at the end of primary are supposed to interact and use complex sentences [...] a teacher who hasn't got the accent and hasn't understood the grammatical structure of the language will find it very difficult [...] especially for interaction activities».

Given David's status as an English expert as opposed to Julie's incomplete knowledge of the English language as a consequence of the insufficient guided learning hours in English that she has experienced, Julie's belief that the teaching of English is easy and straightforward may appear surprising and possibly naïve. However, the old adage: *the more you learn, the more you realize how little you know* may provide insight into the difference in perspective between the two students. Although this goes beyond the parameters of this paper, it could be argued that despite the course she has followed in MFL teaching theory and pedagogy in which the action-based approach is advocated, Julie's beliefs concerning language learning in the primary classroom remain clouded by the language learning experiences she has experienced as a primary pupil and those observed as a student teacher in various primary classrooms in which the teachers have not been able to go beyond teaching vocabulary.

Is your English good enough to teach it? What about your classmates?

Liz and David confirm that their level of English is good enough to teach English and both conclude that most of the other students in the class do not speak English well enough to teach it. Liz believes that her classmates' poor fluency and pronunciation, their insufficient knowledge of grammatical structures and their dislike for language learning will be transmitted to the children: 'they are not able to speak it (...) to use it in a good way (...) and they will give bad structures, bad pronunciation and maybe a bad point of view about this teaching.' All in all, she suggests that this makes for a very shaky foundation for future language learning: 'a bad basis'. Unlike Liz who acquired her English language skills in an instructional setting (school and then university), David learnt English during childhood as a

bilingual child and does not consider himself as typical: 'I'm not a good example of an everyday child.' This may explain why he insists so strongly in the comment above on the importance of human interaction in the classroom rather than on the use of CDs. David feels so strongly that he states that his classmates should not even attempt to teach English in class if they cannot speak English correctly. In his opinion, there can be no half-measure: «Either they are able to do this or they shouldn't teach English at all».

It is interesting to note that despite Julie and Tom affirming earlier that they consider that they (and most of their classmates) are able to teach English, both students express their own shortcomings in English. Tom, for instance, lacks confidence in English and consequently would not wish to teach the language at school if given the choice: «*je ne me sens pas à l'aise pour enseigner l'anglais et je n'ai pas non plus envie de le faire*» whilst not only is Julie aware that she has a poor English accent but also considers any effort to improve it as futile. She states that many in her class fail to speak with a good accent and considers that though this is unfortunate there is nothing to be done about it: «*beaucoup de personnes dans la classe n'ont pas l'accent et ça malheureusement il n'y a rien à faire*». Julie expresses a low sense of efficacy insofar as improving her accent and that of the other students in the group. Nevertheless, her belief is not entirely ungrounded as it is consistent with McLaughlin's (1992) work referred to earlier which indicates that pronunciation is indeed a greater challenge for older learners.

So taking this into account, why do the two A2/B1 students insist on saying that they are sufficiently good at English to teach it? As mentioned earlier, this view may be linked with possible (mis)representations of the objectives of primary MFL being more based on vocabulary than on interactive communicative language. While this is possibly a belief they hold, there is another aspect to consider. When individuals face stressful situations such as that facing these students as far as the B2 CEFR mandatory requirement is concerned, they tend to adopt coping strategies. Let us remember the processes which cause individuals to conform to social norms. The A2/B1 students form

the dominant group among the students and one of the salient characteristics is without doubt the fact that their English is A2/B1 CEFR level. Demonstrating this level of linguistic skills is a social norm for this particular in-group. Julie and Tom can be seen to identify themselves as in-groupers by the use of 'nous': «*mais nous n'avons pas l'accent anglais*» as opposed to «*ceux qui ont un très bon niveau*», in other words: the C1/C2 CEFR level students, the out-groupers. Believing that they cannot improve their linguistic skills to reach the required B2 level: «*c'est impossible de nous imposer le B2*» and consequently experiencing high levels of anxiety: «*c'est vraiment stressant et ce n'est pas pendant ces deux années que nous allons y arriver à réussir cette évaluation*», they believe that they have no choice but to cope as well as they can: «*clairement l'objectif pour nous cette année est de survivre*». Aware that a lack of linguistic skills may indeed prevent them from reaching their overall goal of qualifying as a primary teacher, interview discourse indicates that this in-group attempts to maintain their course of action in the face of adversity: qualify as a primary education teacher by not letting their A2/B1 English skills form an obstacle. One example of such a strategy is to promote certain qualities to compensate for the linguistic shortfall, for instance insisting that they are ready to work hard and prepare lessons thoroughly to teach effectively by learning key sentences by heart: «*même ceux qui n'ont pas le niveau peuvent enseigner en acceptant d'apprendre des phrases types et de chercher à s'améliorer*», and may explain why Julie and Tom on the one hand appear so task orientated about the idea of teaching English despite their A2/B1 linguistic skills and yet do not feel the need to improving them: the two students visualize a success scenario in which they qualify as teachers and teach what they can cope with: vocabulary based lessons rather than the more demanding interactive speaking activities. The second strategy is to refuse to take personal responsibility for this situation and both students shift the responsibility away from themselves by complaining that the situation is unfair '*injuste*' and that they have not had the opportunity during the Master MEEF nor beforehand to improve their language skills: «*avec le peu de cours qu'on a*» and «*il faut des heures en langues*

avant le Master, pendant et après». Not only do these students express frustration and feelings of injustice at the lack of institutional support in helping them to attain the CEFR B2 level in English given the stakes but their call for more guided learning hours in English before, during and after the Master's degree gives away the fact that the two students are indeed aware of their language needs.

Conclusion

This study has given insight into the perspective of four students concerning the current language reform in place and focuses on whether the Master MEEF course provides a realistic linguistic opportunity for A2/B1 CEFR level students to reach the mandatory B2 CEFR level in English. The students who display C1/C2 CEFR skills are not convinced that a primary teacher can teach effectively without the appropriate speaking skills and an expert knowledge of the English language. The view of the two students appears to be in line with the body of research described by Ortega (2009) that was referred to earlier in the paper concerning the role of grammatical competence in successful language learning. The C1/C2 students consider early language learning and teaching to be extremely important because it lays the foundation for future success. In their opinion, the impact of bad pronunciation or incorrect grammatical structures being taught to young children should not be minimized because it may result in children imitating and retaining such models. Moreover, they echo the point that Ortega makes when she says: 'What matters in the linguistic environment is not simply "what's out there" physically or even socially surrounding learners, but rather what learners make of it, how they process (or not) the linguistic data and how they live and experience that environment' (Ortega, 2009, p. 80). However, it would seem that this concern is not very salient in the minds of the A2/B1 students in this study. Aware of their A2/B1 CEFR level, these students do not at any point refer to the negative consequences this may have on the pupils in their classes unlike the C1/C2 CEFR level students who identify the advantages of primary Eng-

lish for children as long as key conditions are in place. Instead, the A2/B1 students focus their attention on presenting the mandatory requirement as unfair or on arguing that knowledge of teaching methods and resources can compensate for weak English in the classroom. It would appear, therefore, that although the students are aware of the importance of good language pedagogy in the classroom, they do not appear as up-to-date with SLA research relating to the impact of a teacher's command of the foreign language on their pupils' progress. This 'burying one's head in the sand' attitude may seem surprising given the necessity to reach the minimum B2 CEFR level to qualify as a teacher. However, Bandura's research findings indicate that such strategies of avoidance are on the contrary to be expected in such circumstances. Indeed, an overwhelming failure scenario seems to have built up in the minds of these students as a result of the anxiety provoked by the B2 CEFR requirement and their awareness that they are at level A2/B1 instead.

There is little evidence that can be drawn from the interview data to suggest that students who lack the required B2 linguistic skills are indeed ready and/or able to acquire them in the face of other demands being made on them. Firstly, the students in this study who entered the Master MEEF course at A2/B1 CEFR level found it difficult to improve their English during the two year course mainly because the gap between their CEFR level and that required was so great given the other academic and institutional pressures they were under and the lack of guided learning hours in English available. Secondly, from a psychological perspective, given that these students make up the majority group (in-groupers), they argue that not having B2 CEFR level English is the social norm and that they cannot therefore be held personally accountable for this shortfall. Although this belief seems to help the students cope with the stress and anxiety generated by this situation on a day-to-day basis, avoiding any personal responsibility or motivation to improve their CEFR level also results in certain students not fully addressing their MFL needs over the two year course. This is unfortunate as students who fail to improve their English and continue to demonstrate the CEFR level A2/B1 are at risk of not qualifying as primary education teachers in the French education system.

Although this study is based on a very small number of participants and cannot be said to be representative of the position of the student population sitting the Master MEEF in primary education, interview discourse indicates that the two A2/B1 students do indeed consider themselves as in-groupers and as such, representative of other ESPE students who also demonstrate A2/B1 English skills. In the light of the findings, it would appear that, on the one hand, students would benefit from research findings related to successful early language teaching and learning being made available to them in order to increase awareness of the necessity for B2 CEFR level English skills in the primary English classroom and that this would increase motivation for learning English. On the other hand, taking into account the MFL needs of French primary children, French policymakers would do well to provide the teachers of these children with full institutional support in foreign language learning. Although an adequate number of guided learning hours in English and/or opportunities to study abroad should be made available to students on the Master MEEF (primary) degree course to improve/maintain language expertise, the findings from this study suggest that it is imperative that undergraduate students who wish to teach at primary level should be given every opportunity to develop a sufficient command of the language not only during the Master MEEF (primary) degree but before sitting the Master's. Accordingly, this would provide *all primary education students* with a realistic opportunity to teach primary English effectively. In consequence, Master MEEF (primary) students would not suffer the stressful conditions facing the students in this study, and primary pupils would then be more likely to have teachers who are able to provide them with the prospect of learning a foreign language in the right conditions paving the way for future success in language learning.

References

- Bandura A. (1993), *Perceived self-efficacy in cognitive development and functioning*, «Educational psychologist», 28 (2), pp. 117-148.

- Brewster J., Ellis G., Girard D. (1992), *The primary English teacher's guide*, London: Penguin.
- Deyrich M.-C. (2007), *Enseigner les langues à l'école*, Paris: Ellipses.
- Djigunović J.M., Vilke M. (2000), *Eight years after: Wishful thinking vs. facts of life*, in *Research into teaching English to young learners*, eds. J. Moon, M. Nikolov, Hungary: University Press PECS, pp. 66-86.
- Johnstone R. (1994), *Teaching Modern Languages at Primary School: Approaches and Implications*, «Practitioner MiniPaper», 14, Edinburgh: Scottish Council for Research in Education.
- Jones N. (2012), *Europe: SurveyLang, l'enquête européenne sur les compétences langagières*. «Revue internationale d'éducation de Sèvres», 60, pp. 18-21.
- Lenneberg E.H., Chomsky N., Marx O. (1967), *Biological foundations of language*, vol. 68, New York: Wiley.
- Low L., Duffield J., Brown S., Johnstone R. (1993), *Evaluating foreign languages in Scottish primary schools: report to Scottish Office*, Stirling: Scottish CILT.
- Oller J.W., Nagato N. (1974), *The Long-Term Effect of FLES: An Experiment*, «The Modern Language Journal», 58 (1-2), pp. 15-19.
- Ortega L. (2009), *Understanding Second Language Acquisition*. London: Hodder Education.
- Sharpe K. (2001), *Modern foreign languages in the primary school: the what, why & how of early MFL teaching*, London: Kogan Page.
- Singleton D.M., Ryan L. (2004), *Language acquisition: The age factor*, vol. 9, Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Spada N., Lightbown P.M. (2006), *How languages are learned*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Online resources

- Goullier F. (2006), *Common European Framework and Portfolios*, Council of Europe tools for language teaching, Paris: Didier. <https://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Source/Goullier_Outils_EN.pdf>. 05.05.2016.
- Gruson B. (2014), *Contribution aux travaux des groupes d'élaboration des projets de programmes C 2, C3 et C4*. Available at <http://cache.media.education.gouv.fr/file/CSP/52/6/Gruson_Brigitte_-_MCF_-_CSP_Contribution_399526.pdf>. 02.05.2016.

Loi n. 2013-595 du 8 juillet 2013 d'orientation et de programmation pour la refondation de l'école de la République. <<https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do;jsessionid=?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000027677984&dateTexte=&oldAction=rechJO&categorieLien=id>>.

McLaughlin B. (1992), *Myths and Misconceptions About Second Language Learning: What Every Teacher Needs to Unlearn*. <<http://escholarship.org/uc/item/1t55s0tc#page-3>>. 10.04.2016.

Association of Language Testers in Europe (ALTE). Available at <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Association_of_Language_Testers_in_Europe>. 02.05.2016.

eum x quaderni

Heteroglossia

n. 16 | 2018

Langues et cultures dans l'internationalisation
de l'enseignement supérieur au XXIe siècle

Volume II. Analyser les politiques linguistiques:
études de cas sur le plurilinguisme et l'anglais

Françoise Le Lièvre, Mathilde Anquetil, Martine Derivry-Plard,
Christiane Fäcke, Lisbeth Verstraete-Hansen (eds.)



mi° eum edizioni università di macerata >

ISBN 978-88-6056-562-4