Final Report Summary - DYLAN (Language dynamics and management of diversity)

The ultimate aim of the DYLAN project was to identify the conditions under which Europe's linguistic diversity can be an asset for the development of knowledge and economy. The project addressed issues for which multilingualism had economic, political, educational and scientific implications:

- economic: strengthening the economic performance through the implementation of linguistically diversified modes of control, problem management and problem solving in production, consumption and exchange;
- political: ensuring fairness in the treatment of various languages and their speakers, and contributing to social justice by facilitating access of all citizens to multilingualism;
- educational: contributing to the construction, transmission and use of knowledge;
- scientific: contributing to the development of a scientific approach to the management of linguistic and cultural diversity.

The project's analytical framework was organised around four sets of variables: language practices; representations of multilingualism and linguistic diversity; language policies implemented by the authorities and language strategies of private sector companies; and the linguistic environment in which actors operate. These four sets of variables influenced each other in a number of ways, and the use and development of multilingual repertoires was studied not only through the variable sets themselves, but also through their interrelations.

The empirical work took place on three terrains that had particular relevance for the management of multilingualism in Europe, namely, companies, European Union (EU) institutions, and educational systems. The investigation of language processes on these three terrains was integrated through three transversal questions that arise on each of them. These are efficiency and fairness in language practices, the emergence of linguistic varieties, and patterns of multilingualism in European history.

One of the original features of DYLAN was the adoption of a mixed-method approach in order to cope with the wide range of questions it addressed. These methods were well-established in the language sciences; on the basis of the hypothesis that the terrains analysed were regulated by different types of institutionalised language practices, they sought to understand how forms of discourse are indicators, how the various institutions operate, as well as the reveal of the patterns of language use through a fine-grained analysis. They comprised discourse analysis, ethnography of communication, ethnomethodology and conversation analysis, analysis of the linguistic landscape, as well as the use of secondary quantitative data sources. The latter type of information, in particular, characterised key features of the linguistic environment described in the research design and provided the backdrop for social actors' choices regarding their language practices, as well as defining the actual context that many public policies and corporate strategies seek to influence. This input could then be processed using concepts from other disciplines, particularly policy analysis, in order to assess the advantages and drawbacks of alternative communication and language acquisition strategies.

The project led to three types of results, namely answers to three questions; instruments for answering these and new
The three questions were the following:
1. How are organisations - especially companies, European institutions and higher education - and individuals responding to the challenge of growing linguistic diversity in Europe?
2. In what way are 'multilingual solutions' not just a response to a problem, but a genuine advantage for organisations and individuals?
3. Under what conditions can multilingual responses be actually an advantage?

Concerning the instruments for answering these questions, as well as emergent, the project brought together researchers from different theoretical and epistemological traditions, in a new kind of partnership with society opening avenues for the involvement of partners in the actual research process, generating a pilot project for the human and social sciences.

Furthermore, language strategies could be selected and designed in order to take into account the complexity of actual practices in the workplace, in political institutions and in educational systems, as well as the organisations' and individuals' requirements. Language policies could be informed by effective language practices, as well.

The project also provided indicators for assessment, comparison, and monitoring, as well as a methodology for deriving additional indicators; a toolkit for the efficient and fair management of multilingualism in a number of different settings; and a tangible basis for developing a strong and coherent field of scientific research on multilingualism that could help formulate new questions and create the conditions for answering them.

Related information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Result In Brief</th>
<th>Europe's strength lies in its many languages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Documents and Publications</td>
<td>Final Report - DYLAN (Language dynamics and management of diversity)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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