

Report on the linguistic situation in ALSACE (France)

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Change on Borders

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Abstract

The linguistic situation in Alsace has been characterised as “complex” (A. Tabouret-Keller). This report accounts for that “complexity”, which has evolved along with the history of Alsace and the language policies implemented through time. In this historical and political framework, emphasis is laid on the sociolinguistic representations of dialect speakers and their verbal repertoire, and also on the measures taken in the linguistic domain within the educational system in Alsace, including teacher-training.

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Key words

Alsace - language history - language policy - German, French and dialect in Alsace - language usage - language representations and usage / attitudes - German-teaching in primary schools - bilingual education

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Report on the linguistic situation in ALSACE (France)

1. LEGAL FRAMEWORK, HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL ASPECTS

Some historical or socio-historical background may help to give a grasp of some of the factors behind the complexity of the situation regarding contacts between languages in Alsace. It will also contribute to the understanding, description and interpretation of the language situation in this context.

1.0. Current situation in Alsace

With a surface area of 8,280 km², Alsace represents 1.5 % of the territory of France.

It has 1,735 million inhabitants, or 3 % of the French population (60 million). It has a population density of 209 inhabitants per sq. km, which is equivalent to double the average population density in France¹.

1.1. Geopolitical framework: successive changes in territorial ownership

From the Vth century on, Alsace was an integral part of the different Merovingian kingdoms, then of the Carolingian Empire. When the Germanic Holy Roman Empire² was founded in 962, Alsace was one of its constituent territories.

It was in the XVIIth century, after the Thirty Years War (1618-1648) that Alsace changed geopolitical zone for the first time (with the exception of the city of Mulhouse, which remained in the Helvetic Confederation), gradually being incorporated into the Kingdom of France (Treaty of Ryswick, 1697).

July 1870/January 1871: At the end of war fought by France against Prussia and its allies, Alsace was ceded (with a part of Lorraine) to the newly created German Empire.³

After the First World War and the defeat of Germany (1914-1918), Alsace returned once more to the French geopolitical sphere.

At the beginning of the Second World War, Alsace was subjected to a de facto annexation to Nazi Germany. Unlike the rest of France, which was occupied by Germany, Alsace was forcibly incorporated into the Nazi state. This annexation was followed by the introduction of the German political structures and legislation in Alsace.

With the armistice of 1945, Alsace again returned to the French political sphere.

Period	Approximate duration	Political sphere	State framework
Ist century B.C. – Vth century A.D.	550 years	ROMAN (Celtic and Germanic)	Roman structures
Vth century – Xth century	500 years	GERMANIC	- Merovingian kingdoms - Carolingian Empire

¹ source: National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies [= INSEE] Population census of 1999, website: www.insee.fr/fr/insee_regions/alsace/zoom/alsaceenlignes.htm

² The crown was no longer Carolingian after 911. The Othonian dynasty would take power with Henry I the Fowler in 919. On the way of naming this geopolitical item: NOËL Jean-François *Le Saint-Empire*, Paris 1993, Presses Universitaires de France (3rd edition corrected), p.66; cf. Joseph ROVAN's useful reminder about this composite name in: ROVAN Joseph *Histoire de l'Allemagne des origines à nos jours*, Paris 1998, Seuil (revised and augmented edition), pp.931-932

³ The "first" empire, the German Holy Roman Empire was formally dissolved in 1805. The Germans States were formally unified when the Empire was proclaimed on 18 January 1871, in the Gallery of Mirrors at Versailles, giving the King of Prussia the title of "German Emperor". Cf. ROVAN Joseph *Histoire de l'Allemagne origines à nos jours*, op.cit., pp.553 sqq.

			- ...
Xth century – XVIIth century	700 years	GERMANIC / GERMAN	Holy Roman Empire Germanic
XVIIth century – 1870	200 years	FRENCH	France (monarchy; republic)
1870 – 1918	48 years	GERMAN	II nd German Empire
1918 – 1940	22 years	FRENCH	France (republic)
1940 – 1945	4.5 years	GERMAN	Germany: III rd Reich under Hitler
1945 –	since 60 years	FRENCH	France (republic)

1.2. Dialectal linguistic framework

The dialect families of German⁴ present in Alsace are Frankish and Alemannic. Depending on the typologies used by dialectologists, a third family can also be added: South Rhine Frankish (the North of Alsace), which must then be classified as a dialect of Upper German.

The German dialect area as it is traditionally identified by dialectologists, includes two main groupings, Low German (Northern part) and High German (middle and southern parts). High German is itself subdivided into two sub-groupings: Middle German (the middle part of the dialect area) and Upper German (the southern part). Alsace is situated on the extreme western side of the High German area, and the largest part of the dialect area belongs to Upper German (Alemannic dialect), the North-West of Alsace, where the Rhine Frankish dialect is established, is part of Middle German.

Groupings and subdivisions:⁵

Level 1: Low German

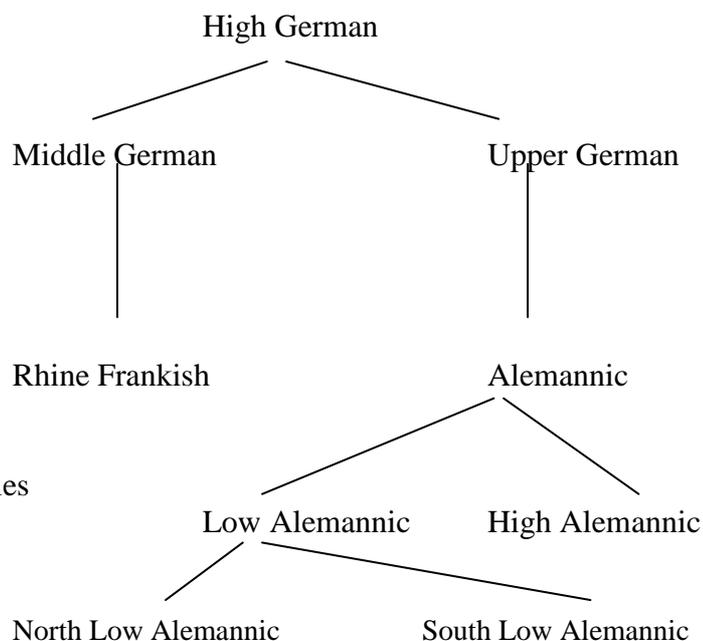
Level 2:

Level 3:

in Alsace, are a part of the dialects constituting each of the groupings at level 2

Level 4:

distinctions within the dialect families



⁴ "German" should be construed in the linguistic sense. The chronological term is generally situated between 1900 and 1930.

⁵ PHILIPP and WEIDER 2002, p.26 propose a different division of Alemannic: Lower Alsatian (*Unterelsässisch*), Middle Alsatian (*Mittelsässisch*), Upper Alsatian (*Oberelsässisch*) and South Alsatian (*Südelssäsch*).

It should be noted that, in this form of typology, political or administrative borders, whatever they may be, have no bearing and that, consequently, the dialect families present in Alsace extend beyond these limits: into Switzerland for High Alemannic, into the Baden region (Germany) for Low Alemannic, into Lorraine for Rhine Frankish, to mention but a few immediately adjacent areas.

Two complementary features characterise the dialect areas, heterogeneity within the area (combination of macro-variations and micro-variations),⁶ on the one hand, and a continuum within the area (linguistic changes also generally take place gradually), on the other hand.⁷

Finally, these classifications do not take account of any dialectal evolution and changes that may have occurred in the second half of the XXth century, under the pressure of social change and the behaviours of the speakers due to modern influences, and which may have affected the more traditional spread of the dialect (cf. *infra*, Part III. 2.2. Dialectal varieties).

In these conditions, the glottonym "Alsatian" referring to all the Alemannic and Frankish dialectal speech patterns presents in the Alsace area owes more to a politico-cultural reading of the area than any observable dialectal reality, even if dialectology is able to highlight some specific or majority linguistic features in Alsace compared to the neighbouring regions.

1.3. The link between the dialectal varieties in Alsace and standard German

(Standardised) German, as we think of it today (in modern language teaching, for example) was formed from the *scriptae* of the princely chancelleries of the Germanic Holy Roman Empire (XIIIth - XVth centuries), but also and above all from the languages used by the printers and that (those) of Luther (XVIth century). The basis of a common *written* German language (that is to say a supra-dialectal norm) was thus constituted. Two facts deserve to be emphasised in particular:

- the language used by Luther (who wanted to be understood at once by the inhabitants of upper and lower Germany⁸) is based on written traditions (the chancellery of Saxony, for example) and on the linguistic forms used in Thuringia, that is to say linguistic varieties that were both part of Middle German (eastern part). The impact of Luther's ideas and writings was such that even his adversaries would come to use linguistic forms similar to his. Printers were quick to grasp where their interests lay and to abandon their local or supra-local *scriptae*, which derived directly from dialectal speech forms, to constitute a particularly effective base of new linguistic forms.

Thus, the distance between the dialectal speech forms used, in Alsace in particular, and the supra-local *scriptae* necessarily widened: the essential basic features used by Luther remained within the range of High German, that is to say at level 1 in our subdivision, but were strongly anchored in Middle German and not in Upper German, of which the larger part of the Alsatian area was a part (level 2). Thus, depending on the point of view adopted, there were certainly necessary convergences, but also inevitable and significant divergences between the dialects spoken in Alsace and the written language, constantly

⁶ Heterogeneity does not mean chaos: the analysis of the dialect area (whether it is only one-dimensional or it uses more complex mathematic models) always shows that it has an internal coherence.

⁷ A synthetic description is proposed by PHILIPP and BOTHOREL-WITZ 1983, pp.2329-2345

⁸ "Ich habe keine gewisse, sonderliche eigene Sprache im Deutschen, sondern brauche der gemeinen deutschen Sprache, daß mich beide, Ober- und Niederländer, verstehen mögen." (quoted from VON POLENZ Peter *Geschichte der deutschen Sprache*, Berlin-New York 1972, de Gruyter [8th edition], p.90)

being readjusted, proposed by Luther and the printers. Alsace was not a specific case: the same applied to all the dialectal areas of Upper German, in different ways.

- As Alsace was "reunited" with the French crown in the XVIIth century, it did not really take part in the slow development of a unified, standardised and codified written language, created by the grammarians, writers and other purists. However, it would adopt it, like the other regions where common German constituted the written language.

1.4. Status of languages and linguistic practices

Whatever the geopolitical affiliation of Alsace, the language of everyday life remained, for the vast majority of its inhabitants, a dialectal form until after the Second World War (the 1960s). Here was a sort of linguistic consistency. However, the official languages (French or standard German) left linguistic traces in the dialectal speech forms. The most immediately visible effects of these influences may be found in the lexical domain (borrowings, for example).

1.4.1. XIXth century

Common German remained, in Alsace, until about the middle of the XIXth century, the most widely used written language, including in schools. Competition from French, the official language, began to make itself felt after 1850. It was only after 1860 that French started to be takeover as the medium of instruction in schools.

Thus, the written language depends on the skills acquired at school, on the intended recipient of the writing, on the biography of the writer. However, when the population needed to use the written language, it was German that was used most frequently.

It was also in German that most of the population read, when they could read.

As French was the official language, it was used by the political authorities, the administration and all bodies emanating from the state. When texts written in French were addressed to the general population, they were translated into German.

Standard *spoken* German, which was beginning to spread into the rest of the German dialect areas, remained absent in Alsace, if we except a certain number of formal situations (church services, speeches, ...).

Oral French was used by the upper social strata, who had long adopted it, often abandoning the use, then the knowledge of dialect. It was also known and/or used by the cultured or educated strata, who on the other hand often maintained some use and/or knowledge of dialectal speech (as the language of a part of their social circles) and of written German.

The image of French, the minority language from the point of view of the number of speakers, retained its prestige and maintained its status as the language of distinction.

Moreover, common German continued to be constructed and standardised throughout the XIXth century, in the German-language political sphere. Therefore the links (objective and, in part, sentimental) between dialectal speech and written German in Alsace continued to loosen, although no-one made a formal distinction between the oral forms (dialects) and the written language (common German). On both the official French side and that of dialect speakers in Alsace, it was the generic term "German" or "Ditsch/Deutsch" which was used. Naming the varieties according to their functions as yet had no meaning.

All in all, in the XIXth century, Alsace was distinguished – very roughly – from the rest of the German dialect area by the presence of French (quantitatively important in the

written form as the official language, but no doubt unevenly used [depending on social stratum, situational formality, ...] as a spoken variety), on the one hand, and the almost total absence (except in formal circumstances) of standardised *spoken* German, on the other hand. It was distinguished from the rest of France by the massive presence of an allogeneous language as the language of oral communication (dialectal speech) and the concomitant and competing presence of another written language, common German.

1.4.2. 1870-1918

The fact that Alsace was attached politically to the German Empire between 1870 and 1918 modified, *de facto*, the linguistic balance as far as the standardised varieties were concerned. This geopolitical change reinforced the presence of written German, which over time became the written language in almost exclusive use in all areas of life.

Written French continued to be used in certain magazines aimed at an educated French-speaking readership or scholarly audience, but no longer had any real functionalities after the end of the XIXth century. It was not taught in primary schools and now only played a role as a symbol of French patriotism.

Regarding the oral varieties, standard spoken German was used in public life, but was not used by the local population in informal situations. Their oral variety invariably remained dialect.

What was new was the "invention" or, at least, the setting up of the conditions for the invention of a new glottonym. Indeed, during this period, artists and intellectuals of different backgrounds who no doubt shared a need for self-identification, to mark off their boundaries in relation to the rest of the German world, "invented"⁹ Alsace and forged its attributes. It was around 1900 that the term "Alsatian"/"elsässisch" started to appear more and more often with an essentially ethnocultural value. Little by little, "Alsatian" would be used for the German dialectal speech forms in use in Alsace to the point where "elsässisch", its equivalent in dialect, would also start to be used by speakers to refer to their own language between the wars.

1.4.3. 1918 – 1940

1.4.3.1. Languages in use after 1918

At the end of the First World War, Alsace found itself in the French political fold once more. Regarding linguistic practices, verbal interaction took place, for a large majority of the population, in dialect, as had always been the case, whichever the state to which the region had been attached. The written language essentially, both in reception and production, remained standard German: the half-century spent in the political sphere of the German Empire had consolidated, in particular through schooling, the knowledge and use of written German. As for French, it was actively used by only 2 % of the total population and 8 % had some relative knowledge of it.¹⁰

A survey concerning the *everyday* language of Alsatians would provide a first quantitative indication of language use in Alsace, but also and especially of the place of French in their interactions.¹¹

⁹ To paraphrase the term used by Georges Bischoff and Jean-Claude Richez in some highly enlightening articles: BISCHOFF Georges "L'invention de l'Alsace" in *Saisons d'Alsace* 119/printemps 1993, pp.34-69; RICHEZ Jean-Claude "Alsace revue et inventée" in *Saisons d'Alsace* 119/printemps 1993, pp.83-93

¹⁰ Figures proposed by Pierre MAUGUE *Le particularisme Alsatian 1918-1967*, Paris 1970, Presses d'Europe, collection "régions", p.47, but with no indication of the sources.

¹¹ The results were published in 1926. The quantitative data were calculated from raw figures published by ROSSE J., STÜRMELE M., BLEICHER A., DEIBER F. and KEPPI J. (eds) *Das Elsass von 1870-1932*, IV. Band, Colmar 1938, Verlag Alsatia., p.198, table 95

population	French	French + dialect	French + German	French + dialect + German	dialect	dialect + German	German	other languages	language not indicated
1,153,396	9.86 %	6.39 %	0.45%	2.93 %	67.91 %	2.76 %	1.11 %	1.33 %	7.22 %

If the answers provided in the columns "other languages" and "language not declared" are removed, French is present either alone (9.86% of declarations), or in a combination, and constitutes the everyday language or the one of the everyday languages declared by one Alsatian in five (19.65 %). French remains absent from all the constellations for 71.80 % of the Alsatians surveyed. It represents for the majority of the population a local foreign language.

In view of these data, the propagation of the knowledge of the French language would become a permanent concern for the authorities, insofar as, within the ideological coherence of France, it had no reason to modify the language policy it was implementing: French was to become, as in the other regions of France, the official language and, the language of the educational system, in particular in elementary schools and nursery schools.

However, attempting to make French the only language in schools in a society whose everyday language remained dialects and standard German inevitably upset the local social, political and religious instances, ... and took up a choice place in the conflictual relations between a large part of inhabitants and the French authorities.

Indeed, most of the adult population in 1918 would not learn French and necessarily had to use German as its language of writing. As a result, standard written German retained a real vitality, at least in reception (= reading), but also in production in daily life, in particular in the press, which remained very largely a German-language press.

For school-age children, French would become the main language in primary school, German being used for approximately one third of school time (teaching of the German language and religious instruction¹² in German, from 1927). In the other sections of the education system (secondary and higher education), French was, as before 1870, the only variety in use. However, the number of young people gaining entry to high school and university was starting to grow. Therefore French gained a dominant position in educational writing, but also as a spoken language in school (in the form of standardised oral French).

Furthermore, the presence of French in the public domain was infinitely greater than before 1870.

1.4.3.2. Language policy

The linguistic policy implemented by the authorities to anchor French in the Alsatian linguistic world seems to have borne fruit. The censuses of 1931 and 1936 provided a certain number of indicators, by means of the declarations requested of the heads of families.

1936 – Declared knowledge of languages¹³

French: 55.63 % of the population stated that they knew French,
 German: 76 % of the population stated that they knew German,
 Dialect: 82 % of the population stated that they knew dialect.

¹² The two Alsatian Departements were still, like Moselle, under the regime of the Concordat.

¹³ Synthesis based on data published in INSEE *Aspects particuliers des populations Alsatiennes et mosellanes. Langues - Personnes déplacées - Religions*, Paris 1956 (Etudes et documents démographiques no. 7), p.151

The authorities were able to ascertain a spectacular progression of French insofar as, in less than 20 years, more than half the population now declared that they knew how to speak French. However, this declared knowledge of French was tempered by the fact that actual use in society was very limited, at least orally, as the dialects remained the essential vector of verbal interaction.

1.4.4. 1940-1945

Between 1940 and 1945, unlike the rest of France, Alsace – along with a part of Lorraine - was not occupied, but was subjected to a de facto annexation. The laws of the IIIrd Reich were then applied in the area: German became the official language (16 August 1940), French was forbidden, and the dialects were regarded with hostility by the Nazis. The annexing power wanted Alsatians to use standard German also as their oral language outside the formal situations where it was de rigueur. Thus, although the Nazi slogan *Elsässer, sprecht Eure deutsche Muttersprache* ("Alsations, speak your German mother tongue") was certainly directed against the use of French at the outset, it also became a more or less insistent invitation to use standard oral German in place of dialect.

"Defrancisation" was the close corollary of the introduction of the German language in all areas of life, public and private, the two acts of linguistic policy constituting an indissociable whole.

When the (non-denominational) German school system was in its turn introduced in Alsace, German became the school language.

It was then, as it were, because of this shared linguistic background that the Alsatians were to see measures applied to them that they had not chosen, in particular the secularisation of society and forced enrolment into the German army. The latter was to constitute a trauma that to this day remains present in the collective memory.

Summary table (Latin is not counted)

Period	Oral varieties used	Written varieties used	"Absent" varieties	Language policy measures	Names of the languages
until the XVIth century	dialects	local or supra-local dialectal <i>scripta</i> quite close to the oral variety	/		Ditsch/Teutsch (= "German")
of the end du XVIIth century to 1870	- dialects - French : upper and/or educated strata of the population	- supra-regional <i>scripta</i> = common German in the process of standardisation - French	Common German in the process of standardisation <i>spoken</i>	- Revolution: theorisation of a language policy; French, the national language, should be exclusive in all areas of public life, including schools - after 1850: teaching should be in French	Ditsch/Deutsch (= "German")
1870-1918	- dialects - standard German (formal situations) (- French : social elite, Alsatian and "Prussian")	- standard German (- written form of the dialects in the literary field) (- French : press with restricted circulation; identity-based texts)	/	- German becomes the official, then administrative language - successive regulations in the onomastic field (first names, place names, signs, ...) - refusal to teach French in primary schools	- Ditsch/Deutsch (= "German") - attestation of "Elsässerditsch" to designate dialects as opposed to "Ditsch", which refers to standard German - attestation of "Alsatian" to refer to the dialects
1918-1940	- dialects : private interaction, but also semi-public: meetings of associations, political meetings, ... - French - standard German (in certain formal	- French - standard German (- written form of the dialects in the literary field)	Standard spoken German (except in certain formal situations: church services, ...)	- French becomes the official language once again - educational language policy: * primary school : successive circulars (1919-1927): 3 hrs of German from the second semester of the 2nd year of school; religious instruction (3 hrs) can be in German * measures in favour of the spreading of French : teaching of French in a post-school framework; book policy	- "Ditsch" - "Elsässerditsch" (= literally 'Alsatian German/German of the Alsatians/of Alsace') vs. "Ditsch" - probably emergence of "Elsässisch" vs. "Ditsch" - "Alsatian" vs. "German", "Literary German" - emergence of "dialect" vs. "German", "Literary German"

	situations)				
1940-1945	- dialects - standard German	German standard (only)	French banned	- German is official language - use of dialect discouraged, borrowings from French banned - French banned - systematic policy of "defrancisation" (<i>Entwelschung</i>) covering all areas of life, including family names	<i>Elsässer, sprecht Eure deutsche Muttersprache</i> ("Alsations, speak German mother tongue")
after 1945	- dialectal varieties: private interaction, but also semi-public: meetings of associations, political meetings, ... until the middle of the sixties - German : religion (church services) until the end of the seventies - French (in all social strata and among the under-60s in all situations), from the beginning of the seventies - French and dialect (informal	- French (in all public writings and gradually in all private writing) - standard German : press; religion and literature, with a decline from the 70s	Standard spoken German , except in certain formal situations (for example: church services) whose number and frequency are diminishing	- French is official language <u>1. Primary education</u> - January 1945: the teaching of German in primary schools is temporarily suspended - December 1952: teaching of German possible for pupils in their last school years (12-14 years old) - 1972: teaching of German possible from the CM1 (last year of primary) (11 years) - from 1982: loosening of the conditions of teaching German, presence of dialect officially possible at school, in particular in nursery school - from 1991: primary school: parity bilingual sites (13 hrs of German/13 hrs of French); "collèges" (junior high schools) and "lycées" (senior high schools): bilingual classes or sections <u>2. Press and films in Germane</u> - 13 September 1945: Order no. 45-2113 relating to the regulation of the press : all publications must include a part in French, in very specific conditions (regulations formally rescinded by an article of law in 1984) - supervision of the number of films authorised for distribution in Germane <u>3. Measures in favour of the spreading of</u>	"elsässisch" (= "Alsatian") (in part: "elsässerditsch"; residually: "ditsch") vs. "ditsch" ("German") - "dialect" vs. "German" or "the Alsatian dialect" vs. "the German language"

	and semi-formal situations)			<p>French: school (creation of numerous nursery school classes); press; cinema; post-school teaching (obligatory for young people from 14 to 17 years, until the end of the 60s); collaboration of the religions: teaching of religion and the catechism in French</p>	
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2. LANGUAGE USE AND LANGUAGE AWARENESS

2.1. LANGUAGE USE AND TRANSMISSION OF DIALECT (1945-2000)

2.1.1. 1945-1970

From 1945 onwards, the French authorities took direct action to foster the spread of the French language in two areas: schools, by temporarily suspending the teaching of German in primary school, and the press, by banning all monolingual daily newspapers in German and by setting aside obligatory space for French in each title that was published.

Nevertheless, until about the end of the sixties, standard German retained an important place as a written language. The circulation of the "bilingual" regional daily press, for example, remained considerably higher than that of the monolingual French press. The spoken dialect forms remained the language of daily communication, but French was nonetheless gaining ground as the language of oral interaction outside the school or formal spheres.

Local elected representatives would request, as early as 1946, that German once again be taught in primary schools. They would only obtain satisfaction in 1952 when German was made an optional subject two hours a week if parents requested it and if the teacher agreed to teach it. The conditions of teaching remained subject to many random factors so that its effectiveness could not really be guaranteed.

In **1946**, 85.80 % of the population stated that they could speak dialect, 79.84 % of the population states that they could speak German and 62.70 % of the population stated that they could speak French:¹⁴ In **1962**, the portion of the adult population declaring that they knew dialect and German remained stable. Knowledge of French on the other hand was indicated much more frequently than in the past: 82.5 % of the population aged over 5 years said that they knew French.

In the 1962 indications, the stratification by age reinforces the absolute values for French and weakens those for German. This was one of the indirect consequences of the linguistic policy being implemented in primary schools.

1962 – Knowledge of languages declared by the population aged 5 years and over¹⁵

	French	Dialect	German
5 – 9 years	81.73 %	77.05 %	3.52 %
10 – 19 years	98.17 %	81.10 %	34.66 %
20 – 29 years	98.40 %	81.49 %	62.39 %
30 – 39 years	96.62 %	84.42 %	78.13 %
40 – 49 years	94.44 %	85.20 %	80.49 %
50 – 59 years	76.02 %	91.64 %	87.17 %
60 – 74 years	44.89 %	93.88 %	90.61 %
75 years and over	35.18 %	93.74 %	89.08 %
All ages (5 years and over)	82.52 %	85.71 %	65.19 %

¹⁴ Synthesis of data published by the INSEE *Aspects particuliers des populations alsacienne et mosellane, op. cit.*, p.82

¹⁵ Synthesis and values established from data in: INSEE – Strasbourg Regional department: *Recensement general de la population – 1962: Langues parlées et religions déclarées en Alsace*, vol. I, Strasbourg s.d., pp.34-36; 38; 40-41

As regards the press, two daily newspapers were bilingual only (*Le Nouvel Alsacien*, *Le Nouveau Rhin Français*), two other daily newspapers had a French version and a bilingual version, whose evolution was as follows:

*Les Dernières Nouvelles d'Alsace*¹⁶

year	circulation	% bilingual edition	% French edition
1950	153,144	80.5	19.5
1955	158,611	77.3	22.7
1960	167,155	70.5	29.5
1965	193,770	60.3	39.7
1969	203,536	50.2	49.8
1970	207,419	47.5	52.5

*Alsace*¹⁷

year	circulation	% bilingual edition	% French edition
1950	88,584	66.4	33.6
1955	90,594	61.42	38.58
1960	95,088	53.15	46.85
1965	129,009	49.02	50.98
1970	136,183	37.64	62.36

The issue of German teaching appeared, immediately after 1945, as a societal, generational issue, with a risk that poor knowledge or ignorance of German would adversely affect the social bonds.

These dangers were not absent at the end of the sixties. But all the rising generations (born from the end of the thirties on) would have, to some extent, French as a written language. Depending on their personal history, individuals would appropriate qualitatively and quantitatively more or less well the German language, which retained not only a majority presence in the press, but also a considerable influence in cultural and religious life.

Thus, the teaching of German started to take on a more symbolic, perhaps more patrimonial, perhaps more cultural aspect. Even if dialect use still remained intense, the dialects were beginning to be perceived more and more often as "autonomous" or as manifestly different to standard German.

Beyond these declared linguistic practices, there were other aspects whose weight was decisive.

The annexation and the war had modified the subjective status of the languages: beyond its status as an endogenous written language, German not only regained its status as the "language of the enemy", but also and especially the status of the "language of the Nazis". French, on the other hand, enjoyed the prestige of the French liberators. The languages appeared as an essential symbol of patriotism. Taking an insufficient interest in French and/or showing too much of an

¹⁶ Source: O.J.D. ([= Office de Justification of the Diffusion, circulation justification service] data provided by *Les Dernières Nouvelles d'Alsace*)

¹⁷ Sources: O.J.D. (data provided by *Alsace*), Departemental Archives of the Bas-Rhin [= ADBR] box 1959W93

attachment to German could open the way to suspicion regarding preferences and political references.

The subjective status of the dialects remained intact. Their linguistic closeness to standard German maintained veiled fears that dialect speakers might prefer the German written language because it was more immediately accessible to them. The dialects also appeared, due to their function as an almost exclusive language in oral interaction and their proximity to German, as a serious hindrance, real or potential, to the learning of French, due to an absence of motivation or lack of usefulness or use of French.

2.1.2. 1970-2000

From the seventies onwards, the distribution of the varieties in the functions and uses changed, French taking over in almost all areas, either as sole language, or as main language. The presence of standard written German was now beginning to decline strongly.

Indeed, under the combined effects of the language policy in primary schools, generational changes and the acceleration of the irruption of modernity in the structures of society, French has become very widely established throughout Alsace and active skills in the French language, within the population, had no doubt never been so great.

French, which has replaced German as the written language for the generations born after 1940, is competing very strongly with dialects which are still widely known to the population, but whose use is beginning to decline.

This drop in the use as well as in the knowledge of dialect can be seen in the results of studies carried out by the official institutions and polling institutes.

Percentage of the population declaring that they know how to speak dialect:

	1962 ¹⁸	1979 ¹⁹	1986 ²⁰	1991 ²¹	1998 ²²
18-24 years	82.4 %	65.5 %	52.2 %	40 %	37 %
25-34 years	86.4 %	64.3 %	58.4 %		44 %
35-49 years	86.9 %	71.5 %	73.3 %		65 %
50-64 years	92.6 %	84.2 %	85.3 %		75 %
65-74 years or 65 years and +	94.6 %	88.3 %	90.7 %		84 %
TOTAL	84.7%	74.7 %	71.7 %	67 %	62 %

In 1998, the situation broke down as follows:

Dialect →	spoken fluently	spoken occasionally	understood, but not spoken	neither spoken or understood	do not speak dialect (total)

¹⁸ INSEE 1962 The age groups used are spread differently in this case: 5- 9 years: 80.8 %; 20-29 years; 30-39 years; 40-49 years; 50-59 years; 60-74 years

¹⁹ SELIGMANN Nicole (1979), breakdown used: 16-24 years; 25-34 years; 45-54 years; 55-64 years; 65-74 years; 75 years and over

²⁰ ISERCO-DNA (1986) "Dialecte: Le déclin se confirme" in *Dernières Nouvelles d'Alsace* 17.4.1986, p. Ré1

²¹ IFOP-News d'Ill (1991) "Identité Alsacienne: la fin des tabous" in *News d'Ill*, June 1991, pp.4-12

²² DNA/CSA opinion poll "Le dialecte: état des lieux" in *Les Dernières Nouvelles d'Alsace* of 2 July 1998, p.Ré1

18-24 years	22 %	15 %	24 %	39 %	63 %
25-34 years	33 %	11 %	27 %	29 %	56 %
35-49 years	49 %	16 %	13 %	22 %	35 %
50-64 years	67 %	8 %	13 %	12 %	25 %
65 years and over	79 %	5 %	10 %	6 %	16 %
TOTAL	51 %	11 %	17 %	21 %	38 %

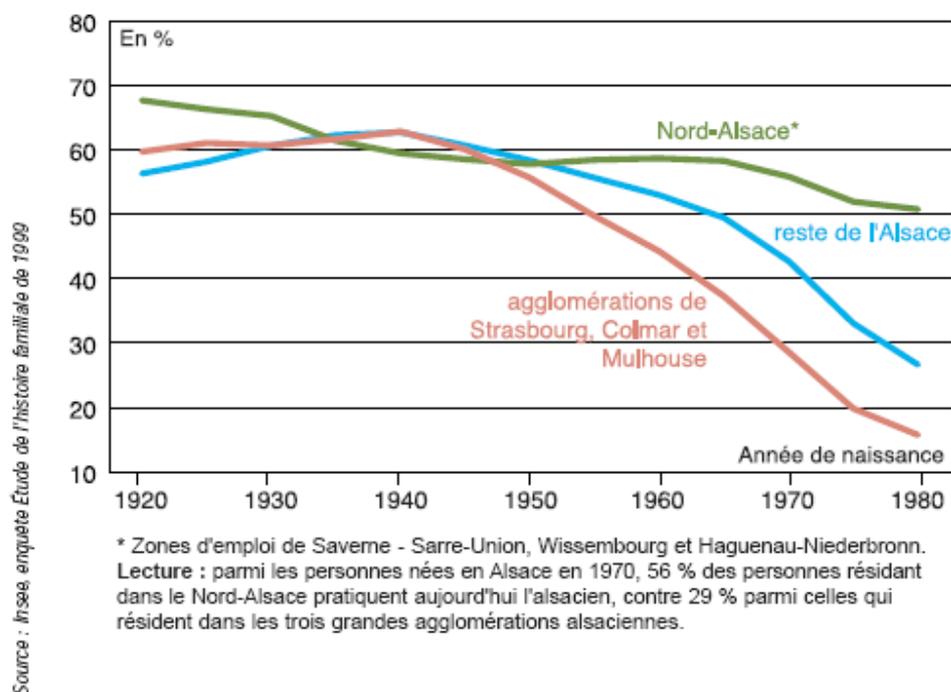
(Source: DNA/CSA Opinion poll, DNA 02.07.98, p. Re 1)

The survey which accompanied the general population census in **1999** showed figures that were markedly lower:²³ the proportion of the population declaring that they spoke Alsatian represented **39 %** of the adults resident in Alsace (= 501,600 people).

Correlated with age, the figures for everyday use of dialect broke down as follows:

- 20 % of people between 25 and 30 years regularly spoke dialect
- between 33 and 38 % of people between 30 and 45 years regularly spoke dialect
- between 40 and 45 % of people between 45 and 60 years regularly spoke dialect
- just over 50 % of people between 60 and 80 years regularly speak dialect.

► **Part des personnes parlant l'alsacien en 1999 parmi les personnes nées en Alsace**



Graph taken from:

DUEE Michel, "L'alsacien, seconde langue regional de France" in *Chiffres pour l'Alsace*, December 2002, pp.3-6 (p.5)

²³ LE GUEN M.A. [2002]

As regards the transmission of dialect to the next generation, only **10 % of children** are learning Alsatian on a regular basis²⁴ (compared to 80 % up to the 60s)

An ISERCO survey in 2001²⁵, however, showed figures that were markedly higher, both for declared knowledge and use and for declared transmission:

Do you speak or understand dialect?

	1990	2001
1. I can speak it, but I almost never speak it	9.8 %	12 %
2. I can speak it and speak it quite often	20.5 %	15 %
3. I can speak it and speak it very often	40.4 %	34 %
1 + 2 + 3	70.7 %	61 %
2 + 3	60.9 %	49 %
4. I cannot speak it, but I understand it	14.6 %	12 %
5. I cannot speak it and I do not understand it	14.6 %	27 %

96 % of respondents who spoke dialect stated that they used it in the family, 88 % with certain friends, professionally 48 %.

15.5 % stated that they were transmitting dialect to their children (12.5 % of 18-34 year-olds stated that they were doing so, and 21 % of 35-49 year-olds). Transmission was virtually non-existent when only one parent spoke dialect.

With 49 % of people declaring that they were regular users and declared transmission at over 15 %, this study seems to contradict the results obtained in the census.

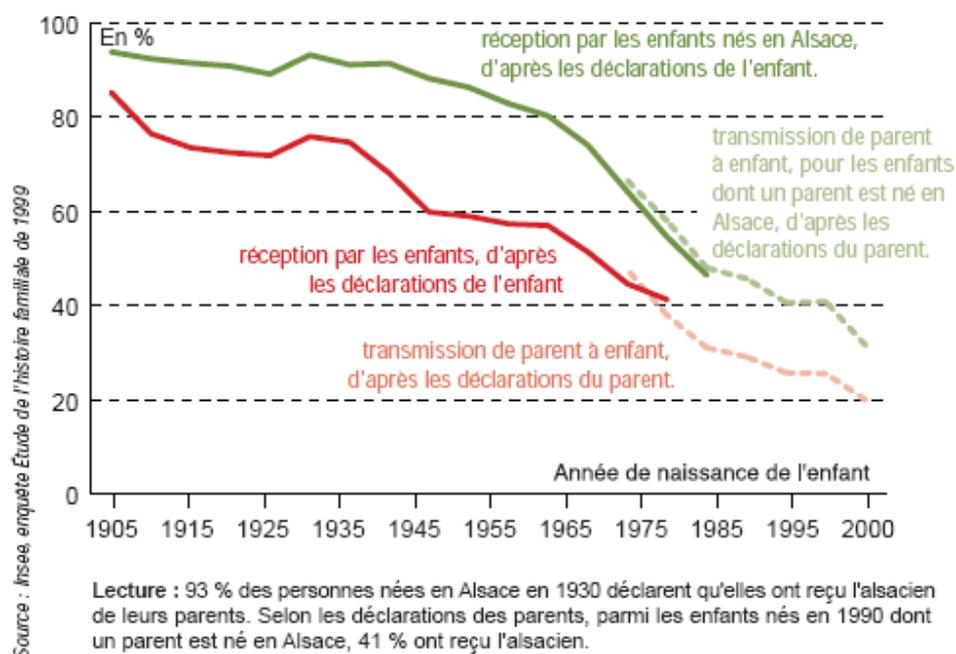
These differences draw attention to the care that must be taken in considering quantified declarations. Indeed, depending on the way the data is collected (on the one hand a census, in 1999, and, on the other an opinion poll in 2001) and the type of question(s) asked, the answers may vary. Furthermore, the context in which the responses are collected may also influence the results.

Finally, such figures document the major trends of the moment, that is to say a subjective reality with rather loosely defined limits, but on no account can they be considered as reflecting observable linguistic practices.

²⁴ DUEE Michel 2002, p.3

²⁵ Source: ISERCO 2001 = "Erosion naturelle. La pratique de l'alsacien" in *Les Dernières Nouvelles d'Alsace* of 21 September 2001

► **La transmission de l'alsacien se fait de plus en plus rare**
Transmission de l'alsacien de parent à enfant selon les générations



Graph taken from:

DUEE Michel, "L'alsacien, seconde langue regional de France" in *Chiffres pour l'Alsace*, December 2002, pp.3-6 (p.5)

Moreover, declared knowledge of German also seems to have dipped considerably. In 1999, only 16.2 % of adults aged over 18 years stated that they knew German.

However, the teaching of German in primary school would start to become institutionalised from 1972, with two hours per week in the 4th and 5th years of primary school, which was extended (3rd year, etc. of primary school) from 1982 onwards and intensified after 1991 (possibility of teaching one subject in German = 6 hours per week; possibility of teaching in French and in German with equal hours).

The history of the glottonym accelerated under the pressures and suffering of the Nazi period. The French authorities in fact made a distinction in the names used by using the couples "German" *versus* "dialect" or "German language" *versus* "Alsatian dialect". Alsatian society would also make a similar, but not quite identical separation: "elsässisch" (= "Alsatian") would impose itself to the detriment of "elsässerditsch", which still remained in use (according to the generations and geography) and "ditsch", which was now only used in a residual form, "ditsch" being used only to refer to standard German (written or spoken).²⁶ The disjunction made in the naming of the varieties accompanied the decline in the use of German, but also a progressive decline in the use of dialectal forms. A form of self-naming of dialectal speech therefore began to

²⁶ For all questions concerning the naming of the languages in Alsace in the XXth century, see BOTHOREL-WITZ Arlette 1997 "Nommer les langues en Alsace"

come into being for Alsatian speakers, and the links between their speech forms and standard German started to fade.

2.2. THE POTENTIAL VERBAL REPERTOIRE OF DIALECT SPEAKERS

2.2.1. Theoretical framework:

The contact between languages in Alsace has aroused and still arouses the interest of numerous French and foreign researchers. An in-depth examination of the specialised literature reveals, most of the time, a vision of the contact between languages in Alsace that reduces its complexity. This simplification is due to a number of sources:

- The descriptions, as Tabouret-Keller (1988) points out, often remain "relatively cut off from the observation and the establishment of the updated empirical data", so that they do not really account for the dynamics of the socio-linguistic changes which at the same time as modifications to societal structures, the socio-political and socio-economic context, have modified since the 70s the balance of power between the varieties present at the same time as their structural characteristics and their uses.
- Many sociolinguistic descriptions have in common that they envisage the contact between languages as a disembodied object, cut off from the significant production contexts.
- Finally, the desperate search for an umbrella language (*Überdachungssprache*) to which all the Alsatian dialects can be synchronously subordinated has considerably delayed the comprehension of the phenomena in terms of a continuum of practices linked to diversely normalised and imbricated varieties which express as many social identities in interaction. Such a vision goes hand in hand with the rejection of the criteria of purity, homogeneity and exhaustivity in favour of hybridisation, heterogeneity and relativity (Blanchet, 2000).

In reconciling the micro and macro levels, we have attempted, from the analysis of the discursive data, of the interactional manifestations of the contact between varieties, to abstract the potential linguistic resources which would constitute the verbal repertoire of dialect speakers²⁷. If we take into account the dominant, shared representations – which enable us to better understand symbolic meanings of the varieties and variables - the social practices that individuals develop, as well as the intra- and inter-group relations (Bonardi & Roussiau 1999: 25), the repertoire may be envisaged as a continuum of practices which, for the same subject and according to the subjects and contexts, comply with the established social norms or distance themselves from them, voluntarily or not. The verbal repertoire is linked to an "ethno-sociolinguistic community" (in its double linguistic and ethno-sociocultural dimension²⁸) whose practices are at once homogeneous (shared varieties) and variable²⁹ (Blanchet, 2000: 119).

In the model proposed (cf. *infra*), we use all the diversely normalised varieties of the potential verbal repertoire of dialect speakers³⁰. Depending on the groups of speakers and where they are

²⁷ Cf. GUMPERZ (1964).

²⁸ The ethno-sociocultural community is based on a collective identity, a feeling of collective and individual belonging, at the same time as it is crossed by multiple identities (multi-belonging of the members of a group). Ethno-sociocultural identity is expressed in particular through the linguistic characteristics of the group (BLANCHET, 2000: 115).

²⁹ For the variation and the diversity of the linguistic resources serving the communicative functions within a discourse community, see GUMPERZ, 1988, pp. 121-13.

³⁰ Cf. AUER, P., DI LUZIO, A. (1988: 2): « [...] linguistic systems ('varieties', 'codes', 'languages', 'dialects' or what-ever) are the *result* of a speech community's more or less focussed (categorical) use of linguistic structures and processes. If this *reconstructive* perspective is taken seriously, it means that linguistic description of any type, whether 'socio-linguistic' or not, has to take as its starting point the whole spectrum of linguistic means of a speech community (i.e. its repertoire)."

anchored in relation to tradition or modernity, this repertoire presents an upward extension (common French zone, cf. *infra*) or a downward extension (dialects with conservative traits). Depending on the context and according to the linguistic mobility he has at his disposal, the subject will activate variable parts of this multilingual repertoire which are combined each time in an original way. Each of the varieties selected is not imagined as a fixed point, but as an open zone that interferes more or less with other zones, themselves fluctuating, closer or further away from the French or dialectal poles. Unlike the linguist who cannot place clear limits between these zones, the speaker has "markers within the continuum" which operate as symbolic and functional barriers (Blanchet, 2000: 100).

In its conception, this repertoire seeks to emphasise the importance of socio-situational factors and norms established in the implementation of variable zones, whose boundaries cannot be clearly identified, which express and symbolise so many social identities³¹; it seeks, not to account for all the complexity of the practices and their evolution, but to provide a framework which can give meaning to the effective practices.

2.2.2. Varieties of verbal repertoire:

2.2.2.1. Varieties and registers of French

The spectrum of the varieties of French is organised around two extreme polarities: the standard variety of French standard and the regional variety.

The **standard or common variety of French**, in its norm of use, necessarily constitutes the upper zone of the model. We see the standard variety as a wide normed zone which does not exclude a form of internal variability (horizontal and vertical). This variability may, horizontally, manifest itself by a more or less large inventory of normed variables (quantitative point of view) and, vertically, by variations in register (very formal, formal, conversational level of language) determined by the context and the sociocultural profile of the speakers.

For the Alsatian mode, it poses the question of whether the normed zone should not include parts of what, for German, Mattheier (1994: 143) calls the "regional accent". This question seems to even more justified given that many speakers of the standard variety of French retain phonetic/phonological and prosodic traits that defy correction. Of course, all the regional phonetic/prosodic variations cannot be dealt with in the same way, insofar as they do not give rise to the same value judgments. Integration in the normed zone must be reserved for variables devoid of classifying social values (initial accentuation, dialectal intonation, aspiration of /p,t,k/, devoicing of /r/ in before a consonant and in a final position, etc.).

As far as the choice of **substandard varieties of French** is concerned, we encounter difficulties linked to the belated interest that the study of the different forms of existence of spoken French has aroused in linguists.

It emerges from the observations that the speakers closest to the modernity and French pole (in their dominant practices) have a non-marked (regionally and socially) register of French that they activate in a context perceived as informal, with their linguistic peers and in a state of reduced vigilance. The same speakers have an upwardly extended repertoire and a mobility within the French continuum in which they are able to activate variable parts. In other words, these linguistic resources (which in the absence of a more adequate term, we identify with a **so-called familiar French**) fit into a double situational and social dimension³² and constitute one of the less standardised manifestations of common French.

³¹ Le PAGE and TABOURET-KELLER (1985) speak of *acts of identity*.

³² See also CHAUDENSON / MOUGEON / BENIAK (1993: 35-37).

Although the French spoken in Alsace³³ corresponds to a categorisation based on error³⁴ and a variability perceived as "abnormal"³⁵, it is to be considered as **regional variety of French** whose "forms of encounter" or whose transcoding markers are specific. Constituting the most standardised component of the speakers closest to the dialectal pole in their dominant practices, its use is not based on a deliberate choice, but on a marked desire to get as close as possible to the ideal norm. It is remarkable that these same speakers see the two varieties of French not marked geographically, but diversely normalised, as a reference entity which refers back to a social and linguistic legitimacy that they are lacking.

The breakdown we have made for heuristic reasons between the different varieties of French does not exclude the fact that speech acts can be situated in zones of intersection between a common and/or familiar and/or regional French. It is therefore necessary to consider the varieties of French as a continuous and open zone, without fixed limits, it being possible to fit any speech act more or less into one or the other of these zones of French³⁶, according to the functional aims or the potentialities of the speaker.

2.2.2.2. Dialectal varieties

In the specialised literature, dialects are essentially approached from the standpoint of their variations in the space which is the basis for the dialect families (Alemannic, Frankish) of traditional geolinguistics.

Variation in use, according to more sociological parameters and contextual factors, has hardly been considered. It follows that most of the descriptions limit themselves to only the more conservative dialectal varieties of speakers anchored in tradition. These then function as a reference standard (for linguists as well as for speakers) which leads other forms of dialectal expression (of subjects for whom a more or less standard variety of French is the dominant or usual language) to be seen as a form of degradation of the basic dialects (*Grundmundart*)³⁷.

The analysis of our corpus (epilinguistic discourse and other dialectal productions) and the interactionist perspective chosen lead us to reconsider the whole palette of dialectal production. They fit into a continuum of practices lying between two extreme polarities:

- the dialectal varieties, with relatively stable structures, which contribute strongly to the discretisation of the Alsatian area, which maintain primary dialectal traits and which present the greatest (socio)linguistic distance from the varieties of French,
- less stable varieties, less differentiated in space, more hybridised, in which innovation, even a form of ideolectal creation, constitutes a consubstantial trait.

Between these two extremes, we find a whole gradation of uses, with dialects being able to function as vernacular between linguistic peers or as an occasional code whose use is dictated by the context.

Linguistically, a certain number of variables allow speakers to be situated in this wide dialectal zone. May be taken as linguistic signs: the transcoding markers (lexical, phonetic and morphosyntactic interference from French, lexical, phonetic and morphosyntactic interference

³³ In total conformity with regional French as "l'ensemble des particularités géolinguistiques qui marquent les usages de la langue française dans chacune des parties de France and de la francophonie" (TUAILLON, 1987: 291).

³⁴ Numerous collections of Alsatianisms with a more or less educational purpose bear witness to this.

³⁵ Cf. CHAUDENSON and coll., op. cit., 50.

³⁶ See BLANCHET, 2000: 99-100.

³⁷ See, for example, HARTWEG, 1988: 45-46.

from German), the degree of simplification of certain paradigms (paradigms of time, of mode ...), the evolution towards a more analytical linguistic type, etc.³⁸

2.2.2.3. Code-switching:

Code-switching has given rise to numerous typologies³⁹ which reveal the heterogeneity of the phenomena grouped together under this notion. We will not mention here the different forms of switching (intraphrastic, interphrastic, etc.), nor the different cognitive operations that they involve.⁴⁰

The analysis of the discourse shows that in Alsace, this mode of bilingual expression, which is in no way marginal, cannot be dealt with in a uniform way, so diverse are its discursive configurations, its contextualisation, its pragmatic aims and its functions.

The place we give to code-switching in our model merits some discussion. It is useful to point out that we reserve this term for the almost simultaneous activation of two quite distinct varieties, which thus falls between two polarities (varieties of French and dialectal varieties). We thus distinguish this phenomenon of polylectal competence which can lead a speaker to combine different varieties and/or registers within what he categorises as French.

Although we consider code-switching as one of the discursive manifestations of the competence of speakers, it emerges from the observations that the nature and the degree of competence may vary considerably from one subject to the other. It follows that the modes of bilingual expression fall, just like the unilingual modes, between two extreme polarities.

- Code-switching may be a mode of normal expression for speakers who fluently speak the varieties of French and the dialectal varieties. They use them alternately. Without there really being any strict separation in the use of these varieties. In context, the varieties are combined to form a single message and the flow of speech is not interrupted by the changeover to another variety. Insofar as code-switching seems to be dictated (more or less unconsciously) by what subjects have to say, "the norms or social rules that here govern language use, at least at first sight, seem to function rather as grammatical rules" and as a monolingual communication (Gumperz, 1989: 59). In this extreme case, switching is the expression of the multilingual competence of the speaker and of a good command of the two varieties.

- Conversely, code-switching may result from restricted competence in one of the varieties and, therefore, from the necessity to overcome a communicative difficulty; the change in code is, consequently potentially conscious. This is another extreme configuration, in which the asymmetry of the speakers' language skills leads us to qualify the situation as "exolingual bilingual" and to talk of "code formulation" rather than code-switching (Lüdi and Py, 2003: 142-144). Due to the instability of the Alsatian language situation, this type of phenomenon is not rare. It is symptomatic of the production of young speakers whose base language is French and for whom dialect is an occasional, even exceptional code.

Between these two extremes, the discursive manifestations of *code-switching* cover a wide spectrum. Without going into all its complexity, we will note that it can correspond to a regular (non-situational) strategy or occasional (situational) strategy, that it can be fortuitous or more or less groupal, that its base language may be variable (for the same subject), that it can depend on shared norms or not (variable tolerance threshold), etc. Its discursive and communicative functions are diverse, switching making it possible to aim at a particular communicative effect, to

³⁸ See on this subject, BOTHOREL-WITZ (1999) BOTHOREL-WITZ / HUCK (2000).

³⁹ For the état of the research, see GUMPERZ (1989), ROMAINE (1995), MILROY & MUYSKEN (1995), AUER (1999), LÜDI & PY (2003).

⁴⁰ See LÜDI & Py, 2003: p. 145 and foll.

select a person to speak to amongst others, to mark one's group membership or a form of proximity, to overcome a communicative difficulty, to express an expressive or affective condition, etc.⁴¹

2.2.2.4. German ?

The place of German in the potential verbal repertoire of Alsatian dialect speakers poses problems. Although it may be a part of the repertoire of Alsatian speakers, it cannot be considered as an "ordinary" linguistic resource. Our position is based, more particularly, on the more and more peripheral role of written German in the current constellation (spoken German never having been the vernacular of Alsations), the absence of an endogenous German in the representations and the categorisation by the majority of German-speakers of it as a local foreign language.

In spite of these reservations, we must admit with Wald (1990) that it is in the placing in the discourse that the otherness of a code or, conversely, its fusion with native modes of expression is manifested.

2.3. THE SOCIOLINGUISTIC REPRESENTATIONS OF DIALECT SPEAKERS

Preliminary remarks

Although the dialects – which have been the subject of an-depth prior geolinguistic study⁴² - are at the centre of our interest, they have, in the sociolinguistic phase of our research, been considered as one of the possible linguistic resources which Alsatian dialect speakers (active or passive) have at their disposal in a situation of contacts between languages. In doing this, we start from the principle that the dialectal varieties only become intelligible through the relationship they have with the other varieties present or with the other linguistic resources in the speakers' verbal repertoire.

In approaching the sociolinguistic description of the Alsatian situation from the angle of the contacts between languages, we have been led to pay particular attention to the representations that the speakers have of practices, languages, their standards, their status, the relationship between oneself and others, etc. As in other scientific domains, we are thus led to go beyond the opposition between the representation and the reality and to include in the reality the representations of the reality (Bourdieu, 1982).

There exists, at the current time, in French and Swiss sociolinguistics⁴³ in particular, a wide consensus that accepts that in the case of complex multilingualism, "the representations, which account for the perception and the social categorisation of practices, are essential data, just as concrete as the effective verbal practices themselves, at least as active as these practices and sometimes (often ?) more so" (Blanchet, 2003: 301).

2.3.1. Epistemological and methodological framework

2.3.1.1. Social representations: a notion borrowed from social psychology

The representations may, for the most part, be thoughts connected to two great traditions, one of which originates in the cognitive sciences and the other in social psychology. It is most

⁴¹ See GROSJEAN (1982: 152, quoted by LÜDI and PY (2003: 153) and GUMPERZ (1989: 58-70).

⁴² Cf. BOTHOREL-WITZ A., PHILIPP M., SPINDLER S. (1984), *Atlas linguistique et ethno-graphique de Alsace*, Vol. II, Paris: Editions du CNRS.

⁴³ See in particular BLANCHET, DE ROBILLARD (2003), MATTHEY (1997).

often from the latter and, more particularly, from the founding work of S. Moscovici (1961) that sociolinguistics has borrowed the notion of social representations which have become sociolinguistic representations.

By opting for a structural approach, social psychology places the emphasis on the organised nature of the social representations and on the relationships between the constituent elements. These elements, informative, cognitive, ideological in nature ... "are always organised in the form of knowledge that says something about the state of the reality" (Jodelet 1993: 36).

Taking the canonical definition that social psychology provides us with as our base, we will retain three essential characteristics of representations: they appear in and through communication, they contribute to the command of the environment, in that they constitute "systems of interpretation governing our relationship with the world and with other people" and they lead to the (re)construction of a shared reality, according to a given relevance. The knowledge that then leads to this breaking up of reality includes at once collective elements (models of behaviour, of thoughts transmitted...) and individual ones, so that the representations – which are developed in and through communication⁴⁴ - are at once the product and the process of an activity of appropriation and social and psychological development of this reality (Jodelet, 1993: 37).

2.3.1.2. Sociolinguistic representations

In the first phase of our research on the linguistic imagination of dialect speakers, we have used the representations as a resource in a framework of analysis marked by social psychology. We have opted for an empirico-inductive approach aiming to determine the representations and their objects in the epilinguistic discourse of speakers (language constitutes an instrument of (re)construction of reality) and to understand or give meaning to the behaviours or to the inferences⁴⁵ that the representations⁴⁶ are likely to trigger. It is therefore very logically that we have given priority to the collective, to the dominant, shared representations, to the detriment of the more psychological and more individual texture of the representations. In favouring in this way the social component, the representations that are totally or partially shared, we have analysed them as a priority through **the said and the unsaid** and dealt with them from the standpoint of their content. In doing so, we have essentially considered the representations as a product which cannot be dissociated from the history of a community and which has been constructed from models of behaviour and acquired and transmitted thoughts. Although not excluding the differences in intra- and intersubjective positioning, the collective and sociolinguistic point of view⁴⁷ must be completed by a more linguistic approach that attempts to account for the discursive development of the representations, for their co-construction in interaction, for their reformulation, for their adjustment to the contextual data, etc. The representations are thus dealt with at once as representations of the object (by a subject) and as representations of the subject, on the one hand, as an unfinished product and as an unceasing process of development and re-development of the representations of the surrounding reality⁴⁸, on the other hand.

⁴⁴ See on this subject, TROGNON & LARUE (1988).

⁴⁵ For the notion of inference, see KAYSER, 1997.

⁴⁶ We will not get into a discussion of the frequent confusion between representations and attitudes. To our meaning, representations constitute a system of references which are expressed through attitudes (more or less positive, more or less negative), opinions, beliefs, stereotypes (cf. BOTHOREL-WITZ, 1998b).

⁴⁷ We will limit ourselves to this point of view in in this report.

⁴⁸ See, for example, PY B. (Ed.), *Analyse conversationnelle et représentations sociales*, Institute of Linguistics, University of Neuchâtel, 2000.

2.3.1.3. Methodological framework

2.3.1.3.1. The discursive data bank ⁴⁹

The analysis concerned a discursive data bank consisting of more than 400 interviews with dialect speakers, active and passive. The interactionist-type survey bringing into play the interviewee and the interviewer took the form of a *semi-directed themed interview* lasting two hours.

The open questionnaire used as the outline for the interview was divided into six sections: 1. sociolinguistic biography / 2. identification of the life space and linguistic space the interviewee belongs to / 3. self-assessment of language skills in Alsatian, French and German / 4. linguistic standards of the three varieties / 5. variations (Alsatian, French, German) / 6. the linguistic and language practices / 7. linguistic ideology (relationship between language / identity, dialect / school ...).

2.3.1.3.2. Choice of subjects

We have opted for an extensive survey with heterogeneous actors (who have the common characteristic of being active or passive dialect speakers with all the difficulties of assessing these skills). The language of the interview was not imposed on the subjects, so that they opted, in these socially situated activities, for code choices in accordance with their linguistic skills and appreciation of the context.

2.3.1.3.3. Analysis and interpretation of the discourse

The analysis of some 400 interviews, during which dialect-speaking subjects of various ages, social profiles and with different practices constructed, in and through the discourse, their language representations led to a need to put these representations into somekind of order. The search, at the first analysis, for correlations between various representational aspects with the conventional sociological parameters (age, sex...) or with the rural/urban opposition of traditional dialectology revealed the limits of these co-variationist principles. Indeed, the distribution of subjective facts cannot be organised according to the sole criterion of age (even if it is combined with sex and educational level); the rural/urban dichotomy does not provide a satisfactory explanatory framework⁵⁰. Basing his conclusions on the elements obtained from our own surveys (epilinguistic discourse, role of biography, linguistic production, choice of codes, etc.), Huck (1998, 226) proposed that the results be organised according to other criteria (and according to variable combinations of these criteria). The rural/urban dichotomy is replaced by an opposition between "traditional traits/modern traits". This dichotomy is based on "[...] the referencing to a (single) system of standards overall, social reproductions, modes and habits of living, social networks (their size, their texture)⁵¹, behavioural features, social (non-)mobility, etc. which form so many combined criteria, which work because they are discriminating, and allow for relevant categorisations". The variable combination of these elements allows us to account for the more or

⁴⁹ BOTHOREL-WITZ A., HUCK D.: Surveys on the *linguistic awareness* of Alsatian dialect speakers 1989- Sound archives deposited with the Department of Dialectology of Marc Bloch University, Strasbourg.

⁵⁰ Cf. HUCK, 1998: 226: "Au-delà des travaux ethnologiques qui ont été menés en France récemment, la réflexion que nous avons conduite au travers des enquêtes sur la conscience psychosociolinguistique des speakers dialectophones en Alsace nous a amenés à réviser, empiriquement puis expérimentalement, la validité de l'usage même de *rural/urbain*. En effet, il est relativement facile de montrer à travers le discours et la biographie des témoins que les traits individuels et collectifs canoniques du fait rural puissent parfaitement caractériser un urbain et inversement."

⁵¹ Cf. DÉGENNE A./ FORSE M.: *Les réseaux sociaux. Une analyse structurale en sociologie*. Paris 1994, quoted by D. Huck, 1998, 226.

less pronounced anchoring of the subjects in one of these poles and for the possible effects of distancing in social acts. As they fit (according to the subject's potentialities and degree of sensitivity to the norm) into the varieties of French or, inversely, into the dialectal varieties, the language practices – which are an integral part of the system of norms - constitute, at the same time, the most immediately perceptible marker of the subjects' proximity to or distance from one of these poles⁵². The criteria for such a categorisation having been posed, it is necessary to correlate it with traditional sociological parameters (age, sex, educational level ...), which cannot be neglected.

2.3.2. Representations of the languages and practices:

2.3.2.1. The varieties of French

When dialect speakers (active or passive) are required to make a hierarchical classification of the "languages" individuated by the representations, French, independently of the criterion taken (functionality, status, social value, etc.) very regularly occupies first place. Most often, dialect and German occupy, respectively, second and third position. Considered as the "legitimate language", French constitutes the standard system against which the attributes, functions and symbolic values of the other varieties are measured.

2.3.2.1.1. The standard variety

In the first analysis, the representation of what "good" French" might be is identified only with the prescriptive and invariant norm code that implies the idea of compliance with rules and the fear of making mistakes. The work done in other regions of France reveals similar tendencies, so that the reduction of linguistic norms to a prescriptive model ("speaking well", "speaking without mistakes") corresponds to the most common acceptance. This authoritarian model, which is situated above practices, is all the more exogenous in that the normative references are always situated in an "elsewhere". When this "elsewhere" refers to the French space, the subjects reproduce stereotyped geographical references (Paris, the Tours region, etc.), unless they rely on data taken from the empirical world (Lille, the Landes, etc.). The normative reference may also be social or societal in nature: insofar as School represents the institutional space where this norm is exercised, subjects are able to appropriate it, then constitute the reference group ("people who are educated: teachers, national politicians, those in the "speaking" professions, etc."). The "elsewhere" is more rarely temporal in nature: older Alsatian speakers, who were educated in German think that "good" French is spoken by the young, who have learnt it at school. All in all, the representative of this idealised competence has three attributes: it is the so-called French of the "interior", young and educated. This very Saussurian view of the language thus echoes a system of representations that the State, the School system, the dominant group have constructed and which is imposed on each speaking subject.

Although we cannot exclude inflated claims regarding the skills in French, the subjection to this ideal model, beyond the field of possibilities of a certain number of subjects, more often than not has the effect of self-depreciation of the skills in French. This form of minimisation is due, as Robillard (1996: 95) points out, "to an approach in two stages: first of all a reification of the language by restricting it to the fixed school norm, then a sort of fetishism that consists of attributing to these norms the social and ideological values related to the globality of the French

⁵² The categorisation criteria proposed by HUCK might contribute to a practical characterisation of the habitus (1998, 227). In this it comes close to the proposal of WODAK and de BENKE, G. 1997, 148: "[...] we would like to argue that sociolinguistic studies would benefit from an inclusion of Pierre Bourdieu's habitus theory".

language thus reduced in advance". Although this minimisation can be displayed with more or less intensity and in variable forms, according to age and sociolinguistic biography, it remains a virtually constant feature, even in the best-educated subjects. It seems that the latter, who have an upwardly extending verbal repertoire (standard French), this minimisation reflects a desire not to set themselves apart from the group to which they belong; it also serves as proof of the limited role that School is able to play in reducing this complex⁵³. The pronounced awareness of the legitimate norm and the feeling of not complying with it generate a linguistic insecurity which is "the manifestation of an unsuccessful quest for legitimacy" (Francard, 1993: 13). If this phenomenon - which, in the epilinguistic discourse, appears more or less openly as much in what is said as in the way of saying it - must be correlated with social groups (insecurity is at its maximum in groups with practices that are not very legitimate, but who are seeking a form of social mobility), it is particularly manifest in where contacts between languages are asymmetrical and, plus particularly, in French-speaking areas (Wallonia, French-speaking Switzerland) and creole-speaking areas⁵⁴, but also in peripheral regions of French such as Alsace. We will note, however, that in Corsica, speakers, on the contrary, feel that they speak "very good French, (...) French *par excellence*" (Dalbera-Stefanaggi, 1991: 170).

2.3.2.1.2. The variety of regional French

"Judged de facto by the single standard, the particularisms [thus] find themselves relegated to the hell of regionalisms, ugly expressions and pronunciation mistakes sanctioned by schools teachers" (Bourdieu 1982, 40). It is therefore quite logical that the variety of French spoken in Alsace ("regional French") enters as it were as an intruder into the speech of speakers. It is named by default, in that it is assimilated with the most negative representation of the Alsatian "accent", that which is conditioned by the supposed or real view of the *out-group*. This indexing variety - which categorises the speaker ethnogeographically and no less sociologically whilst excluding him from the legitimate zone - does not even have the same sociolinguistic status as the other varieties present and is not treated in the same way by society. One can only observe that the regional French of Alsace is hardly ever claimed as a positive marker of identity, for it appears to be a symbol of German-ness unlike, dialect which remains emblematic of Alsatian-ness. We can point out, like Bischoff (1993: 42), that the Alsatian with his accent suggests, in the French imagination, "the image of the German [which] is accompanied of the heaviness of his accent".

What emerges, therefore, from the epilinguistic discourse is that the regional French of Alsace is perceived as a defective variety and belongs, in a way, to an "outlawed" norm. By a strategy of evasion, and even compensation, certain subjects, amongst the youngest, situate themselves in a communicational perspective that permits a non-classifying form of deviance. In doing this, they then refer to an "ordinary" or "everyday" French, to a norm of use, to a communicative competence and to "the normal".

2.3.2.2. Representations of the dialectal varieties

Representations of the dialectal varieties are, generally, over-determined by the fantasised vision of a unitary French.

In total conformity with the views of geolinguistic tradition, the emphasis is placed on the spatial dimension of the variation. Questioned on their belonging to a dialectal area, speakers put forward two concomitant types of logic. Respecting the north/south geographical axis of the

⁵³ The same observation is made by FRANCARD (1993) for the French community in Belgium.

⁵⁴ See, in particular, BAVOUX (1996), FRANCARD (1993), GUEUNIER and coll. (1978), DE PIETRO (1995).

Alsace area, they reduce the spatial diversification by opposing two subsets which correspond roughly to the limits of today's two départements, but also to the old, traditional separation between Upper and Lower Alsace. On the geolinguistic maps, this division coincides with objective isophones. The rough north/south fragmentation contrasts with a very fine and precise awareness of micro-variations which play a part in the atomisation of the dialectal area of belonging. In accordance with traditional geolinguistic practice, which saw in the so-called urban dialects a factor of disruption in the dialectal landscape, speakers in large cities and medium-sized towns tend to isolate their dialects from the surrounding context. It would be interesting to elucidate the reasons behind this exclusion: no doubt the values of prestige and modernity should not be underestimated in this representation.

It follows that the subjective dialectal fragmentation is based on criteria which may stem from metalinguistic awareness, but more certainly still from social awareness. The differential fact marking the distancing is expressed by phonetic or prosodic stereotypes ("clipped" or "guttural" pronunciation, "sing-song accent") which refer back to the differential behavioural traits of an *out-group*. In this dialectic of belonging and non-belonging, the representation of the variation forms part of a dimension of identity in that it allows the marking of similarity (of an *ego* with a close *alter ego*) and difference with an *alter*, which is thus identified.

Although the variation is strongly anchored in the psycho-sociolinguistic conscience of all dialect speakers, it nevertheless reveals variable degrees of awareness. We cannot speak here of a truly shared "common sense knowledge", insofar as the object of representation - the dialectal variations that are at the very basis of the fragmentation of the area - reveals a divide between the speakers, who in their dominant practices, are close to the French pole or, on the contrary, to the dialect pole. The former are not able to exemplify the spatial macro- and micro-variations. This same reasoning is reflected in the names given to the languages. In the local area of the dialectal variety, in conformity with the subjective dialectal maps (*mental maps*), the agents have at their disposal place-name-based glottonyms (which refer to the local speech form and to the micro-variation) and names that correspond to intermediate categories (*Upper Rhine/ Lower Rhine dialect*).

Beyond the dialectal fragmentation and the intergroup categorisations, the quasi-generic term "Alsatian / Elsässisch" has a double function of cohesion and demarcation in relation to the exterior (the German area and no doubt "the interior" [= France]). It marks the belonging to a territory with boundaries, the sharing of cultural and ethnic traits. In contradiction with this entity reified by the name, young speakers, close to the French pole, consider the diatopic variations as a hindrance to intercomprehension. They therefore justify the use of a *lingua franca*, French, and, at the same time, the loss of functionality of the dialectal code. It follows that the glottonym "Alsatian" "[...] is not permeable to the fact that language use is permanently changing and that it is diverse in its registers; on the contrary, [it] allows it to be ignored, in favour precisely of a single identity supported by a globalising term" (Tabouret-Keller, 1995: 143-144).

Dialectal variations which could be linked to the social stratification of the agents are only present by default. They manifest themselves, implicitly, in the self-assessment of dialectal competence. Due to the intense use of French and, therefore, an irregular use of dialect, speakers more strongly anchored in modernity minimise their dialectal competence. They "detach" their production (stigmatised, because it is seen as incorrect, hybridised) from the conservative dialectal norm to which they attribute value. The mythical vision of a "pure" dialect, close to its origins, which is reinforced by the prescriptive representation of French, expresses of a form of estrangement (linguistic and socio-cultural) with a sociolectal variety and the group of speakers who are bearers of this conservative norm.

Insofar as the dialects are correlated, in the representations of their functions and their uses, with the informal societal domain and/or with the non-written, the possible stylistic or contextual variations are never objectivated in the epilinguistic discourse.

When subjects are required to pronounce on what a dialect is, they do so very naturally by opposition to their representation of what a "language", in this case French, is. As in other French regions, the eminently oral nature of dialect determines its status as a non-language. The defining traits: "non-codified", "non-written", "with no grammar", with the negative connotations that go along with them, confirm the idea, which was for a long time widespread amongst linguists, that "speech, decidedly, is something different to language" (Culioli, quoted by Gadet: 1989, 40). The fact that the dialectal code might be one of the resources which could give meaning to language practices, that these practices "obey a syntax, a morphology and phonetics which are most often rigorous" (Poche, 1988: 93) hardly filters into the discourse.

The romantic view of a pure, authentic dialect, not marked by interference from French, is very widely predominant whatever the profile of the speaker. It follows that what appears as a "dialectal norm" is identified with the sociolectal variety of the old, rural, not very mobile group of speakers that constitutes the mythical object of traditional dialectal geolinguistics. The high prestige of this museum-piece standard that middle-aged speakers consider with nostalgia and that the young situate outside the field of their competence has as its corollaries the traits of "non-modernity" and "non-urbanity" which refer back, negatively, to the attributes of French.

The self-assessment of dialectal competence is determined by whether the subject and his practices belong to the "tradition" pole or the "modernity" pole. The "good" dialectal skills that speakers close to the "tradition" pole claim is linked with the fact that dialect constitutes the "natural language", the "mother tongue" in the double sense of the first spoken language and everyday language. In speakers close to the "modernity" pole (more particularly in the 18-25 year age group), the more or less pronounced form of incompetence that most of them acknowledge is linked to an intensive use of French and, at the same time, a limited use of dialect. The relations between dialect and French seem to be exclusive, since competence in one of the codes is only acquired at the expense of the other. These representations seem to express the effects of educational linguistic policy, which has long had as its main objective the acquisition of French. The fact that the structural traits of the dialectal variety of speakers regularly or intensively practising French might be the result of a normal evolution or mark the belonging to another socio-cultural world is never considered. This attitude testifies, outside the policies currently being implemented, to a negative vision of the contact between languages.

Finally, it is only in the identity dimension, on the one hand, and in the affective dimension, on the other hand, that dialect is not in competition with French. Although in speakers close to the "tradition" pole, the dialect that they speak remains the most important at marker of their Alsatian identity, the knowledge and the practice of the language become more symbolic in speakers close to the "modernity" pole. Our surveys show that these *identicals* are more and more often conveyed, as our own surveys show, by other signs of identity ("living in Alsace", "knowing its history, its traditions", etc.). According to Hamers (1997), this more symbolic presence would not be of a nature to favour a possible mobilisation of the ethnolinguistic group. The *Rapport d'étude sur l'identité régionale* of September 1996 (ISERCO Consultants / DNA) shows, moreover, that a "modern linguistic identity" depends, for 69% of respondents, on the early teaching of European foreign languages and, for 31% only, on the use of dialect.

2.3.2.3. Representations of code-switching or bilingual modes of expression

Perpetuating the romantic vision of a pure, authentic dialect, the subjects assimilate code-switching with a violation of the language. Its use is almost always denied by those who practise it. Thus "any hybridising, of any kind, and even if it is proved to be, in its own social context, a creative and appropriate response" (De Pietro 1988, 78) generates a purist reaction.

2.3.2.4. Representations of German

The epilinguistic discourse reveals a surprising variability of positions among the subjects, which fit into a continuum defined by two antagonistic strategies: distance or estrangement, on the one hand, proximity, even fusion, on the other hand.

2.3.2.4.1. Representations of the use and knowledge of German

The analysis of the four hundred interviews shows that the declared competence in German is more potential than real and that there is a real gap between knowledge and use. To the question of with whom, where and when, the respondents need to speak German, most of them declare that they use German occasionally, and even rarely. The responses given by first cycle learners of German in are particularly revealing in this respect.

In spite of a rare use of German, dialect-speaking subjects generally opt for the exogenous code in interactions with speakers of the German language. The strategy adopted – which expresses the concern to respond to the supposed expectations of the person spoken to and not to displease him – corresponds to an attitude of "linguistic submission" that marks, in a general manner, exchanges with strangers and which constitutes one of the salient traits of a collective linguistic conscience.

When they are in Germany, dialect speakers adopt a behaviour that corresponds to a very individual perception based in some cases on a feeling of proximity or on the contrary a feeling of distance from German determined by factors both communicational and socio- or historico-cultural.

Self-assessment of competence in German gives rise to some highly contrasted discourse. In the group of older speakers for whom dialect represents the everyday language, the positive appreciation of their competence in German can even go as far as over-estimation. This pragmatic competence, allowing them to "get by", to "make themselves understood" is seen as the corollary of regular dialect use and, at the same time, of infrequent use of French. It is remarkable that older speakers who depreciate their competence in French tend to opt, faced with the real or supposed view of the French-speaking *out-group*, for a strategy of compensation that reveals a form of linguistic insecurity, which is deployed at the gateway to the French speaking world, between *Romania* and *Germania*⁵⁵.

This exaggeration of competence is particularly characteristic of slightly older male subjects, women being, independently of the group they belong to, more focused on French.

In the intermediate age group, self-assessment of competence varies according to the subjects (biography, educational level, occupation, etc.). Generally speaking, active dialect speakers see themselves as having decoding skills and a form of ease in oral production, a dialectalised variety of German being able to take over, if necessary, from standard German. On the other hand, writing is, with some exceptions, judged difficult, even problematic.

Reproducing the normative vision of French, younger subjects give an academic representation of a German, identified with a foreign modern language, that they strive to speak as they have learnt

⁵⁵ See FRANCARD M.: "Un modèle en son genre: le provincialisme linguistique des francophones de Belgique", in Bavoux C. (Ed.): *Français régional et insécurité linguistique*, Paris 1996: L'Harmattan, p. 93.

it at school. It follows that once again normative competence tends to prevail over pragmatic competence. In this system of representations, dialect may constitute the source of incorrect production. Insofar, however, as German is not invested with the same social and symbolic values as French, the deviations do not really constitute indexing elements which would categorise the speaker geographically and exclude him from a legitimate zone.

In the end, if we consider the different groups of speakers (in the middle and young age groups), their self-assessment of their competence in German contrasts with the high percentage of knowledge in this language declared at the end of the 1990s.

2.3.2.4.2. Representations of an endogenous German ("Alsatian German")

The question of whether there is a German specific to Alsace arouses perplexity in the great majority of the subjects. In total ignorance of the endogenous production of a written German in the bilingual regional press, of a regional literature in German, etc., the interviewer is suspected, at least initially, of assimilating the Alsatian dialects with a "regional German". The large number of (explicit) questions raised in the discourse bear witness to the interviewees' surprise.

Once the meaning of the question is understood, the respondents confer upon endogenous German the attributes of a stigmatised regional French assimilated with the "accent". Based on the oral production of dialect speakers alone, endogenous German is then qualified as a "mixture" (marked by interference from dialect), which is very clearly distinguishable from "authentic", exogenous German (*'s richtige Ditsch*). A regional German may also, in another order of ideas, be thought to refer to an older group of speakers, who would have had all or a part of their education in German.

2.3.2.4.3. Representations of exogenous German

The representations of what "good German" might be, where it is spoken and by whom, indicate, generally, a lack of knowledge of the linguistic situation of the German-language countries, which are, de facto, reduced to Germany alone. The subjects are not really able to base their opinions on their own actual experience, or even on knowledge learned in books or at school. No doubt we may see in this ignorance the consequence of a form of socio-cultural estrangement from the German area.

In spite of the diversity and the plurality of the normative references (Goethe, university professors, politicians, urban centres such as Cologne, Frankfurt, Hamburg ..), everyone agrees, thereby reproducing the French model, that "real" or "good" German is not to be found in the immediate border regions (the Palatinate, Saarland, the Baden region).

Although dialect speakers are aware that not all Germans speak the same variety (reception by means of the media no doubt conditions this appreciation), they give a stereotyped view of the variation (limited to the geographical dimension) of which Bavaria is particularly emblematic.

2.3.2.4.4. German, the object of fluctuating representations

The discourse on the links between German and the Alsatian dialects gives rise to some very contrasted positions that can be situated on a continuum between a strategy of distancing, estrangement at one end and a strategy of proximity or fusion at the other end.

a) The strategies of distancing or estrangement

In the categorisation activities concerning the linking of German and the Alsatian dialects, the question of relationships of inclusion or exclusion between the two varieties reveals in the majority of speakers a difficulty in seeing in it a historical continuity. In the discourse, the discomfort, and even unease expressed by failed language behaviours (self-corrections,

unfinished sentences, approval seeking, breaks in the thread of argumentation, etc.) are indicative of tensions conditioned by previous discourse, by the dominant norms and the current social and societal context.

By reconstructing historical referents or by "tampering with the memory", the dialects, totally independently of the empirical world, are as if they were uncoupled from German. This syncretism is also reflected in the current name for the language, namely *Alsatian*. In other words, the strategies adopted are strategies of distancing, which tend to confine dialect to a closed space and not to appropriate German, a nearby foreign language linked to another nation state. However, categorising the dialects as not belonging to the German language, does not mean for all that that they are categorised as belonging to another language⁵⁶.

b) Compromise solutions

To escape from the categorisation of Alsatian as a dialect of German and, at the same time from a redefinition of the subjective frontiers, certain respondents seek a compromise solution. They opt for something "between two languages", a "mixture" which is devalued all the same in the metalinguistic comments, in that it violates a norm. Hybridisation here takes on a symbolic value: it corresponds to an exceptional situation which lies between an interior (which needs to be defined) and an exterior. The dialogical principle – which underpins this strategy – makes it possible to go beyond the cultural and linguistic disparities.

c) Proximity strategies

- Faced with French – which functions as the symbol of legitimacy, prestige and modernity - German joins, in the representations, the dialectal variety, in that both, reunited for a good cause, refer back to tradition, the past and to a group of speakers whose dialect constitutes the vernacular and German, a possible language of culture.

- When German is evaluated in relation to the economic and educational advantages of having multilingual skills, it leads people to opt for proximity strategies. Surveys currently being carried out in parity bilingual schools show that the pupils do not perceive German as a foreign modern language, insofar as, functioning as one of the classroom languages, it is an integral part of their school life. Two further reasons reinforce this perception. The first is geographical: the physical proximity of Germany leads to an increased feeling of proximity. The second is linguistic: Alsatian and German only seem to be differentiated by "accent" and vocabulary.⁵⁷

The same tendency is confirmed in people working in international companies⁵⁸. The role of Alsace, in a double process of local cooperation (cooperation with Germany and Switzerland) and a wider opening onto the international scene, leads to German – with a positive connotation – being associated with dialect. Potential knowledge of dialect (totally detached from practice) is the corollary of a form of competence (comprehension, oral expression) in German. This heightened linguistic proximity goes hand in glove with "myth of bilingualism" maintained by the political and economic metadiscourse and with the construction of the Upper Rhine area.

This functionality of dialect in the learning of German, and even of English is thus at odds with the very widespread representation of dialectal practice hindering the acquisition of French. We can see an obvious contradiction between the active role of dialect in the acquisition of German and the tacit acceptance of the defunctionalisation and of the non-transmission of dialect.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ See on this subject, MONDADA L., 2000, p. 90.

⁵⁷ JAECKLE J., 2002.

⁵⁸ BOTHOREL-WITZ A., ZIMMERMANN K., 2002.

⁵⁹ Cf. HUCK D. (1997: 146-154).

3. LITERATURE AND THE MEDIA

3.1. The media

3.1.1. The press

Throughout XXth century, all the local and regional press, in all areas (associations, unions, religion, trades, entertainment, ...) gradually moved from editions essentially in German to so-called "bilingual" editions (French/German), more particularly after 1945, to end up as publications almost exclusively in French, at the beginning of the XXIst century.

After 1945 and until the beginning of the seventies, the popular German language press, published in Germany and in Switzerland, had good circulations in Alsace, no doubt because it offered content that was different from the publications available in French. Its importance was reduced with the homogenisation of the content of these publications, whether they were in French or in German. At the same time, the French national news press, then the other types of press in French became more strongly established in Alsace and now has circulations that are probably comparable to those of other regions of France.

At the beginning of the XXIst century, the local "bilingual" press plays only a very minor role, marginal even. The major part of the local and regional press, whatever the areas in question, is published in French.

Daily *Les Dernières Nouvelles d'Alsace*

year	circulation	% bilingual edition	% French edition
1980	232.762	28.7	71.3
1985	234.752	22.4	77.6
1990	239.893	17.8	82.2
1995	238.361	13.5	86.5
2000	224.925	10.7	89.3
2002	221.028	9.8	90.2

Source: Office de Justification de la diffusion (circulation justification service) (data provided by *Les Dernières Nouvelles d'Alsace*)

Daily *Alsace*

year	circulation	% bilingual edition	% French edition
1950	88.584	66.4	33.6
1955	90.594	61.42	38.58
1960	95.088	53.15	46.85
1965	129.009	49.02	50.98
1970	136.183	37.64	62.36
1975	131.024	29.73	70.27
1980	136.096	19.83	80.17
1985	135.936	16.64	83.36
1990	134.205	10.50	89.5
2003	126.296	4.8 %	95.2

Sources: Office de Justification de la Diffusion (circulation justification service) (data provided by *Alsace*) and ADBR 1959W93

Since 2002, the bilingual edition of *Alsace* no longer exists in the form of the co-existence of the two languages in the same journal, but by the addition to the monolingual edition in French of a daily 8-page supplement in German.

3.1.2. Radio

Created in 1925 by a private body, radio would become a state monopoly in 1930 and remain so until the beginning of the 1980s. Apart from the national programmes (in French) that it broadcast, it also broadcast local and regional programmes that were, from the outset, in French, in German or in dialect, at variable rates for each of the languages and with a variable spread between standard German and dialect. Radio retained, throughout the whole of this period, a more political role as a broadcaster of the French language. With the arrival of the "free" radios, that is to say private radio stations, and the multiplication of the number of stations, at the beginning of the eighties, French became even more present on the airwaves.

There is now only one radio station, a public one, broadcasting a majority of programmes in dialect.⁶⁰ The large number of stations and the regular changes to the radio programme schedule make it difficult to make a quantitative evaluation of the programmes offered in dialect. The number of listeners, their sociological profiles, the programmes they prefer, etc. are not known.

German and Swiss radio programmes were much listened to throughout the XXth century, without it being possible to quantify the proportion of Alsatian listeners or specify their sociological characteristics.

3.1.3. Television

With the appearance of television in Alsace in 1953, competition between the French and German channels often favoured the German language channel, the sports and entertainment programmes being particularly appreciated. Twenty years later, the French channels had caught up with the German and Swiss channels and programmes broadcast in dialect continued to have good viewing figures. The number of television channels that can be received in Alsace increased considerably at the end of the XXth century, in particular those that broadcast their programmes in French or German. The frequency of the choice of a programme in German, the time spent watching German programmes, etc. are not known.

At the beginning of the XXIst century, the arithmetical average of the duration of broadcasts in dialect on the French public channel which is likely to broadcast programmes in dialect was around 20 minutes per day. The viewing figures for these programmes, compared to the overall rate, are not known.

3.2. Literature

In Alsace, the literature produced by Alsatians continued to be very largely in German until 1939. From the end of the XIXth century onwards a literature in dialect was added to this, in particular in the dramatic and poetic fields. The quality of this dialect production was uneven. Between 1918 and 1939, a literature in French began to break through.

After 1945, on the other hand, literature in French would take on a dimension unseen before then in Alsace, whilst literature produced in German saw an unprecedented decline, in spite of a revival due to authors born between the wars.

⁶⁰ *France Bleu Elsass*

Literary production in dialect was rooted at once in the tradition of pre-1945 writing, but also in a form of revival driven by the changes that took place around 1968. Books published in dialect have only a limited number of readers. When dialectal production is given a high profile in the media by singers, the circulation of the works is notably higher. Texts set to music by *Liedermacher* are therefore probably better known than the written versions. Other literary forms in dialect appeared throughout the second half of the XXth century: cabaret, radio plays, one-man-shows, etc.

4. LANGUAGES IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING

4.1. Framework conditions

4.1.1. The specific nature of Alsatian schools in the French school system⁶¹

The French school system has its specificities compared to the school systems of other countries (Geiger-Jaillet 2004a: 47-48). All primary and secondary schools belong to what is known as an "Académie" or education authority, in this case the Strasbourg Académie, which is an administrative unit in itself. The baccalaureate is taken after 12 years of schooling, the examinations are national and corrected anonymously. France has a large number of private schools, most of them denominational, alongside the state schools. They may or may not be under contract with the National Education ministry.

Two specificities characterise the school system in the Académie de Strasbourg.

- One is national: it is the existence of free, non-compulsory nursery schools, which form an integral part of the primary system. Nursery school has educational and pedagogical objectives: it prepares children from the age of 3 for elementary school. It provides first learning experiences, giving the child skills which will help him to learn to read, write and do arithmetic: language, symbolic, graphic, motor and gestural skills.

The French school system is based on the continuity of a set of educational cycles. It includes four types of schools: nursery school for children aged 3 to 6 years. It should be noted that more than 80 % of children aged 3 years and almost 100 % of children aged 4 to 6 years attend. Elementary school is for children aged 6 to 11 years with 5 years of instruction. Schooling continues with the "college" (junior high school) (4 years), then "lycée" (senior high school), which provides a general or vocational education (3 years).

The second specificity is regional: it is the existence of the early teaching of German, "*regional language, reference language and written language of the Alemannic and Frankish dialects spoken in Alsace*" (Deyon 1985: 10).

97 % of primary school children in schools in Alsace take German, in extensive (one to three hours per week) or immersive form (13 hours of lessons in German). Only 3.6% of pupils at primary school take 3 hours of English in place of German and two schools in Strasbourg offer Portuguese.

1.2. Modern languages in French education

In France as elsewhere, modern foreign languages are an important factor in success in professional and private life. The French have long suffered from the preconceived idea that they are poor language learners, but they are starting to react. It is above all parents and associations

⁶¹ This passage is taken from an article (Morgin 2000: 400 sqq.)

that have pushed for different French governments to introduce the necessary measures, sometimes managing to set up private bilingual schools in a Département several years before those set up by the National Education ministry.

France has recognised several regional languages on its territory, which are the only ones to benefit from parity bilingual education in state elementary schools. A. Tabouret-Keller's article (1997) recounts this evolution from 1951 to 1983. The list of the "linguistic heritage of France" including 75 languages can be found in a report entitled *Les Langues de France* (Cerquiglini, 99) published in April 1999. But the author of the report, B. Cerquiglini, incorporates in his list not only the territorial, patrimonial languages including the dialects of the Langue d'oïl, but also the languages of immigration and the non-territorial languages (Yiddish, Romani, Armenian...). *"It should be noted that only six regional languages out of the ten identified by Cerquiglini are mentioned in the Order of 31 July 2001: the regional languages of Alsace and Moselle, Basque, Breton, Catalan, Corsican, Occitan and the Langues d'oc. These six languages are taught in the three hours a week system and in bilingual schools. Of the Languages d'oïl, only Gallo benefits from official teaching at initiation level."* (Geiger-Jaillet 2005: 132). The primary school syllabuses for the six regional languages selected are published in a "Bulletin officiel" (official journal) (B.O., special issue no. 2 of 19 June 2003). As far as Alsace and Moselle are concerned, it is specified in it that *"The regional language exists in Alsace and in Moselle in two forms, the Alemannic and Frankish dialects spoken in Alsace and in Moselle, German dialects on the one hand, standard German, on the other hand."* German has the status of a regional language in France, in the same way as Basque or Occitan, but, as the *"language of the countries that are our closest neighbours and an important international language, German has a more important extension than other languages of France"* (Académie de Strasbourg 1997: 45).

4.2. Two modern languages for the greatest possible number of pupils

4.2.1. Teaching more languages earlier

France has launched a large-scale programme to provide more modern language teaching at an earlier age for its school-age children. But at the present time, the teaching of foreign languages in France is at risk of being reduced to the English or American language alone as approximately 75% of pupils aged 10/11 years take English, and almost nine out of ten pupils in the collège. The danger is that we will content ourselves with English only, as only one foreign language is compulsory at the baccalauréat. Consequently, only 72.1% of pupils take a 2nd and 11.6 % a third modern language (Francis Goullier, General Inspector, undated). This is the reason why a French researcher at the Collège de France, Claude Hagège, suggested in 1996 in his book *"L'enfant aux deux langues"* that English not be offered at primary school. For if there remains any degree of diversification in language teaching, it is to be found in primary schools. After English, in decreasing order of the number of learners, German, Spanish, Italian and Portuguese are learned in primary school in France.

Since 1999 there have been reference systems for six languages, a sort of pre-syllabus for language teaching in primary schools, dispensed at the rate of at least 90 minutes per week. The Order of 25 January 2002 (J.O. of 10 February 2002) published general language timetables and syllabuses for all the classes (cycle 2 and cycle 3). The teaching syllabuses for modern languages (excluding regional languages) taught in primary schools (Order of 28 June 2002) were published in the official journal, B.O. special issue no. 4 of 29 August 2002. They present the linguistic objectives (notional-functional, morphosyntactic, lexical objectives) and cultural objectives, language by language. Supplements in the form of pedagogical documentation are available for

each European language concerned. One year later, on 30 May 2003, the syllabuses for the regional languages, were also published.

The teaching of a modern language, which has become a subject like any other, has been a part of in the official curriculum in France since 1998. In 2000-2001, more than 54% of primary school teachers were then able to provide one to three hours per week of modern language teaching in their class (Source: *éduscol*). Eventually, all primary school teachers will have to teach a language other than French. This is the reason why their training in the IUFMs (teacher training institutes) has for several years included modules in language and didactics. As far as Alsace is concerned, the early teaching of German is currently offered in accordance with the national instructions, after having been dispensed without this national reference or under cover of the ministerial texts on regional languages.

From 2008 onwards, every child entering the "C.P." (first year of elementary school) will take a modern language, whether it is a "foreign" language, an ethnic language or a regional language, and this either in the "extensive" form of three hours per week, or in a more intensive and bilingual form. At the present time, a first foreign or regional language is already obligatory where its teaching is offered in primary school, the teaching of modern languages having been included in the new primary school curriculum. The official journal B.O., no. 13 of 29 March 2001 specifies for the collège: *"For pupils who did not begin studying English in primary school, this subject will be offered as soon as possible as modern language 2 from the "6^{ème}" (first year of secondary school)."* Such a provision reassures parents and encourages them to choose the "trilingual" class (two languages) for their child. The official objective is of course to ensure that two modern languages are mastered alongside French.

The orientation and programming law on the future of the school system passed by Parliament on 24 March 2005 confirms the previous provisions whilst modifying and extending them: it provides for the generalisation of the teaching of a language in the 3rd year of schooling (8 year olds), then in the 2nd year (7 year olds). All pupils will learn a second language from the "5^{ème}" (2nd year of secondary education) at the collège (pupils aged 12 to 13 years) and will continue learning it throughout their time at collège, then in the lycée (16 to 18 years). The same law, the "Fillon" Law, has fixed objectives in terms of the level to be reached by the end of the collège: level B1 of the European Reference Framework for the first modern language and level A2 for the second language. By the end of the lycée, at 18, this will be level B2 for the first language and level B1+ for the second. Finally, all future primary school teachers will have to take a language paper in the competitive professional examinations from 2006 and will be trained to teach the language.

The determination of the range of languages offered depends strongly on the geographical region and the linguistic policy choices of the education authority at Académie level, but the orientation law of 24 March 2005 provides for measures to remedy this. In each Académie, a newly created modern language teaching committee will be *"responsible for guaranteeing the diversity of the language offer, for the coherence and the continuity of the teaching of the languages offered, for circulating information to the schools, elected representatives, parents and pupils on the language offer, for updating that offer according to the needs identified and for checking that the language offer corresponds to local specificities."* The aim of this law is increase the diversity of the languages taught thanks to different measures: to increase the proportion of pupils taking German to 20 % over five years; to encourage the learning of the local foreign language; to give young people and families better information on the possibilities offered by European or International sections and in general on the language learning possibilities, etc. For the regional languages, the law renews the existing provisions and proposes to consolidate language and

regional culture teaching within the framework of contracts between the State and the local authorities. Such a contract has already existed in Alsace since October 2000.

2.2. The languages offered in Alsace

Alsace has taken a considerable lead in these areas (cf. table 1: the language offer in Alsace). It offers modern languages earlier than in other regions of France, grants them a larger role in vocational education, gives preference to German and thus contributes to the diversification of the language map on French territory.

It could be thought that the generalisation of the 3-hour-a-week formula in German in Alsace is a total success and that it is a model to be exported for language teaching. However, it is necessary to qualify this because there have been problems in implementing this system, of different types:

The methodological and linguistic problems are related to the status of the people teaching the language (cf. part "*Forces et faiblesses des différentes catégories*", IGIN (National Inspectorate) report 2001: 27f.): Young primary school teachers have certainly often "done" German for many years, but their level in the language is not operational, especially orally. It is one thing to know how to write a literary essay in German, but it is quite another to play games in German with six year-old children. Moreover, since the introduction of the single competitive exam in 2002, the best teachers often choose bilingual training, leaving the field of extensive teaching somewhat neglected. The second category of personnel, outside contributors and foreign language assistants, are providing German teaching where the class's own teacher is not able to do so. These are often foreigners, "native speakers", who have a command of the linguistic code, but are not very familiar with the French education system. Furthermore, they come in at fixed times, since they teach several classes, often in several schools, which can sometimes interfere with the teaching day of the class teacher. The class teacher, sometimes present during these language sessions, is frequently unable to reinvest what has been learned by the children at other moments in the week. The IGEN report (2001) then refers to the insufficient contact the pupils have with the language, producing "*modest linguistic results*" and "*excessive expectations that it is necessary to moderate*" (p.11).

The methodological and linguistic problem is accompanied later on by a problem of continuity: as there is no subject content in the foreign language, but only cultural content (festivals, etc....) and especially linguistic content (rhymes, songs, stories), the children's interest fades after a few years, especially when "*the reproduction of fixed formulae plays the largest role, as well as a guided oral production that excludes any personal initiative. Autonomous production is not the priority in language lessons in primary school, and it is true that the spacing of the sessions rarely allows for intensive speaking practice*" (p.16).

We find many children abandoning German as soon as they arrive at secondary school, motivated by an "*effect of weariness in the children and their parents. The entry to secondary school is then the trigger to choose something else. The variety of possibilities offered on arrival in secondary school, particularly in Alsace, disconcerts parents, who then end up making the most conventional choice, namely English as the first foreign language*". (Geiger-Jaillet 2005a: 172-173). Between the offer proposed by the educational authorities and demands of families, there is often a wide gap. This is proof that simple continuity of learning, provided for by the educational authorities, is not enough. It will be necessary to think of other formulae than the simple language lesson x minutes long over x years (cf. IGIN report 2001, which makes some proposals of this kind).

Problems of an administrative nature next: a foreign language having been part of the curriculum since 1989, young primary school teachers are trained in a language and its teaching methods at the IUFM (teacher training institute), but when they take over their classes, they are not (yet) obliged to teach this language. This situation creates a feeling of injustice, some of them being "obliged" by their inspector to teach the language, others not. The foreign language is taking time to become a subject like any other in people's minds.

Finally, pedagogical and didactic problems: at national level, the language syllabuses were only published very late, that is to say several decades after the introduction of German lessons in Alsace. Between 1972, date when German was reintroduced, and the first syllabuses in 1989, there were no official directives, and no support for the production of manuals for the early learning of German⁶². Since 1972, successive manuals have been produced at regional level and used in the schools. However, the specific Alsatian situation with its dialectal background still present in many children, has had the time to fade. The target language is therefore today German as a foreign language, the same German being taught in Strasbourg as in Brest or Bordeaux. The list of manuals used in the Académie confirms this. (<http://www.alsace.iufm.fr/web/ressourc/pedago/discipli/German/resources/manuels/tout.htm>). All the reports highlight it⁶³, teachers are, in this sense, the representatives of a monolingual school. "Very often, the teachers do not take into consideration the fact that the children are dialect speakers because they do not know the "linguistic landscape" of their class." (Huck 2004: 4).

However, numerous advantages persist in the region: Young people in "seconde" (the first year of senior high school) can take the ZMP diploma (*Zentrale Mittelstufenprüfung*) of the Goethe Institute/Inter Nationes; "regional certificates of excellence" have been created in several languages (Geiger-Jaillet 2005a: 189); modern languages have a certain importance in vocational courses, the Abi-Bac course is available in several lycées in the Académie. These efforts at continuity made by the educational authorities are enhanced by the training and recruitment of about fifty future bilingual teachers every year, most of them from the Alsatian school system.

⁶² The first manuals are those of Holderith, 1974. The next ones date from the eighties!

⁶³ Language teaching assessment committee, Académie de Strasbourg education authority, M.A.E.R.I.

- "Ecole élémentaire et préélémentaire", in *Report 1991-92*, June 1992, 6-11

- "Observation de l'enseignement de l'allemand dans des classes de la voie intensive (13h and 6h) et dans des classes de la voie extensive du cycle 2 (3h)", in *Report 1993-94*, sept. 1994, 5-12

- "Evaluation de l'enseignement de l'allemand au CE1 and au CM2", in *Report 1996-97*, Nov. 1997.11-27;

"Evaluation de l'allemand" steering group (Académie de Strasbourg / Marc Bloch University): Evaluation of performances in German of pupils in CM2 (last year of primary school) in Académie de Strasbourg, "extensive" and "parity bilingual" channels (Primary), [October 2002] unpublished.

Tab.1 The languages offered in Alsace 2003/04

Age		"Extensive" teaching of a modern language (1)			"Intensive" teaching, bilingual with parity of hours French-German	
		German	English			
3 years	<i>Nursery school</i>	Large section 5%			Nursery school 5197 pupils 7.8%	
4 years						
5 years						
6 years	<i>Elementary school</i>	Cycle 2	25.4 %	4.3%	Elementary 5402 pupils 4.8%	
7 years						
8 years		Cycle 3	95.8 %			
9 years						
10 years						
		German	English	Trilingual or bi-lingual sections Pupils/ %	Bilingual education with parity of hours	European sections
11 years 6ème	<i>Collège</i>	50.6 %	48.9 %	5488 pu/ 23, 8%	26 "collèges" (junior high schools) 74 classes 1083 pupils 1.13%	<i>European sections (2)</i> German: 47 English: 30 Spanish: 5 Total: 82
12 years 5ème		49.8 %	49.7 %	5351 pu 23.6 %		
13 years 4ème		50.1 %	49, 3 %	4409 pu 14.8%		
14 years 3ème		50.5 %	48, 8%	5351 ^{pu} 24%		
15 years	<i>General and technical lycées</i>	German L1+ L2		38.3 %	ABI-BAC section (pupils are awarded the German Abitur and the French baccalaureate) 8 lycées	<i>European sections (3)</i> German: 17 English: 23 Spanish: 5
16 years		English L1 + L2		47 %		
		Spanish		0.3 %		

17 years	<i>Professional lycée</i>	other languages (3)	0.3 %		474 pupils (1.2%) Regional (4)		Italian: 1 Total: 46 <i>European sections (5)</i>
16 years		CAP/BEP	Germ	Eng	CAP/BEP	1122 pupils	
17 years			43.7 %	55.8 %			
18 years		Bac Pro	42.8 %	56.8 %	BAC PRO	473 pupils	German: 13 English: 7 Other: 0 Total: 20
19 years							

(Figures collected by A. Geiger-Jaillet and D. Morgen, on the basis of the statistics published each year by the education authority in its Information bulletin)

- (1) As a percentage, the proportion of pupils concerned
- (2) Number of European section classes in the "4^{ème}" and "3^{ème}" (3rd and 4th years of junior high school)
- (3) Number of European sections in lycées (3 years)
- (4) Regional label "Knowledge of German in the professional environment"
- (5) Number of European sections in BEP courses (1st and 3rd year of senior high school) and in Bac Pro (2nd and 3rd year of senior high school).

4.3. Which language(s) for bilingual classes in Alsace?

For a very long time, the system has been clear: it was up to the family to pass on the dialect, and up to the school to teach German, taking advantage if possible of learners' skills. In fact, the school does not consider itself concerned by the transmission of dialect. Why ?

"Whatever the period considered and whatever the conditions of teaching the regional language in primary school may have been, the education system has always taken the standard language as the object of teaching, the dialects being considered, as elsewhere in the German geolinguistic sphere, as purely oral varieties and/or not normed corresponding to the standard. The German language thus appears explicitly in the regulations, at ministerial or local education authority level, published at different times between 1920 and 2002" (Teaching syllabuses, 30 May 2003/ BO (official journal) of 19 June 2003).

The education authorities in Alsace have, at different times, authorised, encouraged or developed the teaching of German. The teaching of the language, scheduled from the third year of the elementary school, places value on the standard form to the detriment of dialect and only begins when the learning of French is sufficiently consolidated. Such a conception is in accordance with the theories on the learning of a second language accepted at the time: the second language can only appear once the first is well structured.

Between 1972 and 1990, the teaching system in place in Alsace did not aim to give access to a true receptive and productive bilingualism, but simply to a good command of the German language. Since the 1980s, it has been a continuous and coherent system, based on the continuity of the offer from primary school through to the end of obligatory schooling using teaching methods that vary during the school years in general and vocational education (see table 1). The intention is to reinforce the natural bilingualism of the region by developing pupils' command of German, and to this effect a system of multiple imbrications and bridges is used. But this system excludes any form of bilingual education (Deyon, Conference of June 1985, Colmar). Thus, Alsatian dialect may have a place in nursery school for the reception of dialect-speaking children, but only to facilitate the progressive and rapid change to French. This option reflects the fear that a more sustained presence of dialect in school would compromise the chances of French. But a social demand for bilingual education began to appear in about 1989, conveyed by associations. Parents were met with a clear refusal on the part of the education authorities in Alsace.

Since 1992, the orientation has been different. Led by a chief education officer ("recteur") favourable to this form of education, the development of bilingual education has been rapid: the National Education has tried to make up for previous failings as far as possible and calm people down. In the form of partial immersion, based on the parity of the languages involved, public bilingual education has progressively spread across the whole of Alsace.

The objective of Alsace, as it was again expressed in the Contract concerning the regional language policy for the education system (2000-2006) signed on 18 October 2000, is in effect to root school bilingualism in the dialectal and standard varieties of the regional language. *"It is not only the utilitarian motivations for learning a language that count...taking account of dialect skills is an important issue that it is necessary for reasons of mutual respect"* (Geiger-Jaillet 1999: 163). The French-speaking or German-speaking children or children speaking ethnic languages must be made aware of the richness of the specific dialect forms, present in the place names and in the literature, as well as the linguistic expressions of the cultural heritage, which we encounter in the professional sphere and in daily life. This heritage can be an interesting way for children to discover the history of Alsace, finding in it cultural elements with different origins, Old German, Swiss, Polish, French, Italian, North African or Turkish, according to the different waves of immigration into Alsace, when dialect still played a role as a cultural integrator, which it does not play today. A return "to the sources" may be

useful, for all the surveys⁶⁴ show that teachers do not generally know the linguistic profile of their classes (cf. Huck 2004). But the taking into account of dialect and its use in bilingual education is encouraged⁶⁵ (Académie de Strasbourg, 1997: 67-68).

4.3.1. Bilingual education or parity sites

4.3.1.1. Evolution and pupil numbers

The demand for bilingual education was expressed for the first time in 1989 by a few parents, who had obtained some information on arrangements existing in other regions of France, starting with the Basque country and who filed with the Académie Inspector a request for the opening of a bilingual class in Colmar. But, faced with the latter's repeated refusal, then those of the "recteur" (chief education officer), the families formed an association during the 1991 year, *l'association pour le bilinguisme dès les classes maternelles* (A.B.C.M.) (association for bilingual education from nursery school onwards). This association opened the first bilingual classes in Ingersheim (Haut-Rhin) aided by grants from local authorities as well as outside subsidies, including grants from the Bosch Foundation and funds from the European Commission. The pressure that was exerted on the National Education ministry was so strong that from the beginning of the 1992 school year, the "recteur" opened about ten bilingual classes with parity of hours in nursery schools within the Académie's remit.

At the present time, bilingual education concerns almost 12,000 pupils aged from 3 to 11 years in public and private schools under contract in Alsace (Tab.1). The evolution of pupil numbers has been progressive and is constantly rising: in about twelve years we have gone from 11 nursery classes (220 pupils) to 525 classes in nursery and elementary schools (11,662 pupils) in 2004 (school year 2004/05). Several ministerial texts published between 2001 and 2003 have formed a solid base for bilingual education. They have been consolidated by the new orientation and programming law of 24 March 2005 presented above.

A list of bilingual elementary schools is available for each Departement (Bas-Rhin / Haut-Rhin) on the websites of the IUFM⁶⁶ and the Académie de Strasbourg⁶⁷.

Continuity of bilingual education is guaranteed in the collèges. New collèges are opening bilingual classes each year when the pupils from the elementary schools reach secondary school age. The increase in numbers is gradual, but the proportion of "bilingual" pupils is still low, standing at 1.5% of pupils in college in 2004-05 (cf. table 1). In 2004/2005, 1400 pupils were following a bilingual curriculum in 32 collèges (out of almost 140 in the Académie).

It is possible to pursue a bilingual education in the lycée in the ABI-BAC classes (Geiger-Jaillet 2005a: 195-196) in general education establishments. The word ABI-BAC is made up from the German *Abitur* and the French "baccalaureate". In Alsace, 474 lycée pupils were preparing the ABIBAC in 2003-04 in 8 schools, which represents 1.2% of lycée students. The list of "collèges" with bilingual sites and lycées with Abi-bac sections is available on the site of the IUFM d'Alsace (2003-04 report).

⁶⁴ Cf. the different reports of the Commission académique d'évaluation des langues, Académie de Strasbourg, M.A.E.R.I.: "Evaluation des sites bilingues à la maternelle et à l'école élémentaire", in *Report 1992-93*, Sept. 1993, 7-17; "Evaluation des classes bilingues paritaires et des classes à 6 heures au cycle 2", in *Report 1994-95*, Sept. 1995, 7-16; "Les acquis en allemand (GS, CP, CE1)", in *Report 1995-96*, Sept. 1996, 21-43; Evaluation of the competence in German of pupils in "bilingual" CM2 classes (final year of primary school), [1998] *report unpublished*.

⁶⁵ Education authority circular of 20 December 1994

⁶⁶ http://www.alsace.iufm.fr/web/connaitr/tout_cfeb.htm

⁶⁷ http://www.ac-strasbourg.fr/sections/espace_germanophone/language_regionale/the_language_regionale/primaire/teaching_bilingu/view

4.3.1.2. Underlying principles

Bilingual education is based on six guiding principles⁶⁸. Briefly, they are:

- early learning;
- continuity;
- volunteer families;
- the "one teacher, one language" rule;
- parity between the languages;
- the instrumentalisation of the language.

The fundamental principle is that of the early acquisition of the languages, at an age where the plasticity of the brain and the absence of inhibitions and prejudices, make it much easier to learn than at a later age. Researchers like Jean Petit have popularised the idea the correct acquisition of phonemes without an accent takes place up to the age of 6 or 7 years. This notion has proved to be correct: where the education authorities have started a bilingual curriculum after this age – which was the case in 1992/93 or in the private schools -, many children proved unable to get rid of their French accent.

But other factors also come into play: the need to learn the language through other subjects (this is this what is known as "instrumentalisation") makes it necessary to have a certain level in the language. To teach non-language subjects in the second language, the understanding of the language in everyday situations and school situations must have been mastered, as well as the beginnings of oral production in the language. Three years of nursery school are not too much to set up these skills. But the early learning rule requires good prior information of families, long enough before they enrol their child in nursery school.

The voluntary principle has been applied in Alsace since the bilingual education development programme was introduced. Indeed, the Académie de Strasbourg guarantees families the continuity of the bilingual curriculum through elementary school then in collège and lycée. For the continuity of the offer to be effective, the bilingual network resembles an upside down pyramid. Several nursery schools feed an elementary school; several elementary schools feed a collège, several collèges a lycée. The creation of a bilingual site depends at once on the existence of an offer and demand. The voluntary principle implies the circulation of objective information to parents. The families are volunteers, but the teachers who take on the German part of the lessons are also volunteers. Both children and teachers involved in bilingual education can leave it if they so wish, and return to the "monolingual" system. One of the problems is that the teachers who teach the French part (13 hours out of 26 hours in a week) are the only ones not to be able to choose to become involved, to be the "French part" of a bilingual class and consequently they do not have their "own" class. Nor are they specifically trained for this task.

The bilingual system is based on the Grammont-Ronjat principle, "one person – one language", or "one teacher – one language". This guarantees a minimum time of presence of the second language and favours the language input, obliging children and teachers to think in the second language and to search for the most appropriate expression⁶⁹. The child learns when he is obliged to paraphrase and reformulate. The principle is justified therefore by a concern for effectiveness, but also for reasons relating to the linguistic context. Indeed, the regional situation is characterised by the dominance of French, the principle of the *reference teacher* guarantees and increases the *input* of the second language. Finally, the child,

⁶⁸ A discussion in German of these principles can be found in Geiger-Jaillet (2004b).

⁶⁹ This passage contains the conclusions of the Round Table on the theme "One teacher, one language? - One teacher, two languages" held in Guebwiller in May 2004 (Morgen/ Carol 2004).

especially the young child, can identify the language with a person, which helps him to structure his daily life at school.

At elementary school, the "one teacher, one language" principle has its constraints. It constitutes extra work for the teachers, who found themselves teaching in two different classes. This is increased further when the two classes are not in the same school. Requests have been made for the recognition of these specific constraints and they deserve to be examined: they deserve a response in terms of remuneration or reorganisation of working hours, and consultation.

The principle of parity between the languages grants equal dignity to both languages and expresses this recognition by giving them equal status in the school timetable. But as school only represents about one third of a child's waking life, it is not possible to claim that the child is being brought to the same level in the two languages and in any case not before the end of obligatory schooling. The crucial issue for local authorities, but also the school and the parents, is how to find ways of increasing the immersion during the child's leisure time.

Parity between the languages also has another meaning in the development of the subject, as each of the languages supports the other. Very quickly, what has been learned in one language will rub off positively on the other, in particular when the child is formulating hypotheses about the way languages work. This means that some active collaboration between the teacher in charge of teaching French and the teacher in charge of the teaching German is necessary. This supposes first of all that there be some common training, which could take place during joint placements of the two teachers who will be working together. Such an approach, seldom implemented so far, would contribute considerably to consultation between teachers, who could create common tools for evaluation and practice.

Bilingual education implies that certain subjects are taught through the medium of the language second, in this case German. The second language becomes an instrument of learning, in the same way as the mother tongue. What are the subjects taught in the regional language? The ministerial texts leave it up to teachers to decide, subject to the approval of the Académie's inspectors. The circulars put out by the Académie in 1993 and 1994 themselves have nothing to say on this subject. Only an accompanying text distributed with the circular of 20 December 1994 proposed a division of the subjects to be taught in German and in French, which has been adopted by the bilingual sites. What are the recommendations given in 1994/95 and still valid today? They propose

- to teach in French: French, history
- to teach in German: German, mathematics, geography, sciences and technology
- to teach in either language, at the initiative of the school teams: art, music, physical education and sport.

The teaching of a non-linguistic subject supposes the provision of the corresponding manuals in German. Schools may have maths (1st and 2nd year), geography (3rd, 4th and 5th year) books and language tools. They often use, for reading, the German manuals and works of children's literature.

If we consult the list of books currently on the Alsatian "market", we are forced to note that some of them seem to be partly out of date or not in compliance with present pedagogical organisation.

4.3.1.3. Evaluations

Primary bilingual classes are regularly subject to a rigorous system of evaluation.

First conclusion: the representation of the social categories in the bilingual classes is close to that in the schools in the regional sample. The only notable difference lies in the over-representation of white-collar workers and managers and in a lesser representation of manual

workers in the bilingual classes (22.8 % instead of 35.7 %). These two parallel observations refute the accusation of elitism sometimes made against bilingual education.

Second conclusion: the pupils in the bilingual classes do as well in oral or written French and in the other subjects, and in some cases, even better. This information results from analyses made, on behalf of the Académie's evaluation committee, of the national tests taken at the beginning of the school year in CE2 (3rd year of elementary school) and 6^{ème} (first year of secondary school). "*The children in bilingual classes have and maintain a level of success in learning that is higher than the national average; taken as a whole, they do not show any weakness in any area*" (Morgen, 2002). This general conclusion must be interpreted: bilingual education is not in itself a miracle remedy for doing better at school: certain children have difficulties, but "bilinguals" are distinguished by their success in the more difficult types of activities and this in French and mathematics. Bilingual classes do not cherry pick their pupils, but are made up of a range of pupils comparable to that of other classes.

Third conclusion: success in *mathematics*, no doubt linked to the form of teaching and to the need to ensure comprehension (clear presentation of the exercises and explanation of the instructions), is a general feature. "The instrumental use of the languages dedramatises acquisitional deviances and allows an optimum deployment of the natural learning strategies" (Petit, 2000: 285). Children acquire better skills in methodology, and the qualities of observation, attention and initiative, as well as qualities of openness to others. The best successes of children enrolled in bilingual classes are therefore connected to the style of teaching: the teacher feels, much more than in monolingual classes, obliged to consolidate by any means the comprehension of the exercises, the wordings, the instructions and to check them. Numerous studies on bilingualism also show that the confrontation with two distinct codes develops specific conceptual abilities, for example of inference, of processing clues gathered and information.

Fourth conclusion: in German, 11-year old pupils show good comprehension of oral and written language. They have mastered narration, also reading. Positional syntax and the tenses have also been acquired. On the other hand, written production still shows weaknesses. If the children know how to use connectors and the complexity initiators, the morphology of the verb, as well as the rection of the verb are sources of difficulty. To avoid the fossilisation of certain forms, that is the fixing in oral practice of incorrect forms, a specific pedagogy to deal with the structuration of the language is necessary.

The criticism made of bilingual education is to have opted for German and not for Alsatian. The regional language, some say, is not German, but Alsatian dialect.

The decline of the Alsatian dialects is linked to the fall in use and the drop in transmission, but also to the ever greater distance from German, which is evolving in its own direction. The Alsatian dialect needs German to "recharge its batteries", to acquire new words or to express new realities. For bilingual education, the lesson must be this: Alsatian dialect for speaking or for some of the speaking, standard German for speaking and writing. A recent research project shows, moreover, from transcriptions of lessons that the question is not so much "German or Alsatian", but that the teachers analysed use each of the registers for specific purposes, whether they have in front of them dialect-speaking children or not. For the price of an official language in the system, German, the children widen their verbal repertoire with dialectal forms, at least in their receptive component. "*The use of dialect by several of the teachers observed is interesting to observe: does it mark, in these teachers, a desire, as is often the case with dialect, to establish complicity? To mark a certain distance from a German language deemed to be too rigid or to create a moment of humour? To remind the children, more or less consciously, of the nature and origin of their bilingualism (in the*

family)? Other analyses or interviews with teachers will need to confirm this hypothesis. But, in any case, dialect refers back to a language still practised in the family or around the school and occurs in moments of pedagogical respite: situations before or after the lessons as such; expressions of irritation, humour or jokes on the part of the teacher as well as mood changes. Dialect is also used as a "last chance strategy", when other means of obtaining responses on the part of the children have already failed. In more intimate situations, comparable to the use of dialect in the restricted family circle, the teacher may also use dialect when talking to a small group of children, or even to one child in the class in particular. He is then more relaxed and shows it verbally." (Geiger-Jaillet, 2005b)

It seems then eminently desirable to have the two components of the regional language play a role in the teaching, even if it is difficult: biculturalism in this region is closely linked to the command of the dialectal varieties of the regional language. But teachers currently feel ill equipped when it comes to teaching in dialect: not that the circular encourage them not to do so, not that the tools are lacking (see the census and the analysis made by Dominique Huck at the conference on the regional language in March 2003 and available on the site of the IUFM d'Alsace). Longer training would also be necessary in order to be able to carry out some analytical work on the relationship between French, German and the different dialectal varieties, as recommended by the authors of the book *L'élève dialectophone en Alsace et ses langues* (Huck/ Laugel / Laugner 1999).

4.3.2.1. Bilingual teacher training for primary at the IUFM d'Alsace

The University institute of teacher training of Alsace (IUFM d'Alsace) has offered bilingual teacher training since the beginning of the 1994-5 academic year. In the absence of a specific competitive professional exam, the first primary school teachers were initially, until 2002, those who had passed the general course and volunteered for bilingual training and were accepted on the bilingual course after interviews to check their skills. The IUFM trained 119 of them between 1994 and 2001, or an average of about fifteen per year.

Things changed with the creation of the special competitive exam in 2002. In the first year of the IUFM, the students, selected by a multiple choice questionnaire⁷⁰ testing their competence in German with simple and non-eliminatory checking of their practice of Alsatian dialect, are accepted for the regional training course (64 places) and on it prepare the "special competitive exam for primary teachers in charge of the teaching of and in the regional language"⁷¹. Those who pass the exam follow the specific bilingual training course in their second year. The "regional course" is taught at the *Centre de formation aux enseignements bilingues* (bilingual teacher training centre) (CFEB) in Guebwiller (Morgin 2004a). From 2002 to 2005, the IUFM d'Alsace trained 134 bilingual primary school teachers, or an average of 45 PE2s per year. The newly qualified PE2s are all appointed to bilingual posts, more than 80% to "one teacher, one language" posts with 2 x 13 hrs in German in two different classes; less than 10%⁷² to "one teacher, two language" posts that is to say 13 hrs in French + 13 hrs in German, either in the same class, or in two different classes. These teachers are trained specifically for bilingual teaching⁷³, but the job description of their posts officially given by

⁷⁰ cf. http://www.alsace.iufm.fr/web/entrer/QCM%202004_web.pdf

⁷¹ Insert in BO (official journal) no. 19 of 30 April 2002. Decree and Order of 3 January 2002⁷¹, Circular no. 2002-104 of 30-4-2002.

⁷² The figure of 6% was put forward by the education authority in May 2004.

⁷³ The training course is described in a brochure dating from 2002.
<http://www.alsace.iufm.fr/web/connaitr/journaux/bilingue02.pdf>

the Académie Inspectorate simply refers to them as "PEs", primary school teachers, without recognising their special skills, which is not very satisfactory.

An entirely binational specific course, the "integrated course", is offered by the University of Upper Alsace and by the *Pädagogische Hochschule* of Freiburg from the second year of higher education. It takes place both in France and in Germany. The students on this course join the IUFM-CFEB after taking their bachelor's degree ("licence") and the first German *Staatsexamen*. They then follow the regional course, but, after the competitive exam, again benefit from pedagogical training in both countries (Morgin 2004b).

Details of the content of the training course may be consulted on the site of the IUFM d'Alsace (http://www.alsace.iufm.fr/web/former/form_bil/2eme_annee/tout_contenus.htm).

The primary bilingual teacher training courses at the IUFM d'Alsace have already been the subject of several publications (cf. bibliography). For the future, three main orientations must be given to the training:

a) The language training must no longer be just the improvement of the linguistic skills so as to teach non-language subjects better in German. It must also render the teacher capable of teaching the oral and written language (reading and written expression), as he would in French.

b) The child in a bilingual class works in two languages, with two teachers. What the child learns in one language, he reinvests easily in the other, but he needs to be helped. A concerted approach to the languages involved is necessary, and this supposes that the teachers involved cooperate, and requires in part the joint training of French and regional language teachers. Furthermore, the teachers themselves are not clear about the use of the children's first language, nor are the trainers at the IUFM. It must be said that in spite of a few research articles such as Butzkamm's (1996, 2000), the children's L1, French, is still too often considered as an "enemy" in the German classroom, to be banned completely. There is research, however, that shows that it is possible to take judicious advantage of the L1, in order to render the children bi-lingual (Krechel 2004, Helbig 1998, ...).

c) France would gain from developing integrated bilingual teacher training, of which the Freiburg-Mulhouse-Guebwiller integrated course described by D.Morgen (2004b) is a good example. For the teacher the best equipped to teach in the second language is a bilingual teacher, if possible a German mother tongue speaker perfectly competent in the language of the country where he is going to work, in this case French, and trained to teach in both languages, the opposite being true for Baden-Wurttemberg. Binational training courses for future teachers are still too few and far between (Geiger-Jaillet 2004c). In consultation with its German neighbour, and within the framework of the Franco-German "roadmap" of the Poitiers Protocol 2003, it is in France's interest to facilitate in practise and in the careers of binational teachers from one country to the other, whilst maintaining their years of service benefits and pension rights. The planned trinational masters is a step in this direction (cf. Morgin 2005).

In order to improve the training in the IUFM, a number of proposals are made in Geiger-Jaillet/ Morgen (2005b).

4.3.2.2. Bilingual teacher training for secondary

The bilingual teacher training for secondary teachers is known as the *option européenne et bilingue (OEB)*. It has been offered at the IUFM d'Alsace since 1994 in a

choice of three languages, German, English or Spanish, the biggest group still being the German-speaking group, ahead of the English-speakers and the Spanish-speakers. Only a few French IUFMs, such as those in Guebwiller, Rennes or Grenoble, offer this type of training for secondary school teachers.

Tab.2 Number of teachers of non-language subjects trained in Alsace

Languages of the training	German	English	Spanish	Total
Total 1994 to 2004	138	78	27	243

Unlike the "regional" training course for primary teachers, the training for secondary has remained optional, chosen after passing one of the recruitment exams, in which only candidates with language skills can be selected. The training is complementary, and the extra hours are estimated at 100. But in the absence of a joint language + subject CAPES (teacher training certificate), it is difficult to predict and stabilise the number of candidates in each subject.

The training, in its specifically bilingual part, includes ⁷⁴

- Continuous advanced language work throughout the training and the placements.
- Didactic training specific to the teaching of the subject in the language: methods for training in language production; relationship between the non-language discipline and the language.
- Transverse training within the framework of transverse training modules: information on the European curricula, comparison of educational systems...
- A teaching practice of 2 to 3 weeks in a school in the country of the language.
- If possible, a period of accompanied teaching practice in a European or bilingual section.
- The writing of a professional dissertation which must take into account the teaching practice abroad and/or the teaching practice in a European or bilingual section and which will be presented at an oral in the target language (German, English or Spanish).

The teachers who qualify on these courses may then teach in European sections which offer different non-language subjects in different languages, in bilingual Franco-German "colleges", in "Abibac" "lycée" sections (Franco-German). The National Education ministry may require them to teach anywhere in France, but "OEB" teachers may ask for priority to stay in Alsace.

We note the fundamental difference between a generalist primary teacher recruited with a coefficient in a language through a specific "regional" competitive exam, and a specialist secondary subject teacher who can only be interested in this type training after he has passed the secondary professional exam. The question arises for both categories of whether the number of teachers trained and if their level (both in the language, and in the subject or subjects) is adequate.

⁷⁴ http://www.alsace.iufm.fr/web/former/form_bil/2dg_forminit/page01.htm

After two years in operation, a first assessment of the new bilingual PE2 (primary) "regional course", reveals that the so-called special competitive exam is not specific enough, as experience shows that it is possible to pass the special exam with average, and even mediocre marks in the language, as long as you do well in the "flagship" papers, French and mathematics. The solution would seem to be to have the candidates take in the regional language at least one of the admission exam papers, the mathematics paper, and another admissibility test, history and geography, for example (cf. Geiger-Jaillet/ Morgin 2005b).

For the language paper, a guided commentary of an education-related text, the solution once again would be to reinforce the professional aspect with an analysis of pedagogical documents or pupil's work and a lesson plan linked to the documents or the needs of the pupils.

4.3.2.3. Influences of the European context

Through the family or school, bilingualism is a daily reality for a growing number of children in Europe. Recent research today allows us highlight this bilingual perspective, and academic institutions, from nursery school to university, are reacting by offering new courses (cf. Geiger-Jaillet 2005a). In the context of the Bologna process, French and European universities are undergoing some great changes (cf. Dietrich-Chénel 2004). This obviously has implications in France, on the training of primary and secondary teachers in the IUFMs. One move to bring France in line with Europe has been the "semestrialisation" of French universities, which the IUFMs may also adopt in the long run. Bilingual training for private or association schools has also been introduced over the last few years.

Border regions like Alsace have a role to play as precursors in the field of bi- and multilingualism in schools, as the significant title of R. Denk's latest publication shows (2004) *Nach Europa unterwegs: Grenzüberschreitende Modelle der Lehrerbildung im Zeichen europäischer Mehrsprachigkeit*. We have seen in the last few years a rapprochement between the teacher training systems in France and Germany. More and more university training courses are moving towards a subject/language combination for the training of secondary teachers and specific recruiting for primary, as is the case at the IUFM d'Alsace. The universities are now making their students aware of these training possibilities at an earlier stage, working with the IUFM, and offering joint cross-border training schemes, allowing some of the teaching practices to take place in the neighbouring country within the Upper Rhine area (Geiger-Jaillet 2003). A trinational teaching masters with a professional component and a research component is currently being drawn up (cf. Morgin 2005). These are some of the changes made possible thanks to the proximity of the places involved, and the political will of politicians (Upper Rhine Conference, Colingua, Eucor) and academics.

4.3.2. Other bilingual models

Alongside the "extensive" system (IV2) and the "immersion" system (IV3) used for the teaching of languages in nursery and primary schools, Alsace also has other models of language teaching, some of which also exist in other education authorities. These teaching models are distinguished by the age of the beginners; by the type and prestige of the schools in which they are offered, and by the integration or not of subject content in the second language (Geiger-Jaillet 2004a: 55-56).

4.3.2.1. L.C.O./ E.L.C.O.

The teaching of L.C.O. / E. L.C.O. (**Teaching of languages and cultures of origin**) has existed in France since 1973, and is a minimum response on the part of the school institution to children who are most often bilingual or in the process of becoming bilingual, and from immigrant or migrant families. The scheme in itself is not really bilingual, it merely

aims to attribute value to the languages of immigration. Thanks to the L.C.O. scheme, the latter are accorded a place in schools. Certain of the children's countries of origin such as Italy, Spain, Portugal, Tunisia, Morocco, Algeria, Turkey are linked to France by contract (Hélot/ Young 2000). These countries provide approximately 1,400 teachers in France and pay them. In exchange France sends teachers of French as a foreign language ("F.L.E.") to these countries and provides other benefits within the framework of the "*francophonie*" (promotion of French abroad) schemes, where the countries are concerned. Approximately 120,000 children are following these free lessons voluntarily in France. However, this scheme teaches the national languages, which are not necessarily those spoken in the families (Turkish instead of Kurdish, literary Arabic instead dialectal Arabic, literary Arabic instead of Berber, Italian instead of Sardinian or Sicilian, Spanish instead of Catalan etc.). The lessons take place outside of school hours or are integrated into the school week, but in this case, the children must leave their class group for a few hours a week. Even if the children are not particularly pleased to have these specific hours in their mother or national tongue, at least the latter has an official existence and is not relegated only to the family environment. In fact, the L.C.O. lessons are good for integration in the long term, they have positive effects on the attitude of the children towards languages, their desire to learn, their motivation for going to school, factors which in the end are important for their success from the outset in their school careers.

These lessons offered under the auspices of the National Education ministry, exist especially in primary schools, and are not very developed in secondary, where barely 1 % of the children living in Alsace benefit from L.C.O teaching, although the languages (Arabic, Turkish etc.) can be offered as L2 and even L1. But it must be admitted that by diversifying the language offer in secondary education, the numbers on each type of course are reduced. It is up to parents to decide if their child will take a language within the framework of the "modern foreign language" (L.V.E.) system, or a regional language in the "regional language and culture" scheme (L.C.R.) or in the L.C.O. scheme for the national languages of countries of origin. Deciding in full knowledge of the facts, requires good prior information on the language learning possibilities offered by the French education system.

4.3.2.2. International classes

International sections in elementary school were opened in France about thirty years ago, for a more and more international public. These sections only exist in certain large cities where there are European institutions or administrations, or international companies. The objective is threefold (Fifth Conference at Saint-Germain-en-Laye, 2000: 4): to allow foreign families expatriated in France to maintain the language and the culture of their children whilst adding the language and the culture of the host country; to allow French children not to lose the language and culture acquired in a country they have lived in, after their return to France; to allow the children of binational couples a dual education in language and culture. The international classes in Strasbourg were the first to open in 1979, two years before the publication of the national decrees⁷⁵.

The rules provide that that these classes must contain at least 50% of French children and 25% foreign children. It is thus believed that there is a benefit in mixing the different mother tongue groups, but the fact of placing together two or three language communities in

⁷⁵ Decree no. 81-594 du 11 May 1981; Order of 11 May 1981 (published in the J.O. of 19 May 1981 and in the B.O. no. 22 of 4 June 1981. International education in Strasbourg, see documents in English, French and German on the site http://www.ac-strasbourg.fr/sections/ouverture_aux_langue/offre_dteaching/view

one class favours cultural and intercultural exchanges, but not individual multilingualism. Paradoxically, French occupies the dominant place in these international classes because it is often the only language the children have in common.

Many International sections differentiate the language groups according to the linguistic level of the children: "National teaching" is mainly for foreign children with at least one parent who speaks the language chosen as the first language (family bilingualism). The method used is that of mother tongue teaching and the school manuals are most often those used in the country of origin. "Special teaching" is for French-speaking children who have benefited from an initiation in English or German at nursery school for example; the children then continue practising this language with a foreign language approach. Children of different languages and cultures come together for the National Education system's subject curriculum in the same class group, but they are separated for lessons in languages other than French. There is no functional use of the language, for no subjects are taught in any language other than French, in primary schools, at any rate. The foreign language (or second mother tongue for the children who are bilingual by birth) is therefore only the subject of language lessons and not used as a vehicle for the transmission of subject knowledge in the International sections in primary schools.

The Organisation du Baccalauréat International (OBI), a non-profit making organisation created in 1968 and based in Geneva, runs the schools authorised to award the international baccalaureate. In 2002-03, there were 1464 schools in 115 countries (statistics for 30.06.2003) authorised by the OBI. The foreign teachers in the International sections must be qualified according to the rules in their countries of origin, but it is not rare for them to take the professional exams in France so that they can obtain permanent posts.

In 1999-2000, 10,194 pupils in France were enrolled in 20 state schools with International sections (Fifth Conference 2000: 84-85). There are no national statistics for all the international classes, public and private included. By way of example, in the international classes in Strasbourg, 180 pupils were enrolled in six nursery classes in 2003-04 (= 0.27%), and 743 in the elementary classes of the *Ecole Internationale Robert Schuman* and the *Ecole du Conseil des XV* (year 2002-03, =0.01%), the two elementary schools with international classes in Strasbourg. In Strasbourg, the International sections are free for the families, unlike other international schools in France. Funding is provided jointly by the Académie de Strasbourg, the City of Strasbourg, the Departement of the Bas-Rhin and the Alsace Region and certain of the children's countries of origin. The recent orientation and programming law on the future of schools of 24 March 2005, proposes to create at least one grouping of schools including at least two International sections in different languages, that is to extend the system to all the Académies.

In the meantime, on a private initiative, an international school offering a full curriculum of teaching in English⁷⁶ for the young children of primary school age (6 to 11 years) was created in Strasbourg in 2003. Another English-language private school taking children from 3 to 15 years, the "Strasbourg International School"⁷⁷, has existed in Strasbourg since 1995.

⁷⁶ The International School at Lucie Berger

⁷⁷ <http://www.strasbourgis.org/>

4.3.2.3. The Eurodistrict school model

On the 40th anniversary of the Elysée Treaty on 22 January 2003, the French President Jacques Chirac and the German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder undertook to support "*the creation of a Strasbourg-Kehl Eurodistrict [centre] (...) with the aim of exploring new forms of cooperation and to accommodate the European institutions*"⁷⁸. Not long afterwards, in October 2003, a citizens' initiative, grouped under the name *Forum citoyen Eurodistrict* was created.⁷⁹ Since then, several projects have been grafted onto the Forum, including that of a bilingual radio station and a Franco-German school. The territory of the Eurodistrict has now been defined: it is that of the Ortenau district and the Urban Community of Strasbourg (CUS), thus guaranteeing proportionality with approximately 400,000 inhabitants on either side of the Rhine on the territory of this new Eurodistrict.

A cross-border association, *Ecole-Eurodistrict-Schule* was set up in Strasbourg in February 2004 with the aim of founding and developing a Franco-German bilingual and bicultural school, a school with two "mother" tongues. This association, founded by parents of pupils, teachers and educators, wishes to see large-scale participation and involvement of parents in school life, on the basis of experiences and courses existing in the school systems in France and in Germany as well as on the development of new concepts. The future Eurodistrict school plans to teach several modern languages from an early age, not only for the fundamental acquisition of the linguistic basics and phonemes, but above all to foster an early awareness in the child of other cultures, civilisations, mentalities, traditions. Languages represent an essential key in this concept.

What has been behind this demand is the conclusion that the schools available at the present time in Strasbourg and in the border Baden region do not satisfy the founders of the association, especially when they are binational and bicultural families. The complaints concern the following points in particular:

The level of German as a second language in the state bilingual schools in Alsace is not satisfactory for children for whom German is one of their first languages. All the school subjects are not offered in both languages, even alternately. But in a private school like Saint Etienne School in Strasbourg, the children are overloaded with work because they follow the French national curriculum and that of Baden-Wurtemberg. Moreover, the long days in French school leave little room for the leisure and artistic activities dear to Germans. However, with an even more lightweight early language learning scheme in Germany, the state of French teaching there is even less promising. Only two primary schools in Kehl and Iffezheim offer subject content in French, the others contenting themselves with a play-based initiation, a system whose ineffectiveness has been shown over the last ten years. Furthermore, language teaching in secondary education is not built on the knowledge acquired in primary school, but starts again at a level close to zero. Besides, not all schools propose continuity of French, sometimes obliging pupils to "choose" English as their first modern language at age 11 (this is the case in "Hauptschule" in Kehl, for example).

The weaknesses of the French and German school systems seem then to justify the demands of the *Ecole-Eurodistrict-Schule* association. Their realisation will depend, however, on political will.

Dissatisfied with the existing educational situation, certain parents have been choosing for several years to send their children to school over the border. The survey "Flux scolaires à l'exemple de Kehl et Strasbourg" (Geiger-Jaillet 2004d) reveals that there are flows in both directions, with a larger number, however, moving from France to Germany: in 2001, 132

⁷⁸ http://www.france.diplomatie.fr/actual/dossiers/traite_elysee/

⁷⁹ <http://www.eurodistrict.com/de/index.php>

pupils from Strasbourg were going over the border everyday to attend a German school, 77 were making the opposite trip. In all, 32 nursery and primary schools and Kindergärten in Kehl and Strasbourg are officially concerned by the phenomenon, which is due to multiple factors. This phenomenon of "cross-border pupils" can also be found at other borders. On the teachers' side, about thirty consider themselves as "cross-border workers", living on one side of the border and working on the other (17 going into Germany, 12 to France), for a few hours a week as part of an exchange scheme or on a more permanent basis. This avoidance, at least temporarily, of putting children in school in their country of residence must be interpreted as a sign of discontent with the educational offer, especially on the part of families who are themselves bilingual and bicultural, choosing a solution that is first of all individual before becoming involved in a complex scheme to create a school of the Eurodistrict type.

5. LANGUAGES AND CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION (Alsace/Baden region/Switzerland)

5.1. At institutional level

There is a non-negligible number of institutional structures whose vocation it is to further cross-border cooperation, in the widest sense of the term. They either depend on political decision-making bodies, or involve implementation at a practical level involving citizens of the cross-border area.⁸⁰

Within this same framework there are also specific bodies set up, either in parallel, or as support mechanisms, to pursue analogous aims. This is, for example, the case of the schemes initiated by the education authorities in 1983 under the title "Apprendre la langue du voisin / Lerne die Sprache des Nachbarn" (Learning our neighbours' language).

5.2. At para-institutional level

The existing institutions stimulate and support possible cooperation outside their own areas of competence. One of the most recent concerns the media, with working groups in which the majority of members were professionals.⁸¹ If the working group on the written press concentrated more on questions of content and questions concerning more closely the functioning of the press, the groups working on television and radio have drawn up an inventory of joint productions involving the three countries concerned. The rapporteur of the "television" group put forward the idea that "the closer people live to the border, the more they are aware, on both sides of the Rhine, of living in a community of lives and destinies."⁸² This statement unfortunately is not borne out by the observations which are supposed to generate it and seems to be contradicted by the surveys carried out by the ISERCO and *Les Dernières Nouvelles d'Alsace* in 2000 and 2002 (cf. *infra*). The radio group working, however, proposes a rather more distanced analysis of cross-border production: "Programmes where speaking plays the largest role are less and less sought after; listeners prefer music above all. In all logic, talk-based bi- or trilingual programmes are losing popularity. (...) For bi- or trilingual programmes, it is necessary to find a solution suited to the multilingualism of the Upper Rhine. But it is more and more difficult to find multilingual presenters or experts for certain themes. For listeners language also represents a barrier which should not be

⁸⁰ For all these questions, see LACK 2003

⁸¹ 9. Dreiländer-Kongress, 16 September in Basle, Medien und Kommunikation am Oberrhein. Source: www.regbas.ch/d_aktivitaeten_dreilaender.cfm (consulted on 02.04.2005)

⁸² „Je näher die Menschen an den Grenzen wohnen, desto größer ist das Bewusstsein beiderseits des Rheins, in einer Lebens- und Schicksalsgemeinschaft zu leben.“, extract of the report on television, website: http://www.regbas.ch/files/Bericht_Forum_Fernsehen.pdf (consulted on 02.04.2005)

underestimated. Unlike television, it is not possible to use subtitles to make up for the deficiencies in comprehension. (...) The cross-border mobility of the population of the Upper Rhine is often limited so that bi- or trinational themes only interest listeners to a moderate degree."⁸³

5.3. Attitudes to the "cross-border" issue amongst Alsatians

The last point mentioned seems to come quite close to the points of view expressed by Alsatians in opinion polls. A survey published in October 2002 revealed that

"The group the most favourable to exchanges with the Germans and the Swiss represents 29 % of the Alsatian population. This minority considers that the Upper Rhine region constitutes a development opportunity for Alsace. The group is made up of working people aged 35 to 49 years, men mainly. They speak several languages, the first of which is German. They are well informed of the political and economic situation of the German neighbour and are often involved in cross-border operations, either for institutions or associations. The second group shows more distance. It represents 23 % of the population and consists for two thirds of men, young, working, members of intermediate professions. Less well informed about Germany, and not at all about Switzerland, they travel in these two countries essentially as tourists. This group is highly aware of the administrative and legal obstacles relating to cooperation; it is not at all aware of the Rhineland identity. The third group, which includes almost half of the Alsatian population (48%), is characterised by a very low rate of exchanges with the neighbouring regions, except for occasional shopping trips. This group includes mainly women, over-fifties and pensioners, who speak dialect and German. They do not believe in the usefulness of economic and cultural exchanges and the obstacles they face are above all... historic."⁸⁴

Thus, if language can be considered as an obstacle to the implementation of the idea of "cross-border" contacts, in particular at institutional level, Alsatians' knowledge of German in no way guarantees that they will show any interest in what is happening in the nearby border region. Nothing would justify, therefore, a correlation, in Alsatians, between the variables "knowledge of German" and "interest for the nearby German geopolitical area" (cf. *infra*, The sociolinguistic representations of dialect speakers).

5.4. The cross-border phenomenon in everyday life

It is through cross-border workers and German citizens living in Alsace that another type of cross-border reality can be seen.

In the 1999 census, the number of Alsatians working in Germany or in Switzerland broke down as follows:⁸⁵

⁸³ "Wortsendungen sind zunehmend weniger gefragt, die Zuhörer verlangen vor allem nach Musik. Dementsprechend verlieren bi- oder trinationale Wortsendungen an Popularität. Für bi- bzw. trinationale Radiosendungen ist eine der Mehrsprachigkeit am Oberrhein angepasste Lösung vonnöten. Es ist jedoch zunehmend schwierig, mehrsprachige Moderatoren und Experten zu bestimmten Themen zu finden. Die Sprache stellt auch für die Zuhörer eine nicht zu unterschätzende Barriere dar. Im Gegensatz zum Fernsehen können im Radio-Bereich keine Untertitel zur Überbrückung der Verständnislücke genutzt werden. (...) Die grenzüberschreitende Mobilität der Bevölkerung am Oberrhein bleibt häufig begrenzt. Dementsprechend stossen bi- oder trinationale Themen auf wenig Interesse bei den Hörern." extract of the report on radio, website: http://www.regbas.ch/files/Bericht_Forum_Radio.pdf

⁸⁴ KEIFLIN Claude "En relief" in *Les Dernières Nouvelles d'Alsace*, 9 October 2002; cf. KEIFLIN Claude "Le tourisme en vedette" in *Les Dernières Nouvelles d'Alsace*, 10 October 2002 and a DNA-ISERCO opinion poll "La langue, oui; l'identité, non" in *Les Dernières Nouvelles d'Alsace*, 11 October 2002, p.Ré3. Cf. the survey on the way the people of the Baden region and the Alsatians see each other and how they evaluate their relations in *Les Dernières Nouvelles d'Alsace* of 21, 22 and 23 June 2000, p.Ré6

⁸⁵ Source: INSEE, site: http://www.insee.fr/fr/insee_regions/alsace/rfc/chifcle_fiche.asp?tab_id=1622 (consultation of 03.04.2005)

	working in Germany	working in Switzerland	TOTAL
Bas-Rhin	29,331	496	30,106
Haut-Rhin	7,275	32,728	40,099
Alsace	36,606	33,224	70,205

At the same time, Alsace was home to 15,800 German nationals. Thus, Germans represent the 2nd largest foreign community in terms of numbers, after the Turks. The reasons that lead people to set up home in Alsace seem to be mainly economic and not cultural: the INSEE puts forward the hypothesis that the difference in the price of housing, which is much lower in Alsace, and the higher salaries in Germany mean that a majority of the Germans living in Alsace live in Alsace, but work in Germany.⁸⁶

6. OUTLOOK AND PERSPECTIVES

The societal, cultural, socio-political transformations that have taken place throughout the 2nd half of the XXth century form an indissociable whole with the linguistic changes that have occurred in society. This implies that the language policies that have been implemented, accompanied by a discourse on the languages, their value, their place, their importance, ... also form a whole, which is in itself constitutive of the transformations that have taken place.

At the dawn of the XXIst century, we must conclude that all these concurrent forces have profoundly modified "the ecology of languages" (L.J. Calvet) in Alsace and have affected German in particular, in its status, its place in relation to other varieties, its relations with them, its legitimacy and its meaning. If German has never been the official or co-official language since Alsace has been French, for a long time it played, in actual fact, an essential role. However, the State has always refrained from defining the status of German in Alsace.

It was in the educational sector that a first definition was undertaken in 1985: "There is (...) only one scientifically correct definition of the regional language in Alsace, it is the Alsatian dialects whose written expression is German. German is therefore one of the regional languages of France."⁸⁷ Six years later, in 1991, the definition is taken up again, modified and widened: "German presents from the educational point of view, the triple virtue of being at once the written expression and language of reference for the regional dialects, the language of the closest neighbouring country and a great European language." And glossed as follows: "Teaching German in primary school in Alsace is thus a threefold enterprise: support of the regional language, early learning of modern languages and an initiation into a European and international culture."⁸⁸ Ten years later, the reference to local roots no longer appears explicitly. German is essentially seen as an *exogenous* language: "The teaching of German naturally meets Alsace' vocation of European and international openness, given its linguistic and cultural resources and its cross-border exchanges."⁸⁹

Moreover, Alsatians have contrasting perceptions of German (cf. *supra*), at once a local language and one of the past, a language they reject and a language with economic value

⁸⁶ SCHMITT Monique and WAHL Daniel "15 800 allemands ont choisi l'Alsace" in *Chiffres pour Alsace*, February 2003, pp.7-10

⁸⁷ DEYON Pierre (1985) *June 1982-June 1985. Le programme "Langue et culture régionales" en Alsace: rapport et perspectives*, Strasbourg, s.d., pp.9-10

⁸⁸ DE GAUDEMAR Jean-Paul, Programme à moyen terme de l'allemand à l'école (education authority circular of 20 September 1991), in *The programme Langue et culture régionales en Alsace. Textes de référence 1991-1996*, op.cit., p.45

⁸⁹ Education authority circular of 19 July 2001: *Lettre du Recteur de l'Académie à Mesdames et Messieurs les Directeurs d'Ecoles élémentaires – objet enseignement de l'allemand au cycle 3 de l'école primaire*, 19 July 2001, ref.: CAB/N°2001-234

added by the cross-border factor. The fact that the number of pupils studying German is declining regularly (cf. the figures *supra*) seems to bear witness to this situation.

Perhaps this is one of the points of reflection that need to be examined in more depth and on which clarifications should be made between local authorities.

Abbreviations

Abi-Bac	Double awarding of end of secondary school diplomas: the German Abitur and the baccalaureate (Agreement between Germany and France)
Bac Pro	Professional baccalaureate (pupils in professional lycées)
BO JO	Official journal of the National Education ministry Official journal (official parliamentary publications)
CAP/BEP	Certificat d'apprentissage professionnel/ Brevet d'enseignement professionnel (vocational training certificates)
CAPES	Certificat d'aptitude à l'enseignement secondaire (teacher training certificate for "collèges" and lycées)
CFEB	Bilingual teacher training centre of the IUFM d'Alsace (in Guebwiller)
DNL	Non-linguistic subject (maths, history-geography, physics, music, art, etc.) taught in the target language in bilingual classes or in European sections.
ELCO or LCO	Teaching of language and culture of origin
IUFM	University teacher training institute (training teachers for primary and secondary schools)
LCO	Language and culture of origin
LCR	Regional language and culture/ These are the patrimonial languages of France, including Basque, Breton, Alsatian German, Catalan, Corsican, the creoles, Occitan etc.
LVE or LV	(Foreign) modern language
PE2 PE	Trainee primary school who have passed the competitive recruitment exam Primary school teachers

Annex: Table of school levels in France

NURSERY SCHOOL		
PS	Small section / children aged 3 to 4 years	Cycle 1
MS	Medium section / children aged 4 to 5 years	
GS	Large section / children aged 5 to 6 years	
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL		
CP	Preparatory class / 1st year of elementary school (children aged 6 to 7 years)	Cycle 2
CE1	Elementary class first year / = 2nd year of elementary school	
CE2	Elementary class second year/ 3 rd year of elementary school	Cycle 3
CM1	Intermediate class first year/ 4th year of elementary school	
CM2	Intermediate class second year/ 5th year of elementary school	

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