

TRENDS IN EUROPEAN LANGUAGE POLICIES WITH A VIEW TO LANGUAGE TECHNOLOGY

Summary

This article gives an overview of current trends in European language policies – a bird’s eye view on the European language landscape regarding the status of the official EU-languages and with a view to language technology. It is based on data in the European Language Monitor (ELM) that is developed and regularly maintained by the European Federation of National Institutions for Language (EFNIL), and on recent developments in Denmark regarding policies for language technology. Language technology is chosen as the focus point, since this is an area where we currently see the most interesting developments in national and EU policies. The aim of the article is to describe the wealth of information about European language policies that is available through EFNIL and ELM, and to inspire researchers, students and policy makers to further analyse the data and use them for future policy development.

The first section describes EFNIL and its approach to language planning. EFNIL’s projects aim at informing decision makers and researchers about language planning activities in Europe. Language planning is generally defined as the development of policies or programs designed to direct or change language use. It typically consists of status planning, acquisition planning and corpus planning.

All three aspects of language planning are addressed in the European Language Monitor (ELM) described in section 2 and 3, which also contains samples of the data in ELM about language legislation, about the use of English in higher education and about language technology. The samples disclose interesting facts about language policies in Europe, for instance: only about half of the participating countries have provisions about language in their constitution; Denmark, Finland, Luxembourg and the Netherlands are the countries where the use of English as medium of instruction in natural science at the MA level is most widely

spread; and only half of the participating countries report to have an official strategy for language technology.

Section 4 describes the development regarding the recently adopted strategy for language technology in Denmark and illustrates important aspects of the policy development process – especially the interaction between political actors and experts in the field, and the recommendations that were finally adopted.

In the concluding chapter, the recent plans for language technology in the European Commission and the UNESCO are highlighted, and it is shown that these are very much in tune with EFNIL's recommendations for policies on language technology.

KEYWORDS: language policy, language planning, language technology, European languages.

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