

2018 ECSPM SYMPOSIUM  
**PARADIGM SHIFT IN LANGUAGE EDUCATION...**

**...TO DEVELOP MULTILITERATE AND PLURILINGUAL AGENTS**

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## PARADIGM SHIFT IN LANGUAGE EDUCATION

We start off by defining the dominant paradigm in language education

1. Teachers with monoglossic mindsets or habitus and monolingual ideologies
2. Emphasis is still on learning the target language as though it were a stable structural, semantic and pragmatic system, and the focus is still on sentence-level grammar and vocabulary. There is little concern with the new discursive and textual meanings, with communicative effectiveness, through the use of multimodal texts.



## THE CONTEXT

However:

- Language, discourse and text has changed
- Ways of communicating have changed
- Social literacy has changed

Yet the paradigm in language teaching (and testing) remains the same



## WHAT'S DIFFERENT?

- In the past, becoming fully proficient in a language meant becoming a social subject operating according to the formal properties of language
- Today's societies are in need of entrepreneurial social *agents* prepared for high-speed change – change on all levels and social norms and institutions, but also change in language and ways of using it.
- Language itself is a social institution, constantly developing and changing to serve society, which is changing at an overwhelmingly accelerated pace today. This change is inscribed in language, discourse and texts. Changes brought about by technology in this digital age, for example, are encoded in the new types of texts and textual forms that we have replacing older equivalents.

## Past

## Present

Business card, resume

LinkedIn

Scrapbook

Facebook

Diary, newspaper opinion column

Blogs

Encyclopaedia

Wikipedia

Broadcast TV

Interactive TV, You Tube

Manuscript

Google Docs

Broadcast radio,

Playlists podcast, iPod

Photo album, picture book

Flickr

Memo, letter

Email,

Brochure

Website

Telegraph, telegramme

Twitter, SMS



## THE DIFFERENT ROLE OF LANGUAGE OF LANGUAGE TODAY

- Within the autonomous states of the past, communities, identities, processes and practices were key concepts linked to the role of language in the construction of social identities, social relations.
- Today, people experience a sense of community, identity and loyalties away from autonomous structures in spaces –such as, for example, digitally created spaces– where linguistic and discursive variation are central to new forms of social organization.
- Languages as bounded systems, identities in stable social positions, and communities as uniform social formations are superseded by mobility and multiplicity.
- Social actors take an *active role* in the flows and transformations, contributing further to globalization, transnationalism, and the new economy.



## LANGUAGE EDUCATION PARADIGM SHIFT

- The paper entitled "Rethinking Language Education in Schools" and it is available as a pdf document A case is made for a major change in current practices in schools and stress that, in order to address today's societal, economic and technological challenges, it is important to rethink the concepts of
  - (a) literacy,
  - (b) multilingualism,
  - (c) mother tongue



## MULTILITERACIES

- Multiliteracies is an approach to literacy theory and pedagogy that highlights two key aspects of literacy: linguistic diversity, and multimodal forms of linguistic expression and representation.
- The focus of multiliteracy pedagogy is on replacing the existing monolingual, monocultural, and standardized needs of students, prioritizing reading and writing, with a pedagogy that uses multiple modes of *meaning making*.
- They emphasis is on the use of multiple modes of communication, languages, and multiple forms of the official language to reflect the impact of new technologies and linguistic and cultural diversity, instead of developing competence in a single national language and standardized form of the official language.



## MULTILINGUALISM VS. PLURILINGUALISM

- **MULTILINGUALISM** refers to “the knowledge of a number of languages or the co-existence of different languages in a given society. It is attained by diversifying the languages on offer, learning more than one foreign language, reducing the dominant position of English.
- **PLURILINGUAL COMPETENCE** refers to one's ability to switch from one language or dialect to another, express oneself in one language and understand the other call upon the knowledge of a number of languages to make sense of a text, recognise words from a common background in a new guise, performing cross-language and interlanguage mediation by bringing the whole of their linguistic equipment into play, experiment with alternative forms of expression in different, languages or dialects, exploiting, paralinguistics (mime, gesture, facial expression, etc.), radically simplifying their use of language.



## SUBJECT POSITIONS AND AGENCY

- Negotiating subject positions and identity/ies – construction of identity
- Facilitating the capacity of the subject to constitute itself as an agent (agency understood in a feminist poststructuralist framework) as
  - the discursive constitution of a particular individual as having presence (rather than absence)
  - the discursive constitution of that person as author of their own multiple meanings (and desires)
  - a sense of oneself as one who can go beyond the given meaning in any one discourse, and forge something new, through a combination of discourses, words, concepts and practices