

Observatoire Européen du Plurilinguisme
Bucharest University of Economic Studies
5th European Conference on Plurilingualism
Le plurilinguisme dans le développement durable : La dimension cachée

ÉTUDES DE CAS.

Olivia-Cristina Rusu

DEICTIC AND BILINGUAL SOCIETY



RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

- How is bilingualism seen / expressed :
 - 1. in Romanian secondary education?
 - 2. in Romanian university education?
 - 3. at the corporatist level, in Romania?
- What are the common features, if any?
- Is there a gap between the acquired skills and the required skills?
- What are the conditions that should be fulfilled and the strongest reasons why one would like to learn a language or to develop one's language skills?

CHOICE OF TERMINOLOGY

Different levels of language mastery =>

- ✓ **bilingualism**
- ✓ multilingualism
- ✓ plurilingualism
- ✓ polyglottery

DIFFERENT DOMAINS, THE SAME DEFINITION

“Multilingual and multicultural competence will be defined as the competence to communicate linguistically and to interact culturally with a social actor who possesses, to varying degrees, the command of several languages and the experience of several cultures, while being able to make use of this linguistic and cultural asset, together. We shall consider that there is no superposition or juxtaposition of distinct competences, but a **complex** or even one compound **personal competence**.” (EC, 2012:27)

DIFFERENT DOMAINS, DIFFERENT TAXONOMIES

F[THE FRENCH TYPE OF “...IQUES”]:

- ✓ age of acquisition,
- ✓ life circumstances,
- ✓ patterns and context of use,
- ✓ degrees of education,
- ✓ degrees of proficiency.

DISCOURSE ANALYSIS: CONTENT IN CONTEXT

=> DESIGN OF QUESTIONNAIRES AND DATA COLLECTION

Relevance theory (Grice: 1975:41-58, Sperber & Wilson, 1996):

The two principles of utterance relevance:

- *cognitive principle of relevance* = maximization of relevance in / of all utterances
- *communicative principle of relevance* = “every utterance conveys a presumption of its own optimal relevance” (Sperber and Wilson, 1996:150)

2012 EUROBAROMETER SURVEY ON EUROPEANS AND THEIR LANGUAGES

Extremely positive attitudes towards multilingualism:

- 98% say mastering foreign languages will benefit their children;
- 88% think that knowing languages other than their mother tongue is very useful;
- 72% agree with the EU goal of at least 2 foreign languages for everyone;
- 77% say improving language skills should be a policy priority.

(European Commission, 2012, *Special Eurobarometer 386, Europeans and their languages*,
http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/index_en.htm)

2012 EUROBAROMETER SURVEY, DATA ON ROMANIANS' VIEWS ON BILINGUALISM

- Romania is among the five Member States or more than half say they cannot speak a foreign language (Spain, 54%, Romania, 52%, Bulgaria, 52%, Czech Republic, 51% and Poland, 50%)
- 22% - knowledge to maintain a conversation in at least 2 languages;
- 8% for at least 3 languages;
- 19% consider that enabling an understanding of people from other cultures is an advantage of learning a new language.

	English	French	German	Spanish	Russian	None
Speaking	26%	8%	2%	5%	2%	52%
Writing	20%	7%	1%	2%	1%	58%
Online communication	24%	5%	1%	2%	1%	59%

CONTENT / DATA IN CONTEXT:

=> TYPES OF QUESTIONS AND DATA COLLECTION

Secondary education

- Qualitative research
- 9 respondents

University education

- Quantitative research
- 146 respondents

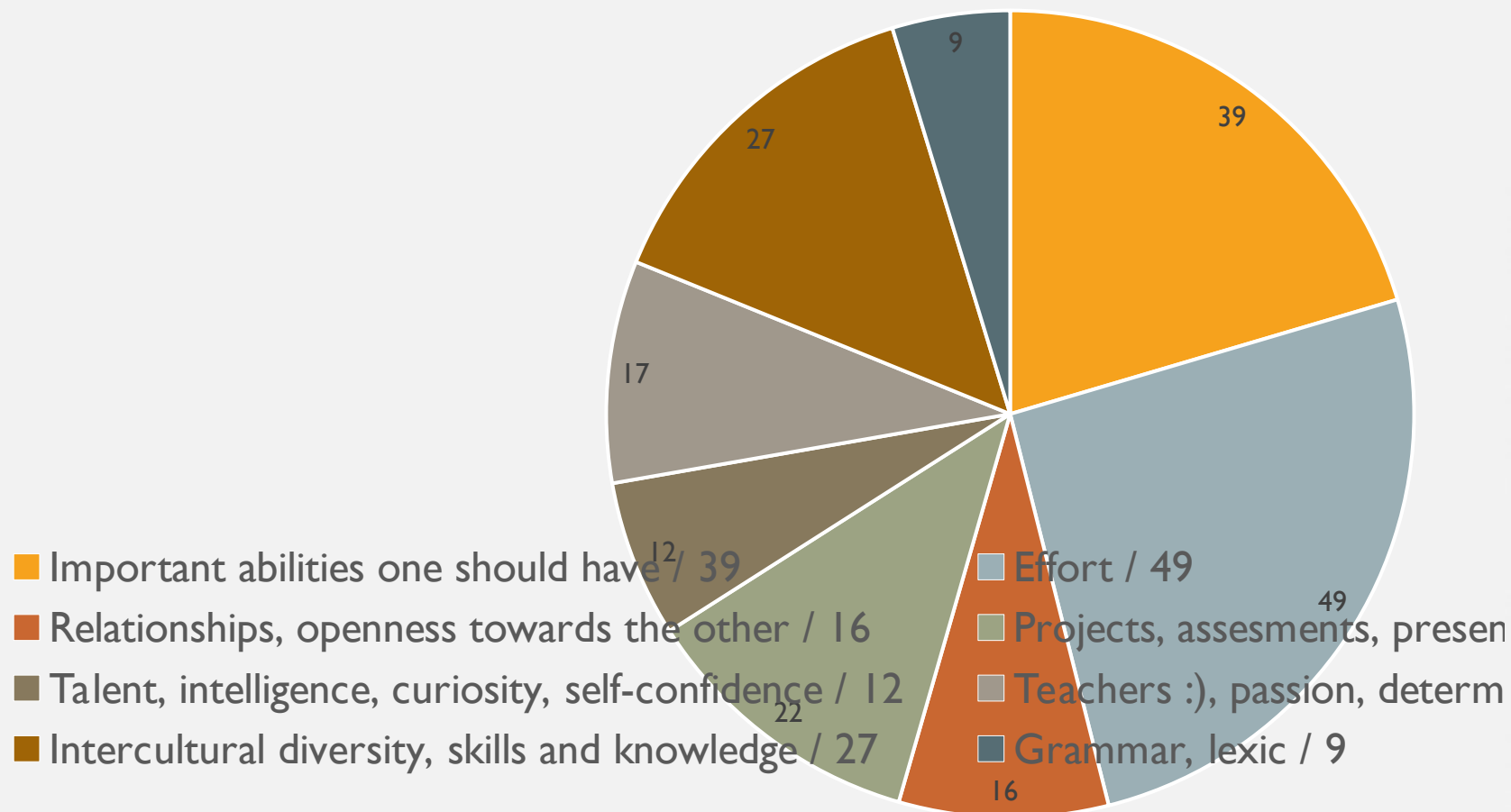
Adults - Labour market

- Qualitative research
- 36 respondents

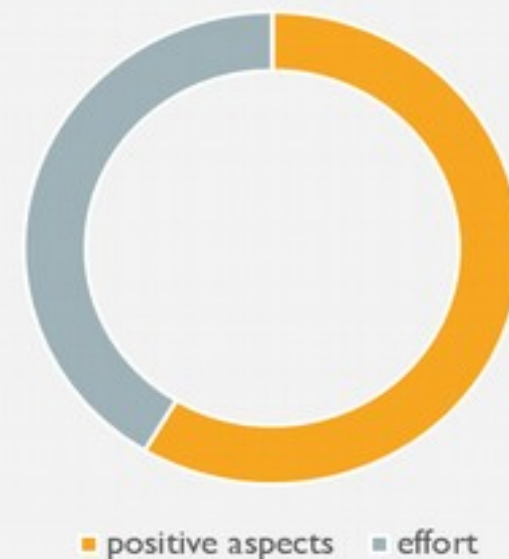
- What do they understand by the concept of *bilingual*?
- Advantages and drawbacks in learning a foreign language.
- What foreign languages do they know / use?
- Use of foreign languages – what situations, to what purposes?
- How could they improve their language skills? What are the CERCL skills they master / wish to improve?
- Learning facilitators (incentives) / obstacles (difficulties, barriers).

TOWARDS A FUNCTIONAL DEFINITION OF BILINGUALISM: SURVEYS – ROMANIAN TARGET GROUPS

The first three words that come to your mind when you hear the word "bilingualism",
186 respondents



Dichotomy:
Views on bilingualism

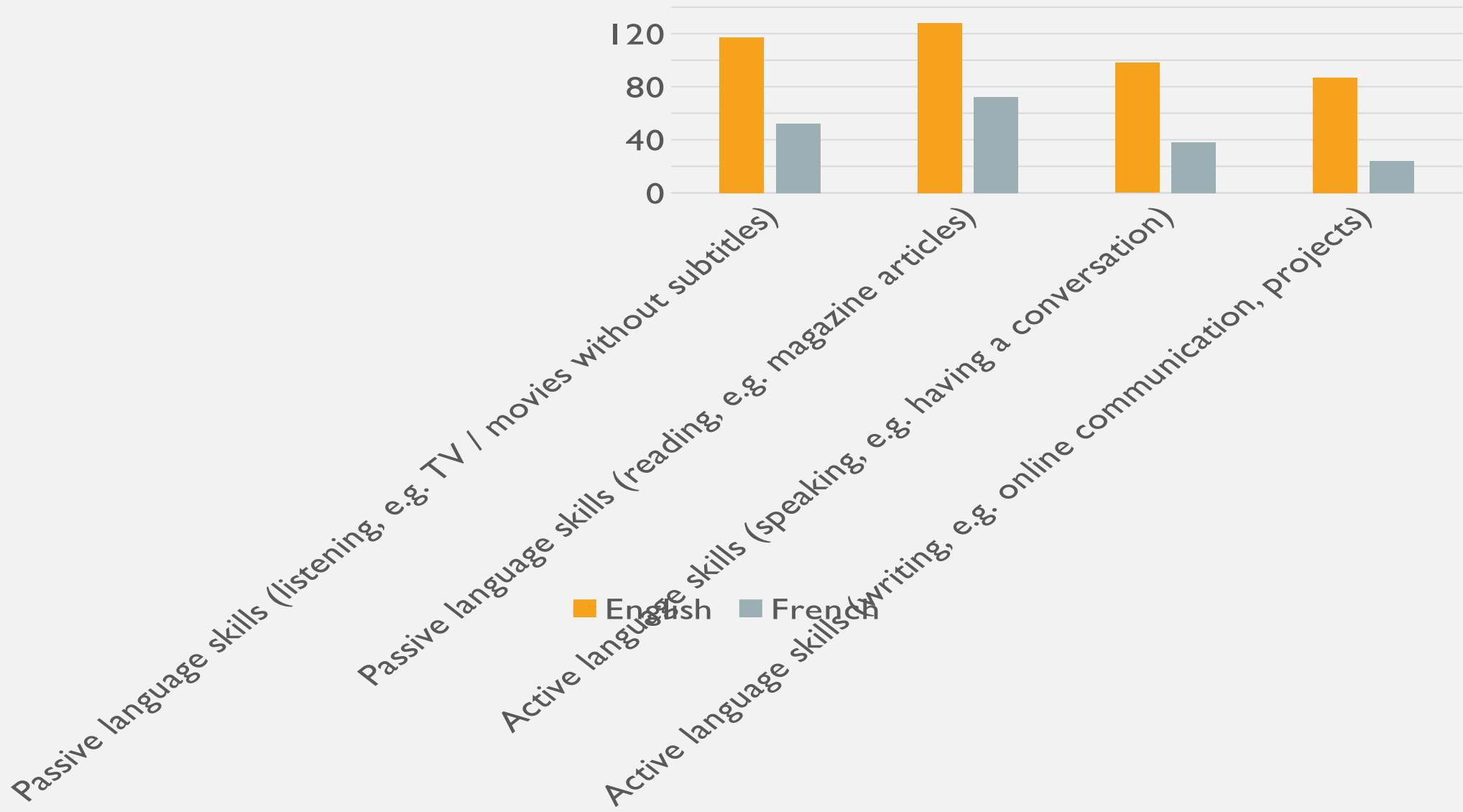


PRE-UNIVERSITY RESPONDENTS

- Incoming migrants: “welt offen”, “wissensgierig” 😊;
 (“openness towards the world”, “greedy for knowledge”)
- Bilingual classes: curiosity, online gaming, music;

=> Mastering a foreign language is not anymore an objective in itself, but a tool through which youngsters can acquire essential and practical skills / abilities.

146 UNIVERSITY RESPONDENTS



UNIVERSITY RESPONDENTS

- English is preferred and most widely used among students (87%); mostly, the use of passive skills prevails for French (~ 50%);
- Past learning environment:
 - English – school (74%), music and movies without subtitles (65%), online games and communication (54%), training at home with teachers (24%);
 - French – school, oral presentations (71%), training at home with teachers (24%), travels abroad and other family related events (17%), internships (7%);
- Preferred future learning environment in terms of utility – high focus on spoken interaction;
- Future frequency of use: travels, internships and labour market.

LABOR MARKET RESPONDENTS

- 2 categories:
 - Migrants – types of bilingualism: passive, subtractive (deductive), latish bilingualism; a foreign language may be a detriment to speaking Romanian 😞;
 - Locals, working in corporations

Bilingualism is a daily concern for many companies and institutions (mainly French ones 😊) => foreign language strategies and policies; the company increases the satisfaction rate of its staff and customers

CONCLUSION: DEICTIC AND QUASI-BILINGUAL SOCIETIES

- How is bilingualism seen / expressed in the continuum *Romanian secondary education - Romanian university education – Romanian labour market*?
- What are the common features, if any?
- Is there a gap between the acquired skills and the required skills?
- What are the conditions that should be fulfilled and the strongest reasons why one would like to learn a language or to develop one's language skills?

“Competences still need to be improved. Whilst just over half of all Europeans are able to speak at least one other language, there are no clear signs that multilingualism is on the increase.” (EC, 2012:142)

DICHOTOMY :
A HEAVENLY SENTENCE (EFFORT)
AND/OR
A DIVINE GIFT (TO SPREAD KNOWLEDGE AND TRUST)?



Tower of Babel, Pieter Bruegel the Elder, 1563



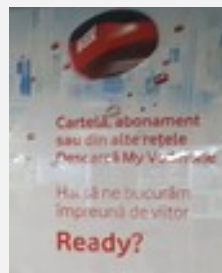
The Four Apostles, Albrecht Dürer, 1526

Observatoire Européen du Plurilinguisme
Bucharest University of Economic Studies
5th European Conference on Plurilingualism
Le plurilinguisme dans le développement durable : La dimension cachée

LINGUISTIQUE ET DÉVELOPPEMENT DURABLE. ÉTUDES DE CAS.

Olivia-Cristina Rusu

DEICTIC AND BILINGUAL SOCIETY



RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

- How is bilingualism seen / expressed :
 - 1. in Romanian secondary education?
 - 2. in Romanian university education?
 - 3. at the corporatist level, in Romania?
- What are the common features, if any?
- Is there a gap between the acquired skills and the required skills?
- What are the conditions that should be fulfilled and the strongest reasons why one would like to learn a language or to develop one's language skills?

CHOICE OF TERMINOLOGY

Different levels of language mastery =>

- ✓ **bilingualism**
- ✓ multilingualism
- ✓ plurilingualism
- ✓ polyglottery

DIFFERENT DOMAINS, THE SAME DEFINITION

“Multilingual and multicultural competence will be defined as the competence to communicate linguistically and to interact culturally with a social actor who possesses, to varying degrees, the command of several languages and the experience of several cultures, while being able to make use of this linguistic and cultural asset, together. We shall consider that there is no superposition or juxtaposition of distinct competences, but a **complex** or even one compound **personal competence**.” (EC, 2012:27)

DIFFERENT DOMAINS, DIFFERENT TAXONOMIES

F[THE FRENCH TYPE OF “...IQUES”]:

- ✓ age of acquisition,
- ✓ life circumstances,
- ✓ patterns and context of use,
- ✓ degrees of education,
- ✓ degrees of proficiency.

DISCOURSE ANALYSIS: CONTENT IN CONTEXT

=> DESIGN OF QUESTIONNAIRES AND DATA COLLECTION

Relevance theory (Grice: 1975:41-58, Sperber & Wilson, 1996):

The two principles of utterance relevance:

- *cognitive principle of relevance* = maximization of relevance in / of all utterances
- *communicative principle of relevance* = “every utterance conveys a presumption of its own optimal relevance” (Sperber and Wilson, 1996:150)

2012 EUROBAROMETER SURVEY ON EUROPEANS AND THEIR LANGUAGES

Extremely positive attitudes towards multilingualism:

- 98% say mastering foreign languages will benefit their children;
- 88% think that knowing languages other than their mother tongue is very useful;
- 72% agree with the EU goal of at least 2 foreign languages for everyone;
- 77% say improving language skills should be a policy priority.

(European Commission, 2012, *Special Eurobarometer 386, Europeans and their languages*,
http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/index_en.htm)

2012 EUROBAROMETER SURVEY, DATA ON ROMANIANS' VIEWS ON BILINGUALISM

- Romania is among the five Member States or more than half say they cannot speak a foreign language (Spain, 54%, Romania, 52%, Bulgaria, 52%, Czech Republic, 51% and Poland, 50%)
- 22% - knowledge to maintain a conversation in at least 2 languages;
- 8% for at least 3 languages;
- 19% consider that enabling an understanding of people from other cultures is an advantage of learning a new language.

	English	French	German	Spanish	Russian	None
Speaking	26%	8%	2%	5%	2%	52%
Writing	20%	7%	1%	2%	1%	58%
Online communication	24%	5%	1%	2%	1%	59%

(EC, 2012:14-66)

CONTENT / DATA IN CONTEXT:

=> TYPES OF QUESTIONS AND DATA COLLECTION

Secondary education

- Qualitative research
- 9 respondents

University education

- Quantitative research
- 146 respondents

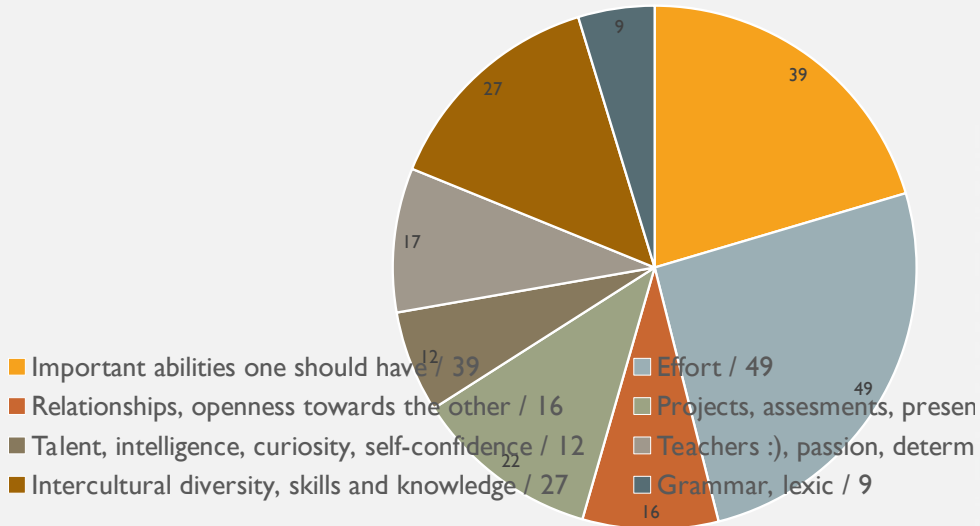
Adults - Labour market

- Qualitative research
- 36 respondents

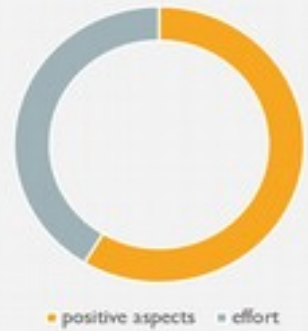
- What do they understand by the concept of *bilingual*?
- Advantages and drawbacks in learning a foreign language.
- What foreign languages do they know / use?
- Use of foreign languages – what situations, to what purposes?
- How could they improve their language skills? What are the CERCL skills they master / wish to improve?
- Learning facilitators (incentives) / obstacles (difficulties, barriers).

TOWARDS A FUNCTIONAL DEFINITION OF BILINGUALISM: SURVEYS – ROMANIAN TARGET GROUPS

The first three words that come to your mind when you hear the word "bilingualism",
186 respondents



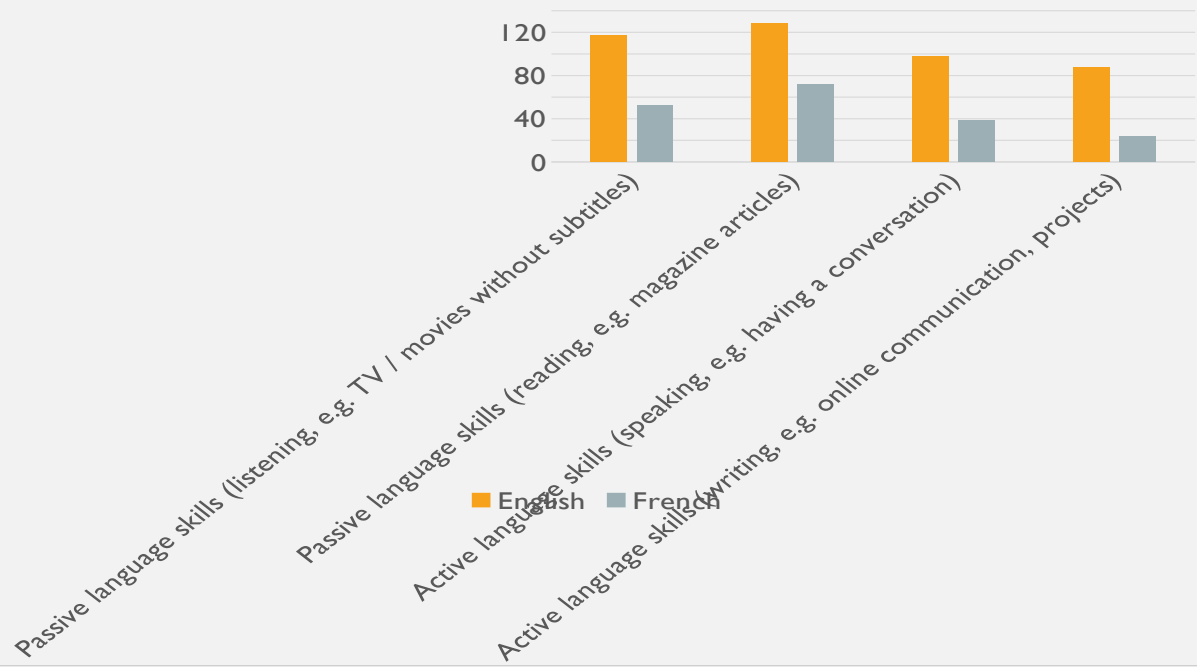
Dichotomy:
Views on bilingualism



PRE-UNIVERSITY RESPONDENTS

- Incoming migrants: “welt offen”, “wissensgierig” 😊;
 (“openness towards the world”, “greedy for knowledge”)
 - Bilingual classes: curiosity, online gaming, music;
- => Mastering a foreign language is not anymore an objective in itself, but a tool through which youngsters can acquire essential and practical skills / abilities.

146 UNIVERSITY RESPONDENTS



UNIVERSITY RESPONDENTS

- English is preferred and most widely used among students (87%); mostly, the use of passive skills prevails for French (~ 50%);
- Past learning environment:
 - English – school (74%), music and movies without subtitles (65%), online games and communication (54%), training at home with teachers (24%);
 - French – school, oral presentations (71%), training at home with teachers (24%), travels abroad and other family related events (17%), internships (7%);
- Preferred future learning environment in terms of utility – high focus on spoken interaction;
- Future frequency of use: travels, internships and labour market.

LABOR MARKET RESPONDENTS

- 2 categories:
 - Migrants – types of bilingualism: passive, subtractive (deductive), latish bilingualism; a foreign language may be a detriment to speaking Romanian 😞;
 - Locals, working in corporations

Bilingualism is a daily concern for many companies and institutions (mainly French ones 😊) => foreign language strategies and policies; the company increases the satisfaction rate of its staff and customers

CONCLUSION: DEICTIC AND QUASI-BILINGUAL SOCIETIES

- How is bilingualism seen / expressed in the continuum *Romanian secondary education - Romanian university education – Romanian labour market*?
- What are the common features, if any?
- Is there a gap between the acquired skills and the required skills?
- What are the conditions that should be fulfilled and the strongest reasons why one would like to learn a language or to develop one's language skills?

“Competences still need to be improved. Whilst just over half of all Europeans are able to speak at least one other language, there are no clear signs that multilingualism is on the increase.” (EC, 2012:142)

DICHOTOMY :
A HEAVENLY SENTENCE (EFFORT)
AND/OR
A DIVINE GIFT (TO SPREAD KNOWLEDGE AND TRUST)?



Tower of Babel, Pieter Bruegel the Elder, 1563



The Four Apostles, Albrecht Dürer, 1526

