

***LANGUAGE ISSUES IN THE
INTEGRATION OF THE AMERICAS***

CONSEIL DE LA LANGUE FRANÇAISE

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***LANGUAGE ISSUES IN THE
INTEGRATION OF THE AMERICAS***

***IS A TRANSLATION OF
THE OPINION
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***LES ENJEUX ET LES DÉFIS LINGUISTIQUES DE
L'INTÉGRATION DES AMÉRIQUES***

***OPINION
BY THE CONSEIL DE LA LANGUE FRANÇAISE
TO THE MINISTER RESPONSIBLE FOR THE APPLICATION
OF THE CHARTER OF THE FRENCH LANGUAGE***

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>Preamble</i>	5
1) <i>Toward inter-American language management</i>	6
2) <i>The Americas: A hemisphere rich in languages, and yet...</i>	7
a) <i>Differences in status</i>	7
b) <i>Relative weighting of the four major language groups</i>	8
c) <i>Recent development of languages within the Americas</i>	9
3) <i>The linguistic impacts of the integration processes in the hemisphere</i>	11
a) <i>The case of Mercosur: a plurinational linguistic solidarity</i>	11
b) <i>The case of the Caribbean: the construction of a multilingual regional identity</i>	13
c) <i>The case of NAFTA: a tacit recognition of trilingualism</i>	15
d) <i>Renewal in the valuing of regional identities</i>	18
4) <i>Community multilingualism: a pillar of European integration</i>	19
5) <i>The responsibility of the heads of state and government of the Americas in the area of multilingualism</i>	22
6) <i>Adapting the language strategy to the inter-American context</i>	24
a) <i>Rapprochement through the knowledge of foreign languages</i>	25
b) <i>To entrust the inter-American organizations with the management of language diversity</i>	29
c) <i>Better serving the interests of consumers and businesses</i>	36
d) <i>An inter-American seminar on language promotion</i>	42
e) <i>Toward the creation of an inter-American network for the promotion of languages in the integrated Americas</i>	43
<i>Conclusion</i>	44

Annexes

<i>Official languages of the countries of the Americas</i>	45
<i>The European Union's language charter</i>	47
<i>Example of a multilingual terminology data base</i>	48

<i>List of recommendations</i>	49
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<i>Bibliography</i>	53
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Preamble

The current context is one in which many integration processes are being implemented, most of which involve major linguistic challenges. In view of this situation, in 1993 and in 1998, the *Conseil de la langue française* organized, with its European partners, two international seminars on the issue of “management of plurilingualism and national languages in a context of globalization”. At the second seminar, held in Quebec City in 1998, the language services, delegations and councils of the states represented adopted the following positions:

- The French language councils request that contact be made with their counterparts in other linguistic areas, that share the same mission, to promote together with them the idea of an alliance in favour of plurilingualism at the international level.
- The councils agree that measures must be taken in this regard (the place of languages and consumer protection), and support Québec regarding the steps to be taken.

On the occasion of the Parliamentary Conference of the Americas (COPA), held in 1997, the *Conseil de la langue française* raised, for the first time, the importance of language-related issues in the context of the integration of the Americas, and proposed that an inter-American conference be held on these issues.

Since then, the *Conseil* has continued its research and thinking process, with a view to analysing the language-related issues connected with the inter-American integration process, and to evaluating the measures to be taken in that regard. This opinion, which constitutes the fruit of that reflection, opens the way to the addition of an inter-American facet to Québec’s language policy.

The matter of the treatment of cultural products in trade liberalization agreements constitutes a separate issue, and for that reason it has been agreed that it will not be dealt with in this text.

This opinion begins with an explanation of the context surrounding the language-related issues on the inter-American scene, followed by a brief linguistic overview of the western hemisphere. Next, the language-related impacts of the various regional integration processes are presented, after which the question is raised of the responsibility of the heads of state and government of the Americas in the area of language diversity. Finally, measures aiming to adapt the language strategy to the inter-American context are put forward. These proposals concern most particularly the measures for the learning of foreign languages, as well as multilingualism¹ in the inter-American organizations, and commercial multilingualism.

¹ Throughout this document, the term “multilingualism” refers to the use of more than one language within organizations and enterprises, and “plurilingualism” refers to the knowledge of more than one language in the case of individuals.

1) *Toward inter-American language management*

So little notice is generally given to the linguistic aspects of the integration processes that one would be led to believe that they are non-existent or insignificant. Yet the globalization and economic integration processes mean that the future of the language issues is increasingly being determined on the international scene.

This is particularly true at the continental level, where regional agreements, such as NAFTA and the future Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA), raise new issues relating to language. Indeed, these processes call for a new set of dynamics and for new language requirements for individuals as well as for organizations. Whether it involves enterprises that are opening up new markets, workers who have to deal with an increasingly international scope, or young people who will build their future in integrated economies, to all of these stakeholders and organizations, the importance of multilingualism is on an upward trend.

This situation leads us to innovate and to consider international measures dealing with language. No longer can we consider a national linguistic framework without supranational measures or interventions.

The opening of borders, in connection with the development of ties between states, sometimes tends to suggest that there is a process of homogenization under way, in which the use of English as the international language of communication is becoming virtually an inevitable reality. However, the integration processes can also open the way to new collaborations and to new forms of solidarity. This is precisely the wager that the *Conseil de la langue française* has made.

Indeed, the *Conseil* believes that the current hemisphere-wide integration process provides a favourable framework in which to place greater value on linguistic diversity, and to take collective measures in this regard. Whether one considers measures aimed at the inter-American organizations, or at enterprises, workers or youth, the fields of intervention are enormous and will require a commitment on the part of many political and socioeconomic stakeholders spread out across the hemisphere as a whole.

2) *The Americas: A hemisphere rich in languages, and yet...*

It is estimated that about 1,000 languages are spoken within the hemisphere, which represents 15% of the approximately 6,700 living languages on the planet². Maya, Yuki, Mura, Katukinan and Yanomam are but a few examples³ of the great variety of languages spoken in the hemisphere, which has a total population of about 780 million people.

a) Differences in status

Of course, these languages do not all have the same status. Among the 35 countries of the hemisphere, only a few languages have official language status throughout a sovereign state. These languages are distributed as follows⁴:

Official languages

Spanish:	18 countries
English:	14 countries
French:	2 countries (Canada, Haiti)
Creole:	1 country (Haiti)
Dutch:	1 country (Suriname)
Guaraní:	1 country (Paraguay)
Portuguese:	1 country (Brazil)

Certain other languages have acquired official status, but at a regional level, i.e. within delimited regions or throughout a federated state.

Co-official regional languages⁵

Quechua:	Peru, Bolivia
Aymara:	Bolivia
Chamorro:	United States (Island of Guam)
Hawaiian:	United States (Hawaii)
Spanish:	United States (Puerto Rico)
Inuinnaqtun and Inuktitut:	Canada (Nunavut)
7 aboriginal languages (differentiated legal status):	Canada (Northwest Territories)

² SUMMER INSTITUTE OF LINGUISTICS INC. *Geographic Distribution of Living Languages*, [On line], 1996. [www.sil.org/ethnologue/distribution.html]

³ For additional information on the aboriginal languages spoken in the hemisphere, consult: [www.sil.org/ethnologue/families/].

⁴ See the list of official languages by country in Anex 1.

⁵ LECLERC, Jacques. "Index alphabétique de tous les États", [En ligne], Centre international de recherche en aménagement linguistique (CIRAL), Université Laval, Québec. [<http://www.ciral.ulaval.ca/alx/amlxmonde/mondeindalp.htm>]

For the dependent territories of European states, the situation is as follows:

- 4 territories use French (Martinique, Guadeloupe, French Guiana and Saint-Pierre-et-Miquelon);
- 7 territories use English (Anguilla, Bermuda, Caiman Islands, Falkland Islands, Turks and Caicos, British Virgin Islands and Montserrat);
- 2 territories use Dutch (the Netherlands Antilles and Aruba).

The pool of official languages is even more limited when one lists the languages that have official status within intergovernmental organizations, at either the regional or inter-American level. In this case, a maximum of four official languages are found, namely English, Spanish, French and Portuguese. However, as will be seen further on, an in-depth analysis leads to the observation that, despite official multilingualism, language equality is not an established fact in many of these organizations. Thus it is mainly English and Spanish that constitute the actual working languages; French and Portuguese are generally used to a lesser degree there.

b) Relative weighting of the four major language groups

If the population of the hemisphere is divided according to these four language groups, the following proportions are obtained: nearly 40% of the population speak Spanish, 38% speak English, 20% speak Portuguese, and barely 2% speak French. There is thus a tremendous imbalance, and the inequality of the forces present is quite striking.

This distribution remains somewhat approximate, in reality, because in certain states, a large part of the population speak an aboriginal language. This is the case in Paraguay, where 95% of the population speak Guaraní, amounting to 4.6 million persons, whereas only 55% of the population speak Spanish⁶. Similarly, in Bolivia, 88% of the inhabitants speak Spanish, but 45% also speak an aboriginal language (Guaraní, Aymara or Quechua). That is why, within the hemisphere, language-related concerns at the national level are often focused on aboriginal languages.

However, it should be underlined that demographics is not the only factor that determines the influence of a language or its power of attraction. For example, although French is spoken by relatively few people in the hemisphere, it continues to exercise a considerable attraction among people wishing to learn a foreign language. Indeed, French benefits from a prestige that comes from its history, from its status as an international language and from the fact that it is the official language of many international organizations.

In addition, according to a study by the British Council, the French language has a strong economic power, ranking third worldwide. This assessment is based on the principle that

⁶ Francisco MORENO FERNANDEZ and Jaime OTERO. “Demografía de la lengua española”, [En línea], *Centro virtual Cervantes*, Madrid.
[http://cvc.cervantes.es/obref/anuario/parte1/cap2/moreno_cuadros.htm]

the matter of choosing a language only comes into play where contacts occur between members of different linguistic areas. Thus, it can be used to calculate the value of the products and services traded by the users of different languages on international markets (i.e. the sum of exports and imports attributed to the countries of each linguistic area). According to these calculations, French ranks on an equal level with Chinese, coming after English and German⁷.

c) Recent development of languages within the Americas

A brief analysis of the recent development of the principal language groups indicates that these languages are at very different stages of development.

As it is generally known, English is going through a phase of hegemonic expansion because of its status as a *lingua franca*, which makes it the principal language of international communications and the language of the new technologies. It is even the official language or the language used by organizations of which none of the member countries is English-speaking, such as ASEAN (the Association of Southeast Asian Nations), and the European Central Bank (Great Britain is not a member of the European Monetary Union). Within the hemisphere, the situation is also favourable for the expansion of the English language, since in the area of foreign language education, English is broadly given preference.

Spanish, for its part, is in a period of “euphoric” growth at the international level, and is becoming the official language of an increasing number of international organizations. Indeed, it appears that Spanish is currently the language that is undergoing the greatest growth on the global scene⁸. Spanish is also growing strongly within the hemisphere, both as a mother tongue and as a foreign language. Indeed, Spanish is attracting an increasing number of speakers in countries where it does not have official language status. In particular, this language is developing at a tremendous pace in the United States, to the point that Spanish speakers now represent the largest minority there. As will be shown, Brazil is also opening up increasingly to the Spanish-speaking world and to the Spanish language.

As far as Portuguese is concerned, it seems clear that within the hemisphere, this language is beginning its expansion phase, mainly among the Mercosur member countries. However, this trend is not yet reflected very much within the inter-American organizations, as Portuguese still holds a rather marginal position there. Nevertheless, the economic development of Brazil is beginning to attract people outside the Southern Cone region to Portuguese.

⁷ Réjean ROY and Pierre GEORGEAULT. *L'inforoute en français: un portrait québécois*, Conseil de la langue française, Québec, Juin 1998, p. 6.

⁸ Daniel MOORE. “Presencia internacional y papel del idioma español”, [En línea], *Comunica*, 25/11/99. [www.comunica.es/lengua/opinion/opinion_ant/1999/noviembre99/opinion251199_02.htm]

With regard to the French language, it is currently going through a period of stagnation within the hemisphere. “For decades, the teaching of French was taken for granted” [in Latin America], even if it was often reserved for the elite. Access to the famed French culture was part of the necessary learning for any cultivated individual. [However], cultural capital became the handicap of non-modernity⁹.” Accordingly, “while the French language still has its say, it must express this in terms of utility, as the image of a language today is greatly dependent on the economic, academic and media-related environment¹⁰.” French nevertheless remains a language – or indeed a culture – of reference on the inter-American scene. It remains one of the official languages of all the inter-American organizations, and continues to be one of the most frequently taught languages – although less so than English. Moreover, the influence of the French culture is still felt in many fields of interest, ranging from literature to law¹¹.

With respect to aboriginal languages, although many of them appear to be threatened, some of them are entering into a period of recognition that is essential for their survival. The demographic weight of a number of aboriginal communities often has a favourable influence on this recognition at the national level. This is reflected either by access to official-language status in a country – Paraguay, Bolivia and Peru each include an aboriginal language as one of their official languages – or through accession to the status of a language of education, as is the case in Mexico.

⁹ Annie MONNERIE-GOARIN (conference by). *L'enseignement des langues étrangères dans des contextes régionaux*, [En ligne], Feria del Libro de Buenos Aires, 23 avril 1999. (translation) [www.frances.int.ar/communications.htm]

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ For example, several Latin American republican regimes have been inspired by the values of the French Revolution.

3) *The linguistic impacts of the integration processes in the hemisphere*

A broad range of factors influence linguistic development within the hemisphere. Whether one considers the globalization process, migratory flows, legislative frameworks, integration processes, foreign language teaching programs, or the increased mobility of workers, all of these factors, as well as many others, have an effect on the development of languages. As a result, in order to exercise influence on linguistic development, one must act on several different fronts.

Although one cannot look upon the impact of the integration processes on languages alone and in isolation, certain recent developments observed at the hemispheric level make it possible to clearly establish a link between these processes and linguistic development.

In the Americas, the integration processes are actually undergoing a process of consolidation. Both on the regional level – within the Andean Region, the Southern Cone, the Caribbean, Central America and North America – and between these different regions, there is a strengthening of economic and political ties under way. In the more specific cases in which an economic block includes more than one official language, the integration processes have made it possible to redefine the regional language dynamics. This has led to a twofold consequence for many governments, which must now make language a “matter of state”, much like a matter of international relations.

The impacts of these transformations opens the way to a gaining of awareness of language diversity, to a recognition of the coexistence of languages, and to a planning of the use and learning of the various languages in a spirit of complementarity.

a) *The case of Mercosur: a plurinational linguistic solidarity*

In the case of Mercosur¹², whose official languages are Spanish and Portuguese, regional integration has made possible an unprecedented rapprochement in terms of language. Indeed, until the 1970s, Spanish and Portuguese speakers in the Southern Cone tended to ignore one another. Indeed, according to Alfredo Valladão:

Portuguese-speaking America had always practically ignored Hispanic America – with the exception of a fairly peacefully managed rivalry with

¹² Southern common market: an economic agreement signed in 1991, aiming to create a common market between the member countries, namely Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay. Chile and Bolivia have the status of associate member countries.

Argentina. Before the 1960s and the 1970s, the Brazilian elite refused to identify themselves as Latin Americans¹³.

During that period, French held a great deal of prestige among the national elite, whose gaze was – and in many cases still is – essentially turned toward Europe. Afterwards, English succeeded French as the principal foreign language.

Without denying the power of attraction still exercised today by English, and to a lesser degree by French, it must be recognized that as of recently, Spanish speakers in the Southern Cone have been taking an increasing interest in Portuguese, in view of the economic development of Brazil and the major pole of attraction represented by Mercosur. In Brazil, Spanish has replaced English as the most-spoken second language. These phenomena have been accompanied by a strengthening of the political and economic ties between the States of Mercosur. The recent adoption of measures in favour of integration in the field of education should, moreover, accelerate this rapprochement.

Following this new trend, the Ministers of Education of the Mercosur countries have adopted an integration program in the field of education. Adopted last August, this program includes a language component that will make it obligatory to teach Portuguese as the second language in the Spanish-speaking countries, and Spanish as the second language in Brazil¹⁴.

At first glance, this measure may appear not to have any major consequences, but certain statistics speak for themselves. In Buenos Aires, among the 340,000 schoolchildren in the capital, only 200 are taking Portuguese second-language courses this year, out of all the public schools¹⁵. Thus, for the vast majority of the schoolchildren in that capital, this school-based component of integration will mean their first contact with the Portuguese language.

By smoothing off language-related obstacles, the countries of Mercosur will be able to continue the process of integration, and facilitate the rapprochements between Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking populations.

The capital of Argentina, Buenos Aires, has also made a commitment to encourage its primary schools to offer a new “plurilingual” educational program. According to Mr. Mario Giannoni, Secretary of Education of the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires:

¹³ Alfredo VALLADÃO. “Une nouvelle identité latino-américaine”, *Amérique latine, Tournant de siècle*, Georges Couffignal (dir.), La Découverte, Les Dossiers de l’État du monde, Paris, 1997, p. 103. (translation)

¹⁴ However, this measure gave rise to protests on the part of France, the United Kingdom and Italy. Thus, according to the Madrid daily *El País*, those three countries “mobilized their diplomatic machines in order to prevent Brazil from turning, perhaps irreversibly, toward the Spanish-speaking world”. Source: COMUNICA. *Brasil: Problemas diplomáticos ante la ley del español*, [En línea], Actualidad, 21 de junio del 2000. [www.comunica.es/lengua/actualidad/actualidad210600_02.htm]

¹⁵ COMUNICA. *Mercosur: Problemas para la enseñanza del portugués y el castellano*, [En línea], Actualidad, 28 de junio del 2000. [www.comunica.es/lengua/actualidad/actualidad280600_02.htm]

This method aims to teach young people at least two foreign languages, and is intended as an alternative solution to the model based on the monopoly of English. [...] this method will reinforce the knowledge of Spanish, since the children will be able to compare their mother tongue with the foreign languages, which will enhance their knowledge of their own language¹⁶.

The Argentine capital is also considering creating “Mercosur schools”, where the educational content will be adapted to this new regional reality¹⁷.

In addition to government representatives, individuals and businesses have followed this trend of opening toward the Portuguese-speaking world because, according to the Argentine newspaper *La Nación* :

As a consequence of the expansion of trade in Mercosur, the demand for Portuguese courses is steadily growing in businesses and universities. The percentage of students aged over 25 who are registering for Portuguese courses, drawn by the growing trade negotiations since the creation of a customs union, has been increasing since 1995¹⁸.

Hence, for Spanish-language teachers in Brazil, the signing of Mercosur has brought about a veritable “explosion” in demand for Spanish courses throughout all the Brazilian states¹⁹.

b) *The case of the Caribbean: the construction of a multilingual regional identity*

The economic integration processes sometimes give rise to a will to build a common regional cultural identity. This is the case in the Caribbean, where a form of linguistic integration has been implemented, and where “the quest for a community identity has in fact just been influenced, officially, by the mastery and functional utilization of several languages²⁰.”

¹⁶ COMUNICA. *Enseñanza plurilingüe en escuelas públicas de Buenos Aires*, [En línea], Actualidad, 1 de marzo del 2000. [www.comunica.es/lengua/actualidad/actualidad_ant/marzo00/actualidad010300_01.htm]. (translation)

¹⁷ GOBIERNO DE LA CIUDAD DE BUENOS AIRES, Secretaría de Educación, Dirección de Relaciones Internacionales y Mercosur. *Proyectos*, [En línea], Buenos Aires. [www.buenosaires.gov.ar/educacion/mercosur/educacion_mercosur.asp] (April 18, 2000) (translation)

¹⁸ COMUNICA. “Mercosur: Problemas para la enseñanza del portugués y el castellano”, *loc. cit.* (translation)

¹⁹ Maria MORIONDO KULIKOWSKI y Neide T. MAIA GONZALEZ. “Brasil: La justa medida de una cercanía lingüística”, [En línea], *Comunica*, 7 de junio del 2000. [www.comunica.es/lengua/opinion/default.htm]

²⁰ Patrick DAHLET. *Adhésion à la diversité et qualifications francophones dans la Caraïbe*, [En ligne], DiversCité Langues, vol. V, 2000. [www.telug.quebec.ca/diverscite]. (translation)

In the case of the Caribbean, it is the entire vision of language issues that has been redefined in the framework of the integration process. Thus, as was mentioned by the Cuban Minister of Higher Education, “it was decided no longer to speak of foreign languages in our region, but rather of Caribbean languages, since this encourages the sense of identity²¹.”

Patrick Dahlet, Ex-Director of the *Institut supérieur d'études francophones* (ISEF) of the *Université des Antilles et de la Guyane*, explains that within the Association of Caribbean States (ACS)²², there has been “a recent gaining of socioeconomic awareness, but also in particular of a political awareness of the role that the knowledge and sharing of languages must play in the construction of the Caribbean Community²³.”

“The major role that the tourism economy plays in the development of the island countries²⁴” contributes greatly to this will to achieve linguistic pluralization. International tourism has indeed become one of the bases, if not the main basis, of the economic development of the islands²⁵.

Thus, the Council of Ministers of the Association of Caribbean States has set the objective of “eliminating the language barriers within the region by upgrading the skills of inhabitants of the Caribbean region through the acquisition of a second or third language²⁶”, referring to English, Spanish, and French.

This objective of eliminating language barriers is connected with a series of nine objectives, including the definition of professional language skills, the establishment of a regional certification system, the use of new technologies and the training of teachers through mobility programs. In order to ensure the achievement of these objectives, regional linguistic “centres of excellence” will be set up in reference territories of the three designated languages: Trinidad and Tobago for English, Venezuela for Spanish, and the French overseas regions in the Americas for French.

Commenting on these commitments, Dahlet underlines that:

²¹ ASSOCIATION DES ÉTATS DE LA CARAÏBE. *Rapport final, Première réunion des autorités universitaires des pays membres de l'AEC*, [En ligne], AEC, Havane, Cuba, 2-5 février 1998. [www.acs-aec.org/french/RELfr.htm] (translation).

²² A regional intergovernmental organization that brings together 28 countries (including France), with the mandate to foster collaboration and dialogue in order to ensure sustained regional development in the cultural, economic, social, scientific and technological fields.

²³ Patrick DAHLET. *Politiques linguistiques et offres de français en Caraïbe: des raisons d'espérer*, Université des Antilles et de la Guyane, ISEF-GERECF. (translation)

²⁴ J. CRUSOL and F. VELLAS. *Le tourisme et la Caraïbe*, Paris-Montréal, L'Harmattan, 1996. (translation).

²⁵ The Caribbean islands receive a higher number of tourists than all the countries of South America combined – 21.4 million tourists versus 11.8 million respectively. Source: Patrick DAHLET. *Politiques linguistiques...*, *loc. cit.*

²⁶ ASSOCIATION DES ÉTATS DE LA CARAÏBE. “Des centres d'excellence pour l'enseignement des langues officielles de l'AEC”, Conseil des ministres (Note du), Trinité-et-Tobago, 1998. (translation).

The most profound innovation is to make it possible to consider language learning as an institutional field in the regional and community domain, with the aim of fostering the expansion of plurilingualism.

He adds the following comment:

The dissemination of languages fits within a framework of a plurinational resolution which replaces the quest for dominance with the quest for high-performance complementarities between the languages²⁷.

This is a quest for “linguistic coexistence”, which could prove to be very appropriate for the inter-American context.

c) *The case of NAFTA: a tacit recognition of trilingualism*

In the framework of NAFTA, matters of language have not been not dealt with directly, as they were in the case of Mercosur and in the Caribbean. Indeed, since the North American integration process aimed only to create a free trade area between states (and not a common market, as is the case in several Latin American regions²⁸), the agreement between Mexico, the United States and Canada essentially commits the states only on trade-related matters.

A recognition of the three official languages, which are English, French and Spanish, was nevertheless expressed through the adoption of a trilingual version of the agreement. Also, the two multilateral commissions that were created in the wake of NAFTA – the Commission for Labour Cooperation and the Commission for Environmental Cooperation²⁹ – have English, Spanish and French as their official languages.

But this will to limit the North American commitments to the trade-related aspects alone comes in contrast with the many individual and institutional steps taken to come closer together, or even to integrate, the North American populations.

Five years after the signature of NAFTA, Mexico became the United States’ second-largest trading partner, after Canada. North American trade is thus growing rapidly. Moreover, we find an increasing number of products with trilingual labelling. Yet it is not enough to eliminate tariff barriers in order to increase exports; also, one must be familiar with the market with which one wishes to deal; with its culture, and preferably one must speak its language. This observation, which many observers share, together with the current Latin-American “surge”, has led to an exponential increase in the demand for learning of foreign languages in recent years. Whether through language courses, immersion programs or bilingual educational programs, an increasing number of people,

²⁷ Patrick DAHLET. *Politiques linguistiques...*, loc. cit.

²⁸ In a Common Market, the free circulation of labour and capital is allowed.

²⁹ These organizations are located respectively in Montréal, Québec and in Dallas, Texas.

both young and not-so-young, as well as educational institutions and enterprises, are undertaking to learn a second or a third language.

In the United States, many groups have been promoting the learning of foreign languages in the last several years³⁰, emphasizing in particular that in the context of globalization, the unilingualism that is often typical of Americans could play against their interests. Others mention that the Americans should not count too much on the triumph of English, and instead suggest that those who wish to communicate with the rest of the world should opt for a real bilingualism³¹.

Taking note of these criticisms, in April 2000, United States President William Clinton signed a memorandum for the internationalization of the education policy. It mentions that:

To continue to compete successfully in the global economy [...] the United States needs to ensure that its citizens develop a broad understanding of the world, proficiency in other languages, and knowledge of other cultures.

Further on, it reads:

Today, the defense of U.S. interests, the effective management of global issues, and even an understanding of our Nation's diversity require ever-greater contact with, and understanding of, people and cultures beyond our borders³².

A President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities, created by President Clinton, had proposed in its final report in 1997 to "require competency in a foreign language for high school graduation and entrance into college³³."

The signature of NAFTA, of course, raised the political and economic importance of Mexico, in the United States, bringing about as a result an increased interest in Spanish. Thus, a number of groups are now lobbying in favour of a bilingual education. This change goes along with the unprecedented increase in the Spanish-speaking population in the United States³⁴. Also, President Clinton recently stated "that he would probably be one of the last presidents not to speak Spanish³⁵."

³⁰ A few examples are the National Foreign Language Center, The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, English Plus More, Center for Multilingual, Multicultural Research.

³¹ Barbara WALLRAFF. "What Global Language?", *The Atlantic Monthly*, Boston, November 2000, p. 66.

³² THE WHITE HOUSE. *Memorandum for Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies*, Office of the Press Secretary, Oklahoma City, April 19, 2000.

³³ PRESIDENT'S COMMITTEE ON THE ARTS AND THE HUMANITIES. *Creative America*, Washington D.C., February, 1997, p. 12.

³⁴ This situation will likely only become intensified in the coming years, since according to current forecasts, a quarter of the American population will be Spanish-speaking in 2050.

³⁵ Guy TAILLEFER. "Le Texas dans les deux langues", *Le Devoir*, 30 Octobre 2000, p. A1. (translation).

In Mexico, also, the importance of knowing foreign languages is being increasingly felt. Moreover, the candidate for the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) made the obligatory teaching of English in the public education system one of the issues of the presidential election campaign.

The very nature of NAFTA is such that the circulation of workers causes linguistic impact, since mobility is quite limited and is subjected to quotas. However, the project proposed by Mexican President-elect Vicente Fox, namely the setting up of a North American common market with free circulation of workers, could more profoundly redefine the linguistic dynamics.

In the case of Québec, whose economy is among the most open – Québec exports 57 % of its GDP³⁶ – it is clear that plurilingualism in society represents a major asset. Indeed, “languages, as communication tools, are part of the skills required to engage in commercial trade³⁷.” Indeed, this observation explains why many people have opted in recent years to develop their knowledge of languages. On this subject, the statistics are quite indicative: the number of persons in Québec “who consider themselves able to carry on a conversation in Spanish has jumped by 31%, rising from 146,000 to nearly 191,000” in 5 years³⁸. NAFTA is certainly not unrelated to this rapid rise.

This surge of interest in Spanish is also felt in the rest of Canada. In Alberta universities, for example, the number of students who take courses in Spanish rose from 870, in 1991-1992, to 3,940 in 1997-1998, whereas the Toronto Spanish Centre, which opened six years ago, had to double the area of its facilities in order to fulfill the rising demand³⁹. This marked interest in Spanish, in Canada, could develop to the detriment of French.

It should be emphasized that the federal government has also placed the question of cultural diversity on its agenda, but it has essentially focused its efforts on creating an International Network on cultural diversity and globalization, which aims to “promote the idea that cultural goods and services should be fully recognized and treated as not being like other forms of merchandise⁴⁰.” This network will aim primarily to protect the cultural field from the trade liberalization processes, which constitutes an entirely different set of issues.

³⁶ This figure, dating from 1998, includes interprovincial trade, which accounts for 19 %.

³⁷ Patrick DAHLET, *op. cit.*

³⁸ Michel PAILLÉ. “Les langues tierces au Québec en 1996”, *Bulletin du Conseil de la langue française*, Québec, volume 15, n° 2, mai 1999. (translation).

³⁹ Leah HENDRY. “Want to be bilingual? Try Spanish”, *The Globe and Mail*, Toronto, June 22, 2000.

⁴⁰ GOVERNMENT OF CANADA. *Report: Preliminary Meeting of Network Experts on Cultural Diversity and Globalization*, [On line], Ottawa, Canada, December 6 and 7, 1999. [www.pch.gc.ca/network-reseau/cdg-gdc/report-e.htm]

d) *Renewal in the valuing of regional identities*

The projects mentioned above fit in well with the measures being taken by many other organizations working in the service of language diversity within the hemisphere. For example, the Organization of Ibero-American States for Education, Science and Culture (OEI), with a membership of about twenty Latin American countries, in addition to Spain and Portugal, is now working toward the “promotion and dissemination of the Spanish and Portuguese languages”, and for that purpose is mandated to “establish cooperation programs with other regions of the world”. In 1989, the Portuguese-language countries also set up a Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries (CPLP), with the mission of “affirming and disseminating Portuguese⁴¹.” The Latin Union, for its part, is devoted to the promotion and dissemination of the common heritage and identities of the Latin world (Spanish, French, Italian, Portuguese and Romanian), while the *Agence intergouvernementale de la Francophonie* has set itself objectives, for 2000-2001, that include “undertaking cooperation with other linguistic areas, particularly those of Arabic, Portuguese and Spanish, in a spirit of promoting plurilingualism⁴².” Academic organizations and programs are also being created that analyse identity issues from a North American viewpoint, such as the North American Institute (NAMI) or Duke University, in the United States. Also, Aboriginal groups are becoming increasingly well organized and are working for the recognition of their languages and cultures.

A dynamics of openness toward language diversity is typical of most regional blocks and language groups. This is an era of advocacy for linguistic and cultural diversity. Indeed, it appears that the populations wish to counteract the tendency of the globalization process toward a homogenizing effect, through the promotion of their identities, cultures and languages. In civil society, as well as on the governmental scene, there has been an increasing number of initiatives in favour of language diversity, and a rapprochement between the members of the different language groups. This makes it possible to enrich the economic aspect of the integration processes by adding cultural and linguistic aspects, in order to deepen and broaden the scope of the changes under way.

⁴¹ COMUNIDADE DOS PAÍSES DE LÍNGUA PORTUGUESA (CPLP). *Quem Somos?* [Na Internet], Lisboa, 9 de maio de 1996. [http://www.cplp.org/index_frames.html] (translation).

⁴² AGENCE INTERGOUVERNEMENTALE DE LA FRANCOPHONIE. *Programmation 2000-2001, Chantier 6, Une Francophonie plurielle : promouvoir la diversité linguistique culturelle*, [En ligne], p. 174. [<http://agence.francophonie.org/>] (translation).

4) *Community multilingualism: a pillar of European integration*

Outside of the Americas, the best known case of the handling of language aspects within an integration process is undoubtedly that of the European Union. Europe passed legislation on the question of multilingualism right from the initial phases of European integration. In 1958, the Council of Europe adopted a rule setting out the four official languages of the Community's institutions, and the Community's language system.

Indeed, the Community multilingualism constitutes one of the pillars of the Union. It is seen as:

the expression of a will which is at the very basis of democracy: every citizen of the Union must have the right to be informed and to be heard in his or her own language⁴³.

In a more general sense, the European Commission mentions in one of its publications that:

The economic integration of the Union is based on the principle of non-discrimination, including that which relates to languages. Equal opportunity in enterprises, and particularly in SMEs, would be seriously compromised if one or more languages were granted the privilege of being the only means of communication in Europe. Access to the larger market while respecting the right to compete depends on multilingualism⁴⁴.

By entrenching the equality of the different language versions of the Treaty Rome⁴⁵, an important initial step was taken in favour of multilingualism. However, it was necessary afterwards to redefine the Union's language system. It is this system (see Annex 2) through which the official languages of the Union are established, as well as the working languages and the obligation to adopt as many versions as there are official languages in the case of texts of general application.

Since then, with the enlargement of the Union, there have come to be no fewer than eleven official languages. Despite the fact that the number of official languages has more than doubled since the implementation of European integration, the rule of multilingualism continues to apply, and was even broadened when the Treaty of Amsterdam was signed in 1997, introducing the following principle:

Every citizen of the Union may write to any of the institutions or bodies referred to in one of the twelve languages of the treaties – that is, the

⁴³ COMMISSION EUROPÉENNE. *Multilinguisme et traduction*, Office des publications officielles des Communautés européennes, Luxembourg, 1999, p. 4. (translation).

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ A treaty signed in 1957, which governed the creation of the European Economic Community (E.E.C.).

eleven official languages plus Irish – and have an answer in the same language⁴⁶.

Thus, the defence of plurilingualism continues to be an important issue for the European Union. Moreover, the efforts to encourage language diversity are continuing in various ways. The European Commission has set itself the objective of helping the citizens of the Union to master three European languages. For this purpose, various measures have been put forward.

Thus, the *Lingua* program allocates financial assistance for European projects that:

1. promote language diversity within the European Union;
2. contribute to improving the quality of language teaching;
3. facilitate access to lifelong learning opportunities.

It is in the framework of the *Lingua* program that the *Eurom 4* project was launched. Instigated by the universities of Provence, Lisbon, Rome and Salamanca, this project gave rise to the development of a method of simultaneous teaching of the Romance languages.

This program is intended for persons whose native language is one of the four Romance languages (Portuguese, Italian, Spanish or French), and who wish to be able to understand the other three. Thus, it no longer appears necessary to interact through a moderate command of English [during communications between persons from these different language groups]⁴⁷.

Moreover, the European Community wishes to take advantage of technological means in its measures to enhance multilingualism, and also invites the member states to do so through the *MLIS* (Multi-Lingual Information Society) program. This program, which completes the European measures in the area of plurilingualism, aims to:

1. encourage the provision of multilingual services within the Community through the use of technologies, resources and linguistic standards;
2. create conditions favourable to the development of the language industries;
3. reduce the costs of transferring information between languages;
4. contribute to the promotion of language diversity within the Community⁴⁸.

⁴⁶ Article 21 de la version consolidée du traité instituant la Communauté européenne. Source : COMMISSION EUROPÉENNE, *ibid.* (translation)

⁴⁷ André VALLI. « Présentation de la méthode Eurom 4 d'enseignement simultané à distance », [En ligne]. [www.emb-fr.int.ar/Ar/Educativo/dialogues/droit-parole.htm]. (31/10/2000) (translation)

⁴⁸ SOCIÉTÉ DE L'INFORMATION MULTILINGUE (MLIS). *Programme de travail triennal 1996-1998*, [En ligne]. [www2.echo.lu/mlis/fr/intro.htm]

The *MLIS* program thus aims to increase the number of proponents of multilingualism within Europe, by mobilizing both the public and private sectors within the member states.

In addition, following a proposal by the Council of Europe, adopted by the European Union, 2001 was declared the European year of languages. Many measures aiming to improve language competency will thus be implemented in order to ensure long-term consolidation of multilingualism, and to build the awareness of all citizens regarding this issue.

Finally, certain member countries of the European Union are launching their own initiatives to foster the knowledge of their language. Thus, with a view to reinforcing the presence of Spanish within the European institutions, the ADES (Association for the dissemination of Spanish and Hispanic Culture⁴⁹) decided to offer a free course in Spanish for public servants and members of the European Parliament. Implemented in June 2000, this program will enable employees and Members of the European Parliament to take Spanish courses via the Internet, with a teacher of their choice, while receiving the corresponding teaching materials at home⁵⁰. This is a concrete example of the use of new technologies for the dissemination of a language.

In summary, in light of the situation in Europe, it may be noted that the handling of language diversity in a context of integration can take on many facets.

⁴⁹ The official name is: *Asociación para la difusión del español y la cultura hispana*.

⁵⁰ All the information concerning this course is available from the ADES site [www.adesasoc.com].

5) *The responsibility of the heads of state and government of the Americas in the area of multilingualism*

Since the regional integration processes have brought about significant impacts on language dynamics, it may be stated in all logic that the process of integration of the Americas will have consequences on the linguistic architecture of the hemisphere.

The growth of economic, political and social ties between the states of the hemisphere and the strengthening of the role of inter-American organizations, the opening of borders, the increasing of commercial trade, combined with the development of new technologies, will have a considerable impact. Of what nature? All that depends on the measures that will or will not be taken.

When they have gathered at the Summits of the Americas, the heads of state and government have so far done very little about language-related issues. At the first Summit, held in Miami in 1994, they certainly agreed on the need for “promoting cultural values⁵¹”, but their explanations of this concept were limited to generalities. Thus, no directive appears in the declarations and plans of action of the Summits of the Americas regarding the necessity for the inter-American organizations linked with the integration process, to operate and be accessible in four languages. Furthermore, there is nothing to encourage exporting businesses to respect the language used by the consumers whom they are targeting.

Some consider that issues relating to the respect of the national language in signage and information regarding a product are strictly a matter of national legislation, but until now, only seventeen countries within the hemisphere – not taking into account Canada and the United States – have passed legislation in the area of consumer protection⁵². The national legislative framework of many countries thus does not allow for consumer protection in the area of language. In this sense, a declaration by all the heads of state and government regarding the importance of respecting national languages would be appropriate.

A tacit recognition of the multilingual nature of the Americas may be seen in the adoption of the Summit declarations and plans of action in four languages, as well as in the availability of the official texts in four languages. While this is an important first step, it nevertheless does not constitute a sufficient or valid guarantee of the respect of multilingualism.

⁵¹ FREE TRADE AREA OF THE AMERICAS. *Summit of the Americas, Plan of Action*, [On line], Miami, Florida, December 1994. [www.ftaa-alca.org/ministerials/plan_e.asp]

⁵² Gustavo GONZALEZ. “Consumers : Parlatino presents Code protecting Citizens’ Rights”, *Inter Press Service (IPS)*, [On line], Santiago, November 5, 1999. [www.oneworld.org/ips2/nov/consumers4.html]

It should be noted that a recent discussion paper, written by the OAS Special Committee on Inter-American Summits Management, presented the themes of the next Summit, namely: strengthening democracy, creating prosperity, and realizing human potential. Concerning this last theme, it is mentioned that

Efforts to eliminate discrimination could be complemented by expansion of opportunities for sharing our diverse cultural, racial and linguistic heritages and perspectives⁵³.

This reference to linguistic aspects is interesting but rather laconic, which brings us to consider that awareness-building regarding language issues has yet to be done in the case of the main stakeholders of hemispheric integration.

Recommendation 1

Whereas, thus far, the declarations and plans of action adopted by the heads of state and government have recognized the linguistic diversity of the Americas only in a tacit way, and it is important to give clear recognition and support to hemispheric multilingualism, the Conseil de la langue française recommends:

- That the Government of Québec request that the Canadian federal government have included, in the Plan of Action of the Summit of the Americas, the need to officialize and strengthen institutional and commercial multilingualism and to support the development of individual plurilingualism.
- That the Government of Québec request that the Canadian federal government include, in the Treaty to be signed by the heads of state and government of the Americas, at the conclusion of the current negotiation process, provisions concerning the multilingualism of the inter-American organizations and of inter-American trade.

It appears that at the third Summit of the Americas, the theme of cultural diversity will be discussed in a parallel meeting that will bring together authors from throughout the hemisphere. This initiative is interesting, but will not bring the heads of state and government to deal with this issue directly.

For this reason, the *Conseil de la langue française* maintains that the holding of the third Summit of the Americas next April constitutes an excellent opportunity to initiate concerted actions to inform governments, socioeconomic stakeholders and the population at large regarding the need to carry out the integration of the Americas in harmony with a number of different languages.

⁵³ OAS PERMANENT COUNCIL, Special Committee on Inter-American Summits Management. *2001 Summit of the Americas : Themes* (discussion document), CE/GCI-170/00, August 18, 2000.

6) *Adapting the language strategy to the inter-American context*

In light of current and upcoming developments on the inter-American scene, it is essential to ensure that the integration process does not overshadow the language issues, by developing a strategy that places priority on linguistic diversity and the promotion of multilingualism. “A national language development strategy can no longer suffice without an international multilateral and supranational strategy⁵⁴.”

From this viewpoint, it is appropriate to adapt the language strategy to the inter-American context. In Québec, this approach fits with the spirit of a number of recent governmental measures and declarations, such as the adoption of the Decade of the Americas, the will to increase trilingualism among Quebecers by 50%, the creation of the *Office Québec-Amérique pour la jeunesse*, the organizing of economic missions to Latin America, the setting up within the *Ministère de l'Éducation* of a *Fonds pour la mobilité internationale des étudiants* (international mobility fund for students), and the will to strengthen the ties between Québec and the Americas.

Based on the valuing of language diversity, the main elements of this adaptation should aim to:

- foster the implementation of measures in favour of language diversity;
- develop plurilingualism among Quebecers;
- strengthen the multilingual nature of the inter-American organizations;
- inform exporting businesses of the need for multilingualism in labelling, directions for product use and e-commerce;
- develop reflection and dialogue on language diversity through the organizing of an inter-American seminar on language promotion; and
- create an inter-American network for the promotion of languages in the integrated Americas.

⁵⁴ Normand LABRIE. *Vers une stratégie intégrée en Francophonie visant la promotion du français comme condition au maintien du plurilinguisme dans les Amériques*, document inédit, Toronto, Centre de recherches en éducation franco-ontarienne, 1998, p. 8. (translation)

a) *Rapprochement through the knowledge of foreign languages*

*To learn foreign languages [...] is to accept, to seek out,
to savour the crossing of cultures, their mixing,
to set out in search of another, to find others,
and sometimes, to find oneself
along unexpected pathways.*

*Annie Monnerie-Goarin*⁵⁵

The knowledge of foreign languages constitutes an inestimable source of culture. It gives access to other ways of thinking and it opens a door to diversity, as well as to similarities. To know foreign languages is also to absorb other ways of seeing, while looking at the world in a different and enriched way.

Apart from the rich personal development that can be obtained through the knowledge of foreign languages, the ability to speak one or more foreign languages constitutes more than ever an asset to function in a society that is in the process of globalization and decompartmentalization. In addition to the traditional economic/political networks in which linguistic homogeneity predominated (the Commonwealth, *La Francophonie*, Hispano-Americanism, etc.), there are now a large number of new networks that are representative of the new geopolitical situation, in which language diversity is a necessity (North American and Caribbean networks, organizations of the Pacific Basin, etc.) Also, far from being confined to governmental representatives, international networks are now emerging in all sectors of society – business people, academics, labour unions, NGOs, ... – thus multiplying the number of people who have to operate in internationalized and plurilingual settings.

The Americas have not escaped this underlying trend. On the contrary, whereas only a few years ago, inter-American relations were rather tenuous, now they are developing at an exponential rate, which reinforces the integration processes. The consolidation and long-term survival of these processes, whether regional or inter-American, depends on a deepening of linguistic pluralism, not only among organizations, but also among individuals.

On this subject, it seems that the interest of Quebecers in foreign languages is undergoing a renewal. According to Sylvie Roy of the *École des langues* (school of languages) of the Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM), over the past several years, interest in Spanish has become as great as interest in English. Moreover, as of late, Portuguese has

⁵⁵ Annie MONNERIE-GOARIN (conférence de). *L'enseignement des langues étrangères dans des contextes régionaux*, [En ligne], Feria del Libro de Buenos Aires, 23 avril 1999. [www.frances.int.ar/communications.htm]

been enjoying an unprecedented popularity “often among business people, because they are drawn by Brazil, with its population of 160 million⁵⁶.”

It should be noted that it is becoming increasingly financially rewarding to master a second or a third language. In a survey by the CROP polling company, it was noted that among members of the *Ordre des comptables en management accrédités du Québec* (association of certified management accountants), non-negligible wage differences were noted between unilingual, bilingual and polyglot individuals.

Unilingual francophone accountants earn on average \$50,300; “functionally” bilingual accountants earn \$58,100, those who are fluently bilingual earn \$69,900, and polyglot CMAs earn \$70,300, or \$20,000 more than their unilingual colleagues⁵⁷.

One may also identify a collective economic benefit in the development of language skills among the population. In this regards, the newspaper *Libération* published an article on April 3, 1999, entitled: “In London, languages create jobs”, which contained the following:

Multiculturalism can be synonymous with good business. This week, London was chosen as the new European reservations centre for Air France. The qualification for recruitment? Being able to speak several languages... in fact, 6,400 calls will be handled each day, in 6 languages including Catalan⁵⁸.

In the area of foreign language learning, one may choose to let individuals develop their language skills by themselves. However, this strategy is likely to delay any real progress in this field, and thus give a head start to other states that have taken action to diversify the language abilities of their citizens. The *laissez-faire* approach is liable to increase the systematic use of English when people communicate with foreign representatives, thereby reinforcing the omnipresence of that language.

Dahlet underlines the role of the political class in this regard:

it must be recognized that the plurilingual transformation of the educational institution [...] depends, in the final reckoning, on the reading and interpretation by the political level of the transmission of these languages and of the related issues⁵⁹.

The role of the *Ministère de l'Éducation* is indeed central with regard to the development of plurilingualism. In this area, Québec's *Ministère de l'Éducation* has increased its

⁵⁶ JOURNAL DE MONTRÉAL. *Buongiorno! Good morning! Buenos Dias!*, Formation et perfectionnement, 8 août 2000, p. 12. (translation)

⁵⁷ Rima ELKOURI. “Fric, money, dinero”, *L'Actualité*, 1^{er} novembre 2000, p. 57. (translation)

⁵⁸ Quotation by Annie MONNERIE-GOARIN, *op. cit.* (translation)

⁵⁹ Patrick DAHLET. *Politiques linguistiques...*, *loc. cit.* (translation)

efforts to develop the knowledge of foreign languages among young Quebecers; however, these efforts are still essentially geared toward the learning of English. Thus, despite a constantly increasing interest among schoolchildren and students in learning Spanish, the projects of the *Ministère de l'Éducation* in that regard remain timid.

Currently, the teaching of a third language at secondary school is only slightly developed, since in 1998-1999, only 163 secondary schools out of a total of 898 (or 18%) offered it to their students.

Recommendation 2

Whereas the knowledge of foreign languages represents a rich asset, it is becoming increasingly important to communicate with parties from other language groups, and clear advantages result from this knowledge on both the individual and collective level, the Conseil de la langue française recommends :

- That the *Ministère de l'Éducation du Québec* make the learning of a third language an obligatory part of the secondary school curriculum;
- That the *Ministère de l'Éducation du Québec*, in the framework of the third language teaching program in secondary school, place priority on the other two most-spoken languages in the Americas, namely Spanish and Portuguese;
- That the *Ministère de l'Éducation du Québec* make the learning of a third language an obligatory part of the curriculum for college-level educational institutions;
- That the *Ministère de l'Éducation du Québec* invite the Québec universities to develop the learning of other languages in the framework of their educational programs.

Most European countries already require the knowledge of two foreign languages, and certain American universities are acting along the same lines. The community-oriented intentions of Europe were clearly expressed at a meeting of the European Council of Education Ministers in June 1984⁶⁰ :

The member states agree to promote any appropriate measure to enable the greatest possible number of students, by the end of obligatory schooling, acquire a practical knowledge of two languages in addition to their native language.

⁶⁰ CONSEIL DE LA LANGUE FRANÇAISE. *La langue au cœur de l'éducation*, [En ligne], Québec, Août 1995. [www.clf.gouv.qc.ca/PubF150/F150.html]

In Québec, apart from the *Ministère de l'Éducation*, several government departments and agencies should also foster the development of language abilities, for example those whose staff enter into contact with foreign representatives. These organizations should indeed set the example in the area of multilingualism, by ensuring that their staff are aware, to the extent possible, of the languages used by the representatives with whom they work.

Recommendation 3

In order to foster language diversity in Québec's international relations with its foreign partners, the Conseil de la langue française recommends:

- That the Government of Québec ensure that the personnel assigned to inter-American affairs has the necessary linguistic knowledge;
- Failing the above, that the Government see to the development of the required knowledge of languages among its personnel.

b) To entrust the inter-American organizations with the management of language diversity

*Plurilingualism is to international organizations
what multipartitism is to democracy*

Boutros Boutros-Ghali⁶¹

The integration processes lead to a reduction of the political power of a state. This “delegation of political power to supranational bodies entrusts the latter with part of the control of language practices previously exercised by the state⁶².”

The experience of Mercosur, of the Caribbean and of Europe demonstrates that the share of the control exercised by supranational organizations over language-related aspects of an integration process may have considerable effects and spinoffs.

The inter-American organizations : a questionable multilingualism

In the case of the Americas, there are four inter-American organizations that are mandated to follow up on the commitments of the Summits of the Americas, namely: the Organization of American States (OAS), the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), the Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO) and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)⁶³. An official Internet site setting out the development of the deliberations leading to the creation of the Free Trade Area of the Americas has also been set up⁶⁴, and is now being maintained by the OAS, the IDB and the ECLAC on behalf of the governments of the FTAA member countries.

In order to gain information on the language situation, the *Conseil* sent out a short questionnaire including six questions⁶⁵ about multilingualism, to the following four organizations: the OAS, the IDB⁶⁶, the PAHO, and the ECLAC. An analysis of the Internet sites of each organization also provides a good idea of the level of organizational multilingualism.

⁶¹ A quotation of Mr. Boutros-Ghali made by Prime Minister Jospin, during comments at *the Haut Conseil de la Francophonie*, 16 Nov., 1999, in Paris. [www.premier-ministre.gouv.fr/PM/D161199A.htm] (translation)

⁶² Normand LABRIE. *Vers une stratégie intégrée en Francophonie visant la promotion du français comme condition au maintien du plurilinguisme dans les Amériques*, document inédit, Toronto, *Centre de recherches en éducation franco-ontarienne*, 1998, p. 6. (translation)

⁶³ DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE. *Plan of Action, II Summit of the Americas*, [On line], Ottawa. [www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/oas/oas05b-e.htm]

⁶⁴ The electronic address of the site is the following : www.ftaa-alca.org/

⁶⁵ The questions were : “ In your organization: 1) What are the official languages? 2) Which texts must be translated into all the official languages? 3) Which languages are used during work sessions? 4) Which languages are used on your Internet site?, 5) Which languages are used on a day-to-day basis at work? and 6) What are the language-related criteria for the hiring of personnel? ” (translation)

⁶⁶ Although French is one of the official languages of the IDB, that organization sent us a response to our questionnaire in English.

Official languages and languages of use

Officially, three of the above mentioned organizations – the OAS, the IDB and the PAHO – as well as the Internet site of the Free Trade Area of the Americas, have four institutional languages, namely English, Spanish, French and Portuguese. The ECLAC, whose mandate concerns only Latin America and the Caribbean – and for that reason it will be covered in the section dealing with regional organizations – has three official languages: English, Spanish and French.

Although most of these organizations would like to give the impression that they operate in four languages, it seems clear that the inter-American organizations do not devote all the necessary efforts to enhancing multilingualism and to ensuring the equality of the official languages. Indeed, it is not sufficient to have a translation service in four languages to consider that an organization is quadrilingual.

At the OAS as well as at the IDB and the PAHO, the meetings of the main decision-making bodies (board of governors, steering committee, executive council,...), take place in the four languages, and the documents that are discussed there are drafted in those languages as well. In the case of the OAS and the IDB, the comments of Canadian representatives at the official meetings are generally made in English and in French.

On a day-to-day basis, however, quadrilingualism within these organizations is rather scarce. The OAS is the only organization which indicates that all four official languages are used in its offices – in view of the diversity of nationalities of the staff. However, at working meetings of the OAS, it seems that the French and Portuguese versions of the documents submitted for discussion consist merely of summaries of the English and Spanish versions.

The IDB indicates that on a day-to-day basis, the work is essentially carried on in English and Spanish, and to a lesser degree, in Portuguese. A few working groups are also unilingual in English or Spanish. The PAHO also answers that English-Spanish bilingualism prevails at the head office. Only the offices located outside of Washington D.C. use the language of the host country. Also, working meetings of a less official nature take place in English and Spanish.

Multilingualism of Internet sites

Multilingualism of Internet sites is essential to the language-related accessibility of an organization, because these sites often constitute the gateway to an organization, or even the only link between it and the populations of the different member states. Indeed, many people obtain all the information that they need from the Internet site of an organization. Yet the purported quadrilingualism of the organizations is reduced here to lip service. The vast majority of reports and publications of these organizations are accessible only in English and Spanish. One need only go beyond the home page of a site, or at best the table of contents, in order to realize this.

In the case of the OAS as well as the IDB and the FTAA, the home page of the Internet site is quadrilingual. However, the site of the IDB contains only one document in French and one in Portuguese, while there are dozens of them in the English-language and Spanish-language sections of the site. The OAS, much like the FTAA, has taken the trouble to translate the tables of contents of the various sections into French and Portuguese, but the documents to which they refer web surfers are often available only in English and Spanish. Yet why should a French-speaker obtain information in English when exploring an interest in Latin America?

Moreover, the OAS indicates, in the letter of response that it sent to the *Conseil*, that all the documents of the “affiliated entities” are translated into all four languages. This obligation is perhaps respected, but it is difficult to be persuaded of this when one notes that the affiliated organizations have strictly bilingual Internet sites (English-Spanish): the Inter-American Council for Integrated Development, the Inter-American Juridical Committee, the Inter-American Court on Human Rights, the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission, the Inter-American Telecommunications Commission, the Inter-American Ports Commission, the Special Committee on Inter-American Summits Management, and the Inter-American Commission of Women, to name only a few. The site of the Office of Cultural Affairs, for its part, is unilingual in English!

At least the PAHO does not attempt to give a false impression of quadrilingualism: its Internet site, much like its home page, is bilingual (English-Spanish), apart from a few documents of the governing bodies, which are drafted in four languages. And the inclusion of an “on-line” translation system proves to be of no help, since it translates only from English to Spanish and from Spanish to English.

Language-related criteria for hiring and for training programs

The language-related criteria contribute to the weakening of the quadrilingual nature of the inter-American organizations, since they do not place all the official languages on an equal footing. The OAS indicates that the languages given priority in hiring are English and Spanish, but that on occasion, a knowledge of French or of Portuguese may be required. Language training programs are offered to the OAS staff. These sometimes allow for subsidies to be granted to study a language.

For its part, the IDB indicated to the *Conseil* that bilingualism (Spanish-English) is a condition of hiring, and that the mastery of another language is rarely required.

The PAHO, for its part, asks for the knowledge of the language of the country where the organization’s office is located – on this subject, it will be recalled that the organization’s head office is in Washington D.C. – while specifying that the knowledge of other languages will be considered as an asset, but not as a condition of hiring. A recognition of plurilingualism nevertheless exists within the PAHO, through a system of wage premiums based on the number of languages spoken by the employee. The PAHO also

provides language courses to interested staff members, but French does not appear on the list of courses offered.

In the area of linguistic representativity, it should be underlined that the Secretary General of the UN decided, in order to reinforce the use of French within that international organization, to set up a plan “in favour of the recruitment of francophones, according to a principle of affirmative action analogous to that which exists in favour of women or under-represented states⁶⁷.”

Publications

All the inter-American organizations issue official publications and documents. Depending on the case, these publications may be intended for the public at large, for experts or for business people. In this area also, the publications are written in English and in Spanish. The occasional document is translated into several languages.

Multilingualism in the regional organizations of the hemisphere

Concerning regional institutional multilingualism, the official languages are divided as follows within the main regional intergovernmental organizations of the hemisphere:

Organization	Official languages
North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) –parallel organizations ⁶⁸	Spanish, English, French
Association of Caribbean States (ACS)	Spanish, English, French
United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)	English, Spanish, French (only English and Spanish are used on the Internet)
Central American Parliament	Spanish
Andean Community	Spanish (English is also used on the Internet)
Mercosur	Spanish and Portuguese
Latin-American Parliament	Spanish and Portuguese

Certain regional organizations in the hemisphere manage to function in a multilingual context. This is the case of the Association of Caribbean States (ACS), which has adopted French, Spanish and English as daily working languages, and which makes available all

⁶⁷ AGENCE INTERGOUVERNEMENTALE DE LA FRANCOPHONIE. *Programmation 2000-2001, Chantier 6, Une Francophonie plurielle : promouvoir la diversité linguistique culturelle*, [En ligne], p. 186. [<http://agence.francophonie.org/>] (translation)

⁶⁸ This refers to agencies created under the NAFTA, namely the North American Commission for Environmental Cooperation (NAECC) and the Commission for Labour Cooperation (CLC).

of the information that it produces in those three languages. The meetings are held in the three official languages, the personnel is trilingual, and all of the documents on the Internet site are trilingual. The equality of the languages seems to be well entrenched in that organization.

Also, the level of trilingualism in cooperation organizations in the area of labour (CLC) and the environment (NACEC) created within the framework of NAFTA is fairly high. The meetings and official documents are trilingual, as is all of the information provided on the Internet sites. On a day-to-day basis, however, one often faces de facto bilingualism in the offices and in work sessions.

The language-related criteria for hiring nevertheless foster a certain equality of languages, since the knowledge of at least two of the organization's official languages is required, although it is not specified which. Thus, in contrast to the inter-American organizations, knowledge of one official language is not given precedence to the detriment of another. In addition, since the personnel must come in equal proportions from Mexico, the United States and Canada, this condition opens the way to a certain geographic and, as a result, linguistic representation. Of course, a higher proportion of the population speak English and Spanish: one cannot leave demographics out of the reckoning. Nevertheless, there is no discriminatory policy in the area of language.

As for the ECLAC, it operates with two languages, despite its official trilingualism. French is present there only during intergovernmental meetings. On a day-to-day basis, much like in the organization's Internet site, French is absent.

Finally, it may be noted that despite the fact that certain aboriginal languages have official status in certain countries of the Andean Community and of Mercosur, only the languages of Indo-European origin have acquired the status of official languages within the regional organizations.

Summary

None of the inter-American organizations really function in the four official languages. Spanish and English are the two working languages there – apart from the OAS – and are the languages required for hiring of staff, as well as those broadly used on the Internet sites. In short, quadrilingualism is reserved for “important occasions”.

Yet, as seen above, there are regional organizations in which multilingualism is more fully respected (the ACS, the CLC, etc.). An example which should be noted in this regard, in Québec, is the Parliamentary Conference of the Americas (COPA), which succeeds in operating in a quadrilingual context. In addition to the fact that the official meetings there are held in four languages, all of the organization's official documents are translated into the organization's four official languages, and the Internet site is fully quadrilingual, as is the staff of the Secretariat, who benefit from a program of foreign language training. This initiative represents a successful example of the management of

plurilingualism and of the respect of language diversity – which was, moreover, one of the themes of discussion at the first Conference, which took place in September 1997, in Quebec City.

The *Conseil de la langue française* maintains that inter-American organizations must take charge of and reflect the linguistic diversity of the states that they represent. As was stated by the *Haut Conseil de la Francophonie*, this is a “factor in the democratization of international organizations”.

For this reason, the *Conseil* considers that together with our Canadian partners⁶⁹, we must make representations to these organizations, to have them reinforce their multilingual nature. Also, various measures could be proposed to the inter-American organizations so that they will ensure the development of plurilingualism among their staff.

Recommendation 4

Whereas there are shortcomings in the inter-American organizations in the area of quadrilingualism, and it is important to respect this quadrilingual nature that they have adopted, the Conseil de la langue française recommends:

- That the Minister of International Relations and the Minister responsible for the organizations under the *Charte de la langue française* (Charter of the French Language) make representations, together with her Canadian partners, to the inter-American organizations, in order that the latter reinforce their multilingual nature.

More specifically:

- That the Government of Québec, together with the federal government, urge the inter-American organizations to consolidate their multilingual nature by ensuring that:
 1. All official documents and general interest documents are translated into each of the official languages⁷⁰;
 2. The information on the Internet sites is made available in each of the official institutional languages;
 3. All the official languages are treated on an equal footing in the hiring of personnel;
 4. Plurilingualism is fostered among their staff by providing language courses or traineeships;
 5. It be made possible for any citizen to communicate with an inter-American organization in one of the official languages of that organization, and receive an answer in the same language.

⁶⁹ By “Canadian partners”, we refer to the Canadian Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Secretary of State for Latin America.

⁷⁰ By “general interest documents”, we refer to documents of an inter-American scope, that is, which concern all the States of the hemisphere. Thus, the documents relating to a given region could be written only in the official language(s) of that region.

Furthermore, the new technologies may provide adequate and not very costly support to foster the dissemination and teaching of French at a distance. In this regard, the case of Spain, presented above, which provides distance Spanish courses free of charge for the personnel and Members of the European Union, stands as an excellent example of the dissemination of a language.

In this regard, it will be recalled that the head office of the Inter-American Organization for Higher Education (IOHE) is located in Quebec City. Its mandate is to foster cooperation between academic institutions and to develop higher education in the Americas.

Recommendation 5

Whereas there is a need to develop the knowledge and use of the French language in the inter-American organizations, the Conseil de la langue française recommends:

- That the Government of Québec, together with the federal government, advocate measures to reinforce multilingualism in the inter-American and North American organizations;
- That the Government of Québec develop, in collaboration with a Québec academic institution, the provision of distance courses in the French language, and that it set up language learning traineeships intended for the members and staff of the inter-American organizations and NAFTA organizations.

c) *Better serving the interests of consumers and businesses*

For consumers, the opening of borders combined with the development of e-commerce may cause certain problems of access to information in the national language. For example, the creation of a Free Trade Area will cause increased circulation of goods and services, which will increase the risk of finding products on the Québec market with labelling or directions that are not provided in French. Moreover, the intensification of international trade flows is not necessarily followed by an increase in the number of controls applied, particularly concerning the languages used in labelling and in the instructions for imported goods. In the case of e-commerce, it can easily circumvent the national language legislation.

However, consumers in the hemisphere are entitled to expect intelligible product information and labelling, that is, clearly written in the official language or languages of their country. That is why it is necessary to promote a better knowledge of the rules in force and to remind businesses that it is their duty to address consumers in their own language.

In Québec, the information appearing on products sold is covered by both federal and Québec legislation. Indeed, under the Canadian Consumer Packaging and Labelling Act, the information concerning product identity and the net quantity of a product must be presented in both official languages, whereas the name and the principal establishment of the supplier may appear in either language⁷¹. The *Charte de la langue française* defines additional requirements concerning the use of French for any product sold in Québec⁷².

With regard to consumer protection in Latin American countries, as was mentioned above, the difficulty often lies in the absence of consumer protection legislation. However, in Latin America and the Caribbean, consumer protection networks are being developed. Grouped together in an organization known as Consumers International, dozens of associations are now working for consumer protection and a few months ago, they adopted a first “model legislation for protection of consumers’ rights”, which stipulates that:

the information regarding a product, whether the label, the packaging, the advertising or the provision of services, must be provided in the national language⁷³.

⁷¹ INDUSTRY CANADA. Guide to the Consumer Packaging and Labelling Act and Regulations, [On line], Government of Canada, Ottawa. [<http://strategis.ic.gc.ca/SSGF/cp01007e.html#2.1.2Language>]

⁷² Information concerning the languages of labelling of products sold in Québec are provided in the *Charte de la langue française* (Charter of the French Language) (sections 51, 52.1, 54 and 54.1) and in Division I of the *Règlement sur la langue du commerce et des affaires* (Regulation respecting the language of commerce and business) (sections 1 to 9). [www.olf.gouv.qc.ca/charte/inscriptions.html]

⁷³ CONSUMERS INTERNATIONAL. *Ley Modelo de Consumers Internacional para la protección de los derechos del consumidor de América Latina y el Caribe*, [En línea], Capítulo 3, art. 8. [www.consumidoresint.cl/] (translation).

The Latin-American Parliament has echoed these emerging concerns by adopting a “Consumer Protection Code” which, although not restrictive, will serve as an instrument for the defense of consumers’ rights and as a support to parliaments dealing with this theme⁷⁴.

Moreover, it is in the economic interest of businesses to address consumers in their own language. The cultural and linguistic adaptation of a product or a service to a given clientele is of prime importance, because even if a business has the best product or service on the market, the fact of not using the customer’s language – or of using it poorly – could cause it to lose part of its customer base. “When the language used is that of the customer base, the business is interested in languages⁷⁵.” It is also worthwhile to inform foreign businesses that the use of French will facilitate their access to the huge market of the French-speaking world.

Standardization in the context of trade liberalization

“On a technological level, in order to take place fairly, competition must be able to rely on common references, that are clearly defined and recognized from one country to another⁷⁶ and from one region to another⁷⁷.” The recognized international standardization organizations, such as the International Organization for Standardization (ISO)⁷⁸, the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), make it possible to define valid standards at the industry-wide level that are recognized internationally.

Standards are documented agreements containing technical specifications or other precise criteria to be used consistently as rules, guidelines, or definitions of characteristics, to ensure that materials, products, processes and services are fit for their purpose.

For example, the format of the credit cards, phone cards, and "smart" cards that have become commonplace is derived from an ISO International Standard. Adhering to the standard, which defines such features as an optimal thickness (0,76 mm), means that the cards can be used worldwide.

⁷⁴ Gustavo GONZALEZ. “Consumers: Parlatino Presents Code Protecting Citizens’ Rights”, *Inter Press Service*, [On line], Santiago, November 5, 1999. [www.oneworld.org/ips2/nov/consumers4.html]

⁷⁵ Annie MONNERIE-GOARIN, *op. cit.* (translation)

⁷⁶ In the field of standardization, a region refers to a group of countries, for example the European Economic Community.

⁷⁷ INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR STANDARDIZATION. *What are standards?* [On line], Geneva. [www.iso.ch/infoe/intro.htm#What are standards]

⁷⁸ The mission of ISO is to promote the development of standardization and related activities in the world with a view to facilitating the international exchange of goods and services, and to developing cooperation in the spheres of intellectual, scientific, technological and economic activity.

International Standards thus contribute to making life simpler, and to increasing the reliability and effectiveness of the goods and services we use. (...)

International standardization is well-established for many technologies in such diverse fields as information processing and communications, textiles, packaging, distribution of goods, energy production and utilization, shipbuilding, banking and financial services⁷⁹.

The cultural and linguistic adaptability of these standards, the importance of which is increasing for all sectors of activity, is essential.

ISO, which is the largest international standardization organization, recently recognized the importance of developing culturally and linguistically “neutral” standards, as in 1999 it set up a technical directorate on cultural and linguistic adaptability. This directorate is mandated to ensure that the standards developed by ISO are culturally and linguistically adaptable according to the needs of a community of users. This means that it must be possible to “internationalize” a standard – i.e., “to adapt it to the culture of a given region, as well as to the characteristics of natural language⁸⁰ and to the agreed rules for its use⁸¹.”

In the framework of the FTAA negotiations, the Working Group on Market Access deals in particular with the standards and technical obstacles to trade. It appears that thus far, this committee has not dealt with the language-related problems of standardization⁸². Also, the documents available on the Internet site of the FTAA make no mention of them. Yet it is appropriate, in the context of the negotiations leading to the creation of a Free Trade Area of the Americas, to ensure that the standardization is adaptable to the cultural and linguistic diversity of the hemisphere.

Apart from the FTAA Committee, three inter-American organizations deal with standardization: the largest, the Pan American Standards Commission (COPANT), works in close collaboration with the FTAA organizations, in particular with a view to advising them and to providing them with technical assistance for the development of a pan-American standardization system. Within that organization, concerns about language diversity are also absent⁸³. The other two organizations are the Sistema Interamericano de Metrología (SIM)⁸⁴ and the Interamerican Accreditation Corporation (IAAC).

⁷⁹ ISO, *op. cit.*

⁸⁰ By “natural language characteristics”, we refer to national characteristics (hyphens, dashes or punctuation marks), the writing system, the system of measurement, the presentation of the date, of numbers, etc.

⁸¹ ISO/IEC JTC 1. *Report of the CLAUI*, Geneva, ISO/IEC JTC / N 5629, July 12, 1998. (translated from the French).

⁸² From a discussion with Mr. Victor Bradley of the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs, November 22, 2000.

⁸³ From a discussion with Mr. David Shortall of the Standards Council of Canada, and Canadian Representative to COPANT, November 22, 2000.

⁸⁴ Interamerican Metrology System. Canada is a member of SIM through the “North American Cooperation in Metrology” group (NORAMET).

In view of the growing importance of the roles of these organizations, in the context of the creation of an FTAA, it would be appropriate for Canada to ensure, within these organizations, of which it is a member, that the inter-American standards that are developed are adaptable to the hemispheric cultural and linguistic diversity.

Recommendation 6

Whereas it is essential that standardization be adapted to the cultural and linguistic characteristics of the states of the Americas, right from the outset of the standards development process, the Conseil de la langue française recommends:

- That the Government of Québec recommend to the Government of Canada that it ensure that the FTAA Working Group on Market Access place priority on the development of multilingual terminology based on the terminology used by the international standardization organizations (see the example given in annex 3);
- That the Government of Québec ensure with the Government of Canada that the mandate of the FTAA Working Group on Market Access includes the need to create Inter-American standards that are culturally and linguistically neutral;
- That the Government of Québec ensure with the Government of Canada that the mandates of the inter-American standardization organizations of which it is a member, namely the Pan American Standards Commission (COPANT), the Interamerican Accreditation Corporation (IAAC) and the Sistema Interamericano de Metrología (SIM), include the need to create inter-American standards that are culturally and linguistically neutral;
- That the Government of Québec equip itself with a follow-up mechanism dealing with the language-related aspects of international standardization.

Plurilingualism in e-commerce

E-commerce constitutes a rather special case. This sector, which is undergoing rapid development, knows no geographical boundaries, and legislation is easily circumvented. Indeed, the only boundaries that remain in this field are linguistic boundaries. This makes the provision of commercial information in several languages all the more cost-effective. This is an excellent opportunity for the language industries, and particularly for those in Québec, which are accustomed to designing multilingual environments.

Indeed, a study by the *Forrester Research* group on multilingualism in e-commerce came to the following conclusion:

For U.S., companies, multilingual e-commerce and business sites are no longer optional. [...] Since an estimated 50 percent of all online sales will be made outside the U.S. by 2004, building a multilingual site has become critical - particularly to those companies serious about winning in the Internet economy⁸⁵.

According to the firm Global Reach⁸⁶, the language profile of Internet users should evolve as follows, between now and 2003⁸⁷:

Language	Current Internet access (millions of persons)	Internet access in 2003 (millions of persons)
English	172	230
Spanish	19	50
French	13	33
Portuguese	8	30

English is thus the language of the largest number of users; however, it is among the group consisting of Spanish, French and Portuguese-speakers that the largest proportion of growth will occur in Internet use. Moreover, the consensus among researchers who study the development of the use of languages on the Internet is that English will end up in a minority position (i.e. it will occupy less than 50% of the space on the Internet) by 2005⁸⁸.

The importance of multilingualism in e-commerce has also been recognized by the joint technical committee of the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and by the International Electrotechnical Commission. Indeed, that committee has identified four challenges concerning the deployment of e-commerce, which include⁸⁹:

- (...) multilingualism: the need to identify objects in an unambiguous, linguistically neutral way that can be processed electronically;
- cultural adaptability: the need to address cultural differences, such as business practices and interpretations of consumer rights.

The strategy of plurilingualism serves not only the interests of businesses, by facilitating their penetration into new markets, but also those of consumers, since they can obtain

⁸⁵ Eric SCHMITT, analyst at Forrester Research. "A Word to the Wise: Multilingual Means Multi-Dollars", [On line], *Forrester Research*, July 5, 2000. [www.forrester.com/Home/0,3257,1,FF.html]

⁸⁶ A business providing international services of promotion of plurilingual Internet sites.

⁸⁷ GLOBAL REACH. *Global Internet Statistics (by Language)*, [On line]. [www.greach.com/globstats/index.php3]

⁸⁸ Barbara WALLRAFF. "What Global Language?", *The Atlantic Monthly*, Boston, Nov. 2000, p. 61.

⁸⁹ INDUSTRY CANADA. *Electronic commerce in Canada, Open Networking/Standards*, [On line], Government of Canada, Ottawa. [www.ecom.ic.gc.ca/english/strat/652.html]

information and make purchases in their own language, and those of states, who gain the respect of their national languages within their territories.

For businesses that wish to export by means of e-commerce, it is thus strongly recommended to address consumers in several languages, but businesses are not all accustomed to functioning in a multilingual or multicultural context. Nevertheless, they may all be encouraged to do so.

d) *An inter-American seminar on language promotion*

The willingness to reinforce the multilingual nature of the integration of the Americas must be collectively accepted by all states. Indeed, only a concerted international strategy will make possible a real development of multilingualism in the Americas.

For this reason, the *Conseil* proposes to bring together a number of partners interested in matters of linguistic plurality in the framework of an “Inter-American Seminar on the Promotion of Languages in the Integrated Americas”. This seminar would bring together representatives of Spanish, English, Portuguese and French-speaking groups from throughout the hemisphere, and would deal with the main linguistic issues in the context of hemispheric integration. More precisely, it would deal with the main linguistic challenges of the integration of the Americas, namely multilingualism within the inter-American organizations, commercial multilingualism and the development of individual plurilingualism.

As part of the follow-up to the third Summit of the Americas, this seminar could take place in 2002. A meeting of this type would provide an opportunity to debate language issues with our partners within the hemisphere, to discuss measures in favour of multilingualism (institutional, commercial and individual) that could be developed at the inter-American level, and to bring the heads of state and government to intervene regarding the status and use of languages in the context of integration.

Recommendation 7

Whereas it is important for Québec that issues related to multilingualism be studied and taken into consideration in the context of the integration of the Americas, the Conseil de la langue française recommends:

- That the Government of Québec support the holding of an inter-American seminar on language promotion, which would bring together, in 2002, representatives of the principal language groups of the hemisphere in order to discuss the language-related challenges and the measures to be taken at the inter-American level.

e) *Toward the creation of an inter-American network for the promotion of languages in the integrated Americas*

In order to carry forward the debate on these language issues beyond the holding of the Inter-American Seminar, and to imbue with a multilateral character the measures taken in favour of plurilingualism within the hemisphere, the *Conseil* wishes to put together a network of partners from throughout the hemisphere. Thus, the *Conseil* proposes to set up an “inter-American Network for the promotion of languages in the integrated Americas”. This network would make it possible to benefit from the experience of members representing the main language groups in the Americas, to develop a common plan of action focusing on the hemispheric language-related issues and problems.

Representing the various milieux interested in matters of multilingualism – the academic, governmental, intergovernmental, socioeconomic and non-governmental circles – this network would make it possible, under Québec leadership, to carry on multilateral initiatives in favour of multilingualism, in the context of the integration of the Americas.

More particularly, the members of such a network could deal with matters connected with the use of official languages in the intergovernmental organizations, with the learning of foreign languages among young people and workers, and with plurilingualism in e-commerce, labelling and instructions for products and services traded at the hemisphere-wide level.

This could also be an opportunity to discuss the setting up of an inter-American Bureau of Languages responsible for analysing language development in the hemisphere, in the context of integration, to propose recommendations to the decision-making bodies, and ultimately, perhaps, to act as an ombudsman in language-related disputes. Such an organization could work toward the development of a Charter of Languages and Cultures of the Americas.

Recommendation 8

Whereas the integration processes have considerable impacts on the language dynamics, and in this regard it is appropriate to implement supervisory and monitoring measures, the Conseil de la langue française recommends:

- That the Government of Québec support the creation of an Inter-American Network for the promotion of languages in the integrated Americas, to be devoted to enhancing the value and respect placed on language diversity in the framework of the process of integration of the Americas.
- That the Government of Québec, in collaboration with its partners in the Americas, establish an inter-American Bureau of Languages, with the mandate to monitor language development in a context of integration, and to propose measures favouring the respect, learning and dissemination of languages within the Americas.

Conclusion

Language diversity constitutes one of the great assets of the Americas. The linguistic profile of the hemisphere is nevertheless in considerable imbalance, and this imbalance is reflected within the inter-American organizations, where despite official quadrilingualism, Spanish and English are in much greater use than are French and Portuguese. Despite the situation, French nevertheless enjoys a level of prestige and economic weight that ought to enable it to maintain its power of attraction.

A great variety of factors influence language trends, but in light of recent developments, it may be noted that the integration processes alone may generate substantial impacts. Indeed, these processes often result in a rearrangement of the language dynamics.

The many examples of integration processes such as Mercosur, the Caribbean integration, NAFTA and the European Union point to an important conclusion: the integration of the Americas will have impacts on language. Of what nature? That will depend on what measures are taken.

Starting from this observation, the *Conseil de la langue française* proposes to adapt Québec's linguistic strategy to the context of inter-American integration. This adaptation must aim to:

- foster the implementation of measures in favour of language diversity;
- develop plurilingualism among Quebecers;
- reinforce the multilingual nature of the inter-American organizations;
- inform exporting enterprises of the need for multilingualism;
- develop the thinking processes and dialogue on linguistic diversity by organizing an inter-American seminar on the promotion of languages, and;
- create an Inter-American Network for the promotion of languages in the integrated Americas.

ANNEX 1

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES OF THE COUNTRIES OF THE AMERICAS

<i>Country</i>	<i>Official languages</i>
Antigua and Barbuda	English
Argentina	Spanish
Bahamas	English
Barbados	English
Belize	English
Bolivia	Spanish
Brazil	Portuguese
Canada	English, French
Chile	Spanish
Colombia	Spanish
Costa Rica	Spanish
Cuba	Spanish
Dominican Republic	Spanish
Dominica	English
Ecuador	Spanish
El Salvador	Spanish
Grenada	English
Guatemala	Spanish
Guiana	English
Haiti	Creole, French
Honduras	Spanish
Jamaica	English
Mexico	Spanish
Nicaragua	Spanish
Panama	Spanish
Paraguay	Guaraní, Spanish
Peru	Spanish
Puerto Rico (US)	English, Spanish
St. Kitts and Nevis	English
St. Vincent & the Grenadines	English
Saint-Lucia	English
Suriname	Dutch
Trinidad and Tobago	English
United States	English
Uruguay	Spanish
Venezuela	Spanish

Distribution of the 7 official languages

Spanish:	18 countries (plus Puerto Rico)
English:	14 countries
French:	2 countries (Canada, Haiti)
Creole:	1 country (Haiti)
Dutch:	1 country (Suriname)
Guaraní:	1 country (Paraguay)
Portuguese:	1 country (Brazil)

Official languages of dependent territories of European countries

French:	Martinique, Guadeloupe, French Guiana and Saint-Pierre-et-Miquelon
English:	Anguilla, Bermuda, Caiman Islands, Falkland Islands, Turks and Caicos Islands, British Virgin Islands and Montserrat
Dutch:	Aruba and the Netherlands Antilles

ANNEX 2
The European Union's language charter

**Council Regulation No 1 determining the languages to be used by the
European Economic Community (as amended)**

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY,

Having regard to Article 217 of the Treaty which provides that the rules governing the languages of the institutions of the Community shall, without prejudice to the provisions contained in the rules of procedure of the Court of Justice, be determined by the Council, acting unanimously;

Whereas each of the 11 languages in which the Treaty is drafted is recognised as an official language in one or more of the Member States of the Community,

HAS ADOPTED THIS REGULATION:

Article 1

The official languages and the working languages of the institutions of the Community shall be Danish, Dutch, English, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish and Swedish.

Article 2

Documents which a Member State or a person subject to the jurisdiction of a Member State sends to institutions of the Community may be drafted in any one of the official languages selected by the sender. The reply shall be drafted in the same language.

Article 3

Documents which an institution of the Community sends to a Member State or to a person subject to the jurisdiction of a Member State shall be drafted in the language of such State.

Article 4

Regulations and other documents of general application shall be drafted in the 11 official languages.

Article 5

The *Official Journal of the European Communities* shall be published in the 11 official languages.

Article 6

The institutions of the Community may stipulate in their rules of procedure which of the languages are to be used in specific cases.

Article 7

The languages to be used in the proceedings of the Court of Justice shall be laid down in its rules of procedure.

Article 8

If a Member State has more than one official language, the language to be used shall, at the request of such State, be governed by the general rules of its law.

This regulation shall be binding in its entirety and directly applicable in all Member States.

ANNEX 3
EXAMPLE OF A MULTILINGUAL TERMINOLOGY DATA BASE

**Proposal concerning the establishment of multilingual terminology in the field of
standardization of the information highways and information technologies**

		English		Spanish		French		Portuguese		Other language(s)	
Ident	Source (ISO)	Term	Definition	Term	Definiton	Term	Definition	Term	Definiton	Term	Definiton
0001	ISO/IEC JTC 1 Report on the Business Team on Electronic Commerce - BT-EC (document ISO/IEC JTC 1 N5437, p, 25)	Multilinguism	The ability to support not only character sets specific to a natural language (or family of languages) and associated rules but also localization requirement, i.e., use of a language from jurisdictional, sectorial and consumer marketplace perspectives.			Multilinguisme	Capacité de supporter non seulement les jeux de caractères particuliers à une langue (ou une famille de langues) ainsi que les règles connexes, mais aussi les exigences en matière de localisation, par exemple, l'utilisation d'une langue dans une perspective juridique, sectorielle ou commerciale.				
0002	ISO/IEC 14662 :1997 (3.1.9)	Open-edi	Electronic data interchange among multiple autonomous organisations to accomplish an explicit shared business goal according to Open-edi standards.			EDI-ouvert	Échange de données informatisé par application des normes d'EDI-ouvert entre plusieurs organisations autonomes visant un objectif d'affaires explicitement partagé				
0003	ISO/IEC 15944-1 (3.1.52)	Unambiguous	The level of certainty and explicitness required in the completeness of the semantics of the recorded information interchanged appropriate to the goal of a business transaction			Non-ambigu	Niveau de certitude et d'explicité dans la complétude de la sémantique d'une information enregistrée et échangée dans le but d'une transaction d'affaires				
nnnn											

LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

SUMMIT OF THE AMERICAS

Recommendation 1

Whereas, thus far, the declarations and plans of action adopted by the heads of state and government have recognized the linguistic diversity of the Americas only in a tacit way, and it is important to give clear recognition and support to hemispheric multilingualism, the Conseil de la langue française recommends:

- That the Government of Québec request that the Canadian federal government have included, in the Plan of Action of the Summit of the Americas, the need to officialize and strengthen institutional and commercial multilingualism and to support the development of individual plurilingualism.
- That the Government of Québec request that the Canadian federal government include, in the Treaty to be signed by the heads of state and government of the Americas, at the conclusion of the current negotiation process, provisions concerning the multilingualism of the inter-American organizations and of inter-American trade.

EDUCATIONAL MULTILINGUALISM

Recommendation 2

Whereas the knowledge of foreign languages represents a rich asset, it is becoming increasingly important to communicate with parties from other language groups, and clear advantages result from this knowledge on both the individual and collective level, the Conseil de la langue française recommends :

- That the *Ministère de l'Éducation du Québec* make the learning of a third language an obligatory part of the secondary school curriculum;
- That the *Ministère de l'Éducation du Québec*, in the framework of the third language teaching program in secondary school, place priority on the other two most-spoken languages in the Americas, namely Spanish and Portuguese;
- That the *Ministère de l'Éducation du Québec* make the learning of a third language an obligatory part of the curriculum for college-level educational institutions;
- That the *Ministère de l'Éducation du Québec* invite the Québec universities to develop the learning of other languages in the framework of their educational programs.

Recommendation 3

In order to foster language diversity in Québec's international relations with its foreign partners, the Conseil de la langue française recommends:

- That the Government of Québec ensure that the personnel assigned to inter-American affairs has the necessary linguistic knowledge;
- Failing the above, that the Government see to the development of the required knowledge of languages among its personnel.

INSTITUTIONAL MULTILINGUALISM

Recommendation 4

Whereas there are shortcomings in the inter-American organizations in the area of quadrilingualism, and it is important to respect this quadrilingual nature that they have adopted, the Conseil de la langue française recommends:

- That the Minister of International Relations and the Minister responsible for the organizations under the *Charte de la langue française* (Charter of the French Language) make representations, together with her Canadian partners, to the inter-American organizations, in order that the latter reinforce their multilingual nature.

More specifically:

- That the Government of Québec, together with the federal government, urge the inter-American organizations to consolidate their multilingual nature by ensuring that:
 1. All official documents and general interest documents are translated into each of the official languages⁹⁰;
 2. The information on the Internet sites is made available in each of the official institutional languages;
 3. All the official languages are treated on an equal footing in the hiring of personnel;
 4. Plurilingualism is fostered among their staff by providing language courses or traineeships;
 5. It be made possible for any citizen to communicate with an inter-American organization in one of the official languages of that organization, and receive an answer in the same language.

⁹⁰ By “general interest documents”, we refer to documents of an inter-American scope, that is, which concern all the States of the hemisphere. Thus, the documents relating to a given region could be written only in the official language(s) of that region.

Recommendation 5

Whereas there is a need to develop the knowledge and use of the French language in the inter-American organizations, the Conseil de la langue française recommends:

- That the Government of Québec, together with the federal government, advocate measures to reinforce multilingualism in the inter-American and North American organizations;
- That the Government of Québec develop, in collaboration with a Québec academic institution, the provision of distance courses in the French language, and that it set up language learning traineeships intended for the members and staff of the inter-American organizations and NAFTA organizations.

COMMERCIAL MULTILINGUALISM

Recommendation 6

Whereas it is essential that standardization be adapted to the cultural and linguistic characteristics of the states of the Americas, right from the outset of the standards development process, the Conseil de la langue française recommends:

- That the Government of Québec recommend to the Government of Canada that it ensure that the FTAA Working Group on Market Access place priority on the development of multilingual terminology based on the terminology used by the international standardization organizations (see the example given in annex 3);
- That the Government of Québec ensure with the Government of Canada that the mandate of the FTAA Working Group on Market Access includes the need to create Inter-American standards that are culturally and linguistically neutral;
- That the Government of Québec ensure with the Government of Canada that the mandates of the inter-American standardization organizations of which it is a member, namely the Pan American Standards Commission (COPANT), the Interamerican Accreditation Corporation (IAAC) and the Sistema Interamericano de Metrología (SIM), include the need to create inter-American standards that are culturally and linguistically neutral;
- That the Government of Québec equip itself with a follow-up mechanism dealing with the language-related aspects of international standardization.

INTER-AMERICAN SEMINAR ON LANGUAGE PROMOTION

Recommendation 7

Whereas it is important for Québec that issues related to multilingualism be studied and taken into consideration in the context of the integration of the Americas, the Conseil de la langue française recommends:

- That the Government of Québec support the holding of an inter-American seminar on language promotion, which would bring together, in 2002, representatives of the principal language groups of the hemisphere in order to discuss the language-related challenges and the measures to be taken at the inter-American level.

INTERAMERICAN NETWORK FOR THE PROMOTION OF LANGUAGES IN THE INTEGRATED AMERICAS

Recommendation 8

Whereas the integration processes have considerable impacts on the language dynamics, and in this regard it is appropriate to implement supervisory and monitoring measures, the Conseil de la langue française recommends:

- That the Government of Québec support the creation of an Inter-American Network for the promotion of languages in the integrated Americas, to be devoted to enhancing the value and respect placed on language diversity in the framework of the process of integration of the Americas.
- That the Government of Québec, in collaboration with its partners in the Americas, establish an inter-American Bureau of Languages, with the mandate to monitor language development in a context of integration, and to propose measures favouring the respect, learning and dissemination of languages within the Americas.

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The *Conseil de la langue française* shall “advise the Minister on the questions he submits to it relating to the situation of the French language in Québec and the interpretation or application of this Act”.

Sec. 188a of the *Charte de la langue française* (Charter of the French Language), enacted by the National Assembly of Québec on August 26, 1977.

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