

# What Educational and Sociolinguistic Effects of "All-English" in Primary Schools in France?

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**Abstract.** In the 50s, the Council of Europe had as one of its missions the affirmation of democratic values and the building of a multilingual Europe, and was convinced that education in linguistic and cultural diversity would help promote democratic stability. In this context, some tools (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, European Language portfolio) and some programs (Evlang, EDiLiC ...) to promote the development and recognition of linguistic diversity were designed at the initiative of the Council of Europe. Driven by strong educational options, European language education policies have opened new perspectives into the way languages (foreign languages but also regional languages and languages of migration) should be taught and seen by pushing schools to offer language education, a strategy that teaches learners about languages by putting linguistic operations into perspective through comparisons between several different languages. In France, as in many other European countries, the importance of the promotion of plurilingualism is reinforced by the effects of globalization and the fear that many sections of French society would yield to English monolingualism. In this regard, the academic disciplines appear to be efficient relays for the recovery and development of plurilingualism. Thus, after the Barcelona European Council (2002) learning one foreign language for 90 minutes a week has become compulsory for primary school children from the age of seven. However, we note that today English holds a consolidated hegemonic position in primary schools as in many other educational sectors in France. In 2010, 90% of the school children in primary schools in the public sector learnt English (Eurydice, 2012). Our study will examine what plays in favor of – from an organizational but also representational point of view - the majority choice of English in primary classes; we will base our study on the results obtained from surveys (questionnaires and semi-structured interviews) conducted with faculty members from different primary schools in the west of France. We will also consider how language courses have been designed and taught throughout the standard French primary and secondary school curricula in the past five years and document some of the educational and sociolinguistic effects on learners of this overexposure to English.