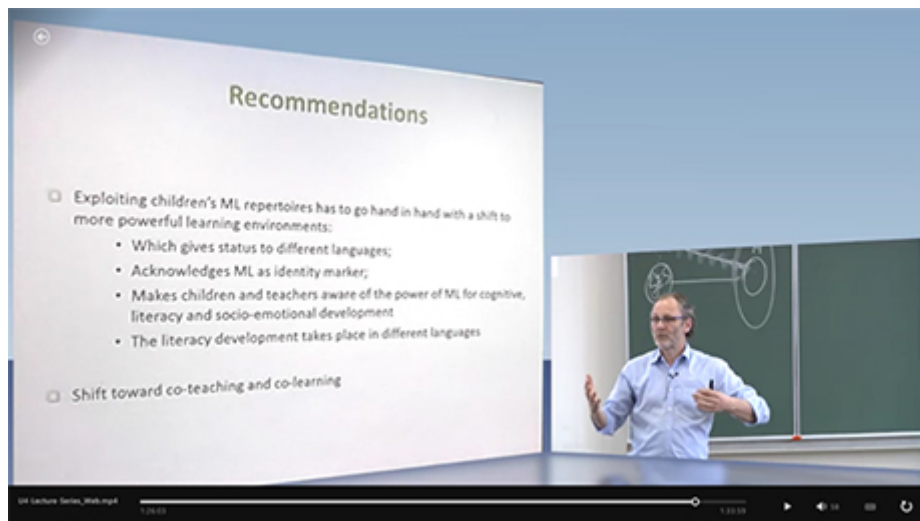


U₄ Multilingualism Lecture Series

About the Lectures

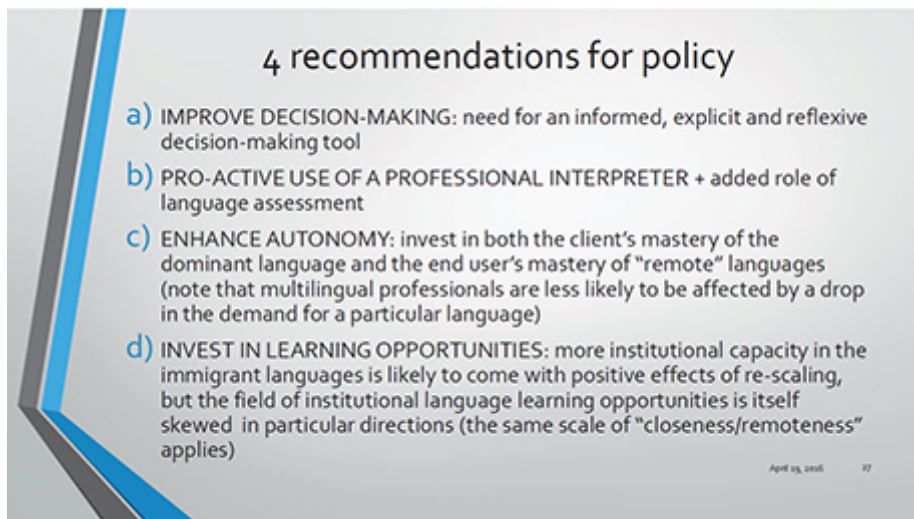
Prof. Dr. Piet van Avermaet (Ghent University – Faculty of Arts and Philosophy)

The lecture series was opened by Piet van Avermaet's talk *Beyond Binaries. Dealing with multilingualism in mainstream classrooms*. Piet Van Avermaet, core member of the U₄ multilingualism group and director of the Centre for Diversity and Learning focused on urgent language education issues, more precisely the discourse on social inequality and unequal outcomes in education. Most European policies have been trying to overcome this causal relation for the last 10-15 years and language i.e. a low proficiency in the dominant language has become more and more pivotal, and in the same line speaking the home language has become to be seen as hindering children's development, an argument basically missing any empirical underpinning but rather an expression of normative thinking about languages, the role of language and language acquisition processes and a clear articulation of a monolingual ideology. Piet Van Avermaet strongly argued to move beyond the binaries towards a new approach to learning at school that integrates multilingual education and L2 learning to overcome the counter productive and highly ideologized binary discussions in society at large and education in particular. His plea for functional multilingual learning that exploits multilingual repertoires as didactical capital for learning and raises multilingual awareness calls for a 'multilingual social interaction model for learning' as an alternative to a 'language learning model'.



Prof. Dr. Stef Slembrouck (Ghent University – Faculty of Arts and Philosophy)

Stef Slembrouck's talk *The dynamics of 'scale': A workable perspective on policies and practices of language support and mediation in an era of globalisation?* shifted the focus from language learning and teaching contexts to processes of language mediation. He addressed the relevance of scalar analysis and scaled decision-making for understanding and shaping the distribution and allocation of linguistic strategies and resources when forms of language accommodation and support such as interpreting and lingua franca use are organizationally and interactionally made available in institutional and professional contexts of service provision. He showed how contemporary conditions of immigration-affected multilingualism have challenged 'default' assumptions about monolingual professional and institutional practice in advanced industrialized societies. These conditions have also put in the foreground questions of language, activity and space, in ways which question more traditional conceptualisations of multilingualism which one-sidedly view multilingualism as a property of the individual speaker and of communities of speakers of the same language (entities defined by ethnicity and nationality). The alternative approach he presented rather stressed the organisational and interactionally-manifest distribution of linguistic resources in and across particular spaces and activities where the actual use of language resources in institutional encounters depends on the context-sensitive affordances of particular spaces and activities in these spaces. His empirical studies in local health clinics in Ghent demonstrated how scalar factors can be seen to interact with language ideological assumptions about communicative efficiency, instrumental reliability, community membership, institutional identity and made him conclude with a set of policy recommendations asking in turn for further studies.



4 recommendations for policy

- a) IMPROVE DECISION-MAKING: need for an informed, explicit and reflexive decision-making tool
- b) PRO-ACTIVE USE OF A PROFESSIONAL INTERPRETER + added role of language assessment
- c) ENHANCE AUTONOMY: invest in both the client's mastery of the dominant language and the end user's mastery of "remote" languages (note that multilingual professionals are less likely to be affected by a drop in the demand for a particular language)
- d) INVEST IN LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES: more institutional capacity in the immigrant languages is likely to come with positive effects of re-scaling, but the field of institutional language learning opportunities is itself skewed in particular directions (the same scale of "closeness/remoteness" applies)

April 19, 2016 22

Prof. Dr. Mieke Van Herreweghe (Ghent University – Faculty of Arts and Philosophy)

Mieke Van Herreweghe's talk *From erasure to recognition (and back again?)*. The case of Flemish sign language took up this focus on language ideologies and their actual use. She started out with a broad historic introduction which went far beyond reviewing the major historical steps with respect to the status of Flemish Sign language to language ideologies and deafness in questioning the concept of language as a 'human factor' in general. Mieke took a close look on linguistic ideologies and deaf peoples' attitudes toward Flemish Sign Language (VGT). She showed how it has developed from complete erasure via implicit recognition within the VGT linguistic minority community to legal recognition by Flemish Parliament and how this has gone hand in hand with changing attitudes within the Deaf community. While the 2006 recognition has unmistakably had an empowering effect in the Flemish Deaf community, even though the actual knowledge of the contents of the recognition decree may be rather weak, new indications of erasure can be observed in Flanders, which are leading to serious concerns within the Flemish Deaf community about the future of VGT and the community in which it is used. Mieke Van Herreweghe very clearly showed how monolingual ideologies underlying bimodal practices prevent speakers from developing their identities in their own rights.



LANG+
LANGUAGE IN SOCIETY AND MULTILINGUALISM

 UNIVERSITEIT
GENT


FACULTY OF ARTS AND PHILOSOPHY

Parents' ideologies, planning and practices

Mouvet, PhD, 2013

- a few: favored bilingual communication
 - => bilingual ideology (one mother reported receiving support and information from intervention services on how to implement signed language in interaction; another mother was informed that CI would make signed language obsolete, but rejected this on the basis of personal experiences)
 - => planned to offer both signed and spoken language (bilingual)
 - => interaction: second mother expressed herself primarily with a visual element (mostly VGT-driven), whereas the first mother did not (mostly Dutch-driven).

Guest lecture, Göttingen, 10 May 2016

The lecture series which is going to be continued with participants from Groningen and Uppsala in the coming term has contributed to the identification of joint research interests which are to be elaborated on in a follow up workshop in autumn.