



## Session 8

# Measuring Linguistic Diversity on the Internet

Chair of session: Adama Samassékou /  
Rapporteurs: Vicent Climent Ferrando,  
Linguamón and Viola Krebs, ICVolunteers



- o Mesurer la diversité linguistique à travers une étude effectuée: The Language Observatory, Prof. Dr. Ahmad Zaki Abu Bakar, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia
- o Measuring Linguistic Diversity on the Internet - Models for development and measurement: Daniel PIMIENTA / Networks and Development Foundation (FUNREDES)
- o Présence des langues dans la Société de la Connaissance: Daniel Prado, Directeur de la Terminologie et les Industries de la langue - Union latine
- o Présentation du Réseau Mondial pour la Diversité Linguistique: Viola Krebs, Secrétaire générale, ICVolontaires



# Highlights from Presentation 1

## “Measuring Linguistic Diversity Through The Language Observatory”



- Presented the effort made by a consortium of universities and research centers around the world to conduct automatic surveys on the Internet to measure the language presence and diversity on the Internet

Answer several questions in this presentation:

- How do we measure linguistic diversity on the Internet?
- How does the Language Observatory measure linguistic diversity?

Answer to 1st question:

- Both linguistic (pragmatics, semantics, syntax, morphology, etc.) and technical aspects (language scripts, language writing systems) must be taken into account

Answer to 2nd question:

- The Language Observatory publishes 3 reports:
  - 1 - The Cyber census report
  - 2 - The Character Encoding Scheme report (CES report)
  - 3 - The Corpus Statistics report



## Highlights from Presentation 2

# “Measuring Linguistic Diversity on the Internet: Models for development and measurement ”



The presentation includes 3 parts:

- A framework to understand the complexity of the digital divide
- Its application to the understanding of the diversity issues
- Some fresh figures about some languages in the Internet
  
- The framework explains the 10 obstacles to overcome, above the existence of an infrastructure, in order to move from ICT to Human Development thus demonstrating that the question of access is just a small part of the problem. The framework is then used as a methodological basis for the systematic identification of the issues which are faced by languages (and cultures) in cyberspace.



## Highlights from Presentation 3 "Présence des langues dans la Société de la Connaissance"



Provided some facts and figures about the language presence on the Internet:

- Approx. 6000 languages on the Internet
- Approx. 1 languages dies every 2 weeks
- There are only around 200 to 600 hundred written languages
- A recent study shows that out of 1374 African websites, only 3,22% are in an African language (Diki-Kidiri, 2003)

Some examples concerning the English language were given:

- Around 70 to 85% of scientific publications are in English
- Around 33% of all world literature is in English
- Pointed out that figures indicate, however, that English is on the decrease, despite the figures above and that Romance languages are on the increase.
- Concluded by saying that the solution is to forge alliances with Networks, Academies, Organizations, etc. to promote linguistic diversity.



## Highlights from Presentation 4 “World Network for Linguistic Diversity”



- Presentation outlined the history, aims and objectives of the recently launched World Network for Linguistic Diversity (WNLD);
  - This new world-wide Network was created in Tunis in November 2005 in the context of the second phase of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) and later launched in Paris at the celebration of the International Mother Language Day on 21st February 2006.
  - The Network proposes concrete solutions to the priorities identified by WSIS around linguistic and cultural diversity in cyberspace. Its mission is to value and promote linguistic diversity as the foundation of meaningful human communication.
  - Based on a multi-stakeholder approach, it brings together representatives from all sectors including civil society, governments, international organizations, research centers and universities, media, the private sector and individuals.
  - While the initiative started in the context of the WSIS, it is also planning to associate organizations not solely focusing on cyber issues, such as associations of writers, poets, researchers, designers, media, translators and interpreters.



## Conclusions



- Underlines the importance of an information society for all;
- Instruments such as the cyberspace must be used by all;
- All of the debates have nothing to do with a war of languages. Indeed, it is not a question of being against English but rather to promoting linguistic diversity;
- Therefore the question is how we can remain rooted in our languages and be open to learn others?
- We can speak different languages, switch from language to language. There is no impediment for this;
- We might need different languages in different domains! We shouldn't have linguistic hegemony.



## Next steps



- o Cross-fertilization of ideas and building of a operational and pragmatic network of organizations who wish to promote linguistic diversity in cyberspace;
- o Establish a roadmap for the World Network for Linguistic Diversity;
- o Work together based on a multi-stakeholder approach.