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LANGUAGE POLICY IMPLEMENTATION: THE ROLE OF APPLIED LINGUISTICS FOR KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER¹

Abstract. Since the 1990s, the promotion of multilingualism and plurilingualism on both the societal and the individual level is one of the most important objectives of European language policies. Nevertheless, despite broad political support, the implementation of guiding policies remains difficult and inconsistent across European countries. Recent studies, e.g., from the *Special Eurobarometer: Europeans and their languages* (European Commission, 2024), reveal that fewer than one-third of Europeans can communicate in at least two additional languages, even though attitudes towards languages and multilingualism are generally positive. This indicates a discrepancy between theory and practice, meaning that language policy is not yet sufficiently implemented in Europe. With this in mind, the contribution examines the role of Applied Linguistics in fostering the implementation of language policies in society, with a special emphasis on the importance of knowledge transfer beyond academia. Using the example of the project *Französisch und mehr – Sprachenlernen im Saarland* (French and more – language learning in Saarland), we present a qualitative case study that investigates in how far research-driven initiatives can promote plurilingualism and contribute to changing people's attitudes towards language learning. The case study relies on project documentation, participation in public engagement activities, qualitative feedback from stakeholders and participants as well as a quantitative needs analysis in the health care sector combined with the development and evaluation of a job-specific language course. Our results demonstrate how Applied Linguistics and knowledge transfer can raise awareness of the societal value of multilingualism, especially in contexts marked by linguistic diversity and cross-border interaction.

Keywords: Applied Linguistics; cross-border cooperation; knowledge transfer; language policy; multilingual education; plurilingualism.

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¹ AI-based translation and language assistance tools (ChatGPT and DeepL) were used for linguistic support.

Introduction

The various facets of multi- and plurilingualism, i.e. language diversity at the societal and the individual level, have been in the focus of European (language) policies for more than three decades now (Polzin-Haumann, 2025a, p. 73). Despite political commitments to linguistic diversity and the role of language learning and teaching in promoting plurilingualism across Europe, the implementation of these guidelines remains limited. According to the most recent European survey, not even a third of Europeans can converse in at least two other languages apart from their mother tongue(s) (European Commission, 2024, p. 7). The study shows significant differences between various countries, as well as along sociolinguistic parameters, such as age/generation and level of education.

On this basis, our case study deals with the implementation of language policy in society beyond the narrow academic field, while examining the importance of Applied Linguistics in this context. In general, the implementation of the supranational European guidelines takes place at the national level and must fit into the respective societies. Hence, this contribution focuses on a specific national context and takes the project *Französisch und mehr – Sprachenlernen im Saarland* (French and more – language learning in Saarland) as a good practice example of (academic) communication (Lipphardt & Ludwig, 2011) on languages, language learning, multi- and plurilingualism in close dialogue with society. The project conducted at Saarland University since 2022 aims at promoting plurilingualism in the German federal state of Saarland that has compiled, in line with European policy guidelines, a language policy with a special focus on French as neighbouring language and multilingualism (Polzin-Haumann, 2017).

The contribution argues for the necessity of dialogical knowledge exchange between academia and society, particularly in border regions, to promote multilingualism examining various forms of knowledge transfer at different levels. It opens with a brief overview of language policy developments at the European level and its (lacking) implementation, followed by a discussion of a selection of most recent findings of the 2024 European survey on language learning, linguistic competencies, and societal attitudes toward language-

related topics. Subsequently, we focus on the regional context of Saarland by means of the project *Französisch und mehr*. The determining factor is the role of Applied Linguistics in the process of knowledge transfer (cf. also Korb et al., 2025).

Multi- and Plurilingualism in Europe: A Gap Between Policies and Their Implementation

First, a terminological distinction between multi- and plurilingualism is necessary. While multilingualism focuses on the presence of languages in society, be it e.g., for historical reasons or as a result of migratory movements (cf. Meißner, 2014, p. 218), plurilingualism concentrates on the individual level. Thus, plurilingualism refers to an individual's ability to flexibly use languages across different competence levels and contexts. From this perspective, language competences are considered to be dynamic and interconnected. They change over time, leading to an integrated and holistic individual plurilingual repertoire. This understanding, in turn, questions traditional perceptions of language education, such as the concepts of 'mother tongue' or 'foreign languages' (cf. Grommes & Hu, 2014, p. 2; Polzin-Haumann, 2025a, p. 75). Though differentiating between multi- and plurilingualism seems reasonable, the terms are not always consistently used in scientific literature and often applied synonymously (cf. Fäcke & Meißner, 2019, pp. 1–3).

European (language) policies have been systematically promoting language education, multilingualism and plurilingualism as both the objective and the guiding principle of language education for more than three decades now (Polzin-Haumann & Reissner, 2020, p. 114). These transnational language policies have been integrated on the national, and sometimes even regional level across European countries. Since the 1990s, a series of language policy documents and initiatives have been published. The *White Paper on Education and Training: Teaching and Learning – Towards the Learning Society* (1995) can be considered one of the first documents that emphasized the special role of linguistic competence for personal, educational and professional development. Further important initiatives and documents are, e.g., the *Framework Strategy for Multilingualism* (2005), the *High Level Group on*

Multilingualism (2008), the *Commission Communication Multilingualism: an asset for Europe and a shared commitment* (2008), the *Joint Declaration on the European Day of Languages* (2011) and the *Council Recommendation on a Comprehensive Approach to Language Teaching and Learning* (2018).

The following two important frameworks can be considered as landmarks in the context of fostering multilingualism in Europe: the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CERF, Council of Europe, 2001) with its additional *Companion Volume* (Council of Europe, 2018) as well as the *Framework of Reference for Pluralistic Approaches to Languages and Cultures* (FREPA, Candelier et al., 2012). Both documents have had and still have an impact on the development of curricula, teaching and learning methodologies, and further instruments for (foreign) language education. In February 2022, the importance of plurilingual and intercultural education for today's societies has been once again highlighted in the *Recommendation CM/Rec (2022)1 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the importance of plurilingual and intercultural education for democratic culture* (cf. Council of Europe, 2022).

In all, European language policies aim at promoting linguistic and cultural diversity and support language education and multi-/plurilingualism. The guidelines, initiatives and documents highlight the importance and value of plurilingual and pluricultural competence. However, recent findings indicate a gap between language policy and societal reality.

Special Eurobarometer: Europeans and Their Languages

According to the most recent *Special Eurobarometer on Europeans and their languages*, 59% of respondents state that they can converse in at least one foreign language. Not even a third of Europeans (28%) can converse in at least two foreign languages (European Commission, 2024, p. 7), despite generally positive attitudes towards language learning and multilingualism and despite the fact that 86% of respondents (unchanged since 2012) think that everyone should be able to speak at least one foreign language. In addition, 69% (decrease of 4% in comparison to the previous survey) support the idea of being able to speak more than one language beyond the mother tongue(s).

This paradox underscores the need for more effective implementation strategies and targeted knowledge transfer from linguistic and didactic research. Another highly interesting result of the Eurobarometer study is the significant differences between countries, as well as along sociolinguistic parameters such as age/generation and level of education. For example, younger people (15 to 24) and those with higher education levels are more likely to be plurilingual.

These correlations allow important conclusions on different levels. In general, there is a clear contradiction between generally positive attitudes toward multi- and plurilingualism and the actual language skills of the population. Furthermore, the findings indicate that language learning and proficiency remain particularly challenging for older generations and people with lower levels of formal education. At the same time, we can see that obviously, language education at school and university level bears certain fruits.

Multilingualism and Language Education in Europe: The Role of Applied Linguistics

As exemplified by the *Special Eurobarometer*, some contradictions between language policies and their implementation in society persist. Language(s) and communication play a crucial role in our daily life and society, and every form of learning is closely connected to language(s); mathematical tasks, for instance, require understanding of the language in the task itself before they can be completed. The presence of language(s) in learning situations is often underestimated. Languages are omnipresent, part of lifelong learning and also key to information access, knowledge transfer and (social) participation. Hence, in multilingual and multicultural settings in particular, language(s) are of undeniable relevance. Therefore, it is somewhat surprising that language-related questions regularly lead to controversial debates: on the societal level, questions about standard and so-called *regional* or *minority languages* as well as dialects arise or language prestige many times determines the use and teaching of language(s) in school as well as curricula. On the individual level, attitudes towards languages can be decisive for language

choice and language learning as well as for language learning motivation. Languages and cultures are often connected with stereotypes, while linguistic phenomena are not well understood. This can lead to misconceptions about languages and language learning, some languages are, for example, labelled as 'easy' or 'difficult'.

In the German context, English is frequently considered to be an 'easy', 'useful' or 'important' language while French is considered to be a 'difficult' and 'unimportant' one (cf. e.g., Korb, 2024, pp. 233–235; Polzin-Haumann, 2015; Schwender, 2018). Research also suggests a relation between language perception and the language learning process. If learners have positive attitudes towards a language, they also tend to be more motivated to learning it, while they (self-)assess their language proficiency more fittingly (cf. Korb, 2024). Projecting these findings on language learning in Germany in general, the first thing worth noting is the difference between German as language of schooling and the opposed term 'foreign' languages, which denotes a certain monolingual mindset that refrains from connecting languages in teaching and learning. Common 'foreign' languages include English, French, Spanish, Italian, Russian, while heritage and/or minority language are still of little significance in education (cf. Mehlhorn, 2020, p. 27). These languages are often perceived as being deficient or threatening to successful integration, hence, heritage-language plurilingualism and its promotion are more rarely found in (German) classrooms even today and even though there are approaches aiming at changing this. Besides this, the role of the English language as lingua franca is oftentimes equated with the attitude that it suffices to learn or speak English in school (and beyond). This stereotype is paradoxically common even in border regions, where neighbouring languages are part of daily communication both in professional and private settings (cf. Micka-Monz & Polzin-Haumann, 2024; Polzin-Haumann, 2025b).

Promoting societal multilingualism and individual plurilingualism is hence a vital task of both educational policies and science. This is where Applied Linguistics seems particularly influential. The essence of this discipline, as we conceive it, is to share scientific knowledge on languages and cultures with society and at the same time draw from society, i. e. taking language related questions in society as research topic. In the following, we will argue how

Applied Linguistics and knowledge transfer can enable a symbiotic interaction between research and society.

Knowledge transfer itself should aim at a multidirectional instead of a monodirectional process, in the sense of Lipphardt and Ludwig (2011, p. 39): [...] the terms used to describe the processual nature of knowledge and science transfer [...] show that each of these terms carries very specific ideas of the process that it endeavours to describe. With regard to the assumed intrinsic laws of knowledge, it makes a difference whether one speaks of "travelling" or "circulating" knowledge, of "dissemination", "diffusion" or "transport". [...] To avoid linear concepts, one could speak of "exchange" (authors' translation).

Applying this to European language policies, we can summarize that political visions do in fact call for diversity and inclusion, while actual practices in schools, institutions and public life as well as public discourse often remain monolingual, limited to dominant languages or unquestioned ideas. Addressing these discrepancies requires dialogical forms of knowledge transfer, in which research insights are shared with society and vice versa. Additionally, working on people's attitudes and reaching a public that goes beyond the academic sphere seems essential. Applied Linguistics as we conceive it addresses this need: it reveals stereotypes/ideologies, investigates what constitutes them on a deeper level, transmits knowledge hopefully substituting vague stereotypes and takes up language related questions from societies for research, reflecting them back into society when research is completed. The following section illustrates these processes based on a case study of the German federal state Saarland.

Case Study Saarland: Between Political Visions and Everyday Practice

Political Visions

Saarland as one of the 16 *Länder* of the Federal Republic Germany with approximately 1 million inhabitants is the smallest federal state apart from the city states Berlin, Bremen, Hamburg. It is both at the periphery of Germany and at the same time in the heart of a multilingual space, bordered by Luxembourg and France. With the so-called *Greater Region*, a cross-border

governance between the territories Lorraine in the French region Grand Est, Wallonia, the Federation Wallonia-Brussels and Ostbelgien in Belgium, Saarland and Rhineland-Palatinate in Germany as well as the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg has been established which involves more than 11.8 million inhabitants (<https://www.granderegion.net/en/>). On another level, since October 2024, Saarland has been an observing member of the OIF (*Organisation internationale de la francophonie*). Hence, the neighbouring language French plays a special role in Saarland for political, societal, and reasons.

This is also reflected in its *France Strategy*, which, since 2014, has promoted both French as a neighbouring language and the objective to become Germany's first multilingual federal state by 2043. Even though the *France Strategy* clearly states the relevance of other languages apart from French and German, it has often been misunderstood and narrowed down to these two languages (Polzin-Haumann, 2017). As of 2024/25, it is explicitly expanded and renamed *France strategy +* (State Chancellery Saarland, 2025a). The updated strategy is characterized by two major changes: its focus is geographically widened on France, Europe and the francophone world and in terms of content opened to cover all policy areas. The *France strategy +* continues to be multilingualism strategy and promotes language learning beyond French, but the aims are expressed more in line with multi-/plurilingualism policies. However, several challenges persist: the *France Strategy +* is often narrowly interpreted as a push for bilingualism with French, both in media coverage and public discourse, which tends to overshadow the broader goals. Other languages, although explicitly included in the policy framework, receive little public recognition or institutional support. This limited perception can provoke instinctive defensive reactions in parts of the population (cf. Polzin-Haumann, 2017), particularly when multilingualism is perceived as a top-down directive. While recent updates to the *France Strategy +* and its latest *Feuille de Route* (2025, cf. State Chancellery Saarland, 2025b) reflect a more nuanced and inclusive vision, these developments still face the challenge of being communicated unsuccessfully and potentially misunderstood within society.

To concretise this broad political vision in the field of language education, some guiding principles have been developed, such as the so-called *Sprachenkonzept Saarland 2019* (Ministry of Education and Culture of Saarland & Saarland University, 2019) as a continuation of the *Sprachenkonzept 2011*. This general framework contains a state of the art of language education in general and in Saarland as well as guidelines and recommendations for language learning and teaching in this special (border) region. The guidelines and recommendations concern all school types and all languages present in the educational system. Among other things, concrete measures are suggested on how to integrate plurilingual approaches into the teaching of foreign languages, e.g., for English and French (Ministry of Education and Culture of Saarland & Saarland University, 2019, p. 25, pp. 171–177).

The Project *Französisch und mehr (French and more)*: An Example for Knowledge Transfer

Despite its clear multilingual agenda, the implementation of language policies and the promotion of plurilingual and -cultural language education still remains challenging, especially on the societal level. To meet these challenges, the project *Französisch und mehr – Sprachenlernen im Saarland* (French and more – language learning in Saarland) has been initiated by the Chair of Romance Linguistics and the *Institute for Languages and Plurilingualism (Institut für Sprachen und Mehrsprachigkeit)* at Saarland University in cooperation with the State Chancellery Saarland in 2022, based on research in the field of Applied Linguistics and language education.

The overall goal of the project *Französisch und mehr* is to contribute to promoting French and multilingualism in Saarland. It pursues different objectives: It aims at fostering French not only as a school subject but as an integral part of everyday life in this area, including cross-border interaction. French as the language of Saarland's neighbouring countries and a key language of the francophone world should be experienced as a means of meaningful everyday communication. Another objective is to motivate people of all ages and backgrounds to start or continue language learning.

The project offers several tools that intend to make language learning easily accessible for everyone. It develops, expands and disseminates various formal and informal language learning opportunities, e.g., in cooperation with the regional association of adult education centres, while it also supports people interested in (French) language learning in finding the individual offer and help they need. In general, the numerous project activities contribute to strengthening Saarland's identity as a francophone space and advancing its long-term vision of becoming a European model region for multilingualism, cultural exchange and cross-border cooperation.

To achieve these objectives, the project has developed the *Französisch und mehr*-platform²; an interactive information and learning space designed especially for the inhabitants of Saarland and the Greater Region.

Figure 1

Screenshot of the French and More Platform



Note. Copyright: State Chancellery of Saarland

² For more information cf. www.saarland.de/franzoesisch-und-mehr.

Beyond the website, the project also engages the public through interactive events and activities, e.g., during the Children's University, the Open Campus Day at Saarland University or regional festivities, such as the *SaarMoselle-Fest* in 2025 or the celebration of the German Reunification Day (October 2 to 4, 2025) in Saarbrücken. Further, it regularly organises excursions, e.g., to the *Cité internationale de la langue française* (2024) or to Paris with a visit of the *Palais du Luxembourg* and exchanges with politicians (2026).

Figure 3

Insight into the Game Activities of French and More at the Cross-Border Teacher Day of Language Education in June 2025



Note. Copyright: Fabienne Korb

To involve the audience and to motivate for language learning, many activities are gamified. By creating a more interactive and pleasant learning environment, gamification can help reduce anxiety, encourage repetition and support sustained attention, all of which are essential for sustainable language acquisition. Furthermore, it can make learning more enjoyable and also foster

deeper cognitive involvement and long-term commitment to language learning goals (cf. Alsawaier, 2018). In the scope of *French and more*, a paper fortune-teller about multilingualism in Europe and the Greater Region as well as a language quest game (both available in German, French and English) were developed, together with different online quiz and interactive eBooks. All activities are freely accessible on the website to give everyone the possibility to learn languages with fun and play. The materials are also used as hands-on activities at the different stands as shown in the picture.

Promoting Work-related Language Proficiency in the Neighbouring Language in the Health Sector within the Project *Französisch und Mehr*

Another example of knowledge transfer from the project is a study on language needs and multilingual communication in the healthcare sector (Dziuk Lameira & Korb, in press; Korb et al., in review). The study was conducted from March to May 2024 in Saarland with 199 participants and from October to November in the French Lorraine region with 80 participants. The primary objective was to identify the specific language demands in healthcare professions to develop targeted French language courses (also including appropriate intercultural communication aspects). Initiatives and plans for promoting cross-border healthcare cooperation have already existed in Saarland for years, but communication and language skills have not been in the focus so far, while communication problems can have serious consequences in medical contexts, e.g., emergency situations. Language proficiency is thus of special importance when it comes to adequate patient treatment.

The study findings revealed that while language skills in the neighbouring language are essential for medical communication, self-assessed competence remains low. Participants generally rated their language skills as beginner to basic level even though the majority had many years of language learning experience. The research also included the requirements for plurilingual communication in the field as seen by the respondents. Besides French, further languages needed were English and Arabic followed by Turkish, Russian, and Ukrainian. Overall, the findings confirmed a clear need for job-specific French-/German-language courses and other language learning offers

in the healthcare field in the cross-border region. Based on these research findings, initially for the Saarland context, basic French courses especially for people working in the health care sector have been developed and implemented in cooperation with the regional association of adult education centers. The evaluation of the by now two courses (beginner/advances) by the participants was very positive and all participants recommended the course. In February 2026, a cross-border health-care day with a focus on languages was conducted to allow the exchange of experiences, further enhance cross-border cooperation and strengthen networks among key stakeholders in the region. The event was very successful, with more than 100 participants, many interesting exchanges, and it provided an excellent platform for networking. It can be considered as a concrete example of dialogue between science and society at various levels.

The project activities of *Französisch und mehr* exemplarily illustrate the role of Applied Linguistics in designing, implementing, and evaluating real-world language learning. They also show that knowledge transfer is not a one-way process: societal needs and questions feed back into academic research, the results of which are used to improve the needs: a dynamic exchange.

Conclusions

European language policies promote multi- and plurilingualism since the 1990s. Nevertheless, there is still a gap between language policies and their implementation at national and regional levels. Applied Linguistics can contribute to transferring research findings into practice by investigating the needs of society and by integrating feedback from society back into research. As good practice example of this knowledge transfer, the project *Französisch und mehr* clearly illustrates the important role of dialogical exchange between research and society to implement and promote language education. By turning research findings into accessible language resources and public engagement activities, the project involves large parts of the population. Participation is encouraged by the integration of theory and practice and by addressing issues and needs that impact individuals in their daily life, be it at work or in private contexts.

However, the detailed measurement of knowledge transfer remains difficult and is connected with methodological challenges. In most of the examples discussed, traditional assessment methods, such as examinations or retention tests are not applicable. In addition, the assessment of long-term impact is difficult, and effects cannot always be clearly attributed to one determining factor; in this case, the project itself, as external factors that cannot be identified may also play a role. This issue is comparable to the evaluation of intercultural competences, where it often also remains difficult to determine measurable learning progress (cf. Fäcke 2026, p. 201; Genkova 2018, p. 12). Furthermore, regional and sector-specific needs are highly heterogeneous and require specific approaches; both are factors that limit generalisability of the project outcomes.

Nevertheless, the outcomes of the project *Französisch und mehr* can be seen as indicators for impact and success: the bilingual German-French language guides are in high demand and have been reprinted multiple times already. Furthermore, our interactions with Saarland's society during the different public events (cf. supra) usually reveal great interest in the project activities, create personal moments of insight and general commitment to the projects' objectives and raise awareness of the language situation in Saarland. The context-specific French language courses for people working in the healthcare sector, which were developed within *Französisch und mehr* in cooperation with local stakeholders based on a language needs analysis (cf. supra), can serve as another example. In this case, the impact is empirically proven by figures (Dziuk Lameira & Korb, in press; Korb et al., in review). The courses are running successfully since autumn 2024, the demand is still high and the course evaluation continues to be highly positive. At the moment, the specific language courses are limited to the healthcare sector, but the project plans to expand into police and security services as well as retail in 2026/2027. Nevertheless, it is not possible to develop specific offers for every professional context.

To sum up, even if not every single activity can be evaluated concerning its impact using the standard repertoire of linguistic methods, the role of Applied Linguistics in fostering sustainable multilingualism is beyond doubt, as highlighted by our examples. By conceptualising knowledge transfer as

a reciprocal and ongoing exchange between research and practice, Applied Linguistics can contribute to language policy implementation and lifelong language learning. With the various project activities developed, different publics have been offered support to strengthen their plurilingual competences in line with their respective needs, thereby enabling the society as a whole to become sustainably 'more plurilingual' in the long term. The project findings illustrate the potential of this approach and encourage us to continue pursuing this path.

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**KALBŲ POLITIKOS ĮGYVENDINIMAS: TAIKOMOJI
LINGVISTIKA ŽINIŲ PERDAVIMO PROCESĖ**

Anotacija. Nuo 1990-ųjų vienas svarbiausių Europos kalbų politikos tikslų yra skatinti daugiakalbystę tiek visuomeniniu, tiek individualiu lygmenimis. Vis dėlto, nepaisant plataus politinio palaikymo, pagrindinės politikos kryptys Europos šalyse įgyvendinamos sudėtingai ir nenuosekliai. Naujausi tyrimai, pavyzdžiui, specialiojo Eurobarometro tyrimo „Europiečiai ir jų kalbos“ (Europos Komisija, 2024 m.) duomenys, atskleidžia, kad mažiau nei trečdalis europiečių gali bendrauti bent dviem papildomomis kalbomis, nors požiūris į kalbas ir daugiakalbystę apskritai yra teigiamas. Tai rodo neatitiktį tarp teorijos ir praktikos, reiškiančią, kad politinė kalbų politika Europoje dar nėra pakankamai įgyvendinta. Atsižvelgiant į tai, straipsnyje nagrinėjamas taikomoji lingvistikos vaidmuo skatinant kalbos politikos įgyvendinimą visuomenėje, ypač daug dėmesio skiriama žinių perdavimo už akademinės bendruomenės ribų svarbai. Remdamiesi projekto „Französisch und mehr – Sprachenlernen im Saarland“ (liet. „Prancūzų kalba ir dar daugiau – kalbų mokymasis Saarlando krašte“) pavyzdžiu, atkreipiame dėmesį į tai, kaip moksliniais tyrimais grindžiamos iniciatyvos gali skatinti daugiakalbystę ir prisidėti prie žmonių požiūrio į kalbų mokymąsi kitimo. Aptariame, kaip taikomoji lingvistika ir žinių perdavimas gali padėti geriau suvokti visuomeninę daugiakalbystės vertę, ypač aplinkoje, kuriai būdinga kalbinė įvairovė ir tarpvalstybinis bendradarbiavimas.

Pagrindinės sąvokos: daugiakalbis ugdymas; daugiakalbystė; kalbos politika; taikomoji lingvistika; tarpvalstybinis bendradarbiavimas; žinių perdavimas.

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ZUR UMSETZUNG VON SPRACHENPOLITIK: DIE ROLLE DER ANGEWANDTEN LINGUISTIK BEIM WISSENSTRANSFER

Zusammenfassung. Seit den 1990er Jahren ist die Förderung von Viel- und Mehrsprachigkeit sowohl auf gesellschaftlicher als auch auf individueller Ebene eines der wichtigsten Ziele der europäischen Sprachenpolitik. Trotz breiter politischer Unterstützung gestaltet sich die Umsetzung der Leitlinien jedoch nach wie vor schwierig und ist in den europäischen Ländern uneinheitlich. Aktuelle Studien, z. B. aus dem Eurobarometer-Sonderbericht „Die Europäer und ihre Sprachen“ (Europäische Kommission, 2024), zeigen, dass weniger als ein Drittel der Europäer in mindestens zwei weiteren Sprachen kommunizieren kann, obwohl die Einstellungen zu Sprachen und Mehrsprachigkeit im Allgemeinen positiv sind. Dies verweist auf eine Diskrepanz zwischen Theorie und Praxis und verdeutlicht, dass die sprachpolitischen Leitlinien in Europa noch nicht ausreichend umgesetzt werden. Vor diesem Hintergrund untersucht der Beitrag die Rolle der Angewandten Linguistik bei der Förderung der Umsetzung von Sprachenpolitik im Dialog mit der Gesellschaft, wobei ein besonderer Schwerpunkt auf der Bedeutung des Wissenstransfers über den akademischen Bereich hinaus liegt. Am Beispiel des Projekts „Französisch und mehr – Sprachenlernen im Saarland“ stellen wir eine qualitative Fallstudie vor, die untersucht, inwieweit forschungsbasierte Initiativen Mehrsprachigkeit fördern und dazu beitragen können, Einstellungen zum Sprachenlernen zu verändern. Die Fallstudie stützt sich auf Projektdokumentation, öffentlichkeitswirksame Aktivitäten, qualitative Rückmeldungen von Akteuren und Teilnehmenden sowie eine quantitative Bedarfsanalyse im Gesundheitswesen verbunden mit der Entwicklung und Evaluierung eines berufsspezifischen Sprachkurses. Unsere Ergebnisse zeigen, wie Angewandte Linguistik und Wissenstransfer das Bewusstsein für den gesellschaftlichen Wert von Mehrsprachigkeit schärfen können, insbesondere in Kontexten, die durch sprachliche Diversität und grenzüberschreitende Interaktion geprägt sind.

Schlüsselwörter. Angewandte Linguistik; grenzüberschreitende; Kooperation; Mehrsprachenlernen, Mehrsprachigkeit; Sprachenpolitik; Wissenstransfer.