

4. NEW HERITAGE MULTILINGUALISM AND PUBLIC SPHERE (Porté par L'Inalco)

Contact : rima.sleiman@inalco.fr / victoria.khurshudyan@inalco.fr

Porteur(s) / porteuse(s)	Etablissement et unité de recherche	Adresse électronique
Victoria Khurshudyan	INALCO, SeDyL, UMR8202 CNRS - IRD/UMR135	victoria.khurshudyan@inalco.fr
Titre du programme	NEW HERITAGE MULTILINGUALISM AND THE PUBLIC SPHERE	

5 line proposal

4. NEW HERITAGE: MULTILINGUALISM AND THE PUBLIC SPHERE. This programme investigates the integration of non-territorial languages in France, emerging as new forms of linguistic heritage in the public sphere. It examines their role in research, education, healthcare, and societal representation via democratic participation, emphasising the need for policies that recognise and support these languages to foster inclusive, multilingual citizenship.

Context, positioning and objectives

This programme aims to investigate the usage and valuation of new heritage languages in France, with a particular focus on non-territorial languages¹, within the public sphere. Specifically, it will examine their roles in the domains of education, healthcare, and societal representation. This program, therefore, seeks to explore how these languages, along with their speakers, can actively engage in democratic processes. The majority of the target languages are rare and under-resourced both in digital and non-digital contexts. As the French linguistic heritage undergoes significant transformation, this initiative aims to describe and analyze emerging linguistic dynamics, particularly among speakers from various waves of migration over the past century, including France's so-called non-territorial languages, and their impact on the public sphere, education, and access to services.

The programme defends a differentiating model of education and research in which languages are at the same time tools to access people, data, knowledge, and indissociable parts of a society's culture and socio-political organisation. In-depth knowledge of societies, hence of the languages spoken, is in fact a prerequisite for studying and teaching the specific features of the cultural, social, political, economical or legal environment of a given region. At a time when the [UN estimates](#) that half the world's languages are endangered and that one language dies on average every two weeks, we seek to understand how social actors engage with the **defense of multilingualism and the promotion and valorization of lesser-used languages**.

This interdisciplinary project mobilizes perspectives from linguistics, sociolinguistics, linguistic anthropology, and social sciences to study the modalities of transmission, participation, and integration of the speakers of those languages in the public space, especially in urban settings, as well as the challenges of participation in areas such as health and education. Through case studies in at least 5 languages, it seeks to understand how this multilingualism, which is part of an evolving heritage, can be taken into account in public policies, particularly concerning pressing issues in education and language certification, school remediation, access to healthcare, and cultural creation. Several other multilingual contexts, including countries with a Francophone presence, may also provide complementary insights.

¹ « On entend par langues de France les langues régionales, et les langues minoritaires parlées (arabe dialectal (maghrébin), arménien occidental, berbère, judéo-espagnol, romani, Yiddish) par des citoyens français sur le territoire de la République depuis assez longtemps pour faire partie du patrimoine culturel national, sans être langue officielle d'aucun État ». Délégation générale à la langue française et aux langues de France. (2016). [Les langues de France \(2e éd.\)](#). Ministère de la Culture et de la Communication

Ultimately, this programme aims to deepen our understanding of these emerging phenomena and shed light on linguistic practices while underscoring their role in fostering inclusive and multilingual citizenship. It raises significant questions for the state and public policymakers, especially regarding the integration of multilingualism into public policies, particularly in education and healthcare, as well as challenges related to integration and migration.

The programme will be instrumental to develop the following main axes.

Axis 1. Access to public services in a multilingual context of heritage languages

This first axis will focus on heritage language programmes related to healthcare, such as Health Access undergraduate degrees proposed for the non-territorial languages of France. The BA Health Access (L.AS) consists of a major discipline chosen by the student (heritage languages among others) and a minor in "Health Access" with 5 options possible: medicine, midwifery, dentistry, pharmacy, and physiotherapy. Since 2020, Inalco, in collaboration with Université Paris Cité, has offered BA education in Health Access for in 17 "Eastern" languages (Albanian, Modern Standard Arabic, Maghrebi Arabic, Armenian, Berber, Hausa, Modern Hebrew, Modern Greek, Khmer, Malagasy, Polish, Romanian, Russian, Tamil, Turkish, Swahili, Wolof).

Axis 2. Academic and teaching resources for heritage languages of France

Most heritage languages in France fall under the category of Lesser-Used Languages (LULs)². The education of these languages varies significantly from that of more widely spoken languages, not only in terms of teaching methods, formats, and content but also concerning the overarching objectives of language education. Restructuring and revisiting the existing state of affairs in language teaching by applying [Common European Framework of Reference for Languages \(CEFR\)](#) systematically and methodically for the lesser-used languages at the baccalaureate and undergraduate level will provide competency-based and homogeneous language education for clearly established levels.

The **Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)** is a standardized system used to describe and assess language proficiency across different languages in Europe and beyond. It was developed by the Council of Europe in the late 1990s and officially published in 2001. It provides a comprehensive framework for learning, teaching, and assessing languages. While most of the heritage languages of France lack certification of any kind, CEFR promotes the establishment of common standards for assessing language proficiency, facilitating mutual recognition of qualifications. Yet, its criteria are not necessarily adapted to contexts of heritage language use.

Axis 3. Policy-making for heritage languages of France

The goal of this axis is to integrate non-territorial languages into the French educational and service systems by developing supportive policies, creating educational resources, and fostering awareness and training for educators. One of the expected outcomes of this initiative is the establishment of formal policies that provide guidelines for teaching and certifying non-territorial languages, thereby introducing them as integral to various public spheres. In parallel, a series of initiatives involving reports, analyses, and the exchange of best practices will be implemented.

Finally, it is essential to establish a system for monitoring and evaluating the implementation and effectiveness of policies and programmes related to non-territorial languages in education. This process will include collecting feedback from stakeholders involved in existing programs to inform

² In Europe, the term Lesser-Used Languages (LULs) has been used by the European Union bureaucracy for languages other than the 24 'official' languages of the EU.

continuous improvement. The aim is to ensure that language education policies and practices remain relevant and effective, based on data-driven insights.

1. RESEARCH

One of the primary research challenges is linguistic and sociolinguistic data collection and representation concerning the heritage language teaching, presence and availability at different levels of education and public sphere. Gathering comprehensive data on and in non-territorial languages is complicated due to their diverse, dispersed and scarce nature. To tackle this issue at an educational and public sphere level, a mixed-methods approach combining qualitative and quantitative research can be utilized targeting the institutions which provide heritage language teaching. This could include surveys, interviews, and participatory research, alongside collaborations with schools and universities providing language education as well as community organizations to access networks of speakers for data collection.

Non-territorial languages often exhibit varying degrees of visibility and vitality, which complicates their analysis and comparison. Another challenge lies in the linguistic diversity and complexity of these languages in order to address the necessities of language teaching resources, harmonized reference frameworks for their evaluation and certification and providing language teaching and linguistic and didactic expertise at an academic level with the principle of providing research for education.

Research and conception of corpus-based teaching resources of heritage languages that could be provided by the partner universities. The resources would include not only didactic and linguistic resources for teaching but also evaluation resources, all of which will be mutualized with the initiative of the certification of heritage languages within the European framework.

Expert knowledge in developing and deploying language models in a diversity context (low-resource languages, dialects, variations) is a significant focus for the programme. Specifically, the programme partners' expertise focuses on digitizing and transcribing data for written (OCR and HTR, for example, on manuscripts) and oral data (such as field recordings or web-collected videos), the ability to implement AI-based methods for translation (both automatic and assisted), interest in interactive methods (active learning) and their evaluation in multidisciplinary projects.

Initiatives

- **A white paper on non-territorial languages of France** would be an essential tool for raising awareness, educating, and advocating for their preservation and promotion. It would provide a historical overview of these languages, highlighting their cultural significance within the French context. The paper would also analyze the current state of each language, including speaker numbers and usage in family, educational, and community settings. Furthermore, it would address challenges such as intergenerational transmission, institutional recognition, and access to educational resources.
- **CEFRL-based academic content for the heritage languages of France.** The first step will be the elaboration of CEFRL-based syllabuses and curricula for the target LULs for most of which no such work has ever been carried out. The project will be started by the elaboration of the syllabuses for 10 pilot languages during two years after which a SWOT analysis by a designated E-InsLULA project committee will be carried out to make educational and economic evaluation. Parallely, language learning contents for different levels will be designed based on the elaborated syllabuses always evaluated by the project committee. New languages will be added gradually taking into account the development of evaluations and under the permanent control of the project committee. The language learning content will be systematically tested and assessed by the students and their feedback will be systematically taken into account.
- **Educational open-access collaborative material of lesser-used and under-resourced languages in collaboration with the French Ministry of Culture's "Langues en France" platform.** The creation of an educational open-access collaborative platform of lesser-used and under-resourced languages will make all the resources accessible according to FAIR

(findable, accessible, interoperable, reusable) principles and it will contribute to the transformation consortium partners into digitally-competent institutions and increase the visibility of these languages.

- **Glossary of Heritage terms.** The project seeks to develop a specialized glossary comprising approximately 3,000 terms related to heritage in select pilot languages among the programme's target languages, with translations provided in French and English. This collaborative effort, led by Inalco's Foundation in partnership with the National Heritage Institute (INP), will concentrate on essential domains such as heritage sites, conservation management, archaeology, and heritage law. The objective of this project is to enrich research on heritage through local language engagement.

2. STATE AND PUBLIC DECISION-MAKERS

Policy-making for non-territorial languages of France faces several challenges that complicate support and promotion efforts. A primary issue is the lack of official recognition for these languages, which limits the development of tailored policies and resources from government bodies.

Insufficient data on the number of speakers and usage patterns hinders evidence-based policy-making, leading to initiatives that may not effectively address the needs of language communities. Additionally, the fragmentation of advocacy efforts among various organizations can dilute impact and reduce the effectiveness of a unified voice in policy discussions.

Limited political will to prioritize non-territorial languages often results in competing government priorities, overshadowing the needs of these communities. Furthermore, the long-term commitment and funding necessary for sustainable initiatives can be challenging to secure, especially given short-term political cycles and budget constraints.

Initiatives

- **CECRL-based certification.** Certification within the European framework is crucial for supporting the sustainability and promotion of non-territorial languages of France, facilitating their integration into various social, educational, and professional sectors. This certification offers several key advantages. It enhances visibility and official recognition for non-territorial languages, boosting their legitimacy on the international stage. By establishing common standards for language assessment, certification facilitates mutual recognition of qualifications across member states.

In a multilingual European context, certification promotes the learning of minority languages, supporting linguistic diversity and professional mobility. It provides speakers with proof of their language skills, which can aid access to jobs in organizations valuing diversity.

Furthermore, certification encourages speakers to enhance their skills and helps preserve cultural and linguistic identity. Certified languages can access EU funding and projects aimed at supporting linguistic diversity, enabling the development of educational resources.

Additionally, certification fosters the exchange of best practices between regions, encourages the development of European educational programmes, and strengthens advocacy efforts for linguistic rights by raising awareness of the importance of these languages. However, most non-territorial languages in France lack a certification system at the national, European, or global level. **CECRL-based language learning and certification** will enable self-financing of CECRL-based language learning resources as one of the consortium's sustainable development initiatives. It will also create a **unique language-learning and certifying center for the heritage**

languages of France, turning France into a major European (and often global) player in the business of language certification.

- **BAC.** Heritage languages in France play a crucial role in the educational landscape, particularly through their inclusion in the living language examinations of the baccalauréat. These languages can be taken as either mandatory subjects (Living Language 1, 2, or 3) or as optional subjects, highlighting their significance within the curriculum.

In 2019, a notable reform was introduced regarding language examinations in the baccalauréat, fundamentally altering the format and pedagogical approach for living languages. This reform emphasized broader language skills and incorporated continuous assessment methods. However, the impact on heritage languages has been profound, as the continuous assessment model was predominantly limited to just a few high schools, mainly in Paris and other major urban centers. Prior to this reform, a general examination system allowed any high school student to participate, regardless of their prior education in heritage languages.

As a result of these changes, the representation of heritage languages in high schools has significantly declined. Very few educational institutions now offer courses in these languages, which has implications for the preservation and promotion of linguistic diversity. This shift not only affects students' access to learning their heritage languages but also raises concerns about the long-term viability of these languages within the educational system.

While the recent reforms aimed to modernize language education, they have inadvertently limited opportunities for heritage languages in France. This situation calls for further research and advocacy to ensure these languages receive the recognition and support they need within the educational framework, ultimately fostering a more inclusive and diverse linguistic landscape.

- **Reports on the BA Health Access (Licence Accès Santé - L.AS) with Heritage languages for taught at Inalco.**

The BA Health Access (L.AS) consists of a major discipline chosen by the student (heritage languages among others) and a minor in "Health Access" with 5 options possible: medicine, midwifery, dentistry, pharmacy, and physiotherapy. Since 2020, Inalco, in collaboration with Université Paris Cité, has offered BA education in Health Access for in 17 "Eastern" languages (Albanian, Modern Standard Arabic, Maghrebi Arabic, Armenian, Berber, Hausa, Modern Hebrew, Modern Greek, Khmer, Malagasy, Polish, Romanian, Russian, Tamil, Turkish, Swahili, Wolof).

a. **Report and Recommendations:** This report analyzes the existing educational programme for the BA in Health Access and heritage languages, utilizing both quantitative and qualitative data from the past four years. It aims to develop recommendations for training state and public decision-makers on the inclusion of non-territorial languages in health programmes. Additionally, it seeks to raise awareness of the benefits of tailored language training for healthcare professionals.

b. **Report on Career Prospects and Professional Mobility:** This report examines the career opportunities available to graduates of the health access degree who speak non-territorial languages. It also identifies sectors where these language skills are particularly valued.

- **French Editorial History of Non-Territorial Languages in France (in collaboration with BULAC, BnF, and CNL).**

Non-territorial languages of France often possess a rich editorial tradition, both in print publications and the press. An initiative will be undertaken to compile an inventory of the

editorial history of target non-territorial languages in France in collaboration with BULAC, BnF, and CNL. This initiative will be conducted in close cooperation with Dépôt légal, with the aim of first identifying existing references and subsequently expanding them to create comprehensive inventories across the partners, various associations and relevant services of regions of France. Furthermore, potential collaboration with Wikipedia will be explored to enhance entries in the target languages.

3. SOCIETAL IMPACT

Non-territorial languages of France face several societal challenges that impact their vitality and sustainability. One major issue is limited recognition; these languages often lack official status, resulting in insufficient institutional support and resources for their speakers. This lack of recognition complicates efforts to promote and preserve these languages.

Intergenerational transmission poses another significant challenge, as many speakers do not pass their languages on to their children. This decline in fluent speakers contributes to reduced language use within families. Additionally, access to education is often inadequate; there is insufficient educational infrastructure to support the teaching and learning of non-territorial languages, leading to limited opportunities for language acquisition.

Cultural visibility is another concern. Non-territorial languages may struggle to gain recognition and visibility in public life, which can diminish the cultural identity of their speakers. Social stigmatization further complicates matters, as speakers may encounter prejudice or discrimination, discouraging them from using their language in public settings.

Moreover, there is a scarcity of resources, including educational materials, media, and literature in these languages, which hinders their use and preservation. Integration challenges also exist, as speakers of non-territorial languages may find it difficult to assimilate into mainstream society, where dominant languages prevail, leading to social isolation.

Addressing these challenges necessitates targeted policies, community engagement, and resources to promote the vitality of non-territorial languages in France.

Initiatives

- Developing new educational programmes within the digital humanities framework for lesser-used languages is set to transform the consortium into a technologically proficient institution and amplify the visibility of these languages. These educational initiatives seek to compile various data and course content with the goal of widespread dissemination, emphasizing the promotion of multilingualism and addressing immigration issues from a digital perspective. Facilitating the reuse of educational materials for lesser-used languages and generating new content through collaborative and participatory research will exert a substantial societal impact on the revitalization and fortification of these languages, as well as indirectly yielding significant research outcomes.
- The implementation of **CEFR-based language learning** and **certification** will be of crucial academic and societal impact. In addition to systemizing and reinforcing language learning of the target lesser-used languages, the outputs will allow the creation of professional language-learning content and foster access to the target languages.
- **French Editorial History of Non-Territorial Languages in France**
- The exhibition, "**Voices of the Non-Territorial Languages of France: Audio Maps of the Non-Territorial Languages of France**," to be held at the National Museum of the History of

Immigration /the Bibliothèque nationale de France (BnF) in Paris. The exhibition will explore the linguistic and cultural diversity of non-territorial languages spoken in France, focusing on the audio perception. The exhibition will begin by introducing visitors to the concept of non-territorial languages. This section will provide an overview of their cultural significance and historical context. An interactive digital map will allow visitors to explore the geographic spread of these languages within France, with audio samples that visitors can listen to as they navigate different regions.

A timeline will be displayed to explain the historical evolution of these languages in France, including how they arrived, how they evolved, and their role in the country's multicultural fabric. Additionally, voice recordings will be featured, where native speakers share their personal stories and explain the cultural importance of preserving their languages. The main exhibit will focus on **audio maps** of these languages. Visitors will engage with interactive audio stations, each representing a different language. These stations will allow them to listen to conversations, storytelling, and music in a range of non-territorial languages. QR codes will be provided at each station, enabling visitors to access additional content, such as documentaries, further readings, and detailed interviews.

A multimedia wall will showcase videos of non-territorial languages in everyday life, illustrating how these languages are used in family settings, community events, and public spaces. Testimonies from speakers and cultural leaders will discuss the challenges they face in maintaining their language, as well as their efforts to revitalize and preserve it within their communities. The exhibition will also address the **challenges and opportunities** for language preservation. This section will include workshops and discussions on the difficulties of intergenerational language transmission, the lack of official recognition, and the social stigmatization many of these languages face. Educational resources aimed at supporting the learning and teaching of non-territorial languages will also be highlighted, with a focus on tools that can be used in schools and community settings. To demonstrate how technology can play a role in language revitalization, a **virtual reality (VR) experience** will immerse visitors in a community event where non-territorial languages are spoken. The exhibition will also showcase collaborative digital projects that are focused on preserving these languages, such as online archives, AI tools for language learning, and mobile apps aimed at expanding access to these languages.

The exhibition will conclude by looking toward the future of non-territorial languages in France. This section will focus on ongoing initiatives and projects aimed at revitalizing these languages through education, media, and digital technologies. Visitors will be encouraged to contribute to the effort by sharing their own language recordings or stories through a digital wall. In addition to the main exhibition, the **museum shop** will offer a range of resources such as books, language learning tools, and audio materials for visitors interested in exploring the languages featured in the exhibition further.

Liste des parties prenantes non académiques (musées, fondations, réseaux, collectivités etc.) participant au programme

1. Musée de l'histoire de l'immigration
2. BnF
3. BULAC
4. CNL
5. Dépôt légal
6. Fondation Inalco
7. Institut national du patrimoine (INP)

Chercheuses et chercheurs mobilisé.e.s

UR impliquées

#	UR	Établissement
1.	SeDyL, UMR8202	CNRS, Inalco, IRD
2.	Llacan, UMR8135	Inalco
3.	IFRAE, UMR 8043	CNRS, Inalco, UPC
4.	LACNAD, EA 4092	Inalco
5.	CERMOM, EA 4091	Inalco
6.	CeRMI, UMR8041	CNRS, USN, Inalco
7.	PLIDAM, EA 4514	Inalco
8.	Lacito, UMR 7107	CNRS, USN, Inalco
9.	Lattice, UMR 8094	CNRS, ENS, USN
10.	LPP, UMR7018	CNRS, USN
11.	Clesthia, EA 7345	USN
12.	Diltec, EA 2288	USN
13.		Université Bordeaux Montaigne
14.		Université Rennes 2
15.		Université de la Nouvelle Calédonie
16.		Université de la Polynésie Française

Éléments bibliographiques (quelques références fondamentales, qui peuvent d'ailleurs être mobilisées dans les enjeux scientifiques)

voir le questionnaire