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Corsican

The Corsican language in education
in France



★ numerically small language communities

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Contents

Foreword	1
1 Introduction	2
2 Pre-school education	7
3 Primary education	9
4 Secondary education	11
5 Vocational education	15
6 Higher education	17
7 Adult education	18
8 Educational research	19
9 Prospects	21
10 Summary statistics	23
Educational system in France	27
References and further reading	28
Addresses	32
Other websites on minority languages	33
What can Mercator-Education offer you?	35

Foreword

background

For several years now, Mercator-Education has made efforts to achieve one of its principal goals: to gather, store and distribute information on minority language education in European regions. Regional or minority languages are languages which differ from the official language of the state where they are spoken and which are traditionally used within a given territory by nationals of that state forming a group numerically smaller than the rest of the state's population¹. To date, Mercator-Education has been successful in establishing a computerised data bank containing bibliographic data, information about people and organisations involved with minority language issues. It has published data collected during four inventory studies on pre-school education (Goot, Renkema & Stuijt, 1994), primary education (Sikma & Gorter, 1991), learning materials (Tjeerdsma & Sikma, 1994) and teacher training (Dekkers, 1995). In addition there is a need for documents stating briefly the most essential features of the educational system of regions with an autochthonous lesser used language. With the establishment of regional dossiers we intend to meet this need.

aim

Regional dossiers aim at providing concise descriptive information and basic educational statistics about minority language education in a specific region of the European Union. This kind of information, such as features of the educational system, recent educational policies, division of responsibilities, main actors, legal arrangements, support structures, and also quantitative information on the number of schools, teachers, pupils and financial investments, can serve several purposes.

target group

Policy makers, researchers, teachers, students and journalists may use the information provided to assess developments in European minority language schooling. They can also use a regional dossier as a first orientation towards

further research or as a source of ideas for improving educational provision in their own region.

link with EURYDICE

In order to link these regional descriptions with those of national educational systems, it was decided to follow the format used by EURYDICE, the European education information network in the European Union. EURYDICE provides information on the administration and structure of education in member states of the European Union.² The information provided in the regional dossiers is focussed on language use at the various levels of education.

contents

The remainder of this dossier consists firstly of an introduction to the region under study, followed by six sections each dealing with a specific level of the educational system. These brief descriptions contain factual information presented in a readily accessible way. Sections eight to ten cover research, prospects and summary statistics. For detailed information and political discussions about language use at the various levels of education, the reader is referred to other sources with a list of publications.

1

Introduction

language

Corsican is a romance language of the Italo-Roman group. The departments of the Ministry of Education generally admit it as an autonomous language. It is worth pointing out that it is not an imported or transformed version of Italian, but the result of its own evolution from an original linguistic state that was probably highly Latinised. It is in fact assumed that on the pre-Latin Tyrrhenian substrate, proper to the lands of maritime *Romania* (Sardinia, the Italian peninsula, Sicily and Corsica), a popular neo-Latin formed itself as the foundation stone of the Roman speech which was progressively to become the Corsican language spoken today.

population

The present population of the island is 260,000, and it is estimated that several hundred thousand Corsicans live out-

side the island, in France or abroad. As regards the *practice* of the language, the most recent information concerns only the resident population. According to the survey conducted in 1995 by the Inter-regional Policy Observatory (*O.I.P.-L'Observatoire Interregional du Politique*), 81% of the island's inhabitants say they understand the language, 64% say they speak it, 57% say they can read it and 73% hope their children will learn it. This type of survey, like those officially conducted by the INSEE (Institut de la Statistique), is certainly interesting, but cannot be guaranteed to be entirely reliable, as the questions are asked in French and the interviewers are often not in a position to check the veracity of the answers. Nevertheless, it can be considered that they reflect, if not the absolute truth of what happens in practice at least a conception of the community about its language.

legislation

Although the earliest texts calling for regional education in the history of Corsica or more directly in its language date back to the early 19th century, they were not passed on by technical promotion and educational works until the early 1920s. Teachers who demonstrated the vigour of the idea published local history, geography manuals and a grammar at that time. But the Second World War and its consequences for the Mediterranean were to have a profound effect on Corsican intellectual circles in the period between the wars. The series of complaints about teaching was revived only with difficulty in 1955. Thus, in 1951, when the Deixonne Law was voted in without mentioning Corsican, there was little reaction from the population or its elected representatives. It took 23 years of promotion and struggle, mainly by militant partners, to drag Corsican under the shelter of the law (modifying decrees of 1974). It must be admitted that by the end of the 60s the opening of universities after 1968, the organisation of evening classes and student militancy enabled considerable theoretical and practical progress to be made: spelling and grammatical modernisation in particular. Since 1982 (the circular from the socialist minister A. Savary), the public service has

succeeded in setting up a structured and organised education system. This is designed firstly to fulfil the needs of families, but without neglecting the deep-seated complaints, which led to the present situation. At least, that is what the academic leaders of those days thought they ought to propose and what they were eager to see materialise.

The Corsican Language Charter is linked to the island's Special Charter (Law of 13th May 1991) setting up a unique Territorial Public Authority. In this administrative framework under the system of shared competence, the Corsican Territorial Public Authority (*C.T.C.-Collectivité Territoriale de Corse*) is therefore called upon "to adopt a plan for developing the teaching of Corsican" and "to envisage the terms and conditions governing its insertion into school timetables." The authority has thus been able to support a set of actions already taken since the previous administrative charter (1981) and the marked progress recorded since 1984. It has also been able to agree contracts with the State concerning a number of actions, such as creating educational information and communication workshops in certain sectors, installing language laboratories in secondary schools and publishing educational support books and documents. The same holds true for setting up and organising centres, which regularly accommodate students on language courses and assisting the operation of specific streams in certain secondary schools. Moreover, the State agreed on financing "educational activities that are complementary" to those supplied by the State, outside normal school hours (for example, cultural action programmes focusing on Corsican singing and music, educational action projects (*P.A.E-projets d'actions éducatives*), twinning operations between schools in neighbouring countries, etc.).

In 2000, there have been going on discussions about Corsican teaching. The Government proposed that Parliament should vote on a provision presenting the principle according to which the teaching of the Corsican language would be included in the normal timetable of infants' and primary

schools. Then, all pupils would be able to study it, unless their parents did not want them to (see also section 9).

As regards to the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages, France signed in 1999, but will probably not ratify, following an official juridical recommendation that this would be contradictory to the national constitution.

educational system

The public schooling system in Corsica is the same as in every other region except Alsace. The unique feature of the teaching of Corsican since its organisation in the early 1980s is that, unlike what happened in other parts of France, particularly the Basque country or Brittany, it is the public system which is wholly and solely in charge of it. In fact, unlike what happened in the aforementioned regions, it was not possible to find an organisational partner that was well organised, powerful and consensual enough to counterbalance the possibilities offered by the national system. The national education system, with the support at various levels of responsibility of officials who were aware of the social and cultural stakes involved, and often linguistically militant, succeeded progressively to set up a system for teaching Corsican at every level (from infants school to university). They did this actively and deliberately applying the general legal texts in force, ranging from the circulars issued by the various Ministry of Education officials to the most recent work conducted in the framework of the discussion workshops organised by the Prime Minister in Paris.

Another unique feature of this organisation consisted of not creating a body of *specialised travelling teachers* in primary and pre-primary education, as had been done in other regions. The inspirers considered first and foremost that as the linguistic patrimony was common property, it came under the responsibility of all primary school teachers. Especially as most of them were Corsican speakers and were therefore more likely to be better adapted to and trained in the new form of teaching envisaged.

public and private

Public schools are governed by the national government and in its constitution. France advocated the idea of state education to promote the values of the Republic itself. Private education comes under the authority of different religious orders, professional organisations and individuals, although as such they are subordinated to national legislation, decrees and regulations. In most cases, private schools have signed an agreement with the state, which allows them substantial support for teacher's salaries and training.

There is no remarkable tradition of private education in Corsica. As elsewhere, private establishments in the general sense of the term exist at both primary and secondary level. However, they apply the same principles as the public establishments regarding the teaching of Corsican.

As regards private education, like *Diwan* in Brittany or *Ikastolas* in the Basque country, in Corsica there are only two or three infants' schools. But they cannot be compared in any way with the qualitative and quantitative organisation of the public education system.

support structures

The *Rectorat de l'Académie de Corse* is the academic office of the Corsican public education service. It manages teaching posts at primary and secondary level and arranges the inspection of regional secondary education and specialised primary education.

The *Collectivité Territoriale de Corse* is the regional public authority in charge of proposing a development plan for the Corsican language, investigating and financing the corresponding action.

The *Centre Régional de Documentation Pédagogique* provides learning material. There are documents, manuals and other educational materials for the teaching of Corsican: books designed for all levels and distributed to schools; audio and video documents, films (made by the CRDP and by local television and radio stations); language laboratories (installed in all secondary schools); computer programs and language databases (compiled by an association and the university).

Training and redeployment courses also exist. These are organised every year by entities such as the Departmental Academic Inspection Services, the Academic Rectorship and, of course, the University Teacher Training Institute (for primary and secondary teaching) or the university (for higher education). These courses are designed for educational staff and for all other employees (the administrative staff of all departments, journalists, etc.).

The *Association ADECEC* is an important organisation with several hundred members whose attributes include: organising a highly regarded annual language day, publishing numerous works, creating a computerised linguistic database, running a regional radio broadcasting entity using the Corsican language and managing a fine ethnographical museum.

At last, the *Association Scola Corsa di Bastia* defends and promotes the Corsican language by organising events, communicating and publishing books.

2

Pre-school education

target group and structure

For pedagogical reasons, the pre-primary and elementary schools were merged into the new primary schools in 1995. The primary school was subdivided into three learning cycles of which the first cycle mainly includes the former pre-primary level. The other two levels are the former primary school.

The public education system finances free schooling for children from 2 to 6 years of age in *classes enfantines* within the primary school or in separate pre-primary schools, *écoles maternelles*. Although this level is optional, nearly all children aged three attend these schools. In regard to language, emphasis is put on discovery, development and acquisition.

legislation

According to the 1989 framework law on education it must be possible for every child aged three to attend a pre-primary school near his/her home.

The 90-788 Decree of 1990 states consecutively the objectives and functions of the pre-primary schools. Group leaders teach 26 hours of lessons a week and they receive the same training as teachers in primary schools.

language use

Learning specialists agree that the age-groups corresponding to non-compulsory education, that is to children at infants' school, are those with the best aptitudes for acquiring basic knowledge, and linguistic knowledge in particular. The possibilities the legal texts offer are the same as those for primary schools, that is to say a total of three hours a week which each teacher can teach in the way he or she considers most useful. However, the non-restrictive nature of those general provisions do not prompt teachers to make special efforts, even though in those cases in which the teacher's personal conviction coincides with the collective interest, the results obtained are generally very encouraging. Therefore, the State's services (departmental and academic inspections) and those of the Territorial Public Authority, are keen to organise these basic learning provisions in infants' schools by recommending the installation of bilingual courses in every infants' school and the regular assessment of the results obtained. The development plan for the Corsican language which the Territorial Public Authority has proposed to the State thus envisages setting up *bilingual sites* within which uninterrupted bilingual streams will be organised for pupils at primary level starting in pre-primary classes.

bilingual sites

These are schools or groups of schools (infants' or primary schools) where bilingual teaching is organised and educationally well monitored under the aegis of the competent education departments. The organisation depends on the local conditions, the joint wishes of the teachers, the pupil's parents and the elected representatives. The people in charge rely on the activities and success of such sites of reference to inspire the other establishments in the sectors concerned and thus to encourage high-quality bilingual

education. That is, in any case, one of the principles the regional departments have set themselves in the general architecture of the bilingual model. These centres are mainly reserved for (pre-) primary schools, as that is the weak point of the teaching of Corsican. Secondary school pupils can also gain access to them, but it is preferred to offer them other activities (cultural trips, various linguistic exchanges, games between schools, competitions, etc.).

3 Primary education

target group and structure

After the first cycle which covers the former pre-school, the second basic learning cycle is for children aged 5 to 8 and employs the concept of teaching various subjects. The third cycle covers education for 8 to 11 year olds. In this last cycle and children are prepared for access to *collège*.

legislation

The 1999 framework law on education of 1989 governs primary education and decree no. 90-788 of 1990 establishes its objectives, function and organisation. Primary school education is free of charge and allows pupils to make use of and develop their cognitive as well as their sensory skills in manual, physical and artistic activities.

language use

It can be pointed out that the pupils' parents and the regional officials demonstrate real interest in bilingual education. Evidence is the rapid increase in the number of specialised sites, of which there were four with 246 pupils at the beginning of the 1996 school year, a figure, which has doubled in recent years. There is every reason to think that this progress will accelerate even more rapidly with the State-Region model contract proposals. It is in fact believed that this method of providing learning of Corsican is the most effective and that it is probably the best way of preparing the progressive generalisation of Corsican language desired by the greatest number of families. At present the number of applications for registration those families have presented, greatly exceeds the number of places on offer.

This particular situation can be explained by the overall results on assessments of all the groups of people affected. It seems, in fact, that although about 80% of pupils are in contact with Corsican at school, only 20% receive three hours a week of real teaching in Corsican. Most pupils therefore do not have monitored and satisfactory access to Corsican. As regards a true learning by the school, it certainly seems that only the bilingual sites are in a position to provide it.

statistics

In all matters involving the primary level (pre-primary and primary education), it is difficult to obtain exact statistics because primary school teachers usually instruct all subjects. For that reason, individual cases vary greatly according to the establishment and sector and the teacher's personal investment. We can thus find schools where the teaching of Corsican is systematically offered to pupils continuously and coherently, and others where it remains almost non-existent for various and sometimes circumstantial reasons. The latest surveys supplied by the academic education department present figures, which in fact make a distinction between an organised and monitored *bilingual* education (as referred to above). Two other typical cases found on the spot are a form of teaching called *consciousness-raising* (light, about one hour a week) and another called *initiation* (more intensive, three hours a week). Figures are given in the following table.

Corsican	pupils	teachers
bilingual courses (> 3h)	1,151 (5%)	26
initiation (3 h)	2,886 (12%)	230
consciousness-raising (± 2 h)	19,773 (83%)	691
total	23,810 ³	947

Table 1: Types of bilingual education, 1999/2000

Source: Rectorat de l'Académie de Corse

<i>accomodation centre</i>	The accomodation centre is an experiment set up in Corsica. Two accommodation centres for Corsican studies (<i>Savaghju</i> and <i>Loretu</i>), have been set up to receive primary school children and their teachers during discovery visits, mainly conducted in the Corsican language. Associations that are partners of the State and the Territorial Public Authority manage the centres. These visits constitute a high point in the implementation of the project by the schools concerned and record a very high demand. This is confirmed by the attendance figures, as the two centres receive 900 and 400 pupils a year respectively.
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4 Secondary education

<i>target group</i>	This level of education is for students from 11 to 18 years of age.
<i>structure</i>	<p>Secondary education is divided into two levels. The lower compulsory level, or <i>collège</i>, has four grades for 11 to 15 year olds. It gives access to either vocational education or <i>lycée</i>. In the last year of <i>collège</i> pupils can choose between the humanities or technological studies. The <i>lycée</i> (16 to 18 year olds) forms the upper level of secondary education and has three main types for general education: literary, scientific and economic. Other types are the technical <i>lycée</i> (also subdivided into several directions) and the vocational <i>lycée</i> (to which the agricultural <i>lycée</i> can be added). The <i>lycées</i> are non-compulsory secondary schools, which give preparation towards a <i>baccalauréat</i> and admission to higher education.</p> <p>The daily responsibility for running <i>collèges</i> lies with the <i>départements</i>, while the region is responsible for the lycées.</p>
<i>legislation</i>	<i>Collèges</i> were created by the law of 11 July 1975 to form a

preparation of a general nature within compulsory education.

language use

The range of possibilities offered remains highly diversified according to the streams, classes and establishments concerned. The possibilities range from the offer of one optional hour to three hours a week.

Corsican can be taught as an option of one hour at all levels of secondary school. This is generally done at all schools. The last years the tendency is to increase the optional hours of Corsican to three hours a week. Another possibility is to teach Corsican as a *langue vivante* (LV-living language) of three hours a week. This choice depends on the student, but also on schools. Some schools put emphasis on the three living languages, other schools are satisfied with two. The first living language is one of the foreign languages (English, German, Spanish or Italian). Corsican, cannot be chosen as LV1, but it is possible to study it as an LV2 or LV3. LV2 means three hours of Corsican in the fourth until the last class, or from the third until the last class. When the students have Corsican as LV3, they are taught three hours weekly in the last two classes. One of the challenges of this language model is to create such a timeschedule that Corsican suffers least from competence of other languages. Since 1982, the year when this education model was set up, the total number of pupils concerned has increased steadily, rising from 1,485 to nearly 8,000 today. It is well understood that these possibilities are enriching although the accumulation of options includes a risk of being too demanding for the student in terms of teaching hours.

statistics

Contrary to the uncertain figures in primary education, those for secondary education are very precise. Firstly because they have been extracted from timetables of each secondary school, in which the hours of Corsican classes appear. Then, because a relatively large body (nearly a hundred) of specialised teachers, certified teachers of Corsican, provides the teaching.

Corsican	pupils
option	6,725
LV2	654
LV3	379
total	7,758 (35% of 22,168 students)

Table 2: Secondary pupils with Corsican education
Source: Rectorat de l'Académie de Corse

school year	secondary pupils
1982-1983	1,485
1985-1986	3,142
1990-1991	4,737
1995-1996	6,126
1999-2000	7,758

Table 3: Number of secondary pupils per school year with 1-3 hours of Corsican
source: Rectorat de l'Académie de Corse

It is noteworthy that this quantitative increase has been accompanied by a qualitative increase, mainly because of the improved training of the body of teachers. Moreover, the pupils who received three hours of teaching a week, initially in the minority compared with those who only received an initiation of one hour a week, have become the majority (4,334 in 1997-98 compared with only 729 in 1993-94). In the sixth and fifth years, although 45% of pupils are studying Corsican today, it must be noted that the proportion declines as competition with other options intervenes. However, a slight increase is recorded each year in the final year owing to preparation for the Baccalaureate examination in Corsican. Lastly, the percentage of students studying Corsican is higher in colleges (30%) and in professional training schools (35%) than in state secondary schools

(lycées) (12%). 20% (400 to 500) of the candidates for the Baccalaureate examinations take a test in Corsican.

Mediterranean sections

The Mediterranean sections apply particularly to Corsica and are known as *European* in other regions in France. Those sections envisage teaching Corsican and another romance language, Italian or Spanish, and moving on as soon as possible to teaching non-linguistic subjects in those languages. They are established in a few colleges with increasing success and many parents find their disciplinary organisation very appealing.

"Romance languages" routes

These routes concern pupils choosing Corsican, Latin and a romance language (in living language LV1 or LV2). The educational teams have to take the special nature of that choice into account and adapt their teaching to it, so as to help their pupils reinvest the knowledge they have already acquired into neighbouring subjects. Setting up the route means that timetables need to be distributed among the various teachers so that pupils' choices are made available without competition among the several obligatory options.

André Fazi prize

Created by the Corsican Assembly in memory of one of its members, André Fazi. He was a former professor of history and Corsican who regularly expressed himself in Corsican from the tribune of that Assembly. The prize awards 15,000 francs each year to the pupils who have obtained the highest marks in Corsican in the Baccalaureate examinations.

public education outside Corsica

Recently, the success of education in Corsican has enabled public classes in Corsican to be offered outside Corsica by certified teachers in the educational establishments of large towns where a sufficient number of pupils have shown an interest in learning it. This has happened in the Bouches-du-Rhône, for example, where the regrouping of services among several establishments is enabling a young teacher of Corsican to prepare his pupils for the Baccalaureate examination in Corsican. The many Corsican families living outside the island, whose children are asserting their wish to

retrieve the forsaken language, warmly welcome these new arrangements.

5 Vocational education

structure

At secondary level (*lycée*) there are some vocational streams which lead to a certificate of professional aptitude or to a vocational *baccalauréat*. Education at this level includes a number of general subjects during half the teaching time. The other half is used to teach professional skills.

After the *baccalauréat*, a student can continue through higher vocational and technical education in order to prepare for the certificate of advanced technician in two years time.

Since 1987 the vocational *lycées* may also award a *baccalauréat*. Full responsibility for vocational education now lies with the regional authorities.

The modernisation and increased appreciation of professional education are the main lines for an endeavour strongly supported by ministerial and academic decision-makers. They are based on the strong integration of education and business and rely on a true training contract with a strong educational dimension. The lines are designed to set up a link between the company, the establishment and the pupil, who is the leading player.

language use

In professional establishments the teaching of Corsican is also organised according to specific conditions, particularly because timetables are so crowded. Depending on the section concerned, linguistic teaching is in fact combined with interdisciplinary work based on exchanges between teachers of Corsican and teachers of professional subjects. In those circumstances, the general practice will have to be adapted to the special constraints of those sections, as the two added hours are optional. As matters stand, an option of only one hour a week is offered in all sections and two optional hours can be added in the sections preparing students for the BEP and professional Baccalaureate

examinations. We referred above to the high proportion of pupils studying Corsican at professional college. An examination of the percentages section by section gives the following relative values: CAP/SES⁴ (sections preparing students for the professional aptitude certificate, special education classes); 44%; BT/BTS⁵ (sections preparing students for technicians' and advanced technicians' certificates); 70%; 2nd B/Pro⁶ (sections preparing students for the professional Baccalaureate examination): 38% final year BEP (preparing students for the professional education certificate); 41%; 1st year B/Pro and final year (preparing students for the professional Baccalaureate examination): 35% and 37% respectively.

Like Baccalaureate candidates, those taking the BEP and CAP examinations can take a test in Corsican. For the BTS, requests to have above-average marks recorded have been taken into consideration since the examination session of 1998. This means that the mark for Corsican is taken into account in the total score of the students.

6

Higher education

structure

Higher education in France is provided by universities, (I.U.T.-*Institutes Universitaires de Technologie*) and Special State Higher Institutes (*Grandes Ecoles*). Applicants for all forms of higher education must hold a *baccalauréat*. Students pay a certain fee, but can be eligible for financial assistance by the state. The first two years of university training consists of a basic programme (concluded by a DEUG or General Diploma of University studies), the *licence* takes another year, while the *maîtrise* exam can be done after four years of university studies.

universities

There is one university in Corsica, at Corte. In 1999-2000 it had about 4,000 students. Some of them are studying

Corsican as their main degree subject (higher stream for secondary-school teachers), but every stream includes an initiation into Corsica's language and culture. The University of Corsica includes a faculty of letters and human sciences, a faculty of law and economic sciences, a faculty of science and technology and a university technological institute.

The special course in "*Corsican language and culture*" set up at the university since the early 1980s is completely full scale, as it concerns every level of higher education, from the DEUG (diploma of general university studies) to the "new system doctorate" thesis. Moreover, among other activities, Corsica's university teacher training institute (*IUFM-Institut universitaire de formation des maîtres*) prepares students for the CAPES examination in Corsican and the school teachers examination (primary level) to which a number of students aspire.

This special university course starts with a diversified and multi-disciplinary education (language, literature, anthropology, archaeology, history, etc.) and from the fourth year of studies it initiates in research (master's degree). Then, in the following years, continues with an in-depth laboratory study of a field of learning (DEA-diploma of advanced studies-and doctorate). Corsican is always included in the special course, either as a language being studied or as a teaching instrument.

In the other courses (literature, law, economics, science and technology), Corsican is included in the form of a general initiation into the language and civilisation. Tutors offer their students' timetables as an aid to inclusion, to improve their adaptation to the reality of the world of work in the region (between 1 and 3 hours a week depending on the sector).

outlets

The most worrying question about these training courses, as with all advanced training, is likely to be the integration of those who graduate from them into the world of work. For the Corsican course, although for a long time the CAPES solution has been a very interesting outlet for many young

graduates, it must be admitted that the needs of the area are fulfilled. So it will be necessary from now on to make better use of other employment opportunities (jobs involving culture, heritage, tourism, communication and even primary teaching) which are open to use a good training in the language and civilisation of Corsica.

7

Adult education

Adult education, which was very lively and militant until the 1980s, has declined considerably in Corsica itself, probably because of the progressive organisation of public education at all levels since that date. It is under the aegis of the national education system that a regional branch of the national distance learning centre is (*C.N.E.D.-Centre Nacional d'Enseignement à Distance*) operating in Ajaccio and organises correspondence courses in Corsican (beginners or advanced). This happens at the request of people and according to that entity's purpose, using documents specially designed for it.

There are still a few departmental associations, which offer courses for adults here and there, in response to occasional demand, thanks to the devotion of a particular person, either voluntary or otherwise. But the teaching and learning of Corsican have considerably changed. This is shown by the general progress in the teaching of Corsican, the number of productive publications and documents to assist learning, the use of language laboratories and the number of educational workshops using modern information and communication techniques, for complete beginners. These new opportunities have facilitated the development of extra-curricular educational activities usually promoted by teachers of Corsican who thus more professionally undertake the associative activities of the early years, using the theatre, literature and choral singing. The fashion of Corsican singing and the increasingly widespread practice of polyphony have also led to the creation of vocal and musical workshops where linguistic exchanges take place, all the

more appreciated and effective in that they are more amusing and entertaining than traditional classes. Among Corsicans who live outside the island, the link offered by the various associations and groups of friends is highly prized. Not only because these groups offer regular activities (shared meals, sales of Corsican products, exhibitions, consecrations, concerts, etc.), but also because, when they have the opportunity and the resources, they organise well-attended evening courses. This happens in big cities such as Paris, Marseilles or Nice, for example.

8 Educational research

Most of the current educational research is being conducted by the multi-disciplinary research teams formed firstly at the university and more recently at Corsica's IUFM. Sometimes, in order to save funds, research is conducted with close collaboration between the researchers of the two establishments. Initially working in anthropology, educational psychology, literature, linguistics and socio-linguistics at the Corsican Philosophy, Languages and Anthropology Research Centre, these teams approached the university's newly created educational sciences department where they also contribute in teaching. It was therefore natural to combine forces and associate them in joint research projects, especially as the ministerial charter called the *Charter for a 21st Century School* had contributed strongly to uniting the various partners at all levels of education in a highly productive *research-support* drive. Then, a team was deployed to a transversal programme called *Research in Education, Training and Professional Practices* in order to circulate knowledge and to deal with its problems. There was included a set of subjects defined by the National Educational Research Institute (*INRP-Institut National de la Recherche Pédagogique*)- under the question *How to teach socially living subjects?* A mixed team is involved, including statutory university staff

assigned either to the university or to the IUFM, accompanied by primary and secondary level researchers. Moreover, in the framework of the INTERREG, inter-regional programmes financed at European level, the University of Corsica has already taken part in numerous activities (seminars and conferences, joint publications). These are linked to language and literature, particularly with the neighbouring Italian regions, the regions of metropolitan France with a characteristic regional language, the Mediterranean islands, among others. In phase 3 of these specific programmes, the aforementioned teams proposed a project called *Managing multi-lingualism and multi-culturalism in an educational environment: experiments in bilingual education*. They suggest bringing the experiments conducted on the spot into synergy with reflection at university level, so as jointly to define a whole effective and coherent educational attitude better related to the needs. These have become apparent in recent years in the Corsican educational environment regarding the *intellectual, linguistic and cultural development* presupposed by a bilingual system of education. The institutional aspects, the precise study of how the bilingual places work, the teaching methods used and what is at stake in the politics of language emerge as this programme's pertinent lines for exploration approached jointly by the researchers of Corsica, Sardinia and the Balearic islands.

9

Prospects

The general information included in the present report is recent and corresponds to an inventory of the situation when it was written. However, that situation may develop somewhat in the near future. In fact it must be remembered that evaluation workshops were being held on the initiative of the Prime Minister, Lionel Jospin. He had suggested holding regular meetings at the Hotel Matignon in Paris with the island's leading politicians to discuss with them frankly and openly possible solutions (or even to consider

institutional advances) to help find a lasting settlement of the “*Corsican question*”. Among the subjects discussed at these meetings, participants and observers alike considered that the defence and promotion of the Corsican language was one of the most important aims. Moreover, it seems that consensus was reached concerning strong measures aimed at supporting the teaching of the Corsican language and defending and promoting it.

Following the discussions held, the government’s proposals on Corsica concerning the teaching of the Corsican language were approved by the Corsican Assembly in Ajaccio on 28th July 2000:

“The elected members of the Corsican Assembly unanimously requested the definition of a mechanism enabling the teaching of the Corsican language to be generalised in infants’ and primary schools, so as to encourage its vitality.”

The following is thus envisaged:

- Giving a strong boost to the initial and continuous training of primary school teachers in the Corsican language. School teachers would be recruited at their own choice through two competitions, one of which would include tests in Corsican.
- Making greater use of teachers of Corsican at secondary level by increasing, if necessary, the number of posts open to holders of the CAPES qualification in Corsican, as well as outside participants and educational assistants recruited according to the “Corsican language and culture profile.

If such measures were to be applied soon, the attendance statistics reported here might have to be considered adjusted upwards.

The political situation in Corsica during thirty years has played an important role in the measures concerning the teaching of Corsican. Although nationalist organisations have always included it in their demands, nowadays, other political representatives have put it on their agenda. All parties are in favour of a serious and efficient organisation of all the degrees of all school levels.

It is also understood that it is through the action of the nationalist representatives of the Corsican Assemblée, supported by the influential leftwing and rightwing parties, that the general negotiation processes about Corsican have led to the “*Accords Matignon*”. These processes have to give way to the edition of a law project that will be submitted to the French Parlement. This will not be considered as a positive development by certain national representatives of the parties that have signed the agreements on a regional level (leftwing as well as rightwing) and provokes a national debate about the risk of fragilising the French Republic with its fundamentals of unity and indivisibility. But it is also known that the European Union strives for a large decentralization of the national powers towards the regions, which aspire a certain autonomous policy. Among the new demands of the regions with a strong cultural and linguistic character, the defence and promotion of the original languages and cultures has to be a priority, without negative consequences for the official status of French.

10

Summary statistics

	Corsican as a subject	bilingual courses
primary	19,773	1,151
secondary	7,758	statistics n.a.

Table 4: number of students involved in Corsican education

These figures illustrate general attendance at primary and secondary level. To give a more detailed understanding of the teaching question, we can nevertheless add to those figures a few more about the motivation for the choices made by pupils or their families when deciding what subjects to study. With that aim in mind, indications are given by a survey conducted by the National Office of Information on Teaching and the Teaching Professions (*ONISEP- Office National d'Information sur les Enseignements et les Professions*) in 1996 in the department of Corse-du-Sud of

CM2 pupils (middle course 2nd year). According to this information, 58% of those pupils were expecting to study Corsican in the sixth year. That percentage pretty well corroborated the figures for actual registrations at the beginning of the following school year. As regards the motivations expressed, they could be described as identity-based in that above all they mentioned the fact that the language chosen was that of the region, the family, the community culture. Those reasons outstripped other reasons suggested such as its usefulness in understanding other languages, or the value of being bilingual.

Another valuable indicator is one which a group of teachers from the *Giocante de Casabianca* state secondary school (Bastia, Haute-Corse) supplied to the writer of the assessment report for the Territorial Public Authority (see below, in the bibliography). In 1997-98, following a union initiative, they conducted a survey of all the primary and secondary pupils at their school "*in order to obtain fuller knowledge of the true practice and teaching of the Corsican language*", and so as to work out their own formulation. The questionnaire, through a set of items handled according to a system of multiple-choice answers, aimed at determining not only the existence of the use of Corsican outside school but also the reasons why pupils made their language choices at school, the guidance they were given about those choices, the reasons for the persistence of those options or their possible abandonment, and even the value of using Corsican in a disciplinary system of education.

The straightforward analysis does not include any comments, but immediately gives some important indications, not least the amount of interest shown in such a survey, because out of 675 questionnaires distributed, only 5 were not completed!

Apart from that, here are a few unprocessed results about the various living languages in competition with one another according to the options on offer.

As a living language option, Corsican was chosen by 3% as a second language and by 11% as a third language. As regards the LV1 options, English obtained over 94% of the

answers. After English, Spanish and Italian were considered valuable.

The explanation for the choices put reasons of usefulness well ahead (86%), logically combined with the same realistic reasoning about how widespread the use of the language was in the world (70%). The advantage of having a little initial knowledge, the Mediterranean character or the presumed easiness of the language were seen as being of only secondary importance.

Regarding information on the possibilities of learning Corsican, over 60% of the pupils considered themselves insufficiently or not at all informed, as opposed to 35% who thought they had had sufficient guidance. The unprocessed answers about previous studies gave useful indications. Only about 20% of the pupils said they had not done any Corsican before, whereas the distribution of the various categories ticked gave a set of percentages ranging from 17% to 49%, from the lowest for the second grade and the highest for the sixth grade.

The reasons given to explain the decision to study Corsican placed regional identity at nearly 60%, an answer objectively reinforced by use in the family (37%), previous knowledge (30%), communication with elderly people (26%), understanding Corsican songs (21%) and greater involvement in society (21%). It was possible to tick more than one answer. To complete a reasoning emerged from groups of young people questioned directly, other motivations will also be noted, such as a knowledge of other languages (10%) or its similarity to Italian (7%) and even the surprising explanation of wanting to please their parents (8%), whereas only 7% of the pupils considered that Corsican was an easy language.

More worrying is the proportion of those who had given up Corsican during the course (61%, compared with 16% who said they were continuing), 47% giving as their explanation that their timetable was overloaded and 22% the poor arrangement of hours in the daily or weekly distribution of lessons. These thus contrast with negative reasons such as its not being useful in seeking a job (21%) or for continuing

studies (26%), or even surprising reasons such as the fact of already knowing the language (13%), its difficulty (3%), its being old-fashioned and unsuited to the modern world (10%), and even a way of avoiding being registered in a bad class (1%)! This survey is only a partial exploration, which admits its own limitations. However, it does indicate trends which, although confined to a group of primary and secondary pupils in a single school, directly or otherwise, shows some of the weaknesses of the present system. At the same time it clarifies certain adolescent attitudes or motivations that are less familiar because they are less frequently called upon. These trends also sometimes highlight unexpected aspects of the language question and they can help to challenge some of the ideas we are too often inclined to take as certainties. On the latter point, a confirmation of that impression could be contributed by the assessment conducted on one occasion by certain teaching members of the committees for the recruitment of the young people involved in the recent ministerial "*young jobs*" initiative. Having had them fill in specially designed information cards at their preliminary interviews, they were thus able to obtain information which, keeping it in the form of a simple statement⁷ nevertheless provided very clear answers. To the question about where the candidates had learnt Corsican, if they knew that language, the answers massively indicated "at school", which would tend to demonstrate the foolishness of the frequent assertion that the educational system cannot produce speakers of Corsican!

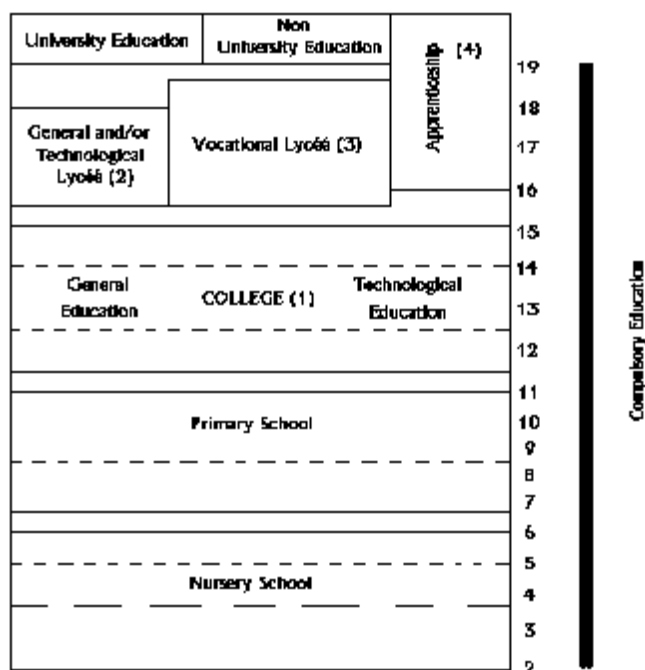
Endnotes:

1. Source for the *European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe. November 1992. European Treaty Series/Série des traités européens, 148. <http://conventions.coe.int/>
2. This document called "Structures of the Education and Initial Training Systems in the European Union" has been prepared jointly by EURYDICE and CEDEFOP. www.eurydice.org address: EURYDICE European Unit, Rue d'Arlon 15, 1050 Brussels, Belgium. Tel: +32-2-2383011, fax: +32-2-22306562.

3. 23,810 is 95% of the total number of students, 24,117. Some students (mainly immigrant children from North Africa) do not have Corsican classes as they follow “Langues et culture d’origine (ELCO). Another factor is the lack of competence in Corsican of some teachers.
4. CAP/SES: sections préparant au certificat d’aptitude professionnelle, classes d’enseignement spécialisé.
5. BT/BTS: sections préparant les brevet de technicien et de technicien supérieur.
6. Terminales BEP: préparant an brevet d’enseignement professionnel
7. That is to say, without supporting evidence.

Education system France

EURYDICE



The College provides general education at lower secondary level leading to a national certificate (Brevet). The orientation cycle includes both general and technological education.

The general and/or technological Lycée provides upper secondary education leading to higher education or employment. Pupils prepare for the general Baccalauréat, which usually leads to higher education, the technological Baccalauréat (B.Th.), which leads either to employment or to higher education, or the technical certificate (brevet de technicien, BT), which generally leads to employment. The preparatory classes for the grandes écoles (classes préparatoires aux grandes écoles, CPGE) and the higher technical sections (sections de techniciens supérieurs, STS) in Lycées provide post-Baccalauréat training.

The vocational Lycée is an institution of secondary education providing young people with general technological and vocational training. It leads after two years to the vocational aptitude certificate (certificat d'aptitude professionnelle, CAP) or the vocational studies certificate (brevet d'études professionnelles, BEP), and after two additional years, to the vocational Baccalauréat.

These courses can be entered between the age of 16 and 25. Apprenticeship training lasts two years. Alternating training qualification contracts last six months minimum, 24 months maximum; adaption contracts last six months minimum; and guidance contracts last from three to six months.

References and further reading

*main official texts
regulating teaching
of Corsican*

Deixonne Law (51-46 of 11/01/51) allows optional courses of one hour per week at pre-primary and primary and secondary levels, depending upon the wishes of teachers and parents.

Directive 74-33 (16/01/74) treats about teaching of regional dialects. It relates directly to *Corsican*, as the former Deixonne Law only referred to Breton, Basque, Catalan and Occitan and had not mentioned Corsican.

Haby Law (75-620 of 11/07/75) art. 12 states that teaching of regional or minority languages may be done throughout the school career.

Circulaire Savary 82-261 makes bilingual classes possible. The circulaire confirms state commitment to the teaching of regional languages on a voluntary basis for one to three hours a week at primary schools with minimum of 12-15 children in rural areas and 20 in an urban setting. At secondary schools, at both lycée and baccalauréat, next to the option of one hour, another option of three hours is created and the regional language can obtain the status of living language 2 ou 3. It also allows the use of pedagogic advisers for regional or minority language teaching.

Circulaire 83-547 (30/12/83) contains specific information on how the regional language and culture can be used in subjects such as music, history, geography and plastic arts.

Circulaire 95-086 (07/04/95) determines the regulations which make regional language teaching official. It summarises previous texts, and contributes advances which Corsica often tried out before they were extended to the whole country: it includes long-range educational plans, the appointment of schools inspectorates and defines the action to be taken by the guidance departments, educational documentation centres and territorial authorities.

Law No.91-428 (of 13th May 1991) concerning the individual status of the Corsican Territorial Authority.

Article 53 of this text stipulates that the Corsican Assembly must determine the complementary educational activities organised by the Territorial Authority, and that it must adopt a plan for developing the teaching of the language and culture of Corsica. In particular, this plan must envisage the inclusion of this teaching in school timetables. These conditions are the subject of an agreement reached between the Corsican Territorial Authority and the State.

Bill issued by the government concerning the Corsican language in education (28/07/00). It demands the integration of Corsican into the curriculum of kindergarten and primary school making it a regular subject for all pupils. To reach these goals, the bill states that more Corsican teachers need to be trained.

publications

Comiti, J.M. (1996) *A pratica è a grammatica*, Ajaccio, Squatra di u Finusellu and CCU Corte.

books

Comiti, J.M. (1992) *Les Corses face à leur langue*, Ajaccio, Squatra di u Finusellu

Dekkers, A. (1995) *Teacher Training of Minority Languages for Primary and Secondary Education*. Fryske Akademy, Leeuwarden, The Netherlands.

EURYDICE and CEDEFOP (1995) *Structures of the Education and initial training systems in the European Union*. Office for Official Publications of the European Community, Bruxelles/Brussel.

Fusina J. (1999) *Parlons corse*, Collection Parlons une langue (directed by M.Malherbe), Paris, L'Harmattan Editions, 280p.

Fusina J. (1994) *L'enseignement du corse. Histoire, développements, perspectives*. Ajaccio, Squatra di u Finusellu and University of Corsica (with the help of the Territorial Public Authority), 317p.

Goot, A. Sj. van der (1996) *Bilingual Education in Catalonia; Different Strategies in Primary Education*. Mercator-Education, Fryske Akademy, Leeuwarden/ Ljouwert, The Netherlands.

Goot, A. Sj. van der and W. J. T. Renkema and M. B. Stuijt (eds.) (1994) *Pre-primary Education*. Fryske Akademy, Leeuwarden, The Netherlands.

Marchetti, P. (1974) *Le corse sans peine*, (learning method) Paris, Assimil.

Tjeerdsma & Sikma (1994) *Provision of Learning Materials for Primary and Pre-primary Education*. Leewarden, Fryske Akademy.

articles

Arrighi JM. (1999) A scolai, quelle jeunesse pour demain? In: *Le Mémorial des Corses* (Volume 7) Ajaccio, Ed. Albiana, pp.483-495

Comiti J.M., Di Meglio A. (2000) La langue corse dans l'enseignement: norme(s) et fonctionnements. In: *Les langues régionales: enjeux sociolinguistiques et didactiques*: Revue de linguistique et de didactique des langues, n° 20 (1999) under the direction of Louise Dabène (pp.61-74)

Fusina J. (1995) L'enseignement du corse : une démarche originale. In: *Actes des Rencontres nationales de la Fédération pour l'enseignement des langues régionales dans l'enseignement public* (9^{ème} colloque FLAREP), Ajaccio (28-30 October 1995), pp.23-27

Fusina J. (1998) Langue corse et modernité. In: *Actes du Colloque international Iles et Mémoires*, Corte (September 1996), Corte, University of Corsica, pp.202-209

Fusina J. (1999) L'identité et ses horizons. In: *Actes du Colloque international L'île laboratoire*, Ajaccio, Ed. Piazzola, pp.450-456

Some of the statistics given here come from this summarised article published recently in the important collection issued under the direction of J. M. Arrighi (regional educational inspector of the Corsican language) and M.J.Vinciguerra(former inspector general of national education, chairman of the first CAPES board for Corsican) *Le Mémorial des Corses* (Volume 7) on Corsica in the last twenty years.

Fusina J. (2000) Le corse (fiche synthétique) (pp.65-67). In: *Les langues de France in La Tribune internationale des langues vivantes* (n°27, May 2000)

reports :

Fusina J.(1998) *Diagnostic-évaluation préparatoire au plan de développement de l'enseignement du corse* (40p). *Examen des dispositifs prévus dans le cadre des orientations pour un plan de développement de l'enseignement de la langue corse* (16p.) *Propositions pour un plan de développement de l'enseignement de la langue et de la culture corses* (19p) (reports requested by the Executive Council of the Corsican Territorial Public Authority). Unpublished documents for internal use by the CTC.

Addresses

official bodies

Rectorat de l'Académie de Corse
Service Langue et culture corses
Boulevard Pascal Rossini BP 808
20192 AJACCIO Cedex
www.ac-corse.fr/
e-mail: dominique.ottavi@ac-corse.fr

Collectivité Territoriale de Corse
Mission Langue corse
22, Cours Grandval, BP 215
20187 AJACCIO Cedex 1
www.chex.com/cesc/ctc/index1.htm
e-mail: ctc.presse@sitec.fr

cultural centres and associations

Association ADECEC
20221 CERVIONI
www.adecec-corsica.com/
e-mail: adecec@mic.fr

Association Scola Corsa di Bastia
Rue Voltojo
MIOMO , 20200 BASTIA

websites

www.corsicaweb.fr/en/decouverte/decouverte.htm
This site gives information about the history, culture and language of Corsica.

<http://corsica.net.free.fr/html/dico/dictionnaire1.htm>
This link has a French - Corsican dictionary.

Other websites on minority languages

- Mercator* **www.troc.es/mercator**
General site of the Mercator-project. It will lead you to the three specialized centres:
- Mercator-Education* **www.fa.knaw.nl/mercator**
Homepage of Mercator-Education: European Network for regional or minority languages and education. The site contains the series of regional dossiers, a database with organisations and bibliography and links to minority languages.
- Mercator-Media* **www.aber.ac.uk/~merc/**
Homepage of Mercator-Media. It provides information on media and minority languages in the EU.
- Mercator-Legislation* **www.troc.es/ciemen/mercator**
Homepage of Mercator-Legislation. It provides information on minority languages and legislation in the EU.
- European Union* **<http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/langmin.html>**
At the website of the European Union an explanation is given of its support for regional or minority languages.
- Council of Europe* **<http://conventions.coe.int/>**
European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. (1992) and *Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities* (1995) European Treaty Series/Série des traités européens 148+157 Strasbourg.
- Eurydice* **www.eurydice.org**
Eurydice is the information network on education in Europe. The site provides information on all European education systems and education policies.
- EBLUL* **www.eblul.org/**
Homepage of the European Bureau for Lesser Used Languages. This site provides general information on lesser used languages as well as on projects, publications and events.

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