TEACHING ITALIAN IN CORSICA: FLUID LANGUAGE BOUNDARIES AND INTERCULTURAL CITIZENSHIP

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Mapping Corsica
The varied coastline
The mountanous interior
Premises/approaches

- **Classroom practice=language socialization**
  - Constructs, differentiates and legitimates students' relationships to the languages of the classroom
  - Positions those languages with respect to each other
  - Attributes value to ways of speaking, being and knowing
  - Creates indexical connections between forms of language and forms of social membership (from the personal to the collective)
Abbreviated sociolinguistic history

• Language shift from Corsican to French since 1900s
  • French schooling and denigration of Corsican
  • Emigration and “mixed” marriages
  • Economic and social advancement
• 1975 – present: language activism
• Schooling as an attempt to reverse language shift
Corsican bilingual education

- Experimental program in early 80s
- Formalized/generalized since 1996
  - 27 schools or tracks
  - Approximately 15% of Corsican primary school students
  - Current LP goal is 100% in ten years’ time
  - Up to 50% of the curriculum in Corsican
Corsican bilingual education

1. **Language revitalization** for children who are mostly French-dominant: give children Corsican language skills (replacing intergenerational transmission)

2. **Authority**: Lend Corsican authority and legitimacy; create parity with French

3. **Identity**: Differentiate Corsican from French (and Italian): create conditions in which children can acquire or strengthen a privileged affective, cultural connection with the language.
The position of Italian

- Early days of Corsican language activism
  - Differentiation from Italian as claim on linguistic autonomy/legitimacy
  - Italian as competitor language

- Mixed historical status
  - High culture
  - Low status immigration
  - Irredentism/Fascism
Late 80s through early 2000s

• Shifting sentiments
  • “not a foreign language”
  • A “natural” partner or “half sister”

• EU as a new framework for identity and educational policy
  • Transfrontier languages/contact zones
  • Plurilingual cultural and linguistic identities and citizenship
  • “Collateral” language
  • preferred FL in Corsican bilingual schools in early 2000s
Reflections of EU policy/orientations in Corsican language planning document (2005)

- The building of Europe, globalization of exchanges, tourism, shifts in population, the mixing of urban populations all lead us to shift our conceptions of language and identity from the purely local and ancestral to values of exchange and openness in all of the following: cases concerning the learning of the language by new residents, cases of contact with other languages, recognition of a Mediterranean and European identity, cultural exchanges or the economic valorization of cultural specificity (labels, ‘identity’ products, tourism...) (Assemblée de Corse 2005: 5).

- France as referent elided in favor of Europe, Mediterranean, global i.d.

- Globalization as a discourse

- Chronotopic shift: local/ancestral → local/modern insular → cosmopolitan

- Linguistic and cultural contact as a key condition

- “exchange”

- Neoliberal framework
the linguistic repertoire

- The linguistic *repertoire* is composed of different languages (those learned from childhood, learned later as a result of education or self-study...) that the speaker uses and in which he/she has acquired different competencies (conversation, reading, listening...) at a variety of different levels. The composition of this repertoire varies over time.

- a heterogenous set of competencies
- perfect/balanced bi- or multilingualism absent
- linguistic competencies framed relative to
  - life trajectories
  - USE
Italian in bilingual schools

• Foreign language and "complementary" tool with for bilingual agenda
• Teaching of Italian + use as medium of instruction

• Recordings
• Collected by Alain di Meglio and Claude Cortier in 3 bilingual schools
• Analysis with the collaboration of Pascale Pergola, former bilingual teacher; Academic inspector for foreign language instruction.
**Sequence 1: “I like chocolate”: what language are we speaking in?**

<p>| | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>Allora io</td>
<td>So I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>Eh?</td>
<td>Eh?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>Io, per Natale, [xxx] Pasqua, ho mangiato</td>
<td>I, for Christmas, Easter, I ate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>la ciccolata [čikolata].. A me, piace chocolate [čikolata]. I really like [piače]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td>Piace la cicc [čik]...la cioccolata, Like choc, [čik]...chocolate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td>[čokolata] la CIOccolata (smiling, shaking) [čokolata], CHOcolate (smiling shaking</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td>index finger) Ti piace la cioccolata? index finger) Do you like chocolate?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>Iè</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>Tu?</td>
<td>You?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>CC</td>
<td>Iè</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>(pointing to another child) Ti piace la cioccolata? (pointing to another child) Do you like chocolate?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page</td>
<td>Column</td>
<td>Text</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>Iè chi...mi...[piace [piačè]] Yes, it..I [like it. [piačè]]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>[piaccia [piača]] [like [piača]]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>Dilla, dilla, dilla Say it, say it, say it</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>Iè chì mi piace [piačè] Yes, I like it. [piačè]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>Allora, (writing on board) iè...chì...mi... So, (writing on board) Yes...I...</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>mi piace [piačè] like it [piačè]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>mi piace [piačè]. Allora, qui, like it [piačè]. So, here,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td></td>
<td>« Iè chì mi piace. » “Yes I like it.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td></td>
<td>In chì lingua parlemu qui? What language are we speaking here?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>CC</td>
<td>Italian</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>Italian. Iè chì mi [piace. Italian. Yes, I [like it</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>CC</td>
<td>[piace [like it]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>Site sicuru chì ghjè, taliano= Are you sure that it is Italian=</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>CC</td>
<td>=no= =no=</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>=italiano =Italian</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>cioccola:</td>
<td>choco:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71</td>
<td>CC</td>
<td>ta</td>
<td>late</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>72</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>ah, si, è perchè/é....(goes to poster on wall and points)</td>
<td>Ah, yes because... ....(goes to poster on wall and points)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>73</td>
<td>CC</td>
<td>to...la..</td>
<td>to...la</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>74</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>h/è..</td>
<td>it’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75</td>
<td>CC</td>
<td>(multiple responses)</td>
<td>(multiple responses: indistinct)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>76</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>h/è</td>
<td>it’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>cioccolatTO</td>
<td>chocolaTO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>78</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>h/è femminile</td>
<td>it’s feminine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>79</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>h/è maschile?</td>
<td>is it masculine?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80</td>
<td>CC</td>
<td>h/è femminile</td>
<td>it’s feminine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>81</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>la ciccolaTO, cioccolaTO</td>
<td>chocolaTO, chocolaTO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>82</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>h/è femminile dunque la cioccolata</td>
<td>It’s feminine, so chocolate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>83</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>le chocolato [le šokolato]</td>
<td>the chocolato [le šokolato]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Corsican</td>
<td>French Only</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>91</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>ciuccolato [čukolato]</td>
<td>chocolate [čukolato]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>92</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>no, in corso</td>
<td>No, in Corsican</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>93</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>cioccolate [čokolate]</td>
<td>[čokolate]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>94</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>cioccolata [čokolata]</td>
<td>[čokolata]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>ciucculate [čukulade]</td>
<td>[čukulade]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>96</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>a...</td>
<td>the (Corsican definite article)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>97</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>a ciucculata [čukulada]</td>
<td>[čukulada]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>98</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>a cicculata [čikulada] (writes on board)</td>
<td>[čikulada] (writes on board)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>99</td>
<td>CC</td>
<td>h/è feminine</td>
<td>it’s feminine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>h/è feminine, cumè</td>
<td>it’s feminine, like</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>101</td>
<td>CC</td>
<td>(lots of responses)</td>
<td>(lots of responses)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>102</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>italiano</td>
<td>Italian</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
« Iè chi mi piace » “Yes, I like it”

- iè = Corsican (Italian ‘si’)
- chì = Corsican (Italian “che”)
- mi = bivalent
- piace [piače] = Italian

Corsican: Vowel lenition “e cambiarine”

[piadʒe] phrase initial;
[biadʒe] following vowel

santu  [santu]
u santu [u zantu]
focu  [fogu]
u focu [u vogu]
References to Corsican

• In Italian, as “corso”
  • in lines 30, 35, 89, 90

• In Corsican, as “corsu”
  • Lines 47, 92
Teacher’s boundary blurring

Awareness/competence unknown

• Line 26
  • “taliano” = hybrid of “italiano” (Italian) or “talianu”/”italianu” (Corsican)

• Lines 47 and 60
  • “que” instead of the Italian “quesso” on line 61

• Line 61
  • “pò” instead of the Italian “puo”

Explicitly commented on and corrected

• Lines 6 and 7
  • “ciccolata” = hybrid of the Corsican “cicculata” [čikulada]) and the Italian “cioccolata” [čokolata]
VARIANTS of “chocolate” found in sequence:

- [le čikolata]
- [le čokolato]
- [čukolato]
- [čokolate]
- [čokolata]
- [čukulada]

- French/Italian mix: “le chocolato” (line 83)
Sequence 2: Why does a beak have a bird?*
*Contrastive pedagogy
*Polynomic perspectives on language variation
*Ludic frame and student agency
Polynomic language

A language with an abstract unity, recognized by its speakers in multiple modes of existence, all equally tolerated with no differentiation of status or function. It is marked by the mutual acceptance of phonological and morphological variation among speakers of different varieties for whom its lexical diversity is viewed as a precious resource.

(Marcellesi 1989)

The abstract unity « comes out of a dialectic movement whose existence is based on the massive affirmation by its speakers to give it a specific name and to declare its autonomy from other recognized languages» (Marcellesi, 1983)
Polynomy:
- Unity in dialectal diversity
- Linguistic unity as a function of acts of social and linguistic recognition in a community of practice
- All varieties of Corsican legitimate

Seen in orthography:
- "parlemu/parlimu"
- "ellu/eddu"
- "tarra/terra"
- "carne/carri"
- "gruppa/gruppi"
- "perche/parchi"
- "nostru/nosciu"
Normalizing “error” and the multilingual floor

- Gianni Rodari, and his “techniques of the fantastic” for teaching language
- “Mistakes” as the source of creativity
- Creativity, communication take precedence over respecting language boundaries and “good form”
“Chì si sbaglia, inventa”
Mistakes are the source of creativity; Errors are the mother of invention
C’era una volta un bambino che faceva tante domande, e questo non è certamente un male, anzi è un bene. Ma alle domande di quel bambino era difficile dare risposta. Per esempio, egli domandava:

Perché i cassetti hanno i tavoli?

La gente lo guardava, e magari rispondeva:

- I cassetti servono per metterci le posate.
- Lo so ma non so perché i cassetto hanno i tavoli.

[...] Un’altra volta lui domandava:

Perché le code hanno i pesci?

Oppure:

Perché i baffi hanno i gatti?

Once there was a child who was asking lots of questions, and this is certainly not a bad thing, it’s even a good thing. But it was very difficult to respond to the questions that this child asked. For example, he would ask, “Why do the drawers have tables?” People would look at him, and even say: “Drawers are for putting silverware in” “I know, but I don’t know why drawers have tables.” Another time he would ask, “Why do tails have fish?” or even “Why do whiskers have cats?”
....the lesson

- 4th grade bilingual classroom
- Teacher reads Rodari story in full
- Establishes structural frame: Why does a part have a whole?
- Elicits backwards questions from children in 3 languages
Frame: Inversion

- Why does a _____ (part) have a ______ (whole)?
- Why does a hand have a clock?
- Why does a wheel have a car?
Color coding

- è/e
- casa
- hè/è
- hà/ha
- à
- un
- perché/perche
- no
- in
- allora
- tù/tu
- chè/che
- certi
- mi, ti, si
- o

and
house
is
has
to
a [masc. sing]
why
no
in
now /so
you [2d sing]
that
some
reflexive pronouns
or

- CORSICAN ONLY
- FRENCH ONLY
- ITALIAN ONLY
- bivalent
Questions in Reverse: Italian, Corsican/Italian, French

- In the language of their choice: “à chì a dice in corsu, à chì a dice in talianu” “Dit-le en français!” [“Whether it be in Corsican or Italian” “Say it in French!”]

- (Video removed)
T: Avà, emu à circa, à pruvà, à pruvà, à pruvà à circa, è à fà domande allo roverscio.
T: Perchè a barba ha a faccia? Perchè a barba ha... la faccia?
S: Perchè i sacchi, pourquoi les sachets ont-ils les poubelles?
T: Pourquoi les sachets ont-ils les poubelles. Bien!

Now we are going to try, to try, to try to find and to make up backwards questions. Why does the shade have a pine tree? Why does the shade have a pine tree? Why does the beard have a face? Why does the beard have ...a face? And in French Why do the sacks, why do the sacks have trash cans? Why do the sacks have trash cans. Good!
The bird’s beak: How do you say it in Corsican?

• (Video removed)
<table>
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<tr>
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<th>CC</th>
<th>T</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>l’ ucello (writing), l’ ucello pò avè</td>
<td>the bird, the bird can have</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>l’ acelli</td>
<td>birds</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>il becco</td>
<td>the beak</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>CC</td>
<td>[xxx]</td>
<td>[xxx]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>uh, eh</td>
<td>uh, eh</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>perché allez</td>
<td>why ? go on</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>perché...il becco hà ..l’ ucello?</td>
<td>why..does the beak..have..the bird ?</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>perché il becco hà l’ ucello brava</td>
<td>why does the beak have the bird, good !</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td>perché il becco hà l’ ucello. In corsu !</td>
<td>why does the beak have the bird In Corsican !</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>perché l’acellu</td>
<td>why the bird</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>l’acellu.</td>
<td>the bird</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
<td>èun hè micca il becco uh?</td>
<td>it’s not ‘il becco’ uh ?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>u beccu</td>
<td>u beccu</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>no (starts to write on board)</td>
<td>no (starts to write on board)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>CC</td>
<td>u...u...</td>
<td>the...the...</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>CC</td>
<td>u pizzi..u pizzicu [pizi’gu]</td>
<td>the b..b..beak [pizi’ gu]</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Polynomy: Rote or Rotule?

- (video removed)
## The polynomic principle: “rote” or “rotule”

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>a vittura hà e</td>
<td>the car has the</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>rote</td>
<td>wheels</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>CC</td>
<td>rote</td>
<td>wheels</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>rotule o ?</td>
<td>wheels</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>CC</td>
<td>rote</td>
<td>wheels</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>o rote o rotule</td>
<td>either wheels [rote] or wheels [rotule]</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td></td>
<td>cumu dite voi ?</td>
<td>how do you [pl.] say it?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>rote</td>
<td>[rote]</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>tu dici e rote, tu u dici ? (pointing)</td>
<td>you [sing] say [rote], and you? (pointing)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>e rote</td>
<td>[rote]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>tu u dici ? (pointing) e rotule</td>
<td>you say it? (pointing) [rotule]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td></td>
<td>tu cumu dice in casa ? rote o rotule</td>
<td>you, how do you say it at home? [rote] or [rotule]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>rote</td>
<td>[rote]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>rote. Chi sceglimu?, hè listessu (writes on board)</td>
<td>[rote], what shall we choose? it’s the same (writes on board)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
53  CC  (overlapping) rote rotule  (overlapping) [rode] [rodule]

54  T  Hè cumè ghjocu-ghjoculu :  It’s like [djogu- djogulu]:

55  rote-rotule, culleta-culletula.  [rode-rodule], [kuleda-kuledula].

56  Indè me, mettimu sempre u ‘la’,  Where I come from, we always put

57  mettimu sempre u ‘la,’ ma in, in  the ‘la’ we always put the ‘la’ but in

58  certi lochi no. Eh ? indè me, si dice  some places no. Eh ? Where I’m from, [xxx] it’s said [xxx]

59  C  indè me, no  Not where I come from

60  T  In Purti Vechju, no, ùn si dice micca  In Porto Vecchio, no, you don’t say [it like that]
18 T u pizzicu [bitzigu], eccu ! the beak ! [bitzigu], right ! Go on, Allez,

19 dimmila in corsu (pointing to girl) say it to me in Corsican (pointing)

20 girl e be, Perché... er, um, why...

21 T No no no, micca perché No no no, not ‘why’ [perke]

22 CC cumu ! how!

23 girl per, cumu hè chì u pizzicu ha l’acellu ? wh-how is it that the beak has the bird?

24 Bene, cumè u pizzicu ha l’acellu ? good, how is it that the beak has the bird?
Implications: Teaching of Corsican as a Minority language

- Ludic, creative, performative frame
  - overcoming linguistic insecurities
  - alternative criteria to traditional standards of correctness
  - community of creative practice

- New tool for “old” concerns about code boundaries
  - Teaching children to discriminate between subtle linguistic differences highlights Corsican’s uniqueness
  - Counterweight to French language contact phenomena
• Tool for new conceptions of linguistic and cultural boundaries
  • Corsican not as “minority” language but commodity of cultural and linguistic exchange
    • Students who report successful communication with Italians
    • class trips and exchanges
  • Leveraging of multiple levels of competence; not ‘balanced’ bilingualism
  • Communicative and expressive agency across codes
  • Codes (and identities) as both bounded and fluid
But…

- Italian as option in decline in primary schools and in secondary
  - English and Spanish more frequent
    - globalizing discourses: mobility
    - discourses on linguistic proximity
    - popular culture
- Lack of continuing education, project support for teachers
  - linguistic competence