

Managing intercultural contacts through translation as part of Slovenian language policy

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Presentation outline

- Brief historical background
- Slovenian language status
- First organized language policy and language planning activities
 - Translation and interpreting as part of this action
- Following the Slovenian declaration of independence
 - Main characteristics of language policy and language planning activities
 - Translation and interpreting as part of these efforts

Short historical background

- From the very beginning of the Slovenian language standardization in the mid-16th century
 - Speakers of Slovene lived in multilingual entities
 - Were open to contacts with others, with translation being among one of consequences of these contacts
 - Speakers of Slovene lived in multilingual entities with other dominant languages
 - Clear relations of power
- Only in 1849 Slovene gains the status of co-official language
 - The status progressed from the mid-19th century onwards with Slovene as co-official language in all multilingual states after that period

Slovenia in the former Yugoslav states

- Following WW1
 - Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes
 - (1919–1929)
 - Kingdom of Yugoslavia until WW2
- Constant centralist political pressures
 - Idea of language unification
 - Slovene-Serbo-Croatian
 - Such language never existed
 - Slovene co-official language together with Serbo-Croatian



Slovenia in former Yugoslav states

- Following WW2
 - Yugoslavia: multilingual and multicultural federal state
 - Serbo-Croatian as official language with co-official languages of the federal republics
 - Slovene one of co-official languages
 - Serbo-Croatian of the socialist Yugoslavia was not only the language of majority, but rather the language of political and military power
 - Serbo-Croatian was the language of federal authorities and institutions, language of diplomacy, language of the army, language in the federal parliament, a dominant language of mass media
 - Slovene of high cultural value in the Republic of Slovenia
 - Slovene was an immanent national as well as political issue



First Slovenian language policy

- Second half of 1970s
- Public event “Slovene in Public”
- Joint effort of Slovenian linguists and politicians
 - The entire event was politically embedded in the international context with explicit reference to issues of international cultural co-operation within the framework of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe

Main objectives

- A modern sociolinguistic approach
 - To analyze Slovenian linguistic situation in virtually all areas of public communication
 - To raise public awareness of linguistic problems within the Slovenian society
 - To draft an action plan with outlined language-planning activities

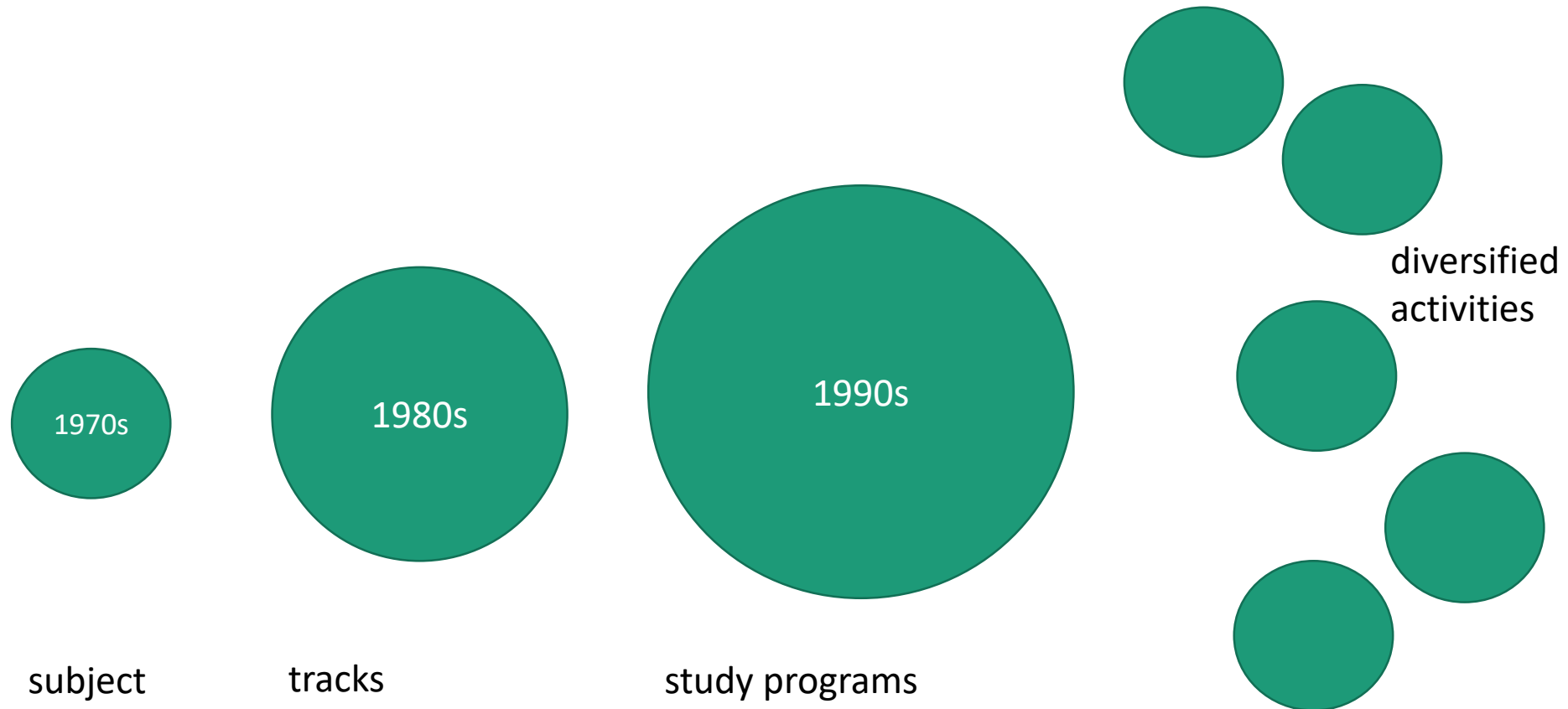
Translation and interpreting as part of language policy

- Starting point
 - Translation has been part of all key stages of creating Standard Slovene
 - Translation has contributed above all to
 - functional variation
 - introduction of new genres
 - Translation has established an intercultural dialogue between the programmatic and ideological postulates of the European environment and the Slovenian cultural community
- Therefore, it is important to be **in the very core of language-planning activities**

Translation and interpretation as part of an action plan

- A plan for:
 - Training for translators and interpreters as part of university programs
 - Introducing revision in translation process
 - For the whole spectrum of texts: from literary and technical texts
 - Introducing direct translation for subtitling
 - Language resources for translators
 - From monolingual to specialized dictionaries
 - Translation into foreign languages as part of cultural promotion

Action plan realization: translator and interpreter training



The independent state and language planning

- 1991: change in status, official language of an independent state
 - Defined in the Constitution
- Mid-1990s: discussion on the legal regulation of the public use of Slovene
 - 2004: A law on the public use of Slovene was adopted by the Slovenian Parliament
 - Struggle for power: two different ideological concepts
 - progressive
 - protectionist



Recent activities

- Depends on who is at the position of power
- **Progressive approach**
 - E.g.: Mid 1990' public discussion on language and gender
 - Change in language use
 - Visibility of women in Slovene public discourse
- **Protectionism**
 - Focus on regulations, laws, and sanctions

Recent activities

- Progressive approach
 - Slovene is *de facto* a multinational and multilingual society
 - Language-planning activities are therefore not connected just with Slovene
 - National language policy
- Protectionism
 - Slovene is an endangered language
 - Majority of language-planning activities are set to protect language and nation as a whole
 - Nationalistic language policy

Recent activities

- Language policy is part of the state activities
- Language-policy documents are prepared and adopted by the Slovenian Parliament
 - Resolutions on the national program for language policy
- Key documents are action plans
- Currently we have 2 action plans
 - For education
 - For language infrastructure

Recent activities: translation and interpreting

- Recent shift from the main focus to the fringes of language-planning activities
 - Do not address key problems of today's Slovenian multicultural society
 - Failed to deal properly with the language barrier in public services, which often results in unequal treatment and power imbalance in cases where interpreter-mediated interaction could resolve communication problems and reduce democratic deficit of community members that do not speak Slovene
- In the future: translation and interpreting should again be among focus points of Slovenian language policy and language planning