



Industrial Relations in multilingual environments in France

(Draft 2)

Sylvie Contrepois

Introduction

- About 400 different languages are spoken in France, including 75 regional languages (amongst these 40 overseas).
- In 1992, 26 % of residents declared that they were brought up in another language than French (2/3 in a foreign country).
- According to a CGC survey (2011), 71 % of managers are using a foreign language at work, 37 % on a daily basis.

Migration and diversity in France

Migrants and foreigners

In 2009 – 2010

- 7.5 million foreign born persons (11.6% of the total population)

In 2011

- 6 % of foreigners (leaving in France without having the French nationality)
- 8,7 % of migrants (born with a foreign origin outside France and leaving in France, whether being or not a French National).

Between 300 000 and 400 000 undocumented workers

France, a country of early migration

Une immigration plurielle

1918-1939

Une immigration essentiellement européenne



Jeune polonais recruté pour travailler dans les mines du nord de la France, années 1920.

1945-1975

Une immigration en provenance d'Europe du Sud et du Maghreb



Ouvriers nord-africains sur une chaîne de montage, usine Renault de Flins, 1975.

Depuis 1975

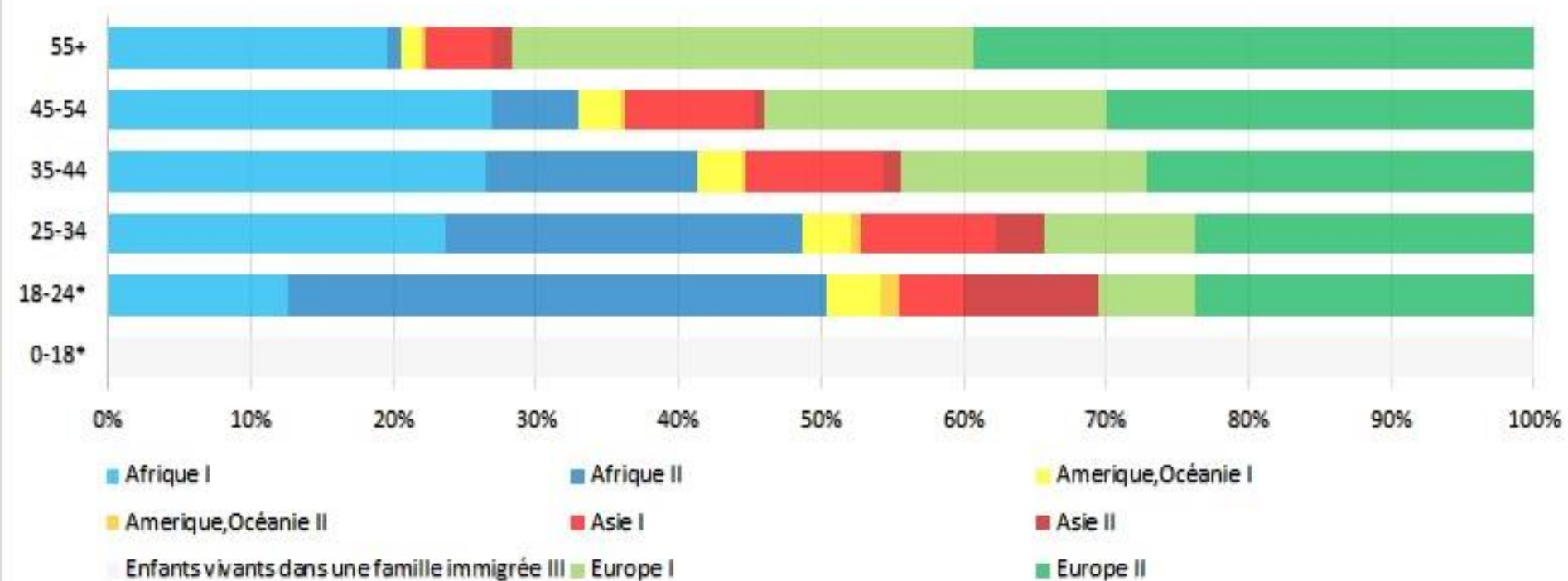
Une immigration venue d'Afrique subsaharienne et d'Asie



Ouvrier togolais sur un chantier, 2005

Migrants and offsprings of migrants according to their home country and age

Immigrés et enfants d'immigrés par origines et classes d'âge en pourcentage du total



Foreign languages spoken

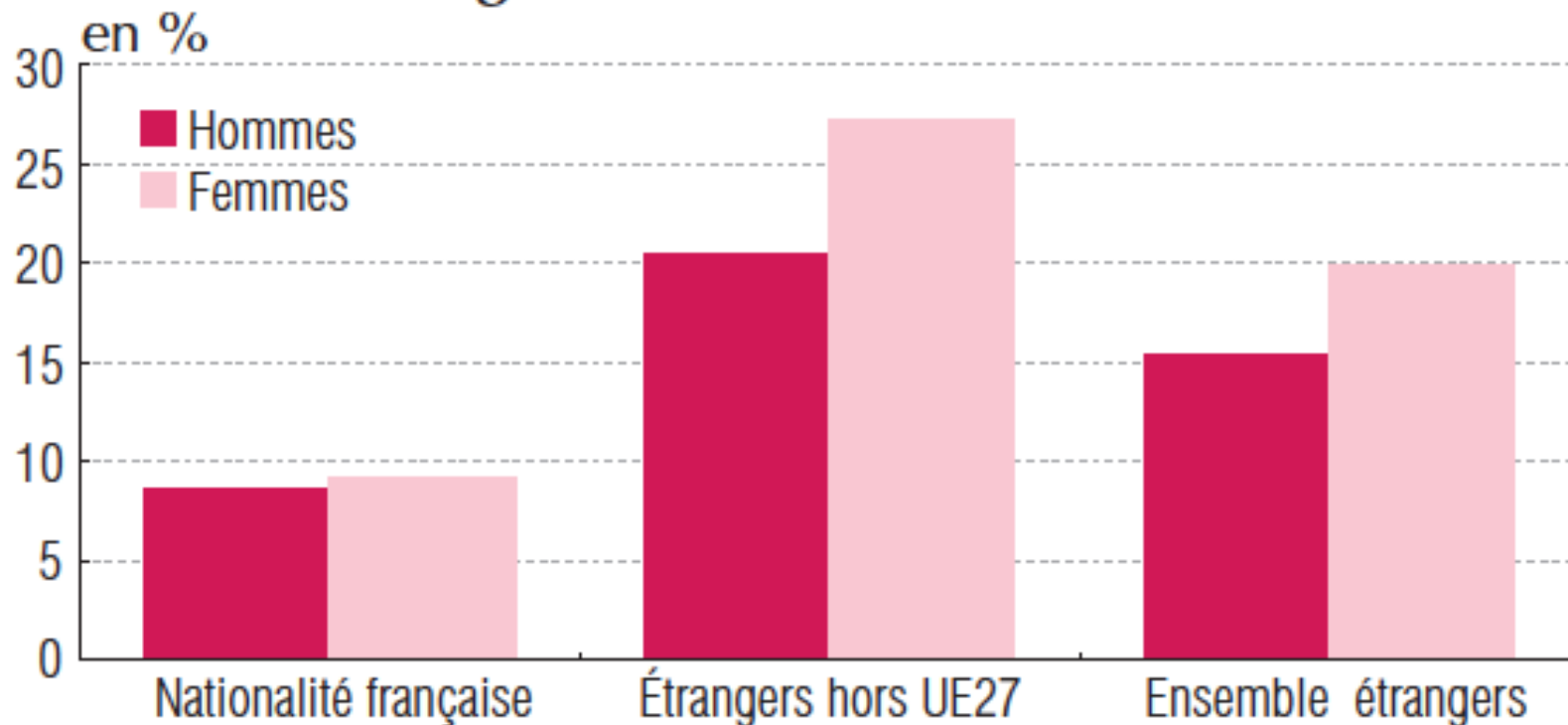
- The most frequently foreign language spoken after French is Arabic. It was recognised as a “Language from France” in 1999.
- Foreign languages spoken vary according to generations (different immigration waves): European languages are more frequent amongst the elderly, Arabic is more frequent amongst youngest.
- They also vary from one region to another: Arabic and Portuguese dominate in the Paris region; overseas languages dominate in Marseille.

Migrants on the labour market

- 2010 : Migrants and offsprings of migrants represent 27 % of the age group 25-54
- 2010 : 2,7 millions of migrants over 15 years old are present on the labour market (9,4 % of workers)
- Migrants are over represented in low qualified jobs (65 %) and amongst artisans and shopkeepers (10 %).

Unemployment rate

Taux de chômage selon la nationalité en 2010



Champ : France métropolitaine, personnes actives âgées de 15 ans ou plus (âge courant).

Source : Insee, enquêtes Emploi du 1^{er} au 4^e trimestre 2010.

Public policies and debates

- Universalism : absence of recognition of race and ethnic minority as pertinent concepts.
- From integration to diversity policies (Eberhart, 2010)

The 16 November 2001 law: declared it illegal for employers in the private sector to exclude or penalise anyone, directly or indirectly, ‘because of his or her real or assumed ethnicity, nationality or race, political opinions, union activities, religious convictions, physical appearance, family name, health or disability.’

Multilingualism at work

Regulation, Data and trends

National regulation on language

1992:

The constitution established French as the “language of the Republic”. French became the only official language in France.

2008:

The constitution acknowledged the value of regional languages. They were first recognised in 1951.

Languages at work: regulation

- **1975 Bas Lariol's law** ordered the use of the French language in the drafting of the employment contract. It also ordered its translation into the mother language of foreign workers at their request.
- **The 1994 Toubon's Law** enlarged the use of the French Language, beyond employment contracts, to collective agreements, internal regulations and "all necessary documents to employees for the performance of his work. » Translations of these documents in foreign languages are possible (especially for foreign workers).

Languages at work : practices

- Distinction between languages at work / languages in business (free)
- TASCA report (2003) : no explicit language policy in companies, pragmatism, domination of English language.
- According to OFEM (2003), the languages most often requested by French companies are English, German, Spanish, Italian, Arab, Chinese, Japanese.
- According to a survey by the French agency for international development (2004), 68 % of SMEs ignored the regulations.

Languages at work : debates & adjustments

- Languages used and safety : different regulations (twists of Air France affair & Epinal hospital) ;
- French authorities themselves renounced to use French - international agency for renewable energies (2009) ; English compulsory for oral entry test of National school of magistrates (2010)
- Law 22 March 2012 : employers can use technical documents in English. Use of English becomes compulsory in aeronautic.

Industrial relations and management of diversity

French industrial relation system

Four main principles :

- Institutionnalisation of pluralism (despite the weakness of employers and employee representatives) ;
- a dual system of representation of workers at the workplace (TU reps + elected reps);
- tripartism at the level of national collective agreements and in the running of welfare institutions linked to work.
- publicly-guaranteed minimum employment rights that provide protection to individual workers and a hierarchy of agreements such that local terms of employment cannot be worse than those established for the sector or nationally.

Workers representation and diversity

- TU open to all workers regardless to nationality from the early 20th century (internationalism); organizing strategies from the 1960s.
- It is particularly difficult to objectivate TU action towards migrants (Universalism)
- Ambiguity between desire to protect and integrate (fight for new rights & against discrimination) and competition, protectionism (fights against undeclared work, demand for more control).

Trade union membership

- French trade union membership is one of the lowest in Europe, around 8 %. It is even lower amongst migrants, around 2 %.
- French trade unions are essentially based in the public sector (restricted access to French and EU citizens) and large companies. Migrants workers are principally working for subcontracting companies.
- Trade unions recruit their members amongst permanent and qualified workers. Migrants workers occupy low qualified jobs and are often employed under precarious contracts.

Trade unions responsibilities

- No figures at the moment appart from participation to congress (“Nationalité”).
- Very few migrants in a situation to take responsibilities inside trade unions.
- Cooptation process that may exclude those who are in a position to take responsibilities.

Trade union representatives

- For a long time, French nationality (+ ability to read and write French) was required to be a TU rep inside companies. This is not anymore the case today.
- Foreign workers cannot be elected to labour tribunal (Prud'hommes)

Actors and actions in the field of multilingualism



FEDERAZIONE EDILIZIA FRANCESE
33, Rue de la Grange-aux-Belles * PARIS-X*

UNIONE SINDACALE ITALIANA

Appello ai Lavoratori italiani emigrati in Francia ai Muratori, ai Terrazzieri ! A tutti i Coscienti !

COMPAGNI LAVORATORI ITALIANI !

A voi che un duro destino di miserie e di patimenti ha cacciato oltre frontiere, si rivolge la nostra attenzione, il nostro pensiero di fratelli di classe, di compagni.
Pensiero di solidarietà, di fraterna assistenza.

COMPAGNI !

Nel nuovo paese ove voi avete cercato un rifugio per guadagnarvi il pane e molti anche per sfuggire alle persecuzioni, voi vi troverete al fianco di altri lavoratori del luogo che faticano e sudano come voi, ricavandone, come voi, un magro compenso.

Quei lavoratori, o compagni italiani, sono vostri fratelli. Con essi, voi dovete affratellarvi nel comune spirito di difesa del vostro pane, della vostra dignità, della tranquillità nel lavoro e per il lavoro.

Questi lavoratori, o compagni, hanno le loro organizzazioni, i loro sindacati di mestiere, sindacati di classe aperti a tutti i produttori senza eccezione. Sindacati che hanno fatto ottenere agli operai del luogo delle conquiste, dei miglioramenti.

Quanti patimenti di meno,
Quante lacrime di meno,
Quante sofferenze risparmiate,

agli operai per effetto della loro forza sindacale.

LAVORATORI FRATELLI ITALIANI !

Se questi sindacati operai francesi si rifiutassero di inscrivere gli operai cosiddetti stranieri, voi avreste diritto di considerarli come vostri nemici.

A voi dunque, anche i fratelli di lavoro negherebbero una stretta di mano, un conforto, mentre, lontani dalle vostre famiglie, dai vostri piccini, dal vostro focolare, povero, ma ricco di tanti affetti e di tanti cari ricordi, sudate per guadagnarvi il pane ?

Ma questi sindacati operai, o fratelli italiani, non solo vi accetano nel loro seno, ma vi aprono le braccia, vi dicono :

« Tu fra noi non sei più lo straniero; tu, fra noi, o sei il compagno; entra nella nostra famiglia, godine i benefici, riconosce i doveri, partecipa alla difesa del pane di tutti gli operai ;

« Noi abbiamo un orario, rispettalo; per il tuo bene e per il nostro, rifiutati di lavorare un minuto di più ;

« Noi abbiamo una tariffa, rispettala; rifiutati di lavorare per un centesimo di meno. »

A questi doveri, lavoratori italiani, avete l'obbligo di sottostare, se non volete attirarvi, invece dell'amicizia fraterna e sincera degli operai francesi, il loro disprezzo.

Cosa avreste pensato voi, quando eravate in Italia, se dei Francesi fossero venuti nei vostri villaggi, nelle città vostre a dire ai vostri padroni, noi lavoriamo a minor prezzo od a orario prolungato ?

COMPAGNI ! FRATELLI !

La storia dell'emigrazione ha delle pagine dolorose di odio, di risse, di tragedie fra lavoratori, a causa appunto del **crumiraggio dei forestieri**.

Non disonorate il buon nome del proletariato italiano, che ha scritto pagine magnifiche nella storia delle rivendicazioni di classe.

Questo diciamo alla gran massa degli emigrati italiani.

Ai compagni che appartennero in Italia all' *Unione Sindacale Italiana* e che hanno dovuto emigrare per ragioni di libertà diciamo : *voi che non avete bisogno di incitamenti per organizzarvi e rispettare le condizioni di lavoro, fate di più : cooperare al lavoro di organizzazione, aiutate gli organizzatori francesi della Federazione del Bâtiment e dei Terrazzieri e di tutte le altre organizzazioni — per illuminare i compagni italiani restii all'organizzazione. Nei luoghi del lavoro, con la parola e con l'esempio, noi siamo sicuri che voi sarete dei bravi collaboratori dei compagni francesi !*

COMPAGNI ITALIANI EMIGRATI !

A voi il nostro saluto fraterno. Viva l'organizzazione ! Viva la frantellanza di tutti gli operai d'ogni nazione ! Viva la coscienza di classe ! Abasso il crumiraggio !

Il Comitato Esecutivo
della UNIONE SINDACALE ITALIANA.
Il Comitato del Sindacato nazionale Edile.

CGT

SINDICATO CGT DA EMPRESA GILARDONI

FSM.

AO PESSOAL DA EMPRESA GILARDONI!

O PATRAO TENE MEDO DA VOSSA UNIDAD.

EL VENE POR MEIO DE UMA CARTA AO DELEGADO DE
INTERDIRE O ACESSO A FABRICA AOS REPRESENTANTES
DA CGT.

Trade union action

- Mainly in defence of the use of French language at work. More marginally in defence of regional languages (essentially teacher trade unions) and presumably very rarely in defense of translation of the employment contract in their national language for foreign workers (no case identified at the moment).
- 2006 « Collective for the right to work into French », CFTC and CGT Alcatel Lucent.
- 2012 a conference organised by the CGC: « *Massive use of English in business: myths, reality and alternative solutions* »

Employers

Research into French multinationals and their subsidiary in central and eastern countries:

- Two types of company strategies in terms of industrial relations : compartmentalization (each subsidiary develop its own IR policy) ; integration (common IR framework).
- Extent of travel and translations facilities offered to trade unions and representatives institutions relates to one or the other of the two strategies (Contrepolis, 2010).

What about language training for TU representatives to enhance plurilingualism and mutual understanding?

Axa assistance: has set up an internal committee to observe the languages, while its agreement against stress takes into account the language issue.