



Primo Intervento del Liceo « L.A. Muratori » di Modena
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<http://lyc-sevres.ac-versailles.fr/projet-eee.europe08.php>

Intervento 2 : *We live in a language*

The writer Elias Canetti said : « We don't live in a country, but in a language ».

Never as today we can understand the importance of this statement, when we travel, we work, we live.

How many languages are spoken nowadays ?

How many dialects ?

Thousands, and we are strictly linked to them much more than to the place we live in. Some tried to create a common language - the « Esperant » - but without any success; and currently English has established itself as the vehicular language for business, political, cultural matters, but it's evident that everyone of us is born with his own language, which was born inside his own tradition.

That's why speaking a language means also keeping a tradition alive.

When the last native speaker of Mansch in 1974 disappeared, he wasn't the only one to disappear, his culture and his language too were lost forever.

The same happened to Latins, Greeks, and also the pre-columbian populations: the history teaches that often the death of a language corresponds to the disappearance of the people who spoke it and vice versa.

And so we can be asked: what was born first, a language or a mentality?

Plato and Lucretius treated this argument in their speculations: certainly the Greek language offers a proper lexicon for philosophy, and actually was born in Greece. Is it a mere coincidence?

Probably, the real relationship between a culture and its language is dialectical: they influence one another.

Therefore, living in a language is not negative: studying more than one language means being open-minded towards different cultures and not being narrow-minded inside just only one.

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