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**Meeting the challenge of multilingual classrooms:  
exploiting plurilingual repertoires, managing transitions  
and developing proficiency in the language(s) of schooling**

**Intergovernmental seminar**

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***Report by***

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## **Official opening**

### **Ólöf Ólafsdóttir, Director of Democratic Citizenship and Participation**

Europe has always been characterised by its diversity, and the Council of Europe's watchword, since it was first founded in 1949, has always been "unity in diversity".

The democratisation of our education systems and access to education for all, along with the profound changes that have taken place in European countries over the last two decades as a result of migration and globalisation, mean that this diversity is very much present in classrooms, which are becoming increasingly multilingual and multicultural throughout Europe, particularly in urban areas. As a result of this great social and cultural diversity people from different parts of Europe and of the world now come into contact with each other on a day-to-day basis.

The Council of Europe has been particularly mindful of what this entails in terms of education policies and practices, and over the past few years we have devised very wide-ranging programmes based on interculturalism, dialogue between cultures, and the management of diversity by and in education. Before you begin your discussions, I would like briefly to remind you of some of our activities in this field.

In 2010 Thorbjørn Jagland, Secretary General of the Council of Europe, asked an independent "Group of Eminent Persons" to prepare a report on "the challenges arising from the resurgence of intolerance and discrimination in Europe". The report assesses the seriousness of the risks, identifies their origins and makes a series of proposals for "living together" in open European societies. To quote the report: "So diversity is here to stay. It is shaping Europe's future in a fast-changing world, and will continue to do so. It is therefore vital that Europeans respond to its challenges in a more effective and wholehearted way – and, to be blunt, much better than they are currently doing. They cannot afford to mishandle it this time. Unfortunately, there are signs that they are in danger of doing just that."

As education professionals, we obviously have a key role to play in meeting this major challenge.

The Council of Europe has made intercultural dialogue a priority, and a White Paper on the subject – "Living together as equals in dignity" – has been drafted and translated into several languages. The White Paper points out that integration is a two-way process; it concerns all societies in which there is interaction between various cultures and which are changed and enriched by the process. This is a fundamental principle in Council of Europe policies.

The Council of Europe is currently working on identifying the skills and attitudes which are necessary for a truly intercultural dialogue. We also have a practical tool, the *Autobiography of Intercultural Encounters*, which serves to explain the principles of the White Paper to the ordinary citizen. The *Autobiography* is an analytical tool to assist pupils – or any other person – in their intercultural experiences so that solid bridges can be established between different cultures (linguistic, religious, sports, social, and so on).

Diversity raises fundamental questions with regard to equity in education. Firstly, to ignore diversity would be tantamount to undermining it, making the building of (individual and collective) identities extremely difficult for learners. Moreover, it would be unfair to talk of a "deficit" or a "handicap" when the knowledge and skills of learners upon first being admitted to school are expressed in a language other than the language of schooling. It would, on the contrary, be more helpful to exploit this wealth of knowledge, to enhance it and benefit from it.

That being said, schools are the best place for building up knowledge through the intermediary of one (if not two or three) common language(s); the common language of schooling is fundamental to learners' cognitive development and in the construction of their individual and collective identities. A good command of the language of schooling is essential for success at school. Literacy, both oral and written, is therefore a priority in the Council of Europe's education programme.

In our work we should always bear in mind the need to underline the value of diversity and ensure equity in education. Equity is the fundamental condition for quality education. It is therefore extremely important to set clear and realistic learning objectives, based on the description of the skills required to achieve them; and to ensure that the evaluation of acquired skills is objective and transparent, in keeping with the goals set. It is in this context that this seminar is being held.

The Council of Europe has been a pioneer in developing foreign language learning projects aimed at acquiring not only knowledge but also the skills required to take an active part in the life of the community. These projects have made a major contribution to the advances made in education in Europe and beyond. The Languages of Schooling project is based on experience in this field and offers a very practical response to the priorities of social inclusion and social cohesion fixed by the Heads of State and Government at the Third Council of Europe Summit in 2005.

This seminar provides us with an opportunity to explore the potential of this Council of Europe activity aimed at fostering integration and promoting the success of *all* learners in multilingual and multicultural classes. It will allow us to share our experiences and good practices in this field and to determine together the next steps in our activities at national and European level.

### **The seminar in the larger perspective of the Language Policy Unit's programme** ***Francis Goullier***

Today's seminar is no isolated event, but fits in with the dynamics of the project currently being conducted by the Council of Europe's Language Policy Unit (LPU) under the title "Languages in Education – Languages for Education". In order to grasp the full reach of the analyses we are to discuss, to assess the relevance of the pointers which will be set out and to participate effectively in our exchanges on this subject, we must bear in mind the key ideas and values conveyed by this comprehensive project, because these key ideas and values shed light on all the themes which we will be dealing with over these two days. You are probably familiar with them, but I will nonetheless outline a number of them.

In our different countries we are all anxious to improve the quality of education, that is to say, to promote access by all the children in our schools to knowledge, skills and attitudes enabling them to integrate into society as harmoniously as possible, to act as responsible citizens in democratic society, to access training courses that help them on to the job market, to appreciate the artistic, cultural and aesthetic resources available to them, and to help create further such resources.

This legitimate aspiration will prompt us to consider the needs of students from linguistic or social backgrounds liable to hamper such progress towards success. This is important because if they do not succeed it means that the whole education system has failed, that the entire system has proved to be unequal to its task. Beyond this aspect, however, we must realise that the quest for equity, involving meeting the needs of vulnerable students, in fact benefits all students. The problems encountered by students with potential difficulties are, in fact, largely

an indication of the difficulties faced by a whole host of learners. Educational quality and the aspiration to equity are inseparable.

My mention of children's linguistic backgrounds as a possible source of difficulties was no coincidence. It is undeniable that a shaky command of the language of schooling is a major handicap, particularly in terms of access to subject-based knowledge and skills. The Council of Europe's project proposes to broach this problem from a broader angle. There is no question, as we shall see, of ignoring the progression requirement in mastering the language of schooling. But we are also invited to consider linguistic and cultural diversity in the classroom as an asset to be exploited for the benefit not only of the particular group of students I have just mentioned but also of all the students present. This perspective is usually summed up by the expression "plurilingual and intercultural education".

Perhaps we should look briefly at the meaning of the word "plurilingualism", clearly distinguishing it from the way in which it is generally used. It is by no means a mere adding-up of competences in several languages. In the rationale developed by the Council of Europe's work, plurilingualism denotes the competence that emerges from the wealth of the individual repertoire of skills in and knowledge of several languages and cultures. Rather than seeing it as a juxtaposition of higher or lower levels of mastery of several languages, the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* invites us to consider this plurilingual repertoire as a set of resources available to each individual. These resources are not hermetically sealed off from one another but rather they interact, and may complement one another in communication situations or for information processing purposes. These individual, mutually complementing resources are not confined to the availability of different linguistic systems but incorporate to the same extent, if not more so, such transversal competences as communicative strategies, discursive skills and learning techniques. Although the individual's plurilingual repertoire is made up of more or less highly developed communicative competence, it also comprises general competences which are fuelled by the whole range of languages known and learnt and can promote the learning of other languages and the mastery of complex communicative tasks.

This conception of plurilingual and intercultural competence obviously has major consequences for foreign language teaching in our education systems. For example, it invites us to make better use of the convergences between the learning of different languages and stimulates an interest in teaching the skill of mediation between different languages and different registers. There are equally important consequences, however, for schooling as a whole because of the decisive role played by language as regards access to knowledge, student participation in the collective educational project, and lastly, and perhaps most importantly, assessment of the knowledge and competences students have acquired and the resulting decisions on their educational and personal future. The complexity of the role of languages in education and training is shown schematically in the "Platform for Plurilingual and Intercultural Education" on the Council of Europe website.

In this connection, the LPU's project requires us to consider not simply the dominant language of schooling (German in Germany, French in France, etc.), but rather the total resources provided by the languages present in schools, and to exploit these resources to facilitate access by all students to knowledge and competences. From this perspective we could say that all students have the right to expect schools to be open to such diversity, to take constructive account of it and to help learners to succeed in their school and educational projects. This means respecting everyone's right to quality education, which all of us in Europe evidently wish to provide. It is also clear that respect on the part of schools for the value of all the components of each individual's plurilingual and pluricultural repertoire is a

fundamental factor in building individual and collective identities and a driving force behind social cohesion.

We must clarify what we mean by “diversity”. Clearly, it must refer to the different languages spoken or known by a student and by the whole community in an individual school or class, but the definition must also include the various registers of the dominant language of schooling used by the children at home, in their immediate environment or with other students. This diversity also exists and must not be ignored or belittled, otherwise educational efficiency will suffer. The concept of linguistic variation must be included in all discussion of languages.

Another educational consequence of taking account of the language dimension which is ubiquitous in school life concerns the language of schooling. The LPU’s current efforts, including studies and conferences and seminars in Strasbourg or in other member countries, highlight the fact that all teaching processes, whatever the field of study, have a language dimension, and that mastery of the language in question largely determines student success. There is a broad consensus on this fact. This consensus is, however, liable to cover up a misunderstanding with far-reaching consequences. Mastery of the language of schooling, which is necessary in order to succeed in subjects other than modern languages, is not simply a matter of developing fluency in the everyday language of communication. Every disciplinary field has developed a specific type of language use, which we might refer to as “academic language” (in German, “Bildungssprache”). This happens from primary school onwards. The increasing differentiation of subjects through the primary school years largely corresponds to the gradual adoption of this “academic language” in the teaching processes in question. There is a growing realisation in some quarters of the need to incorporate this dimension into the curriculum, but given its importance for student success it should be taken into account much more systematically. Teachers must be aware of the challenges of mastering “academic language”. They must be helped to create pathways designed to lead all students to effective mastery. This approach is obviously important vis-à-vis children who speak different languages outside school, but it is just as necessary for children who are native speakers of the main language of schooling but who do not hear “academic language” in their family environments.

Languages of origin, modern or classical languages taught at school, languages learnt outside school, the dominant language of schooling, the “academic language” characteristic of the various fields of study: all these languages are present at school, and specific educational provision should be made for each of them. However, and this is perhaps the most important point I would like to make on this subject, the conception of plurilingual and intercultural education which I have just outlined places the main emphasis on the existing relations among all these languages, which have to be exploited. As we have seen, students have effective resources in their plurilingual repertoires which must not be ignored. The challenge is, precisely, to help students genuinely to make the most of them. Even more, the failure to allow students to exploit their linguistic resources in this way is tantamount to depriving them of opportunities to succeed. Opposing gradual mastery of the language of schooling to the use of other languages available to the children is a pedagogical and educational absurdity. It is a pedagogical absurdity because an apparent detour is often the most direct way to knowledge. It is an educational absurdity because it amounts to negating the value and potential of diversity in school. Making room for linguistic and cultural diversity at school and in school life means facilitating education in the value of such diversity, and this education must be available to both the children who are the vehicles of such diversity and the other students, whom we might call “monolingual” or “monocultural”, and whom schools must also prepare for responsible and critical but benevolent interaction with Otherness in all its forms.

All the pointers I have set out relate to expectations in curricular terms within each educational system. However, we must agree on our definition of “curriculum”. In its work, the Council of Europe’s LPU has adopted a specific conception of curriculum, as set out in particular in the *Guide for the development and implementation of curricula for plurilingual and intercultural education*. In this very broad conception, the curriculum encompasses all the learning processes and experiences of an individual within the education system and outside school. The school or educational curriculum, which is our main concern here, is therefore only one part of this curriculum. But as in any ratio of a part to the whole, school curricula cannot disregard learning processes and experiences which occur outside the whole. In- and out-of-school learning processes naturally interact. Such interaction is especially efficient and productive when it is genuinely taken into account and integrated in educational action. This efficiency requirement cannot become fully operational, however, if the school curriculum is confined to defining the contents to be taught.

Two further components of the school curriculum must be highlighted:

- a) Firstly, the school curriculum must comprise an explicit language dimension. It must reflect or organise the competences to be acquired in the mastery of language, discourse and languages, at the various stages in the school programme and in the different school subjects. Two aspects may be explicitly taken into account here:
  - Reflection on the scope of the mastery of the “academic language” characteristic of each school subject involves analysing the discursive and textual genres at work in the different subjects and disciplines. The project “Languages in Education – Languages for Education” has provided all the players concerned with procedures for describing “academic language” in different groups of subjects. Furthermore, curricular analysis in several countries has produced lists of “can do” descriptors that focus on access to, and exploration of, knowledge. All these tools and examples are available on the project platform.
  - We should also identify the stages in linguistic progression in the language skills required for participation in exchanges, comprehension of the texts used and fulfilment of the requirements of the various subjects. Several experiments have been conducted in this field, one of which we will be examining at this seminar.
- b) The second component of the school or educational curriculum is different in nature. It is specifically described in the *Guide for the development and implementation of curricula for plurilingual and intercultural education*. Alongside linguistic content and trajectories of linguistic development, the school curriculum must also comprise an experiential dimension. Perhaps we could even speak of an “experiential curriculum”. This “experiential curriculum” defines the types of experience to which learners must be exposed in order to conduct their educational careers under favourable conditions; it sets out various learning methods and the plural approaches which students must experience.

I would like to go back to this last aspect for a few moments, as it is still underexplored, despite being a key dimension for quality education. All students are entitled, during their schooling, to maximum diversity in terms of learning opportunities and the widest possible range of experiences to promote their education and training. In order to increase the effectiveness of the existing mechanisms and make future learning processes more autonomous, it would be useful to vary the modes of learning and to provide access to mastery of languages, their use and their functioning in accordance with plural approaches, first trying them out and then analysing them. All or at least some of these experiments can

lead to various forms of reflective activities elicited or encouraged by the teacher, and then noted down by and for the students (in logbooks, for example).

These experiments should obviously include all modes of exploitation of the plurilingual and intercultural repertoire which we mentioned previously. However, the range of experiences to be organised is much wider. Appendix 1 presents the many examples set out in the *Guide for the development and implementation of curricula for plurilingual and intercultural education*, differentiating the various cycles and, for each of them, apportioning the experiences along four possible main lines:

- firstly, the students' personal experiences of linguistic and cultural plurality, contributing to their education in respect for Otherness;
- secondly, diversification of forms of expression;
- thirdly, contact with foreign languages;
- and lastly, the modes of reflexivity with regard to these experiences.

Appendix 1 shows, for example, that at pre-primary level education must enable children to realise:

- that school is a place for exploration and learning (among other things), but also for forming interpersonal relationships which are to some extent different from those they experience outside, and that the school's main function is to facilitate such explorations, learning processes and interrelations by means of a main common language, and
- that this language has internal variations but that its use is regulated.

These children must, at the pre-primary level, become aware:

- that school is nonetheless receptive to other languages and varieties, other forms of expression and communication which complement the language that becomes the common language and thus can help promote school explorations, learning processes and interrelations, but which rarely have the same status as the language of schooling;
- that school is a place where capacities are created for learning and acting in this common language, and that this involves texts (oral discourse, written texts and oralised texts), words, verbal behaviours, training sessions and some degree of self-discipline, also in play and creative activities;
- lastly, that the wealth provided by social, linguistic and cultural pluralism presupposes mediation by adults (teachers and other school staff), but also among the children themselves.

Clearly, more than one level of intervention must be involved if all these aspects are to be effectively taken into account in the curriculum. This is why the curricular conception adopted by the LPU is necessarily based on an analysis of the different responsibilities in the design and implementation of the orientations mentioned. These responsibilities are apportioned among the following levels: *supra* (e.g. the LPU's work in the field of curricular development), *macro* (drawing up a study programme for a national or regional syllabus, educational recommendations issued by a ministry, etc.), *meso* (exploitation of the scope for autonomy attributed to the school in terms of defining its goals and teaching methods or organising the school programme), and *micro* (what the teachers do in the classroom, with their representations and training backgrounds), not forgetting the *nano* level (i.e. the responsibility of individual learners and their specific experiences). Efficiency here involves



coherence in the action taken by people at these different levels. However, it will certainly emerge from our exchanges that since stakeholders at each of these levels all have a role to play, it would be unwise to entrust the desired developments to any single one of them, especially the national or regional level (macro). The micro level is particularly important; therefore, teacher support and training are obviously key points. This is obvious for all the themes addressed by the LPU's and ECML's projects, and certainly for the subject which we shall be dealing with at this seminar, namely taking account of the multilingual dimensions of schools and exploiting them for the students' benefit.

Rather than answering the specific questions which we shall be broaching, the points I have set out here are intended to provide a framework and perspectives which should help us move forward together, in the light of the specific context which we shall be discussing, towards the common goal of an education characterised by both quality and the quest for equity.

**An introduction to relevant projects of the European Centre for Modern Languages**  
***Susanna Slivensky, Deputy Director and Head of Programmes, ECML***

The mission of the ECML is to implement Council of Europe language policies and to promote innovative approaches to the learning and teaching of modern languages; its strategic objectives are to train multipliers and support professional networks, with a particular focus on the learning and teaching of modern languages. The ECML has a Governing Board made up of ministerial representatives from each member state, and its activities are carried out in four-year programmes that address priority issues in language education. The programmes comprise projects that involve experts from all ECML member states and entail cooperation with major international institutions and associations in language education. The ECML's activities are disseminated via its website and publications.

Starting with the foreign language classroom, the ECML's expertise has evolved to include foreign languages in content learning, the management of linguistic and cultural diversity, plurilingualism, and a focus on the learner with all his/her languages in different contexts. The 2004–2007 and 2008–2011 programmes included three projects of direct relevance to this seminar: VALEUR, MARILLE and ConBaT. VALEUR (Valuing all languages in Europe) was concerned with “additional” languages (i.e. languages other than national or regional languages). It compiled an overview of the educational provision made for such languages, promoted the educational, social and cognitive benefits of plurilingualism, and developed recommendations regarding the management of linguistic diversity. MARILLE (Majority language in multilingual settings) focused on teachers as agents for plurilingualism in majority language teaching, small-scale activities (e.g. planning a lesson related to all languages spoken in the classroom), and strategic approaches (e.g. involving head teachers or parents). ConBaT (Plurilingualism and pluriculturalism in content-based teaching) developed a training kit for combining CLIL with plurilingual and pluricultural approaches, using the languages and cultures present in the classroom as a cross-curricular resource. The kit provides 26 content-based units in English, French and Spanish. (Details of these three projects are available on the ECML website: [www.ecml.at](http://www.ecml.at).)

The 2012–2015 programme is concerned with the right to education and will encourage linguistic diversity taking account of the EU's strategy for multilingualism and the Council of Europe's report “Living together – Combining diversity and freedom in 21st-century Europe”. The ECML's long-term vision includes a focus on the learner, the learner's needs and the learner's perspective, and will seek to build on diversity, promote inclusive approaches, develop plurilingual and intercultural competences, and engage with formal and informal learning contexts. Full details of the 2012–2015 projects and their expected outputs are available on the ECML website ([www.ecml.at](http://www.ecml.at)).

## **Working methods of the seminar**

The seminar addressed three themes:

1. *Language development and language learning in multilingual settings*
2. *Developing “academic language” from primary to secondary education*
3. *Linguistic diversity as a resource for learning*

Each theme was dealt with in three ways. First it was introduced by one or more members of the coordinating group, then the issues raised in the introduction were discussed in working groups, and finally the rapporteurs from the working groups reported back in a plenary session. Discussion of issues arising from each of the themes was guided by a principle relevant to that theme:

1. *Language support will succeed to the extent that it follows children’s preferred acquisition or learning strategies.*
2. *Educational success requires proficiency in academic language, which depends on all teachers of all subjects.*
3. *Schools and teachers should exploit children’s plurilingual repertoires as a resource for learning.*

In each phase of group work participants were asked to answer three questions:

1. *What features of your context support the implementation of this principle?*
2. *What features of your context are likely to undermine the implementation of this principle?*
3. *If you could start an innovation programme for the implementation of this principle in your context, what measure would you introduce as a first step?*

Participants were also asked to bear the following question in mind throughout the seminar: *In what ways can the Council of Europe help member states to respond to the challenges posed by multilingual classes?*

### **Theme 1: Language development and language learning in multilingual settings** ***Joana Duarte and Ingrid Gogolin, University of Hamburg***

Educational institutions play a central role in ensuring equal educational opportunities for all and thus contributing to social cohesion and assuring respect for human rights. In European education systems the school achievement of disadvantaged pupils, in particular those from migrant backgrounds, is generally lower than that of their peers. Many of the explanations for these disparities are related to background factors (social, economic, cultural capital) that cannot be changed by education systems. However, other explanations are related to structural or systemic aspects of education systems and their failure to provide appropriately for an increasingly diverse population. This presentation addresses those aspects of language development that are relevant to educational establishments and their room for manoeuvre. Disparities become especially relevant in transition phases, so the presentation will focus in particular on early language development and the transition into (primary) school.

When speaking about language acquisition, one must first reflect on the complexity of language itself. The competences to be acquired throughout life range from the ability to pronounce the sounds of a language to pragmatic aspects of language use such as asking or answering questions or telling stories. Acquiring just one language means acquiring a complex set of competences, particularly as regards differences between oral and written

language. In migration contexts, a variety of languages, including one or more additional languages used in the family, has an impact on general language proficiency as well as on the linguistic repertoire of the child; and the situation may be made even more complex by the existence of dialects and varieties of first, second and third languages. At school foreign languages also play an important role, as well as acquisition of the language of schooling, as Francis Goullier pointed out in his presentation. Despite the complexity of language, however, in most educational institutions linguistic competence is mostly judged on the basis of vocabulary and grammar, and for many migrant pupils this means the vocabulary and grammar of a second (or third) language.

If language is a complex phenomenon, language acquisition is even more complex, as illustrated by a film that shows how a baby learnt to pronounce the word “water” over a period of six months. Most researchers agree that children acquire language through an interplay of innate and environmental factors. A challenge for linguists, sociolinguists and educational scientists is to figure out how nature and nurture come together to influence language learning. It is generally accepted that children are born with an innate biological “device” for understanding the principles and organisation common to all languages. According to this theory, exposure to a particular language programmes the brain’s “language module” to acquire the grammar specific to that language. In other words, innate capacities are brought to life by language use. Adults play an important role in their children’s language acquisition by speaking to them – often in a slow, deliberately grammatical and repetitious manner. In this way children come to discern patterns in the language they hear and gradually experiment with speech, first uttering single words and gradually combining them to form increasingly complex structures.

Very young children acquire languages intuitively by interacting with others, imitating, and building grammatical rules implicitly on the basis of the input they receive. With time, there is a shift from intuitive acquisition to conscious and cognitive learning, as children develop the ability to reflect on their learning and influence its progress. This shift can be illustrated by two examples. In the first, a four-year-old boy is interacting with his mother. He uses the word “car” to refer to a truck in his first turn but is able to use “truck” correctly in his second turn after his mother has used it in her response to his first turn. This scaffolding of language use is very common in early language acquisition and fits well with the intuitive phase. The second example is provided by a migrant pupil in a fourth grade in Germany. She first uses the word for “invention” instead of “experiment” but explicitly acknowledges that she does not know the correct word. When the teacher tells her the correct word she immediately uses it. The shift from intuitive to cognitive language learning entails different methods of support and instruction which must move from more implicit forms, such as recasting or reformulating expressions, to more explicit forms which might include asking for synonyms or grammatical rules and reflecting on them.

Language acquisition occurs in a number of predictable stages which vary in their duration from individual to individual. Basically, in the first 36 months, the foundations are laid for almost all dimensions of language. After that, language development is a matter of extending and fine-tuning these foundations, for example through vocabulary expansion. However, language acquisition is not a linear process. It starts with tremendous speed but develops further with periods of stagnation or even apparent regression. This can be illustrated by a U-curve. In the first, more intuitive phase, children learn non-analysed forms such as “went” or the “man” / “men” singular / plural distinction. When they reach a more cognitive phase, in which they discover rules and apply them to other forms, there is an apparent regression due to over-generalisation of learnt rules. Thus we have forms such as “\*goed” or “\*mans”. Finally, children discover both rules and their exceptions. In monolingual children this U-

curve process takes six to eight years and can become more complex in children growing up with two or more languages. As a consequence, educational institutions need to recognise that the markers of this apparent regression should not be seen as fossilised errors but rather as transition phenomena that are a sign of great linguistic knowledge and essential to further development.

In addition to these complex processes, language acquisition is influenced by a number of individual, family and societal factors. Many of these factors, such as the age at which a person starts to learn a given language or his/her socio-economic status, cannot be directly changed by educational institutions. But many others – for example, the quality and quantity of interaction within classrooms and the expectations that teachers have of their pupils – can be shaped by effective school policy; and it is clear that lack of opportunities for language use, negative attitudes and low expectations have an adverse effect on language acquisition.

We now come to the acquisition and use of more than one language. As we both live and work in Hamburg we decided to bring you an example from this city in northern Germany. The Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg harbours people from about 200 countries, including 55,000 from Turkey and one from Lesotho. However, nationalities or countries of origin are not adequate indicators of linguistic diversity. According to Ethnologue, a website which makes language maps within national territories, there are 34 different languages in Turkey and even 5 in Lesotho. So, linguistic diversity is the “normal” setting of language development, at least in European urban areas.

If we use a flower as a metaphor for monolingual language acquisition, i.e. the acquisition of one language in the early years, we can use two flowers growing in parallel to represent what linguists call simultaneous and early bilingual acquisition, and one flower growing out of another to represent so-called successive language acquisition, when one language is acquired first and then a second one is introduced. This last phenomenon is very common among migrants in Europe. These representations, however, have monolingualism as the norm and see bi- or multilingualism as the exception. They do not reflect the dynamic reality of multilingualism, where very many flowers co-exist at different levels. The individual’s plurilingual repertoire is made up of the various languages he/she has absorbed in various ways (childhood acquisition, teaching, learning outside educational contexts, etc.) and in which he/she has acquired different skills (conversation, reading, listening, etc.) to different levels of proficiency. On the one hand Europe celebrates multilingualism; on the other hand support for language acquisition in multilingual contexts is largely absent, often as a result of ideas that derive from the belief that monolingualism is “normality”.

What kinds of language use are typical for multilingual speakers? In order to identify and understand them, we should first have a look at what Grosjean called the language mode continuum, ranging from a monolingual to a bilingual mode. On the vertical axis, we have the languages of the speakers, which can be any of those available in the repertoire. On the horizontal one, there is the degree of activation of those languages and the oscillation between language modes. In the middle there is fairly large part of the continuum where a mixed mode might occur, depending on situation and communication partners.

So what are the specific features of plurilingual normality? Plurilingual speech includes language practices that may be based on the several languages that are available in a given context (e.g. if partners in the conversation have similar repertoires) or, if the situation demands it, monolingual modes. Normally around the age of three, children growing up with more than one language are able to consciously separate their languages and even translate from one to the other. So, in children, language mixing can happen as a sort of strategy to

compensate for possible lack of knowledge, which means that these are transition phenomena which tend to disappear.

Language mixing and switching in older speakers are indicators of competence in a multilingual context that encompass the ability to *choose* the adequate repertoire and the ability to mix and switch on the one hand, or to use a monolingual mode on the other. Language mixing practices of this kind have also been observed among monolingual adolescents growing up in multilingual areas and engaging in communication with multilingual peers. Such practices can be perceived as identity markers.

Another feature typical of plurilingual normality is metalinguistic awareness and competence, or the ability to reflect on language issues across the various languages of the repertoire. In an audio-recorded interview, for example, a young pupil whose home language is Portuguese shows that he is able to reflect on the role his several established languages have had in the acquisition of new languages; he can also explicitly compare them. Research has found that the early acquisition of metalinguistic awareness can bring cognitive advantages to multilingual speakers and promote language acquisition processes in general.

The iceberg metaphor used by Jim Cummins is a good way of showing how linguistic transfer can occur. At the surface, the smallest part of the iceberg, we can see the language-specific features of bilinguals' languages, one peak for each language. These features may be grammatical rules, for example. Normally the so-called Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills which speakers acquire to master everyday informal talk are also surface features. Acquisition of these skills is relatively fast, taking between six months and two years. The largest part of the iceberg is under the water line, however, and that is where we find the areas of linguistic knowledge that make up what Cummins termed Common Underlying Proficiency and which are subject to transfer from one language to others. These skills are mostly related to cognitive academic language proficiency, that is, to a language register typically used at school, which can take up to eight years to acquire.

Here are some examples of such transferable skills:

- Knowledge that written symbols correspond to sounds and can be decoded in order and direction
- How school genres work (narrating, explaining, etc.)
- Activation of semantic and syntactic knowledge
- Knowledge of text structure
- Learning to use cues to predict meaning
- Awareness of the variety of purposes for reading and writing
- Confidence in oneself as literate

In fact, according to Colin Baker, research suggests “that academic and linguistic skills in a minority language transfer relatively easily to the second language. Simply stated, a child who learns to read in Spanish at home, or in school, does not have to start from the beginning when learning to read in English”. However, language transfer can be seen as an advantage only if it is explicitly supported by teaching and not gradually banned from classrooms, as is often the case. Accepting migration-induced multilingualism as a resource for school learning is, however, still the exception in Europe.

In sum, in multilingual language acquisition errors indicate that learning is taking place; while switching, mixing, metalinguistic repertoires, and transfer are evidence of the

successful development of plurilingual repertoires. The principles governing language support in early childhood derive from most of the things already mentioned about the way in which children learn languages, summarised in Jim Cummins's language proficiency quadrant. In the upper left quarter are communication contexts which are cognitively undemanding and context-embedded: informal language practices in everyday speech which can be oral or written. The aim of early language support programs should be to help children move from the upper left quarter of the quadrant through emergent literacy forms to the lower right quarter, where communication is increasingly demanding and context-reduced. As we have seen, the more language children possess, the more they prefer cognitively explicit teaching strategies. So, language support can be useful only if the methods that are applied take account of the children's stage of development and acquisition/learning strategies. There must thus be a shift from implicit to explicit strategies.

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### **GROUP WORK 1 – plenary feedback (chair: Piet Van Avermaet)**

*Principle: Language support will succeed to the extent that it follows children's preferred acquisition or learning strategies*

*Question 1: What features of your context support the implementation of this principle?*

The French-speaking group (chair – Francis Goullier; rapporteur – Catherine Klein) reported that its members represented a great diversity of contexts, from Luxembourg to Spain, where Spanish is sometimes in the minority, to France, where things are often treated as though the context is straightforwardly monolingual. Everywhere there is a need to develop curricula and resources – some countries emphasise one, some the other. It is important to take account of pupils' languages of origin, and the group heard about approaches in Luxembourg and Switzerland that do this in mainstream classes. Some participants also reported the development of resources that support new pedagogical practices. The group agreed that all ways of validating teachers' skills are important.

English-speaking Group 1 (chair – Koenraad Van Gorp; rapporteur – Mirko Zorman) discussed teaching approaches that take account of individual learning styles and the use of diagnostics. Teacher training is essential if remediation measures are to be implemented successfully. It is important for teachers to develop insight into individual learning strategies and to monitor the progress of individual pupils: both areas that would benefit from more research. The group noted that in Italy educational legislation requires that students' learning skills are profiled. Participants reported increased openness to cultural diversity on the part of some educational authorities. The group concluded that we know what has to be done, but not yet how.

English-speaking Group 2 (chair – Piet Van Avermaet; rapporteur – Christoph Arnold) concluded that teachers support this principle in principle! On the level of policy statements and curricula all the right things are said, but we still need to achieve a cultural shift from a teacher to a learner perspective. It is important not to “rehomogenise” pupils but rather to acknowledge and accept diversity.

*Question 2: What features of your context are likely to undermine the implementation of this principle?*

English-speaking group 1 identified the following problems: lack of scaffolding for the comprehension of written text; the assumption that classrooms are monolingual and that teachers should only have to deal with pupils who know the language of schooling; tension between curriculum requirements and classroom reality; textbooks that are often linguistically inadequate, also from the perspective of pupils’ development; classes that are too large; the questionable language skills of teachers, not all of whom are in control of academic language proficiency. The group noted that more teachers from migrant backgrounds might help to overcome some of these problems.

English-speaking group 2 came to much the same conclusions as group 1. It also recognised that innovation comes thick and fast in most educational systems. As a result teachers must align themselves with the latest “newspeak” before the previous innovation has been adequately evaluated. The group also noted that in many schools in-service teacher training is not obligatory.

The French-speaking group recognised that compartmentalisation is a problem in some countries. Another problem is lack of impetus on the part of education ministries: failure to provide direction and input from the top can mean that further down the system things rather quickly come off the rails. Another problem is lack of teacher training and appropriate resources, though the group recognised that training costs money. Learning strategies tend to be poorly understood. The group noted that commercial publishers are not usually prepared to invest in this domain, which increases the importance of publicly funded publishing.

*Question 3: If you could start an innovation programme for the implementation of this principle in your context, what measure would you introduce as a first step?*

English-speaking group 2 agreed that there is a need for more funding, initiatives designed to ensure greater diversity in the teacher population, and more research on learning strategies. There should also be greater emphasis on mainstream classes rather than special groups, and more reflexion on the part of teachers themselves.

The French-speaking group focused on the need for more diverse educational materials, audio and video as well as books. It considered that an increase in teacher training is also an absolute requirement: children have implicit strategies, but in the classroom they must be made explicit. The group also stressed the importance of the European level and the work of the Council of Europe and the European Union: without White and Green Papers it is always more difficult to make progress in member states.

English-speaking group 1 focused on the level of the classroom. There is a need to raise teachers’ awareness, which means more teacher training. In particular it is necessary to work on teachers’ perceptions. For example, they tend to think that they speak for 40% of lesson time, whereas research shows that the true figure is 70%. Peer observation, video-recording and self-reflection are all techniques that might be used to address this issue. The group also noted that it is necessary to develop a school language policy and to appoint a school language coordinator.

*In what ways can the Council of Europe help?*

English-speaking group 2 concluded that the Council of Europe already provides support via the *Language in and for Education* project. It could also disseminate examples of good practice and local research findings and cooperate more with the European Union. English-speaking group 1 thought that the Council of Europe could support the development of handbooks, guidelines, templates, tools and platforms, and noted that support is already under development in Graz. The French-speaking group wanted the Council of Europe to help manage relations with parents, who are not always well disposed to multilingualism: working effectively with them can help shoe-horn learners into the language of schooling.

## **Theme 2: Developing academic language**

### **a) The English Language Proficiency Benchmarks in Irish primary schools** ***Bronagh Catibusić***

From the late 1990s to the present Ireland has experienced significant levels of immigration. According to the Department of Education and Skills, in 2010 10% of primary school children came from immigrant backgrounds, and the majority of them spoke a home language other than English or Irish. Such pupils come from a wide range of linguistic backgrounds and are enrolled in primary schools across Ireland, though diversity is greatest in urban areas. They are assigned to an age-appropriate mainstream class and provided with two years of additional English language instruction: special lessons that are usually given on a daily basis.

The English Language Proficiency Benchmarks (IILT 2003) were developed by Integrate Ireland Language and Training in consultation with primary teachers to facilitate the design and delivery of this English language instruction. Adapted from the first three levels (A1–B1) of the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEFR; Council of Europe 2001), the Benchmarks describe English L2 proficiency development from the earliest stages to a level at which the child can participate fully in mainstream education. They reflect the main themes of the official primary curriculum, and can be flexibly applied at all levels of primary education. Although their primary focus is on the language of schooling, they also help to promote plurilingual and intercultural education.

The Benchmarks are divided into two parts. Part I comprises two grids: the Global Benchmarks of Communicative Proficiency, which consist of summary descriptors for listening, reading, spoken interaction, spoken production, and writing at levels A1, A2 and B1; and the Global Scales of Underlying Linguistic Competence, with descriptors for vocabulary control, grammatical accuracy, phonological control, and orthographic control, again at levels A1, A2 and B1. Part II restates the Global Benchmarks in relation to 13 recurrent curriculum themes: *Myself; Our school; Food and clothes; Colours, shapes and opposites; People who help us; Weather; Transport and travel; Seasons, holidays and festivals; The local and wider community; Time; People and places in other areas; Animals and plants; Caring for my locality.*

Expressed in the same “can do” terms as the CEFR, the Benchmarks provide a functional description of learning outcomes that are intended to support an “action-oriented” approach to L2 learning and teaching. Further support is provided by a version of the European Language Portfolio (ELP) that has goal-setting and self-assessment checklists of “I can” descriptors that are derived directly from the Benchmarks. Use of the ELP should help to secure pupils’ active engagement in their own learning, involving them in goal setting and self-assessment. The language passport is used to summarise English L2 learning achievement at specific points in time; the language biography provides an ongoing record of



learning in relation to each of the 13 curriculum themes treated in the Benchmarks; and the dossier collects evidence of the individual pupil's learning.

At an early stage feedback from teachers suggested that the Benchmarks adequately describe the growth of newcomer pupils' functional capacity in English. Research was needed, however, to explore the relation between the Benchmarks and various dimensions of pupils' acquisition of English. A longitudinal study was carried out in the school year 2007–2008, involving three schools and 18 newcomer pupils from 10 different national/linguistic backgrounds (Poland, Romania, Pakistan, Serbia, China, Croatia, India, Latvia, Lithuania and Portugal). They ranged in age from 4 to 10 years; 12 of them were boys and 6 girls; some were in their first and some in their second year of English language support.

Over the course of the school year 154 English language support lessons were audio-recorded and transcribed, giving 80+ hours of pupils' oral L2 use (transcribed); samples of their written English were also collected. A mixed-methods approach was adopted to the function-form analysis of oral data: pupils' spoken turns were linked to specific Benchmarks (themes and levels); linguistic features were identified and described; and the impact of interaction on pupils' spoken turns was explored. Literacy-related data were analysed qualitatively. In addition, influences on pupils' acquisition of English were also considered – age, home language, learning style, and patterns of classroom interaction.

A profile was drawn up for each pupil that compared evidence of oral proficiency development in English L2 (derived from links to the Benchmarks) to evidence of the acquisition of underlying linguistic competence, using 10 grammatical and 4 lexical indicators. Evidence of L2 literacy development was also compared to Benchmark descriptors for reading and writing, and possible influences on individual pupils' acquisition of English was considered. Finally, a cumulative analysis of the 18 pupil profiles was undertaken to determine the relation, if any, of the Benchmarks to actual L2 acquisition among ESL (English as a Second Language) pupils.

The functional analysis of the data confirmed that the development of ESL pupils' oral proficiency in English followed the sequence outlined by the Benchmark levels: A1 → A2 → B1. This development occurred over the two years of English language support, so it was possible to conclude that the learning outcomes described by the Benchmarks reflect the actual development of oral proficiency in English over a two-year period. Most instances of pupils' recorded use of English could be linked to Benchmarks descriptors for spoken interaction and spoken production, while links to many of the Benchmarks descriptors for listening could be inferred from pupils' contributions to classroom interaction.

The formal analysis of the data showed that pupils' grammatical and lexical development corresponded closely to the progression of L2 acquisition implied by the descriptors in the Benchmarks' Global Scale of Underlying Linguistic Competence. It also yielded evidence of specific features of English L2 linguistic competence – typical structures, vocabulary range, error-types, etc. – at levels A1, A2 and B1, for example:

- A1 *This is eating.* (commenting on a picture of a child eating) [Child from Latvia, 4 years old, c. 4 months support]
- A2 *Eh the- the three little pigs em eh and the wolf eh and ... I don't know how what that called, this yellow.* (referring to the straw house in the story of the three little pigs) [Child from Serbia, 6 years old, c. 8 months support]

- A2 *And in television I see one ship have- have all day he broke the ship and- and he- he- he-* (referring to the film *Titanic*) [Child from China, 6 years old, c. 9 months support]
- B1 *Because if somebody drinks lots of em whiskey and beer and- and- em then- then they em the eyes start to close and em they start going in the road and then they fell down and eh and that's why the- the police is there.* (contribution to classroom talk about situations requiring an ambulance) [Child from Pakistan, 8 years old, c. 15 months support]

The development of pupils' L2 literacy skills likewise corresponded to Benchmarks descriptors for reading and writing. Younger ESL pupils (under 7 years) begin to acquire literacy skills in English in a manner similar to their native-English-speaking peers, though difficulties were likely to arise, for example regarding unfamiliar vocabulary. The rate of literacy development in English was generally faster among older ESL pupils (7–10 years), but the literacy requirements of the curriculum are much higher for this age group. It should be noted that pupils who had some literacy skills in their home language made more rapid progress than those who did not, which underlines the importance of L1 literacy development (cf. Cummins 2000). General literacy-related issues (e.g. non-language-specific reading difficulties) and the nature of previous educational experience may also impact on ESL pupils' L2 literacy development. The following example captures something of the challenge of developing literacy in a second language. An eight-year-old Lithuanian pupil who had previously been to school in Lithuania and had received about four months of English language support, was completing the task of labelling the actions in a series of pictures. He commented: *I can write just only "s" in Lithuania eh letter, we- we have lots of them ....* Being literate at an age-appropriate level in Lithuanian, he meant that because the letter *s* was familiar to him from reading Lithuanian, he found it easier to write in English than other, unfamiliar grapho-phonemic relations. His final comment at the end of the task was: *It's very hard to me to write .. all the words ...*

Older learners (7–10 years) appeared to acquire English L2 at a slightly faster rate than younger learners (under 7 years), but the curriculum makes higher demands of older learners. There was evidence of cross-linguistic influence, particularly as regards phonology and grammar, so it is useful for teachers to be aware of L1/L2 similarities and differences. Personality and learning style may play a role in L2 acquisition, for example by helping to determine pupils' interactional preferences, which suggests that consideration should be given to selecting learning activities appropriate to the individual child. It is worth noting that more "active" types of discourse (e.g. "telling" and "elaboration") tended to elicit evidence of pupils' maximum L2 proficiency; also that collaborative pupil–pupil talk involving such "active" discourse may create opportunities for further L2 learning (cf. Vygotsky 1978, 1986, Swain 2000). Certainly children should not be restricted to responding roles in the classroom.

In conclusion, the research reported here confirms that benchmarks derived from the CEFR and rooted in the themes and requirements of school curricula can provide flexible and accurate guidelines to support migrant children acquiring the language of schooling. When used in an individually sensitive way, CEFR-based benchmarks and related tools like the European Language Portfolio encourage and support pedagogical practices that promote active and autonomous L2 learning. What is more, using benchmarks that encourage a positive focus on the individual child's language learning experience within an intercultural educational environment may allow better recognition of learners' plurilingual repertoires.

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### **b) Creating powerful (language) learning environments for second language learners Koenraad Van Gorp**

In the school year 2010–2011 more than two in ten primary school children in Mechelen, Boom and Willebroek did not speak Dutch at home; in the city of Antwerp 20,350 out of 52,928 primary pupils (38.45%) had a home language other than Dutch. This is perceived as a problem, and it must be acknowledged that not everyone is equally successful at school. Socio-economic situation, ethnic-cultural background and home language all have an impact on school performance in ways that research has confirmed are all too predictable. The challenge facing L2 learners may be summarised thus: Language is simultaneously a means of learning subject content and an academic discourse practice that has to be learned; both become increasingly abstract and decontextualised as education progresses (cf. Cummins 2000, Schleppegrell 2004). Being able to construct knowledge efficiently and becoming a proficient user of the academic register are preconditions for successful participation in education.

In order to bridge the gap between home and school it is necessary to create opportunities for all students to master academic language and curriculum content. This is a matter of building on their previous experience and prior knowledge and providing them with tasks and activities that allow them to construct knowledge in interaction with the teacher – it is a matter, in other words, of creating powerful (language) learning environments. Such environments provide rich and accessible language input (listening and reading), opportunities to speak and write, authentic interactive communication, and feedback. They allow learners to move from concrete experience to abstract general understanding, from contextualisation to decontextualisation.

If we wish to create powerful learning environments we must rethink classroom activities. Two examples will illustrate the point. After a short introductory talk about going to the doctor, teacher N gave the students vocabulary exercises that focused on parts of the body, and then introduced a slot-and-filler exercise: “My ... hurts. What can I do about it?” Teacher R, by contrast, introduced an authentic problem: how to refurbish a classroom. The students discussed the problem and proposed a solution; then the teacher and students visited a recycling shop to inquire about prices, second-hand furniture, delivery, etc.

Another example is provided by a task-based unit on DNA spread over three lessons. The unit had clear objectives, with tasks, reading texts and worksheets for cooperative learning activities and background reading for teacher. Teachers were told to work towards pre-determined objectives but were free to adapt the lesson unit to their own teaching style, adding or subtracting as they thought appropriate. The unit asked students to perform tasks like solving a crime by comparing DNA-profiles and to find the answers to questions like: Where can you find DNA? Where do your genes come from? What do genes do? What is

DNA-testing used for? Their learning was then assessed using 32 test items in which language and knowledge were partly integrated. For example, they were given 12 true/false statements and asked to indicate the degree of certainty attaching to their answers; they were asked to rank terms – *cell, chromosome, DNA, gene*; they were given a gap-filling exercise that required them to provide words like *scientists, investigation, clues, crime, blood*; and they had to match words with their definitions. There was also a recognition task that involved labelling pictures (e.g. cell, chromosome, DNA, gene, DNA-profile) and an application task that required them to analyse a crime scene, explaining what a CSI detective needs for a DNA investigation. Research showed that the classroom intervention was effective: L2 students learned a lot in a relatively short period of time (between 145 and 215 minutes of teaching), and the more they participated in classroom activities, the more they learned.

These findings coincide with sociocultural theory (e.g. Lantolf 2000, Mercer & Littleton 2007), according to which classroom talk is “the most important educational tool for guiding the development of understanding and for jointly constructing knowledge” (Hodgkinson & Mercer 2008: xi). Effective classroom talk comprises long conversations that achieve shared understanding through the use of scaffolding and feedback: dialogue acts as a bridge. “Dialogic teaching is that in which both teachers and students make substantial and significant contributions and through which children’s thinking on a given idea or theme is helped to move forward” (Mercer & Littleton 2007: 41) Dialogic learning entails student-teacher interactions in which ideas are explored and knowledge is co-constructed (c.f. Swain, 2000).

These principles are illustrated by the contrasting examples of students M and S, both of whom worked on the DNA unit. From the beginning genes caught M’s interest – he asked for clarification from the teacher three times, listened with interest to an extensive explanation of the relation between cell, chromosome, DNA and genes, and in interaction with the teacher co-constructed an account of the function of genes. In all of this M set his own learning goals and related curriculum content to his own social world. His learning was supported by a sense of agency that expressed itself as active engagement in dialogue with the tasks, the teacher and other students. By contrast, S was less actively involved, depending for his learning on what the teacher said to the whole class and on the texts they were given to read. As a result, his knowledge building was partial and idiosyncratic. Limited interactions with the teacher resulted in few production opportunities, and this led to limited and more ‘incoherent’ output. Taken together the two examples underscore the importance of spoken interaction for successful knowledge construction. The complex and dynamic interplay between teachers, tasks and students means, of course, that in any class each student is presented with a unique configuration of learning opportunities that produce a unique learning history; but this fact serves only to underline the importance of presenting learners with motivating tasks that engage their agency.

Learners are active meaning makers in their own right (Wells 2009), but in general the quality of teacher-student interaction leaves much to be desired. Too often it enacts a transmission model of teaching and learning, focusing more on knowledge testing than on knowledge construction. But effective learning depends on the student’s active engagement in interactive knowledge building with the teacher and other learners. More than thirty years ago Allwright (1980: 165) wrote: “Learners are interesting, at least as interesting as teachers, because they are the people who do whatever learning gets done, whether it is because of or in spite of the teacher”. More recently Hodgkinson and Mercer (2008, xii) have argued: “The communication system that a teacher sets up in a lesson shapes the roles that pupils can play, and goes some distance in determining the kinds of learning that they engage in.”

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### **c) Developing “academic language” in secondary education** **Eike Thürmann**

This presentation is concerned with two categories of student: (i) those from migrant backgrounds whose home language is not the language of schooling, and (ii) those for whom the language of schooling is also their home language but who come from less academically minded families with a low socio-economic status. Although the presentation describes work in progress, many of the ideas it presents have already made their way into educational projects and provision in Germany. The underlying concepts and ideas have been discussed in the Council of Europe's informal German-speaking working-group coordinated by Helmut Vollmer.

It is an empirically established fact that mastery of academic language correlates with successful school careers. By far the most important factor predicting performance in mathematics, for example, is socio-economic status, followed by migration status, cultural capital and pre-school education. There seems to be a common underlying denominator for these four factors which we call “literacy”, the awareness of and familiarity with the more formal uses of language characteristic of education. A considerable proportion of young people are conversationally fluent in the language of schooling but neither aware of nor familiar with the distinctive features of the language of schooling (“Bildungssprache”) since at home and among friends and relatives more formal varieties of language are either not widely practised or not practised at all.

In 2006 Aida Walqui wrote: “The linguistic landscape of our schools is rapidly changing .... Although these adolescents have been educated exclusively in our schools, they are still learning the dominant language of schooling, failing academically and dropping out in large numbers”; and she continued: “I maintain that it is possible for second language learners to develop deep disciplinary knowledge and engage in challenging academic activities if teachers know how to support them to achieve their potential.” As this quotation implies, we are currently witnessing a paradigm shift as regards efforts to improve the academic success rate of underachieving students at school. Previously, in Germany and many other educational systems, it was widely believed that the academic success of young people from migrant backgrounds depends crucially on favourable input and context factors. For this reason, considerable resources were devoted to the organisation of learning (separate and

smaller classes, additional teaching time, simplified text-books, etc.). However, at least in Germany, these measures have turned out to be not very effective: in various academic domains second-generation migrants perform even less well than their first-generation peers.

Since language is the dominant medium through which school subjects are taught and students' mastery of content is tested, educators now tend to avoid weakening or watering down educational requirements for pupils at risk. Instead they focus on intellectually challenging core curricula for mainstream education with in-built scaffolds for academic language use. This paradigm shift affects the whole school, since the development of cognitive academic proficiency cannot be left to language (L2) specialists. Subject specialists must also contribute to their students' language development.

The recent book by Walqui and van Lier, *Scaffolding the Academic Success of Adolescent English Language Learners*, moves from a pedagogy of hope to a pedagogy of promise based on five simple principles: sustain academic rigour; hold high expectations; engage students in quality interactions; sustain a language focus; develop a quality curriculum. These principles coincide with the ideas behind the three tools we have developed in Germany: a curricular framework for academic language competence; a checklist for the evaluation of language-sensitive content teaching; and a set of techniques for subject-based language scaffolding. These tools are intended to raise non-language specialists' awareness of the language patterns characteristic of the language of schooling in general and its subject-specific "dialects" in particular. We hope to provide answers to questions like:

- Which language elements, discourse patterns and genre conventions are relevant for cognitive activities in my classroom and thus entail successful learning?
- How do I know whether in my teaching I arrange for learning opportunities which are sensitive to the linguistic needs and learning styles of my students?
- What can I do to facilitate understanding and performance without lowering academic standards?

We started our work on the framework for academic language competences with the aim of identifying the language requirements of so-called non-language subjects. This led to an extensive analysis of curricular documents for different subjects (e.g. Biology, History, Mathematics) from various German Länder. On a federal level we also examined recommendations made by Chambers of Commerce to school authorities regarding entry requirements for vocational training, and we checked task-setting in a random sample of schoolbooks across several subject areas and age groups. The resulting overabundance of data was reduced and structured into a grid which mirrors basic routines of classroom activities. The structure which evolved from discussions with language and non-language specialists can be summed up as follows. The first section of the framework comprises language competences and skills that are necessary in order to negotiate meaning and participate in classroom interaction. The second and fourth sections focus on listening and speaking activities and on the genres specific to particular subject areas. The third section – basic cognitive-communicative strategies and discourse functions – refers to comprehension as well as production activities and competences. Finally, the fifth section clarifies which language elements and patterns pupils should have at their disposal in order to engage successfully with subject-specific learning activities in the fields of negotiating, listening and reading, speaking and writing.

The analysis of curricular documents and the ensuing clustering procedure by language and subject specialists made two things quite clear:

- The symbiosis of cognition and functionally appropriate language use is the basis for successful learning; you cannot have one without the other. As a geologist would say, there is a “mutual contact zone” between cognitive and language activities.
- Across the curriculum there is a pedagogically manageable common core of such basic functions, each with characteristic linguistic features.

The framework suggests that reflective language-sensitive content teaching should allow teachers to control learning opportunities on the basis of these seven basic functions:

1. Assessing properties and characteristics, naming and defining
2. Describing and exemplifying objects, procedures
3. Referring to past events, reporting, narrating
4. Explaining complex issues, cause-effect relations
5. Arguing, taking a stance
6. Judging/valuing
7. Modelling/simulating.

Below the level of macro-functions the framework offers a number of indicators. For instance, students have acquired academic language competences if they are able to take a stance on a fairly complex issue and can defend their position with sustained and coherent argumentation. If they are able to do this, they should have learnt – among other partial competences and skills – how to

- clarify the advantages and disadvantages of different facts and ways of behaving, weighing and discussing the pros and cons to arrive at a personal viewpoint;
- follow the course of an argument in a discussion or a text, examining its accuracy and, where necessary, rejecting it on the basis of their own knowledge and/or experience and clarifying remaining differences;
- undermine the arguments of others by advancing counter-arguments.

Across the four sections the framework offers a total of almost 100 indicators.

Developed in a top-down way, the Framework has already influenced a new generation of state curricula for “Hauptschule” in Northrhine-Westfalia: curricula for all so-called non-language subjects have a special section on “language and learning” that explains the relevance of cognitive academic language proficiency for successful subject-based learning and draws descriptors and indicators from the Framework. In this way the general framework is being adapted to the particular curricular demands and needs of individual subjects.

Currently, specialists are adapting the Framework to the linguistic needs and particularities of individual subject areas. They generally endorse the Framework’s overall structure and find section five especially helpful. They are gradually filling up the general Framework with specific content, cancelling those indicators that are irrelevant to their specific teaching objectives and adding indicators to accommodate specific curricular demands. In this way the Framework is going through a bottom-up validation procedure.

In conclusion two further tools which fulfil complementary functions should be mentioned: a checklist for the evaluation of language-sensitive content teaching and an inventory of scaffolding techniques for language-sensitive content. The checklist is being developed in the same way as the Framework: top-down in a general way and bottom-up for subject-specific

use. It covers six observation areas, operates on three levels (descriptors, indicators and examples) and can serve various purposes – self-evaluation, peer-evaluation that follows a “critical friend” approach, and reflective teaching in combination with a professional portfolio – all of which imply classroom development and quality control of teaching. The third tool for language-sensitive content teaching is still under development: a set of classroom techniques for scaffolding academic language and discourse patterns. These techniques are in accordance with up-to-date principles of L2 acquisition: task-based and self-directed/autonomous learning, situated learning and cognitive apprenticeship.

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### **GROUP WORK 2 – plenary feedback (chair: Francis Goullier)**

*Principle: Educational success requires proficiency in academic language, which depends on all teachers of all subjects*

*Question 1: What features of your context support the implementation of this principle?*

English-speaking group 2 (chair – Ingrid Gogolin; rapporteur – Sigrun Aamodt) noted that in some countries resources and in-service are already available. Norway and Sweden, for example, have jointly developed a website with an extensive range of materials, while Austria has developed standards to help teachers of all subjects. In Norway the National Centre for Intercultural Education provides examples of good practice and is evidence of the political will to strengthen intercultural education.

The French-speaking group (chair – Francis Goullier; rapporteur – Daniele Janssen) acknowledged that it is difficult to become a language teacher if you have been trained to teach another subject. It is not necessary for teachers of other subjects to become language specialists, however, but to become more aware of the varieties of language and discourse characteristic of their subject. For twenty years we have been speaking about languages and other disciplines; the challenge is to get this accepted in schools. It is a general issue, not just one that concerns pupils and students from migrant backgrounds.

English-speaking group 1 (chair – Helmut Vollmer; rapporteur – Gunther Abuja) argued that curricula supportive of teacher autonomy would make a good starting point, since they allow teachers to adapt their practice to new challenges. Some curricula already include an explicit language dimension. Teachers are becoming increasingly aware that socially and economically disadvantaged children drop out of school without achieving functional literacy, never mind academic literacy. There is a need to define literacy in terms of the specific requirements of the different curriculum subjects. Models exist for providing a basic linguistic training for all teachers. The FörMig project in Germany is a good example of a combined top-down and bottom-up approach to meeting the challenges of multilingual classrooms.

*Question 2: What features of your context are likely to undermine the implementation of this principle?*

English-speaking group 2 noted that basic teacher education does not engage with multilingual and multicultural issues. In Sweden and Norway the language of schooling as L2 has an uncertain status. Especially in Norway, languages like English, French and German have high status, whereas other languages do not. Some schools/teachers want pupils to speak



only the language of schooling outside school and at home. In Norway there is significant investment in educating bilingual teachers, but qualified bilingual teachers then have a problem finding jobs. More generally, the “monolingual habitus” is protected by the widespread belief that monolingualism is in some sense “best”.

English-speaking group 1 recognised that in some countries there is a serious lack of resources for training, research, development, and the provision of adequate materials. The role of teachers who teach the language of schooling as a subject should be redefined to take account of diversity; it might be extended to include taking on a support role in multilingual classrooms. It will be necessary, however, to overcome many obstacles in the minds of such teachers.

*Question 3: If you could start an innovation programme for the implementation of this principle in your context, what measure would you introduce as a first step?*

Introducing Question 3, Francis Goullier pointed out that pupils and students from migrant backgrounds are often treated as a *separate* problem, which runs the risk of encouraging a segregationist mentality and undermining integration.

The French-speaking group recommended that curricula should include a section on the language of non-language disciplines – tools prepared by the Council of Europe can help here. Also, teacher education should take account of the linguistic characteristics of different curriculum subjects and might encourage teachers to spend some time teaching their discipline in two different languages. Another useful innovation would be to develop new materials and make them available on line.

English-speaking group 2 concluded that more research is needed in order to discover what works and what doesn't work. Teacher training programmes should include multicultural pedagogy, and education systems should develop sufficient flexibility to accommodate intercultural measures.

English-speaking group 1 argued that it is important to involve all stakeholders. It would also be beneficial to put teachers in the same situation as pupils/students from migrant backgrounds, perhaps by teaching them part of their curriculum content through an L2. It might also be useful to mix language and non-language teachers in order to increase the awareness of both groups. Action research could be used to make teachers more aware of the diversity in their schools. At the same time schools need expert help: they should not be expected to do everything themselves. It should also be remembered that innovation requires time: new ideas are often rejected to begin with, as a first response.

Francis Goullier reminded the seminar of the importance of ensuring coherence between European, national and local levels.

*In what ways can the Council of Europe help?*

The French-speaking group pointed out that the Council of Europe has already established examples of good practice. The group thought that a Recommendation on pre-school children might be useful. English-speaking group 2 wondered whether the Council of Europe could develop a Common Framework to guide the teaching of second and minority languages, while English-speaking group 1 suggested that the existing platform could be used to exchange materials and examples of good practice, perhaps including work in progress. The platform is appreciated but not sufficiently used.

### **Theme 3: Linguistic diversity as a resource for learning and knowledge construction (chair: Koenraad Gorp)**

#### **a) Comparing languages in the classroom: linguistic diversity as a resource for learning and teaching Nathalie Auger**

Linguistic diversity is one of the dominant features of contemporary urban societies. According to Bertucci and Corblin (2004), in some large cities in France more than 50% of pupils speak a language other than French at home. Many different languages may be spoken in those parts of the school not used for teaching, but what about classrooms? The platform of resources developed by the Council of Europe's project "Languages in Education – Languages for Education" is an important tool for policy makers who wish to engage with the challenge of providing plurilingual and intercultural education. Our theoretical knowledge is informed by the work of Cummins, especially his interdependence hypothesis (Cummins 1976, 1979, 1981, 2000), which proposes the existence of a common underlying proficiency; also by the principles of "additive bilingualism" (Lambert 1974) and "additive multilingualism" (Cenoz and Genesee 1998).

The CEFR defines plurilingual competence thus: "The concept of plurilingual and pluricultural competence tends to [...] consider that a given individual does not have a collection of distinct and separate competences to communicate depending on the languages he/she knows, but rather a plurilingual and pluricultural competence encompassing the full range of the languages available to him/her" (Council of Europe 2001: 168). According to the *Guide to the Development of Language Education Policies in Europe* this definition has clear didactic consequences: "Managing the repertoire means that the varieties of which it is composed are not dealt with in isolation; instead, although distinct from each other, they are treated as a single competence available to the social agent concerned" (Beacco and Byram 2007: 67). In other words plurilingual competence should be treated as a single unified competence.

Research carried out by Nathalie Auger since 2000 has tested the concept of plurilingualism against the linguistic reality of French schools. The research adopted an ethnographic approach and focused on verbal interactions in class and conversations as well as "plurilingual" classes. One of the chief findings was that there is a gap between sociolinguistic research, pedagogical research and the work of the Council of Europe on the one hand and what could be observed in classrooms regarding the use of linguistic diversity as a resource for learning on the other. For instance, teachers are often unaware of language acquisition processes and so consider interference from learners' other languages as a problem rather than a natural and inevitable part of their acquisition of French. And the fact that immigrant languages have very little value in the market place increases teachers' fear of allowing them to be used in the classroom. Texts issued by the French Ministry of Education in 2002 (MEN 2002a–d) point out that academic competences developed by migrant pupils in other languages should be taken into account, but they do not explain how this should be done.

Nathalie Auger's ethnographic studies led to the development of activities designed to promote the use of pupils' home languages as a resource for learning. The activities were oral so as to avoid discouraging pupils who have not yet learned to read and write. The CEFR's description of plurilingual competences encourages "intercomprehension" and acknowledges that competences are in perpetual development and often unbalanced. Accordingly, the activities avoid classroom practice that tends to treat languages as completely separate from one another. The development of the activities was guided by two principles: (i) languages share universal features, and (ii) pupils work on different linguistic levels. The DVD

activities are designed to put the different languages and communicative behaviour present in classrooms into relation with one another, and at the same time to show that one can always find similarities between languages. For example, Chinese and English seem to be very distant from one another from a lexical perspective; in that respect German is much closer to English. But from a syntactic point of view English and Chinese are much closer than English and German.

Comparing languages can help pupils to become active participants in the interlingual process they are involved in; and it is an intercultural activity because one cannot help making comparisons with one's former experiences when faced with a new language and culture. The activities are appropriate for any child, whatever languages he or she speaks and whatever level of proficiency he or she has reached in the language of schooling. For example, teachers may work on sounds with newly arrived pupils, and then on lexicon and syntax. The writing process is not excluded; observations can be made on differences between writing systems, verb tense, etc. The selection of activities entitled "Let's compare our languages" mobilizes first languages as resources to help pupils develop proficiency in the language of schooling, in conformity with the CEFR's concept of plurilingual competences and the studies and resources provided by the "Languages in Education – Languages for Education" platform. Video extracts are freely available in French<sup>1</sup> and in English and German translation.<sup>2</sup>

The DVD activities were found to make pupils more active in their learning, reinforcing their capacity to observe and analyse and to put languages in relation to one another. They do not disadvantage children with little experience of schooling, since research shows that language awareness develops in children from the age of three; and they show that it is possible to work on linguistic similarities and differences without using a metalinguistic vocabulary. As for teachers, the activities made them aware that their pupils have knowledge and competences that they can mobilise. This implies a new role for teachers: to help their pupils to organise their knowledge. The activities do not turn teachers and pupils into linguists but rather require them to pay more explicit attention to languages. They show how we can respond to one of the major challenges faced by our society: to turn school into a place of social cohesion.

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**b) Who is afraid of multilingualism in school? Linguistic diversity as a resource for learning  
Piet Van Avermaet**

To reject a child's language in the school is to reject the child. When the message, implicit or explicit, communicated to children in the school is 'Leave your language and culture at the schoolhouse door', children also leave a central part of who they are – their identities – at the schoolhouse door. When they feel this rejection, they are much less likely to participate actively and confidently in classroom instruction. (Cummins 2001: 19)

We all have questions about how to deal with the multilingual reality of classrooms. Should we forbid or suppress languages other than the language of schooling? Or should we try to use them to support learning? Should we even try to teach them? And what is the impact of doing each of these things? How should we communicate with parents who are not fluent in or do not speak the language of schooling? What language should we advise migrant parents to speak with their children at home? (The answers to these questions proposed by the Centre for Diversity and Learning at the University of Ghent can be found at [www.meertaligheid.be](http://www.meertaligheid.be).)

Teachers have many concerns. They feel that parents don't want them to allow pupils to use their plurilingual repertoires in the classroom; they worry that their pupils' proficiency in their home language is undeveloped and restricted; and they wonder whether allowing the use of many languages in their classroom will pave the way to segregation. They also worry about losing control if pupils speak languages that they themselves cannot understand, and they worry because pupils from migrant backgrounds already have so little time in which to learn the language of schooling. Most of these concerns underlie a notice in a school in Flanders, photographed in 2009: "In the interest of your child we speak Dutch here. What about you?"

Multilingualism is a reality in all European societies, especially in urban spaces. Schools and classrooms are increasingly characterised by "superdiversity", and the multilingualism of communities produces plurilingual individuals. Traditionally our societies have distinguished between "good" and "bad" multilingualism: some languages have high status and others have low status. At a time when "superdiversity" is becoming the norm it is important to reflect on the limitations of the recipes that are currently being used in systems of (language) education. Concepts like language, citizenship and learning are social constructs, and new social contexts should prompt us to consider reconstructing them.

A central question that confronts us is: Which language education model most effectively supports the acquisition of the language of schooling when it is not the pupils' home language and at the same time closes the "achievement gap"? The search for a "one-size-fits-all" model has created a polarisation between L2 submersion, in which only the L2 (the language of schooling) is used and bilingual/multilingual education. Three arguments that are advanced in favour of L2 submersion are that it avoids competition between languages, exploits the fact that children are "sponges" when it comes to language learning, and maximises their exposure to the target language. Three arguments that are advanced in favour of bilingual/multilingual education are that it exploits positive relationships between higher-order language skills (Cummins's interdependence hypothesis), encourages positive transfer from the pupil's L1 to L2, and facilitates the construction of knowledge by allowing cross-linguistic scaffolding.

Traditionally, bilingual education has emphasised separation: separate classrooms, separate lessons, segregated learner groups, compartmentalised languages (Cummins 2008). Multilingualism has been conceptualised as a series of parallel monolingualisms (Creese and Blackledge 2010) and instruction has generally been provided by bilingual teachers, so that mainstream teachers have had little involvement. The time seems ripe to develop a new approach to multilingual education. A practical reason for doing so is that the extreme linguistic heterogeneity of schools in urban areas casts doubt on the sustainability of the traditional model; while a theoretical reason is provided by new sociolinguistic conceptions of multilingual communication in the complex contemporary world, which mark a significant break with traditional ideas.

Functional plurilingual learning and teaching (FPLT) is an approach that seeks to exploit plurilingual repertoires as a resource for learning by encouraging functional use of home languages in multilingual, L2-dominant learning environments. The setting for this approach is a linguistically diverse mainstream classroom that accommodates L1 as well as L2 learners. The L2 (the mainstream language of schooling) is dominant, but there are opportunities for concurrent use of other languages, which the teacher herself does not have to speak. In this way pupils' L1 becomes a tool for learning, helping to scaffold their comprehension and uptake of curriculum content. FPLT is underpinned by socio-cognitive and socio-cultural (Vygotskian) theories of learning as well as by Cummins's interdependence hypothesis. Empirical research shows that it can be effective only when it is structurally embedded in a school policy that opts for a multilingual perspective and pedagogically embedded in "powerful learning environments" that are characterised by a safe and positive atmosphere, meaningful learning activities, and interactive support from the teacher and other learners.

The research project "Home language in education" (HLE) was funded by Ghent municipality and carried out by the University of Ghent and the Catholic University of Leuven. It had two objectives: to exploit diverse linguistic capital in plurilingual powerful learning environments, and to develop pupils' academic literacy in their L1. At the beginning of the project classroom observation and interviews with teachers showed that the monolingual L2 submersion model was dominant. L2 pupils' L1s were banned from the classroom, especially at primary level; teachers aimed to provide maximum exposure to the L2; and multilingualism was not thought to have any cognitive or linguistic added value. In the course of the project there was a shift concerning attitudes to L1 use at home. The importance of L1 maintenance (additive bilingualism) was acknowledged and use of the L1 outside school was no longer explicitly discouraged. What is more, some pre-school teachers spontaneously began to tolerate pupils' use of their L1 in the classroom and to adopt L1-related practices in order to support pupils' sense of well-being.

Here are some of the things teachers said at the beginning of the project:

“The children were not allowed to speak their ‘own language’.”

“We used to punish those children who spoke their home language. That was very common.”

“There was little interaction. On September 1st, the children knew that they were only allowed to speak Dutch. I presented myself and nobody said anything. All children remained silent. Their proficiency in Dutch was insufficient and they were not allowed to speak their home language. So there was simply no interaction”

Interim observations carried out in 2009–2010 in preschool classes showed greater tolerance of the pupils’ L1:

“If, for instance, a child uses an Arabic word, Turkish children will try to pronounce it and want to learn it. This was not the case before the project. Then the Turkish children would have said ‘bah, Arabic’.”

“Since the project the children are more tolerant towards each other regarding the use of their home language.”

Teachers also recognised that pupils’ use of their L1 brought added value:

“The children rapidly felt that they were allowed to use their home language and that they could make themselves understand better and could help each other”

Pupils were also more fully involved in classroom activity:

“The added value is that previously a child often said nothing and was very passive, it didn’t learn. That same child is now actively involved, talks all the time and learns by doing.”

“I notice now that children are more talkative when entering the classroom and are not afraid to ask something.”

These changes also had an impact on pupils’ L2 learning:

“Children now want to learn more Dutch. They ask for it more than before.”

“Two Turkish children who were talking about a lobster in Turkish spontaneously asked me, ‘What is this in Dutch?’ And they kept repeating the word in Dutch.”

There was greater awareness of multilingualism:

“Language sensitising tasks make me aware of the children’s multilingualism. What we teachers experience as something ‘special’ is common for the children.”

There was also greater awareness of parents:

“A mother spontaneously said to me, ‘I didn’t know that my child knew all these animals in Turkish.’”

“A lot of parents are now more involved with their children than before.”

Parents were seen as partners:

“Parents feel more at home in school because the L1 is present. [...] They are often invited to help in the classroom, e.g. by reading a story in L1.”

By using their L1 pupils were able to help each other:

“They rapidly started to help each other. When I said something and one of the children didn’t understand what I said, another child started to repeat it in the home language.”

“I am not able to give feedback in a child’s home language but other children can definitely do that.”

Use of L1 does not slow down L2 learning:

“Since the project started, I have the impression that they already know more words in Dutch than children I had in my classroom before I allowed pupils to use their home language.”

Allowing pupils to use their L1 made the teacher something of an outsider:

“I often wonder what is going on in the heads of the children. It’s a pity I don’t understand what they are saying when they use their L1.”

And finally, it was recognised that a positive attitude is essential:

“It starts with a positive attitude, but also with being well informed what the project is exactly about and how the school looks at it, what kind of vision the school has.”

The project confirms Cummins’s linguistic interdependence hypothesis. It also confirms that a shift from monolingual to multilingual school policy and from L2 submersion to FPLT goes hand in hand with a shift from instructivist pedagogy to a social constructivist learning paradigm. When pupils are allowed to use their L1, a more powerful learning environment begins to develop. FPLT seems to be more powerful and to have more potential than traditional compartmentalised bilingual approaches. In superdiverse classrooms, allowing children to use their plurilingual repertoires becomes an asset, a resource for learning, because it leads to more interaction and greater involvement on the part of teacher and pupils. It also has a positive impact on teachers’ beliefs and perceptions, encouraging them to see themselves as active agents in the process of rewriting of old recipes.

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### **GROUP WORK 3 – plenary feedback** **(chair: Joana Duarte)**

*Principle: Schools and teachers should exploit children’s plurilingual repertoires as a resource for learning*

*Question 1: What features of your context support the implementation of this principle?*

English-speaking group 2 (chair – Bronagh Ćatibušić; rapporteur – Christina Månberg) argued that in-service programmes need to find an effective way of conveying the message that all teachers are language teachers; also that there is a clear need for more multilingual resources. The group also discussed collaboration between and within schools and the need to involve parents in the classroom, for example by getting them to read books aloud in migrant pupils’ L1. Members of the group referred to more or less successful models to support the use of migrant pupils’ L1 as subject and medium of learning, and one example was provided of how a multilingual curriculum would work as a subject on its own or as a support for teachers of all subjects.

English-speaking group 1 (chair – Eike Thürmann, rapporteur – Anna Österlund) pointed out that in many countries there is growing awareness of the importance of plurilingualism. In Norway and Sweden there are resource centres that also undertake research. Demographic trends are likely to work in favour of plurilingualism. Members of the group pointed to

examples of countries that make an effort to recruit migrants to careers as teachers. There is no guarantee, however, that such teachers will contribute to the development of pupils' plurilingualism. Again reference was made to curricula that include the language dimension, and it was noted that the European Language Portfolio and the Autobiography of Intercultural Experiences have been used successfully with migrant learners.

The French-speaking group (chair – Francis Goullier, rapporteur – Silvia Fankhauser) discussed the importance of pupils' home languages for their sense of identity, noting that migrant pupils' self-esteem is likely to receive a boost when the value of their home languages is acknowledged. This group too drew attention to the fact that the European Language Portfolio can play an important role, helping to raise the awareness of teachers as well as learners.

*Question 2: What features of your context are likely to undermine the implementation of this principle?*

English-speaking group 2 thought that society as a whole is very slow to recognise the importance of plurilingualism. Most people see no need to interact with speakers of other languages or to learn L2s themselves. The “monolingual habitus” is found at every level of society. When second-generation migrant children perform worse at school than their first-generation predecessors, plurilingualism may not be seen as something positive. In some countries legislation on L2 learning at school omits low-status languages. It is also necessary to change the content of language teaching; at present too much time is spent on activities that do not develop learners' communication skills. Different countries face different challenges, and that makes it difficult to find common strategies.

The French-speaking group thought that context is very important. If politicians agree to have multilingual classes and provide them with appropriate support, things may progress; without political and financial support they will not. Teachers worry that if they allow pupils to use their home languages in the classroom, those languages may become dominant; also that different “language communities” could begin to develop.

English-speaking group 2 drew attention to the shortage of teachers of less widely used languages and the difficulty of accommodating such languages in already overcrowded timetables. The group also noted that different age groups pose different problems. It is especially difficult to know how to deal with migrants aged 15–18: they are too young for adult education but too old for successful integration into upper secondary. It is important to try to provide continuity from one educational level to another, and difficult to cope with lack of continuity in policy and funding.

*Question 3: If you could start an innovation programme for the implementation of this principle in your context, what measure would you introduce as a first step?*

The French-speaking group argued that the European Language Portfolio should be used more widely and that measures should be taken to make teachers more aware of the importance of home languages. English-speaking group 2 returned to the theme of teacher training, but also discussed the importance of ensuring that schools are open to migrant communities – inviting parents into the classroom as volunteers and so on. It is important that teachers can communicate with migrant parents. English-speaking group 1 thought that it might be worth developing a tool that would help migrant pupils to develop skills in their L1. The group also thought that it might be a good idea to allow students to write exams in their strongest language. Once more the group drew attention to the importance of finding ways of drawing migrants' home languages into the educational system.



### *In what ways can the Council of Europe help?*

The French-speaking group wondered whether the Council of Europe could develop a bank of materials and help teachers by providing information on similarities and differences between languages. English-speaking group 1 recommended the development of a tool for assessing pupils' development and saw a role for the Council of Europe in coordinating and supporting networks. There was some criticism of way in which the diagram on the "Languages in Education – Languages for Education" platform accommodates plurilingualism.

### **Closing session**

#### ***Round table feedback from presenters***

***Joana Duarte, Ingrid Gogolin, Bronagh Ćatibušić, Koenraad Van Gorp, Eike Thürmann, Piet Van Avermaet (chair: Johanna Panthier)***

In the course of a brief round table discussion the following points were made:

- The "Languages in Education – Languages for Education" project's platform has technical limitations, but it certainly does not intend to present languages as entirely separate from one another.
- An iceberg may be a better metaphor for language than a flower.
- The individual's linguistic abilities change in the course of his or her life, but they are not separately linked to different languages.
- Languages are social constructs and do not exist as discrete entities in the brain: the boundaries between them are porous and constantly shifting.
- The idea that languages are entirely separate entities derives from ideas promoted by Herder in the 18th century.
- Among the arguments against developing a Common European Framework of Reference for languages of schooling are: it would be open to misuse; it would not be able to take account of differences between the educational cultures of member states; there would be endless argument over categorisation; the CEFR already provides a foundation for the development of curricula tailored to the needs of specific; there are already reference descriptors for a number of languages.
- As regards the development of policy to help low achievers in general, linguistic engagement is more important than language background or socio-economic status.
- We should avoid dealing with educational issues in terms of binary opposites.

#### ***General Rapporteur's summing-up***

***David Little***

The first theme addressed by the seminar was "Language development and language learning in multilingual settings", which was discussed in relation to the following principle: "Language support will succeed to the extent that it follows children's preferred acquisition or learning strategies". Participants thought that this principle was likely to be supported by: public service publishing, which is not subject to market pressure; finding ways of valorising teachers' skills; making appropriate diagnostic tools available to schools; a growing openness to cultural diversity. They thought it was likely to be undermined by: the widespread assumption that classrooms are monolingual; a lack of teachers from migrant backgrounds; too large classes; the limited language skills of teachers; a lack of leadership and impetus from above; a surfeit of innovation. Among the first steps they said they would take to improve matters were: allocating more money and materials; creating greater diversity in

educational systems; funding more research; placing more emphasis on the mainstream; raising the awareness of teachers; requiring each school to have its own language policy.

The second theme addressed by the seminar was “Developing ‘academic language’ from primary to secondary education”, which was discussed in relation to the following principle: “Educational success requires proficiency in academic language, which depends on *all* teachers of *all* subjects”. Participants thought that this principle was likely to be supported by: some existing models of in-service training, websites, networks; the impact on schools of good practice at tertiary level; curricula that allow for teacher autonomy and include the language dimension; complementarity between top-down and bottom-up processes as in the German *Förmig* programme. They thought it was likely to be undermined by: lack of resources; the fact that coping with diversity is still not central to most programmes of pre-service teacher education; the status problem that often attaches to the language of schooling as a second language; the widespread belief that migrant pupils should speak the language of schooling at home. Among the first steps they said they would take to improve matters were: inclusion of Council of Europe tools and multicultural pedagogy in teacher education; giving teachers the experience of learning content through a second language; developing coherence between European, national and local levels.

The third theme addressed by the seminar was “Linguistic diversity as a resource for learning”, which was discussed in relation to the following principle: “Schools and teachers should exploit children’s plurilingual repertoires as a resource for learning”. Participants thought that this principle was likely to be supported by: a growing awareness of the importance of plurilingualism; supportive curricula and teacher education programmes; effective involvement of parents; the recruitment of teachers from migrant backgrounds; use of the European Language Portfolio and the Autobiography of Intercultural Experiences. They thought it was likely to be undermined by: the fact that society moves very slowly and the “mono-lingual habitus” is very persistent; the low status of migrant languages; inappropriate emphases in teaching the language of schooling as a second language; adolescent students mocking the teacher’s efforts to engage plurilingual repertoires; lack of continuity between educational sectors and levels, in policy and in funding. Among the first steps they said they would take to improve matters were: taking the European Language Portfolio more seriously; developing teachers’ understanding; opening schools to migrant communities; helping pupils to develop skills in their home languages.

Throughout the seminar participants were asked to consider ways in which the Council of Europe might help member states to respond to the challenges posed by multilingual classes. They noted that the “Languages in Education – Languages for Education” platform already provides support of various kinds and could be used more widely to exchange materials, ideas and experience. They said they would like the Council of Europe to continue to support the development of key concepts and policy orientations, handbooks, guidelines, templates, tools and platforms. Some participants favoured the development of a common framework for teaching minority languages and the language of schooling as a second language; and some favoured the development of diagnostic tools to monitor migrant pupils’ development in the language of schooling

### ***Closing of seminar***

Johanna Panthier gave a brief overview of the various developments envisaged for the “Languages in Education – Languages for Education” project and drew attention to the Council of Europe materials that were already available to support the management of diversity in schools. She noted that the videos shown at the seminar would be helpful for teachers: perhaps they could be added to the platform. She concluded by announcing that in

September 2012 the Language Policy Unit will organise a seminar on the language(s) of schooling in all subjects, and that the idea of a framework of reference for language(s) of schooling would probably be raised again.

Ólöf Ólafsdóttir said that she had been impressed by the seminar, which reminded her of something she had experienced when she was a little girl living in a village in the north of Iceland. Her grandmother and a friend were discussing the adoption of a child from Asia. One of them said: “I don’t understand these people. What will they do when the child starts speaking?” She was also reminded of her grandson, who speaks English, French and Icelandic (which he uses in order to say no). She pointed out that the attempt to move from monolingualism to plurilingualism is revolutionary; in moving forward we shall need to exercise great flexibility. Two things that seemed especially important to her were teacher education and the involvement of parents. She concluded by thanking all present for their contributions: participants, presenters, chairs, rapporteurs, the general rapporteur, the interpreters, and the Language Policy Unit’s team: Johanna Panthier, Philia Thalgott, Christopher Reynolds and Corinne Colin.

#### **PRESENTATIONS BY PARTICIPANTS**

During the lunch break on Tuesday 6 March the following presentations were given by seminar participants:

Danièle Janssen (Belgium), “Classe de français – classe en français”

Leena Nissilä (Finland), “National programme to develop multicultural skills within general education”

Ragnhild Meisfjord (Norway), “Material developed by the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training”

Susanna Slivensky (European Centre for Modern Languages), “The 4th Medium-term Programme of the ECML”

## Appendix 1: Programme

<b>Wednesday 7 March 2012</b>	
09.00-10.00 <i>Chair:</i> <b>Johanna Panthier</b>	<b>OFFICIAL OPENING</b> - Ólöf Ólafsdóttir, Director of Democratic citizenship and Participation  The seminar in the larger perspective of the Language Policy Unit's programme - <b>Francis Goullier</b> Introducing relevant ECML projects - <b>Susanna Slivensky</b> Introduction to the seminar - <b>David Little</b>
10.00-11.00	Focus on the learner: Language development & Language learning in multilingual settings - <b>Joana Duarte</b> and <b>Ingrid Gogolin</b>
11.00-11.30	<i>Coffee break</i>
11.30-13.00	Discussion groups
13.00-14.30	<i>Cold Lunch (provided)</i> <i>Presentations of local / regional / national projects</i>
14.30-15.00 <i>Chair:</i> Francis Goullier	Plenary feedback from discussion groups
15.00-16.30 <i>Chair:</i> Ingrid Gogolin	Developing 'academic language' from primary to secondary education - <b>Koenraad van Gorp</b> , <b>Eike Thürmann</b> and <b>Bronagh Finnegan-Catibusic</b>
16.30-16.50	<i>Coffee break</i>
16.50-18.00	Discussion groups

<b>Thursday 8 March 2012</b>	
09.00-09.30 <i>Chair:</i> Piet van Avermaet	Plenary feedback from discussion groups
09.30-10.30 <i>Chair:</i> Eike Thürmann	Linguistic diversity as a resource for learning / knowledge construction: <b>Nathalie Auger</b> and <b>Piet Van Avermaet</b>
10.30-11.00	<i>Coffee break</i>
11.00-12.30	Discussion groups
12.30-14.00	<i>Lunch</i>
14.00-14.30 <i>Chair:</i> Joana Duarte	Feedback from discussion groups
14.30-15.30 <i>Chair:</i> Johanna Panthier	Closing session: rapporteur's summing up; round table feedback from providers of input; feedback from participants ; next steps

## Appendix 2

## Elements of the experiential dimension of the curriculum

(Extracts from the *Guide for the development and implementation of curricula for plurilingual and intercultural education*, pp.44–50)

	ISCED O: Pre-primary	ISCED 1: Primary school	ISCED 2: Lower secondary level
<b>Experiences of linguistic and cultural diversity and education geared to respect for otherness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- acceptance by teachers (and other children) of the language(s) of each child, of his/her language variety/varieties and way of speaking;</li> <li>- plurality of modes of expression of others, both teachers and children;</li> <li>- lifestyles of various cultures (clothing, food, music, etc.);</li> <li>- rules of interaction within groups (not all speaking at once, knowing how to listen, but also how to get a hearing, etc.).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- participating in activities which foster language awareness and openness to languages;</li> <li>- becoming aware of differences/similarities between languages, and of scope for partial inter-comprehension between related languages;</li> <li>- learning to use metalinguistic tools (dictionaries, etc.) and metacultural tools (atlases, encyclopaedias, etc.)</li> <li>- experiencing variations (historical, geographical, social, written/oral, etc.) in the language of schooling</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- participating in linguistic mediation activities; switching from one semiotic mode to another (from text to diagram, etc.);</li> <li>- participating in intercultural mediation activities;</li> <li>- thinking about the cultural differences reflected in the connotations and wording of concepts, and the difficulty - even impossibility - of translating some of them;</li> <li>- critical analysis of the ethical/moral motivation of behaviour in one's own and other cultural environments.</li> </ul>
<b>Experiences of diversifying forms of expression</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- projection of the spoken word, in gesture and movement (physical expression, theatricals, etc.);</li> <li>- first forms of oral literacy (little poems, rhymes, tales) and other first steps towards full literacy (handling and looking at various types of book, albums, etc.);</li> <li>- role-playing games which encourage participants to switch registers (simulating everyday situations, etc.);</li> <li>- contact with various semiological and graphic systems;</li> <li>- restitution in one expressive mode of content registered through another sense.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- becoming aware of the differences between, and special features of, language activities (reading and writing) and discovering and experiencing the various functions of the written word;</li> <li>- discovering and observing plurality of graphic systems;</li> <li>- starting to think about discourse genres at school;</li> <li>- awareness of word-play, and of the form and content of literary texts likely to stimulate sound and visual perception, imagination, and a desire to memorise, share and describe, as well as to write and read other texts oneself;</li> <li>- observing and interpreting the conventions and workings of semiotic modes other than natural language.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- prepared and structured or improvised debates on topical issues, followed by retrospective evaluation of the discussion, the arguments used, the level of information required, etc.; experience of, and reflection on, culture-specific modes of discussion and argument;</li> <li>- external surveys (carried out by small groups, pooling and formatting of findings, collective reflection and evaluation);</li> <li>- class newspapers, books of poems, multimedia projects, involving group work, distribution of roles and responsibilities, negotiation and decision-making.</li> </ul>
<b>Foreign languages</b>	a first foreign language and culture, possibly based on counting rhymes in languages spoken by other pupils: depending on context, this may range from awareness through play to early immersion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- going through the first stages of learning to speak and write a foreign language;</li> <li>- establishing reflexive links between the foreign language and language of schooling (focusing on similarities or differences, as appropriate).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- work on multilingual dossiers and aids and use of various resources (in school and outside);</li> <li>- autonomous learning of the rudiments of a foreign language;</li> <li>- linguistic and cultural study visits and/or virtual international exchanges.</li> </ul>
<b>Reflexivity</b>	first forms of reflection on languages, human communication and cultural identity, which are within children's (affective and cognitive) reach.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- using a personal class-record to note and keep track of work done, and record personal reactions;</li> <li>- becoming aware of self-evaluation, and evaluation of and by peers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- using a personal class-record to note (European languages Portfolio approach, etc.);</li> <li>- self-evaluation, evaluation of and by peers.</li> </ul>

## Appendix 3

### Feedback from the participants

27 % of the participants gave written feedback by completing the questionnaire.

#### Questions 1, 2 and 3:

On a scale from 1 to 5, the seminar was rated

- 4,3 as regards relevance to the needs of the participants
- 4,5 as regards balance between plenary sessions and group work
- 4,8 as regards general organisation

The lowest rate (concerning relevance) was given by a Norwegian participant who had expected a stronger focus on newly arrived pupils/students and discussions more on a political level.

The second lowest rating (also concerning relevance) was from Slovakia, where they ‘do not have much experience with multilingual classrooms’.

#### Question 5: Most relevant topics

Two topics were clearly very relevant to the contexts of the participants:

- children’s plurilingualism as a resource for learning (experts’ input and videos were considered of high quality, convincing and motivating);
- the development of “academic language” at all levels of the education system (from pre-primary to secondary education) and throughout the curriculum/all school subjects

#### Question 6: Areas concerning multilingual classrooms to be further developed

Most of the participants underlined the importance of pre and in-service teacher training.

Further development should also involve guidelines for whole-school policies and awareness-raising documents for parents.

In addition to the development of curricula for specific subjects that describe the language competences needed in each specific domain, several participants attached great importance to the development of a framework for the languages of schooling/an intercurricular framework of language competences.

Tools to support the implementation of plurilingual education are urgently needed, as well as examples of good practice (to be made available on the *Platform of resources and references for plurilingual and intercultural education*).

Recommendations from the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe to the member states (or even White/Green Papers) on the importance of the languages of schooling (in the perspective of plurilingual and intercultural education) were indicated as powerful “tools” to convince policy makers.

Language Education Policy Profiles were also mentioned as an excellent way of supporting the member states in the development of coherent language education policies across the curriculum. Participants would like to see them developed for other member states/regions.

**Questions 7, 8 & 9 about examples of good practice concerning plurilingual repertoires as a resource for learning**

57 % of the participants who completed the questionnaire indicated that they knew of examples in their context of policies which promote plurilingual repertoires as a resource for learning; most of them could be made available on the Platform, but in most cases copyright issues would need to be solved. Most of these examples would be available in French, German, Norwegian and Italian, some in English. Some would be multilingual.

**Questions 9, 10 & 11 concerning tools developed by the Language Policy Unit for defining the competences in the language(s) of schooling necessary for successfully learning history, sciences or literature.**

85 % of the respondents said they were aware of these tools. They all said they would be interested in applying them to their specific languages, but some did not know whether this would be possible in the current situation. Most of them (85 %) said they would request (some kind of) support from the Language Policy Unit. This support could take the form of experts from the Language Policy Unit's project on the languages of schooling visiting member states to work with national teams (the name of Eike Thürmann was mentioned).

Translation of the existing tools into other languages (in addition to English and French) was also considered desirable.

**Question 12: Other comments**

In addition to the many congratulations on the organisation and relevance of the event, one participant complained that the working groups were too large for effective discussion, and another participant would have preferred a stronger policy focus on the issues raised.

## Appendix 4

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