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**GUIDE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF  
LANGUAGE EDUCATION POLICIES IN EUROPE  
FROM LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY TO PLURILINGUAL EDUCATION**

**Main Version**

DRAFT 1 (rev.)  
April 2003

BEACCO Jean-Claude  
BYRAM Michael

**Language Policy Division**  
Council of Europe  
Strasbourg



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The opinions expressed in this work are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official policy of the Council of Europe.

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This draft will be revised after consultation.

In this version [\*] denotes that references to a Study will be added at a later stage.  
Bibliographic references will also be added.

**This text is available in downloadable form on the Council of Europe website :**  
[www.coe.int/lang](http://www.coe.int/lang) (Language Policy Division - Policy Development activities)

## PRELIMINARY NOTE

This document is version 1 (revised) of April 2003. It replaces the previous pilot version of November 2002.

This version of the *Guide for the Development of Language Education Policies in Europe* is a first draft. The essential nature of its form and contents was conceived during meetings of a Scientific Committee composed of a core group which was assisted by a number of others on specific occasions. This Scientific Committee was as follows:

### *Core Group:*

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The preparation and production of this *Main Version*, which is the reference version, and of the *Executive Version* (for policy deciders involved in language education policies but who may have no specific specialist knowledge of technical matters in language education) were completed by Jean-Claude Beacco and Michael Byram.

The *Main Version* was written in French and then translated into English. The *Executive Version* was written in English on the basis of the *Main Version*, and then translated into French. The *Guide* is accompanied by a series of Reference Studies which provide in-depth analysis of key issues (see next page). The final version of the *Guide* will make explicit reference to these studies.

The *Guide* is being distributed for consultation which will lead to the preparation of a revised version. Guidelines and a form for providing feedback in the consultation process are available on the website [www.coe.int/lang](http://www.coe.int/lang) (Language Policy Division / Policy Development activities).

Respondents are requested to make concrete suggestions for each of the three parts / six chapters of the *Main Version* separately, adding more general comments for parts 1, 2 and 3 or for the document as a whole if necessary. Please comment on relevance, comprehensiveness and clarity.

Respondents are invited to comment also on the shorter *Executive Version* of the *Guide* using the same form (adding the title “Executive Version”).

Please send feedback to [decs-lang@coe.int](mailto:decs-lang@coe.int) (e-mail), by post to the *Language Policy Division*, DG IV, Council of Europe, F-67075 Strasbourg Cedex or by fax (+33 388 41 27 88 / 06).

## LIST OF REFERENCE STUDIES

The texts of the studies currently available can be downloaded from the Council of Europe website [www.coe.int/lang](http://www.coe.int/lang) (Language Policy Division / Policy Development activities).

### Reference Studies

Castelloti Véronique / Moore Danièle	Social representations of languages and teaching
Costanzo Edvige	L'Educazione Linguistica in Italia: Un'esperienza per l'Europa? Language education in Italy: an experience for Europe?
Gogolin Ingrid	Linguistic diversity and new minorities in Europe
Grin François	Using language economics and education economics in language education policy
Huhta Marjatta	Tools for planning language training
Johnstone Richard	Addressing 'the age factor': some implications for languages policy
Ó'Riagáin Pádraig	The Consequences of Demographic Trends for Language Learning and Diversity
Piri Riita	Teaching and learning less widely spoken languages in other countries
Raasch Albert	Europe, frontiers and languages
Skutnabb-Kangas Tove	Why should linguistic diversity be maintained and supported in Europe? Some arguments
Starkey Hugh	Democratic Citizenship, Languages, Diversity and Human Rights
Willems Gerard	Language teacher education policy promoting linguistic diversity and intercultural communication

### Studies on English and diversification

Breidbach Stephan	Plurilingualism, Democratic Citizenship in Europe and the Role of English
Neuner Gerd	Policy approaches to English
Seidlhofer Barbara	A concept of international English and related issues: from 'real English' to 'realistic English'?
Truchot Claude	Key aspects of the use of English in Europe

### Studies on diversification elsewhere in the world

Alexander Neville	Language education policy, national and sub-national identities in South Africa
Churchill Stacy	Language Education, Canadian Civic Identity and the Identities of Canadians

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## PRESENTATION

*This **Guide for the Development of Language Education Policies in Europe** is a response to the need to develop language policies on the basis of a coherent approach: clarifying principles and defining goals, analysing situations, identifying resources, expectations and needs, and the implementation and evaluation of these measures. The aim is to reduce the number of ad hoc decisions, often taken under the pressure of events, and promote a “global concept” for languages. It is important also that the language policies of European education systems be developed in the context of a democratic debate and be implemented in such a way as to gain the acceptance of the social agents concerned, since any form of imposition, especially with respect to languages, would be counterproductive.*

*This document does not advocate any particular language education policy measure, but seeks to clarify the issues involved in these policies, identify the analyses that need to be conducted, and provide an inventory of ways of organising language teaching that comply with common European principles. These principles are already established since they have been set out in a large number of Council of Europe recommendations and conventions. This document seeks to clarify those principles through the successive formulations they have been given, and above all to explore their practical application. It will be shown that the principles may be put into practice through concerted action involving long-term investment on the basis of existing teaching practices and theory.*

*The **Guide** does not claim to be original. It is based on existing research which, although it does not cover the whole field, can be considered reliable. The Guide’s purpose is to help readers acquire a better understanding of what languages are, the management of language teaching, the issues surrounding it and its organisation, since in this field more than others there are numerous received ideas that do not help to solve the already complex questions at issue. It is part of on-going Council of Europe work on modern languages and language policies which has been presented in many documents, including Recommendations, the Common European Framework for Languages, the European Language Portfolio, and also in the **Proceedings** of the Conference “Linguistic Diversity for Democratic Citizenship in Europe” (Innsbruck, May 1999).*

*The **Guide for the Development of Language Education Policies in Europe** exists in two versions of unequal length. The present “Main Version” (Version intégrale) is the reference version. An abridged “Executive version” (Version de synthèse) is also available. They have been designed to meet the needs of readers familiar to varying degrees with the subject according to how much detailed explanation they will need. The two versions are designed for various categories of readers who share an interest in language issues and education: readers who are not specialists in educational questions and those who are familiar with educational problems but not particularly well-informed about linguistic questions. They are also designed for specialists who will find in them well-known approaches to and analyses of language policy and language teaching methods. The Guide is accompanied by a series of separately published reference studies which enlarge on some of the issues covered in the Main Version.*

### **I. Aims of the Guide: an instrument for developing a common approach to language education policy**

The aim of the *Guide for the Development of Language Education Policies in Europe* is to offer an analytical tool which can serve as a reference for the formulation or reorganisation of language teaching in member States (essentially in education systems) and, through it, an examination of European language policies. It is not prescriptive, seeking rather to gain support for principles and modes of action that can be shared. This area of intervention will be called *language education policies* (in order to stress that it is not only a question of dealing with the subject in technical terms, the province of educational ‘engineering’ and language teaching methods), whether they concern national or ‘foreign’ languages, those known as *mother tongue* or second languages, majority or minority languages, and so on. On the contrary, this document emphasises the central place of

languages of every kind and education systems in the social problems that have to be confronted in Europe on the basis of common principles.

More precisely, the ambition of the *Guide* is to contribute to a renewal of thinking in member States about the language education policies they conduct, separately and collectively. The goal is to try to draw up language education policies that have been carefully thought out rather than being the sum of ad hoc decisions. The policies should at least have the common characteristic of complying with the values and principles of the Council of Europe to which member States have subscribed.

One of the central principles of the document will be that policies should be based on plurilingualism as a value and a competence.

The concept of *plurilingualism* will be defined more fully in Chapters 2 and 6; for the moment, it will be defined simply as the potential and/or actual ability to use several languages to varying levels of proficiency and for different purposes. More exactly, following the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (p. 168), plurilingual and pluricultural competence is the ability “to use languages for the purposes of communication and to take part in intercultural action, where a person, viewed as a social agent, has proficiency, of varying degrees, in several languages and experience of several cultures”. It is not seen as a juxtaposition of distinct competences, but as a single competence, even though it is complex. This leads to the distinction between *plurilingualism* as a speaker’s competence (being able to use more than one language) and *multilingualism* as the presence of languages in a given territory: there is a shift, therefore, from a perspective focusing on languages (a state may be referred to as monolingual or multilingual) to one that focuses on speakers.

It is posited that the purpose of plurilingual education is to develop speakers’ language skills and linguistic repertoires. The ability to use different languages, whatever degree of competence they have in each of them, is common to all speakers. And it is the responsibility of education systems to make all Europeans aware of the nature of this ability, which is developed to a greater or lesser extent according to individuals and contexts, to highlight its value and develop it in the early years of schooling and throughout life, since it forms the basis of communication in Europe, but above all of linguistic tolerance, the prerequisite for the maintenance of linguistic diversity. The experience of plurilingualism also provides all European citizens with one of the most immediate opportunities in which actually to experience Europe in all its diversity. Policies which are not limited to managing the diversity of languages but adopt plurilingualism as a goal may also provide a more concrete basis for democratic citizenship in Europe: it is not so much mastery of a particular language or particular languages which characterises European citizens (and the citizens of many other political and cultural entities) as a plurilingual, pluricultural competence which ensures communication, and above all results in all languages being respected.

In order to promote such aims, the *Guide* will first provide frameworks for:

- identifying language education policies as such
- relating them to current changes in Europe and the proposals of the Council of Europe
- making decision-makers and the agents of language education policies aware of social issues involved in language policies.

The *Guide* has been designed to serve as a framework for the analysis of national education systems with respect to language teaching or teaching in languages. It could serve as a reference instrument for those seeking ways of introducing or reorganising teaching designed to develop the plurilingual competence of learners of whatever age. Using this document as a basis, it will, in particular, be possible to organise, on the initiative of interested states, meetings or working groups in which national and international experts could discuss their ideas. The purpose of such exchanges would be:

- to enable the education systems concerned to situate themselves in relation to the educational principles developed on the subject by the Council of Europe and other European and International organisations

- to look at language teaching issues from the point of view of diversification and plurilingual education aimed at enhancing the status of and developing individual and group linguistic repertoires
- to identify problems and solutions to problems with respect to implementation and promotion of plurilingualism which might be of common interest
- to create a common educational culture based on instruments such as the *European Language Portfolio*
- to give all national actors concerned with languages and their teaching the opportunity to develop contact with one another
- to deal with language teaching from the point of view of quality, common standards and mutually compatible certification processes.

Such exchanges could result in documents being drafted that take stock of the situation and identify a number of priorities. The production of the reviews covering national languages, the languages of newly arrived residents, foreign languages and so on would be a practical means of facilitating the implementation of common principles and arriving at national solutions that it might be possible to use elsewhere in Europe.

## **II. Who the *Guide* is for: language policy actors**

### **A. Who the *Guide* is for**

The purpose of the *Guide for the Development of Language Education Policies in Europe* is to inform all those involved with language education policies, and not only the experts in the field, since these issues concern society as a whole.

It concerns all those who develop strategies in these fields, or take part in decision-making itself, whatever their exact functions: elected representatives and those responsible for education and culture, head teachers and those responsible for continuing education in companies, the officers and members of parents' associations, managers of companies working in the language market, residential language courses and tourism.

It seeks to make the general public and the media more aware of the issues involved in proficiency in more than one language and knowing more than culture so that belonging to Europe does not only mean supporting the principles of market economy and of democracy, but also fosters the personal appropriation of plurilingual competence as a means of communication and a common, diversified way of relating to the Other. It will bring out the roles incumbent on national education systems in this respect, if they are regarded as having the social function of correcting the predictable mechanical effects of language supply and demand, and promoting European education for languages.

### **B. The different versions of the *Guide***

In order for the proposals made here to be accessible to readers with different needs, the *Guide for the Development of Language Education Policies in Europe* is available in two versions:

- the Main (reference) Version, the present document, which discusses, argues and exemplifies all the principles, analyses and approaches for organising European language education policies, as they are conceived in the framework of the Council of Europe. This version is designed for readers interested in all aspects of these issues, including their technical dimensions. It provides the means of answering the question: *how can language education policies geared towards plurilingualism actually be introduced?*

This version is itself extended by a series of reference studies which have been produced specifically for the *Guide* by specialists in the relevant fields. They provide a synthesis of or take up in more detail the issues dealt with in this version. They are available separately;

- an Executive Version which contains the gist of what is proposed in the main version. It is designed for those involved in language education policy decision-making and answers the question: *how can a policy that aims to preserve and develop linguistic diversity be put in place?*

### III. Organisation of the *Guide*: the issues covered

The *Guide for the Development of Language Education Policies in Europe* provides the means needed to describe and therefore, to a certain extent, understand better the linguistic problems of European societies, in particular those that education systems have to deal with. Generally speaking, it reviews and comments upon the principles of the Council of Europe in this area of language education and describes the administrative and didactic ways of putting those principles into practice. It will be for each member State to select from the proposals put forward those best suited to its particular characteristics.

The *Guide* has been divided into three parts in accordance with this overall project.

**Part One** (*Language Education Policies*) seeks to demonstrate the fundamentally political nature of language and language education policy issues. It gives an overview of the common characteristics of the language policies at present conducted in member States in order to show the gap there is between the principles subscribed to and national education policies:

- these policies may still be defined from the viewpoint of the nation-State, seen as a political entity in which the community is not based on group, lineage, territory or religion and therefore transcends cultural particularities through the notion of citizenship. But citizenship is understood restrictively from the linguistic point of view because it is the national language or languages that makes or make the citizen. This legal definition of citizenship strongly bound up with that of the national language(s) tends to make monolingualism the official (national or regional) norm and introduce antagonistic relationships between languages in that it leads to some languages receiving preferential treatment and a radical distinction being made between the national/official language(s) and all the others;
- the political nature of language issues is rarely identified as such. They are often discussed in terms of common-sense arguments or beliefs put forward as obvious but which are in fact the reflection of unexpressed, mutually contradictory underlying principles. Linguistic ideologies are at work which are not related to established political ideologies (nationalism, liberalism, socialism, and so forth) to which they do not unambiguously correspond. Acknowledging that language education policy issues are a matter for public debate and not simply market forces, i.e. linguistic supply and demand, is a precondition for their being taken into account in collective terms in a European perspective (**Chapter 1**).

Other principles will also be put forward through a reading of the principles of linguistic diversity and plurilingualism that have been affirmed many times by the Council of Europe. They cannot be understood in the limited sense of more attentive management of the diversity of languages. Linguistic diversity is in fact dependent on the acceptance of other people's languages and the curiosity every individual feels about those languages: these are the attitudes that can ensure that the minority languages in a territory survive and result in openness to other communities. Linguistic diversity can be brought about in European societies through education for plurilingualism and plurilingual education that seeks to exploit the linguistic resources of all individuals and develop their potential. This means including in the same educational approach the teaching of the mother tongue (which may or may not be the official language) and the teaching of other languages (**Chapter 2**).

**Part Two** (*Data and Methods for the Development of Language Education Policies*) describes a controlled approach to the management and implementation of language education policies, the principles of which have been defined from a European perspective. Objective data are available that must be taken into account in order to guide education systems with respect to languages. The discussion is therefore methodological since it deals with the collection, identification and interpretation of such data in order to clarify the factors to be taken into account in decision-making in this area.

It will be shown that designing language syllabuses and courses is not only a pedagogical matter since languages are not a type of knowledge comparable to other subjects transmitted by education systems. Languages can be learned outside school and are also used to construct individual and group identity. They cannot therefore be reduced to a means of communication and it is this that makes their management a particularly delicate matter. Emphasis will be placed on the role played by social representations of languages (how easy or difficult they are, the best way of learning them, etc) and the need to be familiar with these common perceptions in order to influence them. The importance of forward-looking analyses will also be stressed, since language provision takes a long time to organise and should anticipate social change (demographic, economic, etc). General trends (such as the prolonging of youth and old age) are such as to modify social demand for languages, so appropriate collective responses to them must be planned (**Chapter 3**).

The languages present in a particular territory are especially decisive for the definition of language education policies. It is therefore important to understand how they are linked at various macro-levels (presence of national and regional languages and the languages of minorities) as well as how speakers (or groups of speakers) use or would like to use them. This chapter describes the possible ways of analysing linguistic situations in order to identify the types of collective conflict that such differences are likely to provoke. The community of citizens must, through its language education policy choices, introduce acceptable modes of arbitration and create consensus (**Chapter 4**).

**Part Three** (*Organisational Forms of Plurilingual Teaching and Learning*) has the purpose of showing that education that includes education for plurilingualism and is geared towards developing plurilingual competence can be introduced so long as the necessary resources are made available.

It is possible for language teaching-learning no longer to be a disputed area since space can be created for every language, particularly if all languages contribute to education for citizenship. Plurilingualism will therefore be interpreted not only as having to bring about better communication between Europeans and with the rest of the world, but as a means of developing intercultural sensitivity and as an intrinsic component of democratic citizenship in Europe. The expected benefits of such an education policy mean that support for the principle should be stimulated by educating the social demand for languages by, for example, increasing the diversification of the ways in which languages are present in the media. Such an option also requires action aimed at education systems: local officials and teachers of every subject need to be made aware of the role of languages and the collective issues involved in teaching them. This objective also means rethinking the initial training of language teachers, whatever languages they teach (**Chapter 5**).

The last chapter offers an inventory of the technical means by which language teaching based on these principles may be organised. Once it is accepted that knowledge of a language is real, even if it is not complete and that languages can be acquired at times particularly propitious for learning them, but also throughout life, the cohabitation of languages becomes possible, especially if everyone is made aware that they use or could use several. These means will be identified in general terms as a matter of alternation over time and space: alternation of languages learned, forms of teaching, places of teaching and learning, etc. Syllabuses can be modulated according to the anticipated role of each language in the linguistic repertoires of each group, all having in common the ability to use several languages through clearly signposted learning paths. This requires the linkage of the educational resources available, whether official, voluntary or private. The instruments the Council of Europe has developed over the last thirty years are particularly relevant in such an educational space structured by common shared values (**Chapter 6**).



## **PART ONE: LANGUAGE EDUCATION POLICIES**

*Developing and implementing policies for the teaching of languages (national, regional, foreign, those of recently settled communities, etc) requires not only technical decisions, but also that such decisions should be based on certain principles. Language policies will therefore be examined from the point of view of their relationship with the 'European project', in an attempt to provide a comprehensive picture. It will be shown that the principles on which some aspects of the language education policies currently pursued in Europe are based are not clearly geared towards linguistic diversity (Chapter 1). The Council of Europe's principles on the matter, which centre on the concept of plurilingualism as a value and competence, will be discussed (Chapter 2).*

## Chapter 1: Language Policies and Language Education Policies in Europe: General Approaches

*In order better to understand the position taken by the Council of Europe on language teaching, this chapter will provide an overview of some of the language policies and language education policies that currently predominate in Europe. It is not claimed that this very general analysis, which would probably prove inadequate if related to a particular country, describes national policies, but the aim is to bring out the timeliness of refocusing these policies in such a way as to define a language policy based on shared European values. It will be emphasised that government language policies, especially those concerning minorities, are still imbued with the idea of monolingualism as the basis of national cohesion and regional identity, as is clear from the modest place accorded to the languages of groups that have settled in Europe very recently.*

*As a result, the dominant characteristics of language education policies are that the national or regional language(s) is (are) made the language of instruction in order to create a feeling of national/regional identity: the teaching of these languages is carefully distinguished from that of foreign languages, although in both cases the purpose is to give pupils, students and adults language education. These general trends should be related to the principles inspiring them, which amount to veritable linguistic ideologies, coherent systems of ideas on languages, their role and teaching. Their constituent elements will be identified and it will be shown that these linguistic ideologies are mutually antagonistic and, in short, incompatible with the principles the Council of Europe has developed as the basis of language education policies.*

### **A preliminary requirement: recognising the political nature of language teaching issues**

Languages in and for Europe are a problem that is often avoided and one that cannot be resolved by resorting to ready-made solutions that are probably inappropriate to the cultural realities of the whole continent. What is required is a collective examination of the matter and it is to this that the *Guide* hopes to make a contribution, particularly as the problems are destined to become more complex (migratory movements, the multicultural nature of society, etc) or may well resolve themselves: the question of languages, and particularly the way they are taught, could receive *de facto* answers if certain market forces which tend to lead to linguistic homogenisation are left to operate for too long.

When looking at language teaching issues, it is important to remember that all political decisions are taken on the basis of two types of considerations: the first relate planned measures to general principles, such as social equity, individual freedoms, tolerance, the model of society, the market economy, etc, which are supposed to legitimate those decisions, while the others are of a technical nature and concern the congruence of the planned measures with available resources, collective priorities, the time-scale for implementation, and desired effects.

The same should be the case for language policies, particularly language education policies. This latter field, however, is not everywhere the subject of in-depth debate in societies, except in situations or circumstances in which language questions take on acute forms. An example of this is that many political parties devote virtually no space to language issues in their manifestos. Language issues are increasingly present with respect to minority languages, but these would benefit from being approached in the context of a comprehensive view of languages for Europe, in particular because the emphasis given to the linguistic and educational rights of minorities tends to strengthen majorities in the feeling that such issues do not concern them since they are of no direct relevance to them, being the affair of minorities.

With respect to language teaching, the most frequent intervention is in the form of regulatory decisions taken at ministerial level or, more simply, by general or regional directorates of education. These decisions are presented as being justified by the dominant social demand or their technical relevance (for example, the choice of languages to be taught in elementary schools). They seem to result from

commonly accepted truths or agreement among educational specialists that do not involve public debate.

This situation results from the fact that the problems of language education policy are not usually seen as being matters for political debate, unlike economic and cultural policies or other issues concerning education in general (equality of opportunity, efficiency of education systems, educational freedom, and so forth). Citizens are likely to recognise and consciously adhere to distinct philosophies on these questions, although the very principles on which linguistic education policies are based are often unclear. Nevertheless, those principles, which may take the form of linguistic ideologies, exist and give rise to different language policies.

The degree of failure to understand the political nature of language and language teaching issues varies from country to country and is accentuated by the fact that, although it has existed for centuries, conscious intervention with respect to languages has only recently been identified as such in the worlds of politics and linguistics. Linguistics develops knowledge which decision-makers could take into account and that will be used in this *Guide*.

### **Definitions: language education policies and plurilingualism**

It will be argued that *language policy* is a conscious official or militant action that seeks to intervene in languages of whatever type (national, regional, minority, foreign, etc) with respect to their forms (the writing system, for example), social functions (choice of language as official language) or their place in education. The language policy may be pursued by citizens or groups, by political parties and in the voluntary or private sector. Action on languages takes place in the context of particular social situations or events of which it bears the mark. Such language policies are also, however, based on principles (economy and efficiency, national identity, democracy, and so forth) which give them a meaning that extends beyond current circumstances.

The scope of language policies is made up of this set of issues (conception of the nation, purposes of education, etc), agents (politicians, activists, trades unionists, etc), and levels of intervention (legislative, regulatory, etc). Recognising the political nature of language and language teaching issues is a prerequisite of any action in this field, since the technical difficulties (structural, administrative, financial, etc) governments have to overcome, individually or through joint action, cannot be overcome unless positions are clearly taken in relation to these principles.

The scope of language policies concerns language rights (of minorities in particular), courts and administration, public signs, media... and language teaching (from elementary school to higher and vocational education). Interventions in this latter area, the central concern of this *Guide*, will be called *language education policies*.

Language policies, language education policies and linguistic ideologies which underpin them will be related to *plurilingualism*, which is a fundamental principle for Council of Europe language education policies. Plurilingualism should be understood as:

- the intrinsic capacity of all speakers to use and learn, alone or through teaching, more than one language. The ability to use several languages to varying degrees and for distinct purposes is defined in the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (p.168) as the ability “to use languages for the purposes of communication and to take part in intercultural action, where a person, viewed as a social agent, has proficiency, of varying degrees, in several languages and experience of several cultures”. This ability is concretised in a repertoire of languages a speaker can use. The goal of teaching is to develop this competence (hence the expression: *plurilingualism as a competence*).
- an educational value that is the basis of linguistic tolerance: speakers’ awareness of their plurilingualism may lead them to give equal value to each of the varieties they themselves and other speakers use, even if they do not have the same functions (private, professional

or official communication, language of affiliation, etc). But this awareness should be assisted and structured by schools since it is no sense automatic (hence the expression: *plurilingualism as a value*).

Plurilingualism should be understood in this dual sense: it constitutes a conception of the speaker as fundamentally plural and a value in that it is the basis of linguistic tolerance, an essential element of intercultural education. *Multilingualism* refers here exclusively to the presence of several languages in a given space, independently of those who use them: for example, the fact that two languages are present on a territory does not indicate whether inhabitants know both languages or one only.

Language policies and linguistic ideologies will therefore be examined in relation to how they approach plurilingualism with respect to:

- **education for plurilingualism**, which involves enhancing and developing speakers' individual linguistic repertoires from the earliest schooldays and throughout life. *Education for plurilingualism* will from now on refer to language education (national, "foreign", regional languages) in which the purpose will be to develop plurilingualism as a competence
- **education for plurilingual awareness**, which is one of the requirements for the maintenance of linguistic diversity. Education for plurilingual awareness will refer to education, not necessarily limited to language education whose purpose is to educate for linguistic tolerance, raise awareness of linguistic diversity and educate for democratic citizenship.

Plurilingual education includes both education for plurilingualism and education for plurilingual awareness, as specified above.

### **1.1. State language policy trends in Europe: from national monolingualism to tolerated multilingualism?**

The following considerations should be read as a description of the current situation which is probably of uneven relevance to different contexts. In this attempted overview, it is stressed that current linguistic situations in Europe vary but are, in the final analysis, comparable.

They are related because they have been inherited from a common past: they are, in particular, the product of changes in borders between European countries in the late nineteenth and in the twentieth centuries and, more radically, in the very nature of modern states. They are also related because recent political events have reactivated the classic geopolitical issues in Europe: return of real sovereignty to countries that have not been subject to historical discontinuity, the reappearance of former sovereign states, the sometimes tragic emergence of regional entities that were previously part of federations as independent states or regions with intensified self-government. Migratory movements, which affect the whole of Europe, and all the various forms of marginalisation connected with social breakdown have also produced problems with linguistic dimensions.

New policies or projects are being devised to enable education systems to respond to these European and global developments. The goals of such language policies include a European dimension but one that is not necessarily centred on education for plurilingualism and education for plurilingual awareness.

#### **1.1.1. *The linguistic norm and national identity***

Some political philosophies well represented in Europe propound the theory that state, nation and language are coterminous: the national language is a symbol and component of nationality and is also a factor in the definition of citizenship itself. Accordingly, it is crucial that the national language be clearly defined and distinguished from other linguistic varieties used in the territory or its environs. In

the course of European history, instruments have gradually been created to define the national linguistic variety and ensure its stability over time (dictionaries, grammars, academies, etc). These linguistic authorities have official and/or academic or cultural powers and disseminate linguistic norms to other institutions, such as the education system. The state reinforces the legitimacy of this (or these) standard linguistic variety(ies) by the exclusive use of it (them) it authorises in its relations with citizens and in education.

In practical terms, problems relating to the national norm have obvious political and educational implications. Debates particularly concern:

- defining the source of the norm as a unifying model: what is the *right language*, what level of ability in it should schools provide? This question concerns parents (especially with respect to how they can help their children) as well as employers
- spelling may be at the centre of debate, sometimes taking a clearly political turn, since it is the objective external form of linguistic competence on the basis of which linguistic or intellectual ability can be judged. This question is linked to the previous one, but the development of specific graphic code is also a way of constructing national identity where there are neighbouring varieties
- pronunciation is also a very visible marker of social differentiation. Linguistic communities tend to favour certain pronunciations as correct or distinguished and stigmatise “lower class” pronunciations or “accents” considered vulgar. Schools play a part in forming such linguistic norms
- the definition of language skills that make it possible to demonstrate that one belongs to the community or to acquire citizenship through naturalisation. This may be vague (demonstrating a *good level* of knowledge of the language of the host country) or precise, evaluated by interview or specific tests. This is an apparently technical question that may become extremely political, the level of competence required being a tangible indication of integration policy
- in some countries and some cultural and political contexts the borrowing of words from other linguistic varieties gives rise to debates in the context of which the notion of national linguistic identity reappears.

The degree of interest in such linguistic questions varies according to national context but, generally speaking, they concern only some aspects of the teaching of official languages. The excessive attention paid them too often gives the impression that these are essential linguistic problems. This may well be the case from a national point of view, but their relevance to the question of the future of Europe is less certain.

### ***1.1.2. National cohesion and linguistic minorities***

The central political issue remains managing linguistic diversity since current language policies are set in the context of nation-states whose very creation has involved the invention of national languages favoured above others.

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The ideal model of the modern nation is one where linguistic frontiers, cultural and religious frontiers and external and internal political frontiers coincide: in this case, all citizens speak the same linguistic variety, which is therefore designated the national language. This shared linguistic variety may then be considered a signifier of belonging: the nation consists of the community of those who speak that language.

But this model of the nation-state, devised in the early nineteenth century, is purely theoretical, even mythical: political, linguistic and cultural frontiers are not identical and in a given population or territory there are always speakers of other linguistic varieties who are there as a result of ancient migrations (often predating the arrival of those who brought the “regional” language that would become dominant) or recent migrations. All national entities are multilingual, even if they claim to be homogeneous. Every nation-state must therefore devise solutions in order to articulate an abstract definition of citizenship, such as adherence to certain common values that make up the social contract (where citizenship is defined independently of lineage, territory, wealth, religion, etc) and what might be called a concrete affective adherence to one national grouping rather than another. In order to resolve this contradiction, national citizenship has again been given a cultural dimension, which receives a concrete content in the form of a shared memory or language. It is this latter which is the basis of state monolingualism and leads the state to reduce linguistic heterogeneity.

In Europe, linguistic and cultural heterogeneity has not disappeared with the development of modern nations: it was first renewed by the redrawing of nation-state boundaries themselves by the Treaty of Versailles and following the end of the Second World War. It has also been maintained by the emergence of communities that have become aware of forming specific entities and that consider themselves as such. Lastly, it has been renewed by the settlement in European countries of communities from every part of the world. The new arrivals, still linked by a feeling of belonging to the same cultural group because of their common origins, may continue to use their languages and want to transmit them.

These regional and minority communities whose identity is bound up with a common language have varying origins and statuses:

- groups whose territory was part of a previously existing state and which have been attached to a different state
- historically indigenous minorities which are part of collective entities (kingdom, empire, modern nations, etc) which have long enjoyed some form of autonomy and have been able to maintain it in modern nations
- recently emerged minorities which have received legal recognition as national minorities. These are groups whose members are linked by the feeling of belonging to a specific group and are also citizens of a single nation-state
- communities consisting of newly settled groups which may tend to disintegrate over the generations
- communities that speak regional varieties of the national language without having any strongly affirmed or claimed political and cultural identity

The severity of the recognition problems such minorities give rise to depends on such characteristics as:

- their demographic weight in relation to the national entity in which they are present and their degree of geographic concentration (dispersion among the majority group or concentration in certain places where its members form the majority)
- their economic power (geopolitical situation, access to natural resources, economic dynamism, etc)
- their history, particularly democratic deficits that need to be corrected, if they have been subjected to linguistic repression

- the status of their linguistic variety and its “degree” of acceptance by speakers of the majority language: if it is regarded as very “exotic” (with respect to its sounds, for example) or very “minor”, the feeling of foreignness will be more acute

*A priori*, it is not possible to determine on the basis of these characteristics the form of the societal problems to which such situations may give rise. Forms of conflict will remain political (demand for independence, self-government, legal and cultural recognition, etc) or become violent. The demands made will range from recognition of a community’s language as an official language of certain institutions or as the language of education, to minimal demands, such as that the language be taught at least as an option in the national curriculum in order to ensure its transmission.

The responses of national central government to these questions in the context of language education policies converge in Europe in that they focus on managing acceptable balances between national variety(ies) and other linguistic varieties: multilingualism is accepted as a fact to which one adjusts because questions relating to the languages of minority communities are regarded as concerning only those minority groups. The plurilingual nature of the diverse communities of a State is not everywhere accepted as a basic principle of language policies.

#### 1.1.2.1. *The retreat of state monolingualism*

In Europe, linguistic repression is now considered a politically out-dated, costly “solution”, although the use of languages other than national/official may still be penalised or restricted, particularly where there are serious tensions between communities. The policy is still pursued, indirectly at least, through the dissemination of powerful national ideologies that result in linguistic self-censorship by speakers of unofficial varieties or because these communities lack access to the mass media. As a result of advances in democracy, imposed monolingualism is now held to be illegitimate and even illegal.

Such a policy was frequently implemented in the past. It was accompanied by other forms of domination and, in Europe and elsewhere in the world, its aim was to eliminate dialects, patois or indigenous languages. Where it was politically possible to ignore the presence of or eliminate other linguistic varieties, steps were taken to establish a language policy aimed at imposing the greatest possible degree of monolingualism, including in private life. The most radical solution found to ensure the linguistic homogeneity of the nation-state was to prevent the use of varieties other than the national one(s) by every possible means.

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Nowadays, while the presence of other varieties is recognised, national language policy continues to emphasise the preference to be given to the national variety(ies) in its (their) official usages (in government departments, at school or before the courts, where the language question is crucial), other varieties being accepted for private use. The result is a strengthening of the current social representation which regards individuals as fundamentally monolingual.

Language policies tend to tolerate citizens’ linguistic diversity as necessary for communication or social harmony. But such diversity is still not recognised and encouraged for its own sake.

#### 1.1.2.2. *The autonomy model: the adjustment of state monolingualism*

Where it has proved impossible to ignore the presence of speakers of other linguistic varieties in the country because assimilation policies might be a threat to national cohesion itself, language policies have created legal conditions to accommodate such linguistic heterogeneity. The members of communities using regional or minority varieties have then obtained certain forms of linguistic autonomy on a territorial basis, which often may or sometimes may not mirror forms of political autonomy.

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On the basis of this principle of relative linguistic autonomy, the organisation of specific systems (legal, educational, etc) that give a place to regional and minority linguistic varieties involves complex adjustments (to the national or federal constitution, for example) which are the subject of delicate negotiations. The degree of autonomy is extremely variable and may go so far as to make the acquisition of the official national variety a simple symbolic concession.

Such adjustments to put in place or preserve the identity of communities using minority linguistic varieties are always fragile; they find practical expression in detailed technical measures, which may always be disputed, because of the complexity of their implementation on the ground. This may lead to a general questioning of the *status quo* with respect to secondary issues.

### 1.1.2.3. *The federal model: from nation-state to region-state?*

The recognition of rights to national minorities in Europe has also taken the form of federal or federalist constitutions. This has happened when it has been impossible not to take into account the presence of specific linguistic communities (because of their demographic weight in the nation, for example) or because it has not been possible to reach consensus as to what the national language itself should be. This has particularly been the case when new states have been created by the territorial restructuring of existing states. Language policies have then essentially concerned the equitable management of multilingualism, i.e. devising ways in which several linguistic varieties may coexist as official languages.

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Such policies may, however, have the same results as monolingual policies since they reproduce them at local level, i.e. in the administrative and territorial authorities that make up the federal entity (regions, cantons, *autonomias*, *länder*, etc): each may be managed as though it were linguistically homogeneous, in other words, according to a conception that remains monolingual.

The dominant groups in these territories, which are not necessarily homogeneous despite their smaller size, may promote language policies whose goal is to develop a feeling of belonging and end up making the official linguistic variety of this subdivision of “territory” a standard of belonging for all its inhabitants.

The members of such communities will, however, have to become bilingual to some extent, since they will have to acquire one of the other official varieties of the federal entity. Thus they have to give some place, including in the framework of federal legislation, to a linguistic variety other than the one they regard as their own. This type of plurilingualism may not be accepted willingly and therefore not satisfactorily put in practice (or with disappointing results, if compulsory teaching in schools is involved) because it is seen as being imposed by the sociolinguistic and institutional situation.

There are therefore policies defending or adjusting state or other monolingualism that recognise minority linguistic varieties. The differences between them are clearly far from negligible with respect to democratic values. But the principles of these language policies, which seem to be so opposed, are in fact similar: they are founded upon the principle of linguistically homogeneous political entities. Where a monolingual ideology is not acceptable and official bilingualism is necessary in order to reach a *modus vivendi*, citizens’ plurilingualism may nonetheless be regarded as contrary to the unitary conception. Recognising the linguistic rights of minorities, particularly on a territorial basis, should not lead to the reproduction of monolingual rationales which are appropriate only to linguistically homogeneous entities, the nature and size of which are open to question. Juxtaposing state monolingualism or forms of bilingualism necessitated by the requirements of good community relations is not the same as promoting plurilingualism: the purpose is still the symbolic and legal assimilation of the language to the nation.

### 1.1.3. *Migrants: new linguistic minorities, new linguistic rights?*

Ending the recruitment of foreign labour in the 1970s slowed, but did not put a stop to, immigration. The need for labour, now qualified professionals, was again felt at the beginning of the new millennium. There continue to be new arrivals, in particular from the Mediterranean, along East-West and South-North trajectories. Economic factors are likely to generate new needs in Europe which might be of the order of several million people. Language policy issues concerning these people will therefore continue to arise for many years.

Receiving newly arrived migrants involves setting up language education structures for them and their children, in the absence of which the acquisition of the national or official language will take place spontaneously only with respect to oral forms. This would lead to later handicaps as a result of inability to write the language. For a time, the national language of the host country can only be a second language for such new citizens: the language of the media, work and ordinary social relations. But exposure to the language of the host country varies according to each community's degree of self-sufficiency: in the case of non-working women, for example, it may be weak.

The integration, even temporary and reversible, of such populations takes place through the acquisition of (one of) the national variety(ies). At the latest, this will happen with the second generation through school attendance. But this also raises the question of recognising the mother tongues of the migrants' children in a manner comparable to those of established national minorities. These languages are likely to be lost and, by the third or fourth generation, to be merely the ancestral language. "Ethnic mobilisation" around cultural identities does not necessarily focus on the transmission of original languages. For example, second generation North Africans, who have gone from being immigrants to minority groups, seem to be interested in cultural action focusing more on new values (anti-racism and civil rights, for example) which do not always make transmission of various forms of colloquial Arabic or Kabyle or the acquisition of classical Arabic a priority.

These linguistic varieties are generally given only minimal space. There are numerous examples of recently settled minorities with no specific territorial base who have immigrated to Europe for economic reasons since 1945, importing linguistic varieties which are given no significant place in schools and receive little cultural tolerance.

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Some believe that, while policies respecting the principles of multiculturalism (recognised ethnic communities) have avoided major social disturbance, they have not provided equal opportunity, or at least sufficient forms of integration. They are, however, at least a temporary solution in a situation where little account is taken of the languages of new arrivals. This may be regarded as unfortunate merely in economic terms, given the enrichment the presence of speakers of foreign languages represents for a country. The political question is whether the integration of such new citizens presupposes the eventual disappearance of their heritage languages.

## 1.2. **Language education policies in national education systems: national language(s) versus "foreign" languages**

The need to maintain the stability of official languages leads dominant social groups and the state apparatus to set norms which are disseminated by education systems, in particular by the teaching of the so-called *mother tongue* and the teaching of other subjects in that language. Language issues are therefore particularly central in education systems, especially in the early years of schooling, since their function is both to improve children's communicative skills and give them the basic cognitive skills, and ensure their social training and training as citizens.

### **1.2.1. *The language of education as language of affiliation***

The role of languages as an element of membership of the national community explains the attention they receive in education systems. For this reason, the national language is often the first written variety learned in the education system, even by children who have not acquired its oral forms in their home environment. It can be expected that in all cases where the linguistic variety of the school is not the mother variety this situation will produce inhibitions or delay these children's learning processes. They will only appropriate the written forms of their mother tongue later, if at all. It was because of such fears and in order to respect a democratic principle that international declarations were made recommending that children should be educated in their mother tongues.

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In some national education systems the right of immigrant populations to be taught in the official linguistic variety of the host country has been acknowledged (in order to avoid any discrimination), at the same time stressing the need to take into account the heritage language and culture. It is accepted that the acquisition of writing should initially take place in the language of the child's family socialisation. But, in this case, it is accepted that these are only transition programmes to the acquisition of the written form of the national variety, though there are exceptions in Europe to this quasi-general rule. The very establishment of such programmes gives rise to negotiations regarding the age at which children should be exposed to the school variety or the subjects which may later be taught in the mother variety. Exposure may be wanted as early as possible to the mother tongue, to as many subjects as possible taught in the mother variety. These debates are only apparently pedagogical.

However that may be, such transition programmes are only a temporary accommodation of pupils' linguistic diversity in relation to the homogenising purposes of schools.

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The situation has become more complex with the accession to certain forms of political autonomy by regions recently formed in existing sovereign states, since the minorities there have acquired the right to educate their children in their own linguistic variety rather than that of the linguistic majority. If writing skills are acquired in this initial variety, the mastery of writing skills in the national variety will also be necessary, which may be justified in terms of participation in the life of society as a whole. This makes compromise bilingual schooling indispensable, with the problems underlined above of a satisfactory balance between the mother/regional and national linguistic varieties. This situation is made still more complex if there are substantial minorities in these regions.

Language education policies of this type, which are still a significant current in national policies, are not receptive to the concept of plurilingualism and diversified language repertoires. The imposed coexistence of linguistic varieties as a result of mediation, the cost of which is sometimes borne in part, could be accepted fully and result in coordinating the teaching of the various languages (mother, affiliation, official, national, etc), thus forming the basis of plurilingual education and education for plurilingualism.

### **1.2.2. *“Foreign” languages and the non-integration of language teaching***

So-called *foreign* languages present different problems. The reasons for their inclusion in training programmes are nowadays often economic and practical, although the teaching of languages, particularly classical languages (Greek and Latin) was for long considered a means of “mental training”, access to the corresponding literatures and to general knowledge, with the prestige that went with them.

The general trend of European education systems seems to be to give foreign languages a more important place than previously, often to the detriment of classical languages. This major attention results from the increased social demand for languages, which is itself the result of greater awareness

that a knowledge of foreign languages is an advantage in working life. A greater number of languages may now be offered and the time devoted to them is tending to increase. The European dimension obviously has something to do with this general trend. These conclusions are clearly set out in the *Eurydice* study on language teaching in schools<sup>1</sup>. The following observations have been made:

- more space given to languages (earlier teaching, increased time devoted to languages throughout schooling)
- major sensitivity to teaching regional languages and, to a much lesser extent, the first languages of immigrant children, for whom the most widespread solution still seems to be integration in education systems
- a wider range of languages is offered, though real choices are still limited.

Thus the overall situation of foreign languages is positive but mixed. Apart from the quantitative progress with respect to the languages education systems offer, the systems seem to pursue the same general education policy, in that they give foreign languages the same status as before:

- languages are still taught in exactly the same way (frequency, length, types of certification, etc) as other school subjects, as though languages were objects of knowledge like others (yet language acquisition is a natural competence)
- they put foreign languages in competition with each other in grouped options
- they put them in competition with other subjects (for example, classical languages and computer sciences)
- they put them in competition with the teaching of regional minority languages

This status as optional subjects or matters of choice sets foreign languages school subjects apart in which there is an appearance of taking learners' expectations into account. But this possibility of choice is not often accompanied by education for plurilingual awareness, which would facilitate understanding of the multiple value of languages. Furthermore, the options system contributes to the fragmentation of subjects, each coming under a distinct set of teachers (primary school teachers, teachers of a particular language) who often have little professional contact with one another, despite the work of national and international teachers' federations that group together all modern languages.

This administrative and pedagogical fragmentation encourages a heterogeneous approach to the teaching of foreign languages, maternal varieties and foreign and classical languages, although they all involve the same competence: the potential and/or effective ability to use several languages at different degrees for different purposes that may vary over time. Such a separation of languages is very noticeable in the case of foreign languages, where it creates problems for learners (heterogeneous grammatical terminology from one language to another, for example). The lack of adequate coordination between the different languages learned according to modern methods, between different levels of schooling (languages learned successively), and between the ways the national/official variety and foreign varieties are taught is a source of inefficiency and it helps to mask the single nature of plurilingual competence.

Even referring to these languages as "foreign" is reductive since the term may be used to refer to the languages of "nationals" who have acquired them as their first languages outside school and use them a great deal. National identity is confirmed by this opposition between national language(s) and languages which are differentiated from it, essential unity as opposed to cosmopolitan plurality, which some find threatening. Moving beyond such oppositions involves considering any linguistic variety

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<sup>1</sup> Eurydice (2001): Foreign language teaching in schools in Europe.

used in Europe as a language of Europe, wherever it originally came from. The role of plurilingual education seen from this point of view is to ensure a perception of linguistic varieties at last separated from the value each of them may have as an element of national or regional identification.

Policies for national/official languages, those of minorities and immigrant populations and those known as *foreign* often seem to be devised through sometimes incoherent institutional forms and according to political principles inspired by a qualified monolingualism in which linguistic diversity is tolerated rather than accepted. This *Guide* calls for language issues to be seriously examined and above all for them to be treated as a whole from a standpoint that takes its coherence from clearly established, common European principles. This action is possible because a shared educational culture has been formed in Europe. It is as yet not widely accepted by some sections of public opinion, however, and is hampered by a number of linguistic ideologies at work in language policies and national language education policies.

### **1.3. Linguistic ideologies**

The management of language issues in education systems and elsewhere is based on beliefs or perceptions that may be erected into a system: belief in ease of learning a language, the ability to reflect modernity or transmit science, the value on the job market, according to its internal characteristics, may lead to the formation of stabilised, coherent sets of opinions. The groups that adhere to such representations are likely to use them for their benefit in debates with other social groups. These sets of beliefs that are the basis of arguments advanced about languages may be called *linguistic ideologies*. Such representations are equally active in European debates: it is important to describe them in order to situate them more precisely in relation to other opinions and to be better able to discuss them.

#### **1.3.1. Common linguistic ideology: the inequality of languages**

One of the most widespread linguistic ideologies is born of the simple feeling, which has no scientific foundation, that languages are unequal. This ideology, which is often not controlled, suggests that languages are intrinsically unequal in value. It usually has its origin in ethnocentric prejudices which make it necessary to denigrate languages spoken by others in order to establish the superiority of one's own language and group. Other languages are presented as unpleasant, rudimentary or fundamentally unsuitable for sophisticated uses such as literary or scientific expression.

It is with this in mind that the term *linguistic variety* has been used in this document as a neutral generic term whenever it seemed appropriate to avoid the word *language* itself, which already implies a value judgment. Any assessment of a linguistic variety as being, or not really being, a *language* because, for example, it is more or less able to express contemporary scientific knowledge, is the result of external factors and not of the intrinsic potential of each linguistic variety. All linguistic varieties may be equipped to accomplish functions they have not previously been required to perform.

From the point of view of linguistics, any linguistic variety, whatever its social status, is a system of signs used as a basis of communication by a human group, all languages being manifestations of the capacity for language peculiar to the human race. However, in a particular society and in different societies, languages are considered not to have the same value. Such judgments are apparently based on the nature of the languages themselves, but they are in fact a function of their status in a society or the status of the people who speak them. The legitimacy of one linguistic variety in relation to others in a given place is dependent on external factors which have been clearly identified by sociolinguistic research, such as:

- its use as the language of communication by dominant social groups (military, economic, cultural, religious, scientific, symbolic or elite) or by central government
- its standardisation through forms, grammars, dictionaries, etc

- its historical legitimacy as a linguistic variety belonging to all the cultural groups in the place in question and its recognition as expressing at least a part of their identity
- its cultural legitimacy acquired through literary, artistic, scientific, philosophical, religious and other productions
- its status as a taught language and its role as the language in which other school and university subjects are taught

Quite derogatory representations of other languages and their speakers may be promoted by the denomination of languages, the attribution of characteristics to them (languages are regarded as being more or less clear, simple, rich, beautiful, etc) or the designation of certain uses of them, and particularly of the national language: speaking with an “accent”, speaking in a “lower class” or “vulgar” way or “incorrectly”, etc. Some immigrant children say they speak only one linguistic variety, the national language of the host country, because they have absorbed the dominant representation according to which their parents’ language is not considered a “real” language where they now live.

These words designating languages are themselves the first issue of groups working for recognition: a particular regional dialect wishes to be recognised as a full *language*, the denomination having the power of legitimisation, just as a group wishes to be recognised as a *people* in order legitimately to found a state. This linguistic ideology is still very much alive in media and political discourse, perhaps in forms less virulent than in the past. It is clear that it may lead to linguistic intolerance in that it is not likely to foster the recognition of equal dignity to all linguistic varieties.

Decision-makers involved in drawing up, formulating and implementing language policies and language education policies are not necessarily free of these common stereotypes about languages. Drawing up language education policies in a democratic context involves using perceptions of languages other than those based on such representations, especially since the ideology of the unequal value of languages has been used as a premises for policies of cultural and religious repression, in order to justify or perpetuate territorial conquests, marginalise social groups, hinder their emancipation or retrospectively justify colonial enterprises.

### **1.3.2.     *The linguistic ideology of the nation***

Modern European nations embodying a new concept of the state were created in the late eighteenth and in the nineteenth centuries, and are still being created today, on the basis of complex cultural and political processes in which languages play their part. This development of sovereign territorial entities is based on a feeling different in kind from obedience to a single sovereign: it comes from collective, renewed, and therefore always revocable, adherence to a common project.

Nations are formed around adherence to a community of equals. But while belonging to a community of individuals held to be equal is defined as a choice and a legal status independent of belonging to a clan, lineage, religion, territory, it should also be shaped through and in common experience and values, in a shared heritage which constitutes the affective dimension. This affective attachment, which is at the root of patriotism, has in Europe been based on symbolic and material elements that differ, but are comparable, in different states: such multiple forms of national identity are constructed from materials such as the memory of great ancestors, heroes incarnating national values, and so forth. These common national traits have reintroduced the principles of cultural differentiation where the abstract identity of these communities made cohesive through attachment to values such as equality before the law or the sovereignty of the people should prevail.

A particular linguistic ideology has been evolved to form, with other materials, the cultural common denominator which has been used to define historical nations. A single linguistic variety of the territory, which has a central position or is spoken/adopted by the dominant urban classes, for example, is chosen as the official language: it becomes one of the incarnations of the nation and the

national spirit (sometimes even the essence of the nation). The nation, in its turn, reinforces this by giving it pre-eminence (it is used by government, disseminated by teaching). This “officialising” mechanism may be supplemented by measures to eradicate, slowly or suddenly, the other linguistic varieties or systematically to make them minor varieties. It is recalled that the exacerbated exaltation of such national identities led to the implosion of Europe.

The same ideology may be mobilised by minority groups seeking recognition as distinct communities to reduce the space given to other linguistic varieties still “more minor” than theirs in the name of the need to maintain or create the cohesion of this newly formed and recognised community. Such a linguistic ideology is clearly inappropriate for the European project: one cannot think of Europe as a monolingual political entity and base its cohesion on the voluntary adoption by all its citizens of a single language that would provide a concrete basis for their adherence to that community.

#### **1.4. The linguistic ideology of economy**

Another linguistic ideology is based on the need for a common language that would reduce the cost of multilingualism. It has been strengthened by current economic globalisation and the development of the communication technologies which have greatly increased opportunities for and the nature of contacts.

##### **1.4.1. *The principle of economy and lingua francas***

The needs of international relations, particularly trade, have contributed to the development of knowledge of languages which have been put in contact with one another by specialised groups: soldiers and emissaries, monks and pilgrims, merchants and tradesmen, nowadays businessmen and tourists. Mutual comprehension may also be brought about by knowledge, mutual or otherwise, of interlocutors’ languages or the use of specialised linguistic varieties in these forms of international communication.

A common language may be created on the basis of one or more existing linguistic varieties and thus be used as a more functional means of communication between speakers of different mother tongues. During the Middle Ages, *Lingua Franca* based on French and Occitan was created and used as a means of communication in the Mediterranean Basin and later disappeared. Sociolinguistics uses the name of this language to refer to linguistic varieties performing those functions, be they artificially created (like Esperanto) or composite (like *Lingua Franca* itself). The role of *lingua franca* may also be played by an existing linguistic variety: it may be the language of a particular community and become the language of communication between groups (like Bambara in Mali). The role may also be played by the language of a particular community (Latin, Spanish, English), its use being the result of the multiple forms of primacy (military, ideological, cultural, economic, etc) that that community may enjoy. But, once it has become international, the language of a dominant nation may also ultimately be cut off from its original territorial bases, and no longer have the function of being the vector of that dominant power. It can be adopted in new forms as a result of diversification, by other communities which can then consider it at their own language.

The linguistic ideology based on a principle of economy is often placed at the service of the economy. The costs of the diversity of human linguistic varieties are then invoked: the cost of learning and translation, the difficulty of mutual comprehension. It is also the source of national policies for which the use of a common, homogeneous language ensures the fluidity of the national market, particularly the labour market, and maximum efficiency to the state. Economy of languages is used to justify efforts to thwart linguistic diversification. This ideology can be considered part of liberal economic ideology.

##### **1.4.2. *The dissemination of English: towards the linguistic homogenisation of Europe?***

The present place of English (or, more exactly, Anglo-American) in international communication is most often justified by such a linguistic ideology: this linguistic variety allows an economy of scale in

trade, which now extends worldwide. English has followed other languages in being used internationally because it is the language of dominant states. It is a language of Europe, where it is not used universally as a language of communication, but is widely used in certain fields, such as trade and finance.

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It may firstly be feared that sociolinguistic processes are at work which could lead from English being used as the common language of inter-group communication to its becoming the ordinary language of national communication in certain milieus (economic, artistic, scientific, etc), in the end competing with some national languages. English is commonly presented by the ideology of linguistic economy as the single language of the future, which is not enough to justify fears of linguistic homogenisation in Europe.

It has certainly not been proven that this scenario for the linguistic future is relevant or that it will be fulfilled: the prospects for the development of Global English involve various issues. It is indeed possible to envisage:

- that this linguistic variety might, at least partly, lose its role as single official language in the USA as a result of the rise of other languages, such as Spanish and Asian languages
- that this linguistic variety, because of its regional diversification and use among non-native speakers (the English, Indian, American and Australian varieties going so far as to become mutually incomprehensible), will eventually no longer conform to the linguistic standards of native speakers and develop into forms which would make it just one variety for special relationships between the states of which it is the official language
- that the roles of *lingua franca* and language of dominant powers may split as a result of a more massive rejection than is at present possible of certain elements of the American model. Anti-globalisation movements may be an indication of this
- that the functions performed by this linguistic variety will split from the goods it is used to trade. There is a notable trend to describe certain products in the language of the purchaser and not in that of its designer or vendor: *National Geographic* is now distributed in several languages, *CNN* has created regional editions, *Coca Cola's* advertising campaigns are national; all these are indications of the impact of individualised sales techniques which highlight the specificity of the consumers targeted and therefore their languages and cultural references
- that social distinction strategies will value the acquisition of competence in several languages (at least two), and less widely studied languages. As knowledge of foreign languages becomes commonplace (a certain degree of knowledge of English, for example), the social space for less common languages might be recreated.

All these reasons argue in favour of a cautious assessment of the effects of homogenisation based on the linguistic ideology of economy. However, other elements suggest that a process of dissemination may have started which, in quantitative terms, has reached the point of no return: English has a dominant place in education systems and international communication. This universality (although very relative) could at least weaken the languages of small communities if communications between its members took place exclusively in this other language in whole sectors (scientific and economic exchanges, etc). Each state should therefore think about its own linguistic future (to decide whether it should “marginalise” its national language which has no international standing, for example). The essential point is that these forces should not reach their logical conclusion without the members of each community being explicitly informed and called upon to debate them democratically. It can be imagined that European perspectives will have a role to play in those debates.

### 1.4.3. *English and plurilingualism*

It is obviously very difficult to draw conclusions on this question, which has a number of political undercurrents. Whether or not one believes that English is “threatening” Europe with linguistic homogeneity, it remains the case that dominant social representations attribute every virtue to this language (for use, communication, the new technologies, etc) and thus contribute to disseminating an ideology of monolingualism. The question of the relationship between mastery of English and plurilingualism is, in fact, in a sense more cultural than sociolinguistic.

The role of English as world language is to a great extent the result of the current dominance of the “American model”, in particular with respect to mass culture. The increasing importance of cultural activities in social life and the efficiency of the United States of America and other English-speaking countries in the culture industries, as well as their contributions of every kind to the world community, have led to the international dissemination of models of behaviour and values. English therefore not only plays the role of a language of communication but is also valued for itself as the language of a model of life or society. In this sense, it is no longer a *lingua franca*, although it is conceivable that it might be appropriated only to express one’s culture and construct one’s own identity. This would be possible if the contents of teaching were culturally neutralised (with no relation to English-speaking societies) and the linguistic reference model were one of the varieties of international English. Such a path has already been explored and is encouraged, among other things, by some teachers’ fear of being accused of neo-colonialism.

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English is therefore valued as an indispensable communication tool and as a means of access to modernity. This conjunction of functions may lead to the appropriation of other linguistic varieties being seen as superfluous (and not only by native English-speakers), because knowledge of English is in itself sufficient to satisfy communication needs and model social aspirations.

It is therefore important that the teaching of English, and of all linguistic varieties in the same position, should be dealt with specifically, in particular with respect to its functions in education for plurilingualism and intercultural communication. Dealing with the question of English without taking into account the position it has been given would amount to abandoning action concerning situations whose educational consequences are crucial.

In these circumstances, it is not enough to diversify the languages offered in schools; the education system must also be enabled to offer education for plurilingual awareness, that is, organise as part of the teaching of languages, but also elsewhere, educational activities which lead to equal dignity being accorded to all the linguistic varieties in individual and group repertoires, whatever their statute in the community. Teaching of English should be conceived so as to stimulate speakers’ plurilingualism and not block its later development in the name of a monolingual ideology.

### 1.5. **Conclusion**

The problems which make the search for consensus between the states of Europe more complex in the field of languages (mother tongue, second language, etc) and their teaching derive from the fact that languages have multiple social functions: they are associated with collective identities (nation, region, community, etc), play a part in the formation of the individual and the citizen, are an increasingly indispensable instrument in working life, facilitate the discovery of other cultures and societies, and have an educational role in that intolerance and racism are also expressed in contempt for the Other’s language. Furthermore, the social demand for the teaching of English is probably unable to foster the dissemination of pluralistic perspectives like those developed in the Council of Europe.

If languages are to be a real means of communication and openness to Otherness, this goal must become one of the essential goals of education policies. In order to achieve commitment even more clearly to an education policy that is not reduced to a juxtaposition of languages and is given the

means to create space for the less commonly spoken and taught languages (whether national, regional, minority, community, extra-European, etc), it is indispensable to explore all the resources of *plurilingualism*. “*All languages for all*” is certainly a maximalist, unrealistic slogan, but it is also the concise, jubilant expression of a viable educational project (education for plurilingualism as valuing and developing everyone’s linguistic repertoire) and the identification of a consensual value (education for plurilingual awareness as education in linguistic tolerance) that are both constituents of democratic citizenship in Europe.

## **Chapter 2: The Council of Europe and language education policies: plurilingualism as a fundamental principle**

*An attempt was made in the previous chapter to describe a number of dominant characteristics of the linguistic ideologies active in Europe and the types of language teaching to which they give rise. It was shown that it is not languages that are at war, as is commonly suggested, but antagonistic linguistic ideologies. Other principles are also at work, however: the principle of the diversification of languages in schools and society has already been accepted by many governments, although its practical expression is uneven, particularly with respect to the implementation of this diversification. It may be considered that these problems of application are the result not simply of political circumstances or ideological resistance, but of a lack of adequate elucidation of the very principle of diversification.*

*The Council of Europe has identified principles to form the basis of common language education policies in Europe. This chapter will recall the Conventions ratified and the Recommendations approved by member states in which those principles on languages and education have been set out and affirmed, and how their legitimacy is derived from higher political principles, those of democracy and human rights. The notion of plurilingualism, which is at the centre of this linguistic ideology, will be examined, and it will be shown that it can be interpreted in many different ways which are not, however, contradictory. Plurilingualism is at once connected to the legal protection of minority groups, the preservation of Europe's linguistic heritage, the development of individuals' language skills and the creation of a feeling of belonging to Europe in the context of democratic citizenship.*

### **2.1. What principles for language policies for Europe?**

The definition of principles for European language education policies is part of a continuum ranging from technical choices to choices concerning identity. All these options are present in the debate about the future of Europe in that they arise from different interpretations of European cohesion, which see it in economic (movement of goods and persons), cultural, social (social cohesion), political (democracy and minority rights) and even anthropological (what form of community identity for Europeans?) terms.

#### **2.1.1. *The linguistic principles used in nation-states are not relevant to Europe***

Europe is not a political entity of the same kind as a nation-state, to which it would be sufficient to give one (or more) official national language(s) in order to derive a form of unity or identity from it (them). It is a fundamentally novel grouping, a plural space, where numerous linguistic varieties are used – the expression of the cultural diversity of which it consists – which have enriched each other, but where no linguistic variety has had a dominant position for long. There is probably no single language which Europeans could experience as the language of affiliation to this space.

There are too many national/official European languages for all of them to obtain a privileged position in the education system of other countries and for all the linguistic and cultural communities to achieve mutual recognition thereby. For official communications, common languages would be used which would be foreign for everyone except those for whom they are the first language. Thus, in order to ensure linguistically the free movement of goods and persons, it would be enough to make the use of one or more common languages official (*lingua francas*), but this would have little effect on Europeans' cultural cohesion. Europe needs common linguistic principles more than it needs common languages.

#### **2.1.2. *Only common principles can provide the basis of a language policy for Europe***

Technically, it may be possible to agree on the space to be given to particular languages in European education systems, but those choices will probably not be the same because of the differences in the

sociolinguistic situation of each country. It would seem that such issues should be dealt with on the basis of a shared definition of the values and principles on which to base not only communication between Europeans but also choices of language policies, because plurilingual education and the use of European languages are capable of forming each citizen's practical, intimate experience of his or her belonging to a common political and cultural space whose institutions may be felt to be distant and whose ideals abstract. From this point of view, choices of language education policy are decisive. They should be made at the highest level of decision-making in order that they may be implemented in a coherent, clearly identified framework covering simultaneously compulsory education, secondary education, vocational training and higher and continuing education.

**2.1.3. *The principles for a language policy in Europe can only be part of the democratic framework***

Language rights are also components of human rights. While individual rights must be protected, it is easy to understand that the transmission of languages threatened because they are little used can only be ensured with the cooperation of linguistic majorities. The survival of languages depends on everyone being educated to respect linguistic differences. This means organising the coexistence of languages in a manner other than their juxtaposition. Linguistic conflicts must not be allowed to degenerate into more serious confrontations. The history of twentieth-century Europe is punctuated by domestic and international conflicts in which linguistic issues were the manifestation of far more complex conflicts. Stability and peace in Europe depend upon issues of this sort being taken into account in a democratic framework that respects the rights of all groups.

Furthermore, language policies are decisive because they are also an integral part of social policies. No European social policy seeking to reduce poverty, inequality and marginalisation is conceivable which fails to take into account national, regional, minority or foreign languages. The acquisition by everyone of national languages, particularly their written forms, and of foreign languages, is an increasingly essential competence for working life as much as for social cohesion. Action taken to combat marginalisation inevitably involves verbal communication as a pre-condition and form of socialisation.

It is the function of these principles for convergent education policies to make linguistic diversity, the management of communication in Europe and democratic citizenship compatible.

**2.1.4. *These principles should take into account current social developments***

The establishment of principles for language education policies should also take into account current developments: on the one hand, internationalisation, the commercialisation of most human activities, the increasing role of multinational companies, the formative influence of the economy on society and the impact of television culture and, on the other, the re-emergence of feelings of identity and the resurgence of ethnocentrically based nationalism. This dual movement is leading to cultural homogenisation or identity-centred isolationism. To move towards the recognition of communities, with their specificities among national and transnational entities, the principles of language policies in Europe will have to be based on something other than the link established between belonging to the same political grouping and the languages spoken by the members of that community.

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**2.1.5. *These principles are also connected with the issue of a feeling of belonging to Europe***

In the constitutions of modern European states, national languages have been assigned the role of being one of the fundamental components of national affiliation. This is because through languages individuals identify and define forms of affiliation or membership for themselves, just as they do through religious beliefs and shared moral values. Does Europe, which in E. Morin's well-known words, sees itself as a *community of destiny*, need a linguistic project of this kind in order gradually to develop its new identity, in the same way as it discovered a need for an anthem and a flag? From this

point of view, should language teaching play the same role as history teaching which, through a common, but not monolithic, reading of the past seeks to create the link of citizenship in the diversity of its attitudes? If such a form of affiliation seeks to be free of the exclusion of otherness and exteriority, it will be seen that it can only be based on an open conception of language education and the language skills that need to be acquired. *Europe could be identified, not by the languages spoken there, whether or not they are indigenous languages, but by adherence to principles that define a common relationship with languages.*

## **2.2. Plurilingualism as a principle of language education policies in Europe**

There are many potential agents in language education policies: citizens' groups, businesses, cities and regions, nations and international instances such as UNESCO and the European Union. The Council of Europe is one of those agents: concerns about education and languages have always been important in the activities of its Steering Committee for Education. The central position of language education policies is clear in many texts. And the policies adopted by the Council of Europe already provide a basis for the development of language education policies which together contribute to the development of a Europe of citizens characterised by plurilingualism.

These ideas have found practical expression through the development of reference instruments for planning and organising language teaching on the basis of shared principles. It initially favoured the so-called *communicative* language teaching methods by drawing up specific reference tools (*Threshold Levels*) from 1972 onwards and then developed an analytical framework for language teaching and a description of common reference levels to enable language competences to be assessed: the purpose of the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (2001) is to make the language teaching programmes of member States transparent and coherent.

In addition to these technical and institutional advances, however, it is the very notion of plurilingualism which has asserted itself as a form of language education appropriate to European realities. This trend was made more concrete and further legitimised both by the dissemination of the *European Language Portfolio*, designed to enhance the value of the linguistic experiences of adults and children, and by the *European Year of Languages* (2001), itself sustained by the European Day of Languages (celebrated on 26<sup>th</sup> September). This educational culture has been disseminated among language professionals and is sufficiently developed at the theoretical and practical levels to be submitted for political examination in a real sense.

### **2.2.1. The founding texts of the Council of Europe: plurilingualism and language policies**

Taking into account language and language teaching issues has led to the drafting of numerous official Council of Europe documents. They outline a language education policy for Europe which cannot be presented in its entirety here. The most important documents will be reviewed briefly in order to give readers unfamiliar with the field a general idea of them, but also in order to compare these principles, which have been approved by member States, with national provisions and their implementation.

Article 2 of the European Cultural Convention (dated 19 December 1954) describes the action all States Parties should take for the promotion, teaching and learning of languages:

“Each Contracting Party shall, insofar as may be possible,

- a encourage the study by its own nationals of the languages, history and civilisation of the other Contracting Parties and grant facilities to those Parties to promote such studies in its territory, and
- b endeavour to promote the study of its language or languages, history and civilisation in the territory of the other Contracting Parties and grant facilities to the nationals of those Parties to pursue such studies in its territory.”

The *European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages*, a convention opened for signature on 5 November 1992 (European Treaties Series, no.148), is an essential legal instrument with respect to managing plurilingualism. The Charter provides for specific measures to promote the use of this category of languages in education (Part III, Article 8) as taught languages or languages in which other subjects are taught in pre-school, primary and/or secondary and higher education, vocational education, etc.

In 1995, the member states of the Council of Europe (through the *Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities*, 1995, European Treaties Series no.157) agreed to:

“undertake to promote the conditions necessary for persons belonging to national minorities to maintain and develop their culture, and to preserve the essential elements of their identity, namely their religion, language, traditions and cultural heritage” (Section II, Article 5).

The strategic role of convergent language education policies has several times led to the drafting of Resolutions and Recommendations more specific to language teaching. They have defined the main lines for state action and form the basis of the proposals developed in this *Guide*. The most important are:

- Resolution (69) 2 adopted at the end of the Council for Cultural Co-operation’s “Major Project” put in place following the Conference of European Ministers of Education in Hamburg (1961);
- Recommendation No. R (82) 18 resulting from the work of CDCC Project No. 4 (“Modern Languages 1971-78 ”);
- the Final Declaration of the Second Council of Europe Summit (10-11 October 1997). Here, the Heads of State and Government of member States stressed the development of a Europe based on the principles of pluralistic democracy, respect for human rights and the rule of law. Chapter IV of the Action Plan appended to the Declaration set out three fields of action in which immediate progress was possible in relation to democratic values and cultural diversity: education for democratic citizenship, enhancement of the European heritage, and the new information technologies in relation to freedom of expression and their educational and cultural potential;
- Recommendation No. R (98) 6 of the Committee of Ministers to member States, resulting from the “Language Learning for European Citizenship” project implemented by the Education Committee between 1989 and 1996, where the many measures to be implemented concerning the learning and teaching of modern languages include, in particular, “Promote widespread plurilingualism” (Appendix to the Recommendation, A.2), “by diversifying the languages on offer and setting objectives appropriate to each language” (2.2) and “encouraging teaching programmes at all levels that use a flexible approach ...” (2.3);
- Recommendation 1383 (1998) of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe expressly devoted to “Linguistic diversification”: “Beyond the cultural and practical dimensions, a command of foreign languages is a decisive factor in understanding between peoples, tolerance of other communities, be they indigenous or foreign, and peace between nations, as well as being an effective barrier against the return of barbarity in its various guises.” (2);
- Recommendation 1539 (2001) of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe on the European Year of Languages states that plurilingualism “should be understood as a certain ability to communicate in several languages, and not necessarily as perfect mastery of them” (4). It recommended that the Committee of Ministers call upon member States to “maintain and develop further the Council of Europe’s language policy initiatives for promoting plurilingualism, cultural diversity and understanding among peoples and nations (11.i)” and to “encourage all Europeans to acquire a certain ability to communicate

in several languages, for example by promoting diversified novel approaches adapted to individual needs ...” (11.ii)

All these texts, and others, invite the governments of member States, while respecting their specific characteristics, to implement sets of measures to promote the acquisition of language skills by encouraging the use of foreign languages for the teaching of certain subjects, to facilitate lifelong language learning, and make linguistic diversification the priority in language education policies. For example, paragraph 3 of Recommendation 1383 (1998) recalls that “Existing statistics show that a vast majority of pupils in Europe learn English, while other ‘major’ European languages such as French, German, Spanish and Italian lag far behind. Languages which are spoken by hundreds of millions of people in the world, such as Russian, Portuguese, Arabic and Chinese, have only a tiny place in school curricula ...”.

These recommendations and conventions form the expression of a particularly coherent consensus, compatible with national requirements, on the development and implementation of comprehensive language policies. There have been considerable advances in the field of languages and language teaching, out of all proportion to the resources mobilised by the Council of Europe: its work and reference instruments are disseminated because of their intrinsic relevance and are often the catalyst for redirecting national language education policies.

The *Guide* takes the elements developed in these texts (diversity, plurilingualism, tolerance, cohesion, etc) and reorganises them around the concept of individuals’ *plurilingual repertoire*. A common goal of language education policies could be to enhance the value of and develop the linguistic repertoires of social agents through education for plurilingualism (in the form of measures to facilitate language teaching and learning) and education for plurilingual awareness, as education for linguistic tolerance.

### **2.2.2. *Plurilingual and pluricultural repertoire: the pluricultural component***

Individuals have usually acquired one language, but sometimes more than one, in the process of socialisation starting at birth: such language acquisition is a fundamental element of the development of a sense of belonging to one or more social and cultural groups. The acquisition of language thus involves acquisition of *cultural competence* and the ability to live together with others. The extension of a plurilingual repertoire throughout life also involves further development of the awareness of other cultures and cultural groups, and may lead the individual into engagement with communities speaking the languages currently being acquired. The depth of engagement and identification with groups and individuals speaking other languages depends not only on language acquisition but also on many other individual and social factors, and on the mode of learning involved.

The acquisition of a plurilingual repertoire throughout life is thus associated with the development of an awareness of the cultural complexity of the environment, particularly evident in and among European countries. This awareness can also be associated with changes in cultural competence and identification. Individuals may become able to live with others in new linguistic surroundings, and may be able to identify with the values, beliefs and behaviours of other groups as a consequence.

Where such changes take place, individuals have an understanding and experience of at least some aspects of the lives of people of other languages and other cultures. This also means that they have the capacity to interpret another way of life and to explain it to those who live another. This *intercultural competence* is crucial in the development of mutual understanding of different groups, and is the role of *intercultural mediators* of all kinds, from travel guides, to teachers, to diplomats and so on. Intercultural competence and the capacity for intercultural mediation are thus one of the potential goals of language teaching, enabling plurilingual individuals to acquire a capacity for living in the multilingual environment which is contemporary Europe. It is fundamental for interacting with people of other languages and cultures in the context of mutually supportive activities within and across political boundaries, and which constitute activities of democratic citizenship.

### 2.2.3. *Plurilingualism and democratic citizenship*

Plurilingualism as a goal for language education policies has wider implications than might at first be apparent: in the Declaration and Programme on Education for Democratic Citizenship of 7 May 1999, the Committee of Ministers stressed that the preservation of European linguistic diversity was not an end in itself, since it is placed on the same footing as the building of a more tolerant society based on solidarity: “*a freer, more tolerant and just society based on solidarity, common values and a cultural heritage enriched by its diversity*” (CM (99) 76). By making education for democratic citizenship a priority for the Council of Europe and its member states in 1997, Heads of State and Government set out the central place of languages in the exercise of democratic citizenship in Europe: the need, in a democracy, for citizens to participate actively in political decision-making and the life of society presupposes that this should not be made impossible by lack of appropriate language skills. The possibility of taking part in the political and public life of Europe, and not only that of one’s own country, involves plurilingual skills, in other words, the ability to interact effectively and appropriately with other European citizens.

The development of plurilingualism is not simply a functional necessity: it is also an essential component of democratic behaviour. Recognition of the diversity of speakers’ plurilingual repertoires should lead to linguistic tolerance and thus to respect for linguistic differences: respect for the linguistic rights of individuals and groups in their relations with the state and linguistic majorities, respect for freedom of expression, respect for linguistic minorities, respect for the least commonly spoken and taught national languages, respect for the diversity of languages in inter-regional and international communication. Language education policies are intimately connected with education in the values of democratic citizenship because their purposes are complementary: language teaching, the ideal *locus* for intercultural contact, is a sector in which education for democratic life in its intercultural dimensions can be included in education systems.

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Learning to recognise that all the varieties that make up individuals’ linguistic repertoires have a value could create a feeling of greater affiliation to Europe through enhancement of the value of all its languages. Such a language education through languages would not, however, be limited to the languages of European countries, since the same educational project would include the languages spoken in Europe and also others that are little used there, making the distinction between national/European languages and foreign languages less clear cut.

## 2.3. **Plurilingualism: Interpretations**

While plurilingualism may become a goal and even a watchword, it is not free of ambiguity since its flexibility leaves it open to different interpretations involving other concepts, including linguistic diversity, multilingualism, bilingualism, etc. Plurilingualism can be used to organise forms of language education which only correspond to this principle in some, and not necessarily the most important, respects. It is likely to achieve a degree of consensus as long as it remains a principle divorced from institutional applications, which imply practical choices. The different goals that may be based on the principle and that have been dealt with only by implication in what has been said so far will be brought out more clearly in what follows.

### 2.3.1. *Plurilingualism as a diversification of languages known and of foreign languages offered by education systems*

One interpretation of plurilingualism may be to enable national foreign language syllabuses to ensure better communication among Europeans than has previously obtained, since knowledge of languages is essential to the free movement of goods and services, the exchange of information and knowledge and the mobility of persons. An attempt may therefore be made to adapt language teaching to the functional requirements born of the development of European societies. It is this goal that has been

used as the legal basis of certain linguistic arrangements. It has not been pursued explicitly in the name of plurilingualism, but rather in the name of more effective knowledge of foreign languages.

Another interpretation of plurilingualism is to consider it as a principle that aims to increase the offer of languages by education systems (the number of learners with access to foreign language teaching, the number of hours devoted to those languages, the number of linguistic varieties that can be studied, etc). However, the fact that a state is officially multilingual does not automatically guarantee that citizens will have a plurality of language skills; similarly, an increase in the supply of languages in education systems does not necessarily mean that everyone learns more languages. For example, it has been noted that some bilingual programmes offered by education systems may be taken over by social groups who then transform them into pathways of excellence. These pathways, usually called “bilingual”, are distinguished by subjects other than languages being taught in a foreign language and are probably capable of renewing learners’ interest in languages and ensuring greater competence in them. But such programmes are also being sought for reasons other than their intrinsic features: the fact that they are selective is presumed to guarantee the quality of teaching, the social homogeneity of learners and subsequent access to forms of training with the reputation of providing better employment opportunities. Diversifying the supply of languages is a necessary, but insufficient, condition for acting on motivation to undertake plurilingual education.

### **2.3.2. *Plurilingualism and multilingualism: linguistic diversity as heritage***

Plurilingualism may also be interpreted as a principle for preserving the living diversity of European languages, and therefore independently of the issue of foreign languages. There are now more than 220 indigenous linguistic varieties in Europe, about 40 of which have the status of official, national or state language. The languages of immigrants and refugees are not included in this estimate; if they were, the number of linguistic varieties currently used in Europe would be several hundred. In this case, plurilingualism is a function of the recognised multilingual nature of contemporary European states, in other words, of the fact that various languages are present in these areas. It is this overall multiplicity which is regarded as an anthropological and cultural heritage worthy of protection, in the same way as the artistic heritage, in the very name of biodiversity.

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The preservation of the multilingual nature of European societies may be undertaken by constructing legally determined spaces which leave enough room for the use of threatened varieties, or by including the languages of the territory in education systems. In so doing, one is putting oneself more on the side of the languages themselves, from an essentialist viewpoint, as it were, than on that of the users of the languages.

This policy should also, however, take into account communities where some languages are spoken only by minorities. It concerns, firstly, the family environment, where those linguistic varieties are transmitted before schooling. But in order for this to happen, parents have to recognise the languages as worthy of transmission, children must accept them as worthy of being learned and they must be acknowledged by everyone as worthy of being used. In multilingual areas there are people who use mainly the national language, and it is by no means certain that they see the relevance of giving regional and minority linguistic varieties space in society and education. This linguistic ideology may ultimately be adopted by the speakers of the regional and minority languages themselves and result in a break in the family transmission of the languages.

Political and educational institutions in such areas should not only create space for the teaching of the languages used in the territory but also make the children and the whole community concerned understand the intrinsic value of the linguistic varieties with which they are in contact but which not everyone uses.

Taking into account the linguistic diversity of a territory has led to the development of legal responses. Steps should also be taken to make everyone aware that plurilingualism is a social and personal value

in order to move to plurilingualism conceived as a form of contact with others. This means embracing the teaching of all languages in the same educational project and no longer placing the teaching of the national language, regional or minority languages and the languages of newly arrived communities in water-tight compartments.

### 2.3.3. *Plurilingualism as shared goal*

A further conception of plurilingualism sees it as an unexceptional ability shared by all speakers. Plurilingual ability may remain latent or only be developed with respect to varieties very close to the first language. One of the roles of language education policies is to make speakers aware of this potential, to value it as such and to extend it to other varieties. In this way, individual plurilingual ability, which is a shared form of the relationship to languages, is one of the preconditions for maintaining the multilingualism of communities.

The interpretation of plurilingualism used in the *Guide* can be made clearer by emphasising:

- that it is a *competence that can be acquired*: all speakers are potentially plurilingual in that they are capable of acquiring several linguistic varieties to differing degrees, whether or not as a result of teaching. The aptitude for acquiring languages is natural and therefore within everyone's grasp. Plurilingual people are not exceptional speakers like polyglots and plurilingualism cannot be considered the privilege of a "gifted" elite. Plurilingualism is ordinary and, in a sense, is already there, even if the "cost" and the psycholinguistic acquisition processes may differ according to whether it is a matter of the first or subsequent languages, varieties close to or distant from the first language. For example, the language acquired in early childhood and the corresponding official language, acquired in its written and standard forms at school, will be considered close
- that it is regarded as a not necessarily homogeneous repertoire. Being plurilingual does not mean mastering a large number of languages to a high level, but acquiring the ability to use more than one linguistic variety to degrees (which are not necessarily identical) for different purposes (conversation, reading or writing, etc). The degree of proficiency is not necessarily the same for all the varieties used and will also be different according to communication situations (a person can read a language without being able to speak it or speak it without being able to write it well);
- that it is regarded as a changing repertoire. The degree of proficiency in the varieties in the repertoire may change over time, as may its composition. While language acquisition probably takes place in a specific way in early childhood, this does not mean that later on, in primary and subsequent education, it is impossible or necessarily more difficult to add to one's plurilingual repertoire. It is often a matter of need and motivation.
- that it is considered a repertoire of *communicative resources* that speakers use according to their own needs. The linguistic varieties of which it is composed may have different functions: use in the family, at work, in official/ordinary situations, showing affiliation to a community, etc. A speaker may favour one of the varieties as the "basic variety" (the one most useful to him or her for ordinary communication). But the distribution of functions among the languages in a repertoire is not necessarily "fixed", and the acquisition of a new language, for example, may modify it. Furthermore, a given communicative situation is not necessarily managed in a single linguistic variety: speakers may use several varieties successively or in the same utterance. This simultaneous use of several linguistic varieties, known as *code switching*, gives the speaker great flexibility in communication;
- that it is regarded as a *transversal competence* extending to all the languages acquired or learnt. According to the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*, such proficiency is not "the superposition or juxtaposition of distinct competences, but rather ... the existence of a complex ... competence" (p. 168). Whatever the psycholinguistic bases of this

definition, its pedagogical nature that calls for the teaching of different languages to be linked to one another should be noted, because they are likely to bring into play the same skills;

- that it is regarded as having a cultural side, thus forming *plurilingual and pluricultural competence*, as potential experience of several cultures. This is regarded as being symmetrical in its functioning to linguistic skill in the strict sense of the term.

From this viewpoint, the purpose of plurilingual education understood as teaching mechanisms, whatever their institutional character, will be:

- to make everyone aware of and value the nature of their linguistic and cultural repertoire
- to develop and improve it
- to give all speakers the means of developing it themselves through autonomous acquisition.

This is the particular responsibility of compulsory general education.

Making everyone aware of the nature of their linguistic repertoire and of its role in social communication and the formation of group affiliations brings out the co-existence this structures between linguistic varieties of different origins which play multiple roles. A better understanding can thus be developed of the nature of other citizens' linguistic repertoires as can sensitivity to other linguistic and cultural communities, because individuals get into the way of interacting on the basis of mutual respect and inclusion. Respecting the languages of one's interlocutors, making the effort to learn and use, even partially, the languages of one's neighbours, partners and interlocutors whoever they may be, are preconditions of democratic citizenship since they are expressions of linguistic acceptance. Plurilingualism conceived as a value may not only be the basis of education for plurilingualism, but also result in pluricultural awareness.

#### **2.3.4. *The implementation of language education policies based on plurilingualism***

The implementation of a language education policy shared by Europeans is possible if the political decision is taken to make national education systems essentially, but not exclusively, responsible for doing so. By education system, is meant public educational institutions, whether organised at national, regional or municipal level. Other educational institutions may contribute to this educational project (voluntary bodies, foundations, "private" schools, etc) but, in this role, there can probably be no substitute for national education systems (particularly compulsory schooling) in the private market supply of languages, which has other functional or vocational purposes. Just as it is the state's role to provide education in the values of democracy, so it is the state's responsibility to promote knowledge of the languages of the territory, European languages, languages spoken in Europe or elsewhere, and to put in place a type of education for languages and through languages capable of strengthening or creating the feeling of belonging to the same democratic space.

This convergence will not necessarily come about through similar educational curricula or identical organisation of teaching. Plurilingualism is plural: it is not a matter of advocating a single plurilingualism for Europeans, a sort of standard repertoire, identical everywhere, arrived at by putting together similarly weighted sets of national, classical and foreign languages and languages of the territory of each member State. Teaching of or teaching in several languages may take many forms according to the languages used in a given national and international context, to national and inter-regional needs, to the affiliations of each citizen, and to their needs and wishes. They may produce widely differing forms of teaching. Plurilingual and pluricultural competence may be built around a common core (mastery of the official language), but what is common to all these forms of plurilingualism is the ability to master different languages to differing degrees, to use all the resources of the languages known in communication and to see that all the languages in individual repertoires, one's own and other people's, are considered as being of equal value, each in its own role.

On the basis of the above definitions, the implementation of plurilingualism involves:

- putting in place education for plurilingual awareness (not to be confused with language teaching, as has already been emphasised) linked to education for democratic citizenship
- coordinating the teaching of national, regional or minority and foreign languages, and classical languages (Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Arabic, Sanskrit, etc) as a common basis on which to develop language skills. This linking of the components of the plurilingual repertoires targeted, according to learners' repertoires, may use many different teaching methods appropriate to specific contexts
- the expression in syllabuses of the concept that knowledge of a linguistic variety is not an “all or nothing” matter: it is commonly thought that if one has not acquired the level of a native speaker, one *speaks a language badly*. Opposing this common belief, teaching will be provided which leads to diversified competences (in terms of the level of proficiency and kinds of competence: understanding, understanding and production, knowledge of the culture concerned, etc)
- management of language teaching throughout an individual's educational career, introducing as much cohesion as possible between different educational levels (compulsory, secondary, vocational, university, in-company, etc).

There is no shortage of teaching methods for putting these options into practice. The Council of Europe has already taken plurilingualism into account by acknowledging the value of all linguistic experiences, particularly in early childhood, through the *European Language Portfolio* and the analytical tool for language teaching programmes, the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*. The latter makes it possible to compare syllabuses, the essential basis of any concerted action; it offers reference levels common to all languages for defining levels of proficiency homogeneously; this diversification provides the basis for differentiated plurilingual learning paths. Language teaching, which has been fuelled by the issue of Europe, can provide the technical responses needed for political action on the matter.

Policies geared towards plurilingualism may result from rearranging forms of language teaching as they now exist in national education systems and all educational structures, whose situation in this regard varies very considerably. Some rationalisation of teaching, qualitative improvements and coordination are possible, but the clearer orientation to plurilingualism will probably not come about without extra investment, which will not necessarily have to be enormous and will vary from one country to another, in different educational sectors and according to the forms of plurilingualism chosen. It is above all time that is needed to set up plurilingual education, since widely held beliefs and representations have to be changed. The authorities also need time, since goals need to be set, syllabuses defined and teachers trained.

## 2.4. Conclusion

In the light of plurilingualism as it has been defined on the basis of Council of Europe reference texts, it would seem that the question of languages probably needs to be reformulated: it is less a matter of deciding which and how many foreign languages should be taught in education systems than of directing the goals of language education towards the acquisition of a competence, in fact unique, encompassing the “mother” tongue, the national language(s), regional and minority languages, European and non-European languages, etc. This is a realistic goal if it is accepted that plurilingual repertoires to be developed through education can be diverse, that the languages that are the components of plurilingual competence do not all have to be learned to the same level and that language education takes place throughout life and not exclusively during school years.

Such an organising principle for language education implies that this becomes meaningful in a context of education for linguistic tolerance and inter-cultural education.

Developing and optimising plurilingual competences can become a common linguistic matrix that will give the European political and cultural area a form of plural linguistic identity rooted in the diversity of its communities and compatible with its values of openness to the world.



## **PART TWO: DATA AND METHODS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF LANGUAGE EDUCATION POLICIES**

*The second part of the Guide for the Development of Language Education Policies in Europe covers the issues that must be dealt with systematically in order to implement language education policies. Certain data and information are required, the nature and compilation of which will be described. A number of factors have to be taken into consideration in this outline methodology for decision-making on languages; their implications will be indicated. For the sake of clarity, they have been divided into two groups: the general, essentially non-linguistic characteristics of a situation, such as social representations, demography, etc (Chapter 3), and linguistic characteristics (Chapter 4).*

## Chapter 3: The Development of Language Education Policies: social factors in decision-making

*Devising language education policies geared towards the diversification of language teaching in a European perspective must, like all political action, be based on an analysis of the social conditions in which they will be implemented and an estimate of the necessary resources. In order for a language education policy to gain the community's consent and be implemented with some chances of success, a number of factors need to be taken into account, including:*

- *the ordinary representations people may have about languages and about what language teaching/learning is. These influence policy-makers', as well as learners', choices*
- *finding a balance between the languages which public opinion regards as "useful" and the language needs of a society, such as they can be identified in relation to future geopolitical, economic, or cultural trends*
- *demographic change, which is characterised by a downward trend in birth rates, greater life expectancy and migratory movements within and towards Europe. These general trends, which shape overall social developments, necessitate policies able to link language education with lifelong teaching/learning, which is a characteristic of contemporary knowledge-based societies*
- *a cost-benefit analysis of such policies, devised in response to social demand and taking long-term prospects into account.*

*Because these factors vary from one country to another and within a single country, language education policies will be devised locally according to the specific configurations of each educational situation, but within a common global project.*

*The possible strategies for devising such policies will have to take into account the existing organisation of the teaching of languages and specific or experimental mechanisms within and outside compulsory education. In order to develop language policies geared towards plurilingualism as a competence and value, the distinction traditionally drawn between the teaching of the various foreign languages (each being dealt with separately) and between these and national/official languages is a dominant social and educational representation which must be rethought as a matter of priority.*

### 3.1. Public opinion and languages

Like history and literature, the teaching of languages in education systems and elsewhere can easily become a subject of public debate as they are not subjects whose general focus can only be discussed by experts. Every citizen is a speaker and has experience of linguistic varieties other than his or her first spoken language, languages are often optional (completely optional, options to choose from, etc) and the structuring of these choices result in positions being taken.

Furthermore, in this area as in others, citizens act according to social representations of languages. The term social representation is used here in the psychosociological sense of spontaneous, shared, socially conditioned knowledge about a subject. The notion is often associated with others, such as stereotype, cliché or prejudice. Such collective representations are not necessarily well-founded but they influence motivation to learn. Thus, one language not known will easily be considered *melodious*, while another is seen as *harsh*. It is important to take into account how society will interpret planned changes in language education: they will probably be assessed in terms of educational benefits on the basis of such representations.

### 3.1.1. *Familiarity with social representations of languages, identifying language needs*

Choices of language education policy must therefore take into account representations of languages. Such representations are characterised by their subject matter, but above all by their positive or negative thrust which is used to justify value judgments, often inspired by the ordinary ideology of languages.

Languages are therefore the subject of representations concerning:

- how supposedly difficult they are to learn: the difficulties of the pronunciation or writing systems of these languages may be overestimated, for example
- their beauty, an extremely vague criterion which refers to the pronunciation of languages or, indirectly, the prestige of the literary and musical works written in those languages
- their usefulness, some being perceived as valuable for career development, others corresponding to personal, intellectual and cultural interests
- their educational value: some languages are regarded as easy and may therefore be suspect, since learning them is seen as not requiring much effort. Others may be favoured since they foster intellectual capabilities (especially reasoning).

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Such social representations have complex origins: they derive from history and tradition in that they tend to reflect the relations between the learners' country and the country or countries in which the other languages are used. Colonial relationships, political or trade conflicts, geographical and cultural proximity, as well as mass tourism and the representation of the relevant groups in the media (one only has to think of football commentaries), are all sources of production or reproduction of such imagery.

Until recently, such social representations were stable over time, and this made them difficult to change. Now, they are probably more sensitive to particular events (political, economic, sporting, etc) which may change their general focus in one way or another. Generally speaking, the globalisation of information is probably making the images of foreign countries and the languages spoken in them less basic and fantastical than they once were.

Representations are shared, but not unanimously so: different social groups may have variations of such linguistic representations: for example, different perceptions of the supposed usefulness of certain languages between highly educated groups or groups living in border regions in regular contact with speakers of other languages, and groups in only intermittent or indirect contact with languages other than those they use. It might be argued that such representations are more open than they used to be to changes over time and social space. This gives more overall room for manoeuvre and enhances the chances of success of training actions and information campaigns designed to change them or make them more sophisticated.

Responding to demands for languages based on such common representations is not the only factor to be taken into consideration when devising education policies. With respect to languages, the community's needs should be taken into account. It is probable that the representations individuals have of their own needs will not completely coincide with the language needs perceived at community level. For example, the dominant view may be that everyone should learn one language deemed generally useful for children's futures, while economic forecasts suggest that it would also be very appropriate to learn other languages, including from a career point of view. This potential tension between individual perceived needs and the needs of the community means that language policy issues must be explained as fully as possible.

Identifying those linguistic needs from the institutional point of view is an important component of decision-making on language teaching in a country. Language needs may be objectively established for some fields, such as scientific and technical translation, diplomacy and international relations, the

armed forces, trade, the media and cultural action. Language needs are not only identifiable in material and institutional terms: a language may be learned for purely educational purposes, such as personal development in one's relationships with other members of the community and with other communities.

### **3.1.2. Taking into account social representations of the teaching of languages**

It has already been emphasised that the teaching/learning of languages differs from that of other subjects taught in education systems in that language acquisition is not a school subject but a human competence. Speakers therefore also have certain representations about how languages should be learned and taught. Such representations, which are culturally and socially variable, concern the organisation of teaching (for example, thinking that native teachers are preferable to others), techniques (learning lists of words by heart) or, again, the goals to be achieved (speaking well).

In recent decades, language teaching methods have moved far away from such representations, as have ideas about the purposes of language learning. Previous generations experienced language teaching presented as:

- an intellectual activity
- an activity based on exercises and repetition
- an activity largely based on grammar and learning "rules"
- an activity involving a great deal of translation
- an activity focusing on writing, giving little space to speaking
- an activity leading as soon as possible to reading major literary or intellectual texts, presented as linguistic models.

These characteristics involve social representations such as:

- it takes a long time to learn a language
- the model to aim for is the native speaker (speaking without an accent or mistakes, etc)
- only those who have reached the level of competence of a native speaker may be regarded as knowing the language, any partial mastery being regarded as a sign of failure.

Current teaching methods emphasise speaking, or neglect it less, in theory give less space to grammatical analysis, and try to see that what is learned in class is speedily useable in everyday communication. On the whole, they tend to resemble more 'natural' approaches to language learning. But the essential point is that they have radically called into question the model of the native speaker as the only legitimate objective: it is now accepted that a speaker may have an unequal level of skills in the same linguistic variety or in different linguistic varieties, that he or she uses his or her mother tongue in communication with others, and switches linguistic variety with the same speakers according to needs of expression. The dominant representations of teaching/learning have not yet been greatly influenced by contemporary pedagogical thinking. Young children and their parents may still believe that learning a language requires years of (academic) study and that the reward will only be forthcoming at the end of all the time invested in learning it.

It is probably necessary to undertake actions to explain the ways in which pedagogical thinking has changed. They could, in particular, be systematically incorporated in initial schooling, whether or not in relation to language teaching. Giving such attention to how to learn is one of the prime purposes of language training: *learning to learn languages means learning to manage one's acquisition of languages independently and analytically.*

### **3.2. European societies and languages: assisting and anticipating change**

Language education policies imply clear choices that must take into account an analysis of the social context in which they are to be implemented. But it is perceived expediency that often prevails in decision-making: they are all too often governed by short-term considerations such as the state of public opinion, budgetary choices or coming elections, even if it is decided in the framework of a government's overall policy. The role that should be played by other structural, social or economic

data relevant to the medium- and long-term management of language education policies will be reviewed here. It is essential to anticipate change since it takes time to set up language teaching, and certainly to train the teachers required, i.e. four or five years.

### **3.2.1. Demographic change**

Organising teaching involves taking into account general demographic trends in Europe. These trends are well known: greater life expectancy and a downward trend in birth rates. These are accompanied by later average entry onto the job market (longer initial training), while economic development prospects require the use of productive forces that only temporary or permanent migration within or from outside Europe will be able to supply.

These changes, perceptible at national or regional level, are already taking place and seem set to continue. They give rise to linguistic questions:

- what language education can education systems and other educational institutions offer to elderly people who have free time and sometimes the means to travel abroad, and are involved in the voluntary sector? This section of the population will probably generate new language needs, as will other groups with more leisure time;
- what language education should be provided for adult migrants, and for their children who have to enter the national education system? This debate has been going on for many years and resulted in many positions being adopted concerning, for example, migrants' long-term projects, whether or not they have migrated temporarily and their children's later desire to return to their country of origin. In the latter case, it is vital to organise the transmission of some knowledge of their parents' or grandparents' language. If migration is temporary, reception and training facilities must be provided that can give these populations the general and linguistic skills essential for them to adapt socially and professionally in the local environment and at work;
- what language education can be developed for pupils and students who have far more contact with speakers of other languages than used to be the case, contact that is essential for exercising European citizenship?
- what are the implications for initial and continuing teacher training of the increase in the length of compulsory education and the increased presence of languages in some contexts?

All these changes affecting European populations require the creation or reorganisation of language education involving more post-school education for adults, in the voluntary sector or in local or regional institutions, for example. In any case, they mean that language education must be seen as a coherent whole throughout an individual's life in society.

### **3.2.2. Economic change**

Knowledge of languages, which was once the cultural capital of individuals (in which it played an educational role and one of social demarcation), has now become the economic capital of every individual: languages are useful in working life and have a value on the labour market.

#### **3.2.2.1. Taking occupational mobility into account**

The general trends in the European labour market are also well-known:

- an increasing proportion of jobs are in the service sector and therefore require more and more intellectual skills. It is the knowledge-based society which has led to the introduction of lifelong training, which also concerns languages.
- career paths are less linear: the old model of a job in the same company for life is now unusual; mobility (geographic and occupational) is often required, although it may be hard to accept. Such flexibility is accompanied by new forms of uncertainty that make it all the more appropriate to set up reception structures. The consequent risks of marginalisation or exclusion bring out the value of verbal communication for maintaining the social bond. Here again, the changes require that the teaching of languages be interpreted as different in kind from the

acquisition of a modern language at a high level. Knowledge of several varieties used for different purposes and to a level adequate for the tasks to be accomplished is the form appropriate to such changes in working life: this suggests that the organising principle should be controlled diversification of school and post-school language education, whatever the principal language of individual linguistic repertoires.

### 3.2.2.2. *Assessing the value of languages: cost-benefit analysis of language education policies*

Knowledge of languages is now valuable on the job market: it is sometimes a criterion in recruitment, and individuals with certain language skills may have higher incomes than other people doing the same job. Insofar as the benefits thus obtained by individuals may, taken as a whole, be regarded as benefiting society itself, it may be assumed that investing in languages through education systems results in an overall social benefit. Language education is part of this investment in human capital, a view seen as relevant to analysis of the educational economy.

For a state, the main element of the investment is the education system costs that can be strictly imputed to language teaching. The benefit of such collective investment could therefore theoretically be calculated in terms of the rate of return on the investment during the phase in which individuals are economically active. Data that would enable such a quantified approach are lacking since they are not the subject of regular surveys. They are, furthermore, difficult to identify and gather, which for the moment makes such calculations difficult. It would, moreover, be essential to take into account in such overall calculations the cost represented by members of a community not knowing languages (translation costs and lack of access to certain markets, for example).

Such a quantified approach would have to enable the respective costs of different language policies to be evaluated so that they could then be compared. But such economic macro-analysis is not easy, and political debate will probably focus more on immediately identifiable costs than expected, unquantifiable, though not necessarily non-existent, overall benefits.

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Decision-makers should probably assimilate from economic analyses of the value of languages that that value is a function of their degree of dissemination and that the teaching of less known linguistic varieties represents a proportionately greater social benefit. Should this observation – which relates to a European situation in which English is widely disseminated – prove to be of general validity, it could be emphasised in public awareness campaigns aiming to demonstrate the advantage of learning little known languages.

It will also be important to learn more about the economic sector consisting of language schools of every kind (private, voluntary, tourism and languages, etc): their legal status, staff (origins, recruitment methods, pay, status, etc), the nature and expectations of their clients, their economic weight (total turnover), contractual relations with clients (quality charter). This information is not relevant only because it facilitates a better understanding of costs and benefits in a micro-economic (the company, association or whatever) or sectoral context. It should also be able to show the role such language education plays in relation to national language education: what functions does it perform that state education does not or is perceived as not performing satisfactorily? Knowledge of the sector gives a good indication of how national language teaching is performing and the perception people have of the role the state should play with respect to language education.

When estimating the profitability of language policies in economic terms, care should be taken not to underestimate the fact that languages also have a non-pecuniary value. For individuals, they contribute to quality of life, the multiplication of personal contacts, access to other cultural productions, and personal development and achievement. For societies, knowing one another's languages may provide the basis for peaceful coexistence, while multilingualism can be an enrichment of the environment and recognition of minority and foreign languages a precondition of democracy. The value of these effects of knowledge of languages is quantifiable, but not necessarily taken into

account. The economic analyses of language education policies should be subordinated to political analyses, without which education systems will be governed purely by the market economy, whereas some people consider education to be a global public good.

### **3.3. Conclusion**

Such analyses of medium- and long-term change will probably pinpoint new language needs. They may, for example, lead to linguistic varieties to which little value is at present attached being considered “useful”. As for the many languages brought to Europe by immigrant communities, public opinion is not necessarily yet prepared for measures to be taken to avoid their disappearance once their speakers have become integrated in the host country. Others, such as Japanese, are not present in this way in Europe but are nonetheless considered possible components of linguistic repertoires. These and other languages should be taken into account by the institutions and citizens of Europe not only on demographic, economic or diplomatic grounds but also in order to prevent Europe becoming linguistically isolated.

## **Chapter 4: The Development of Language Education Policies: linguistic factors in decision-making**

*The organisation of language education policies should obviously take into account the linguistic environment, the present and future language needs of individuals and states (which languages, what competences in those languages?) and the conceptions of language education adopted in other, especially European, countries which may include organisational features of interest to other countries.*

*This chapter will attempt to show the diversity of the status and functions of the languages present in a territory. Each category of languages presents particular problems whose social and political consequences it is important to foresee. As the conception of language education is a response to the wish to create conditions favourable to the development and enhancement of the value of plurilingual repertoires, it involves finding a balance where supposedly simple but politically and culturally very expensive solutions might be imposed. Account should be taken in these decision-making processes of the skills learners have acquired in the languages they speak before they start school and, more generally, the linguistic varieties used in the national community or in regional or minority communities.*

*It should be possible to clarify these choices through specific quantitative data collected, in particular, through sociolinguistic surveys that make it possible (even with samples) to describe the ways in which languages are used, as well as individual linguistic repertoires and the repertoires of the various groups that make up the community. Little such information is as yet available, apart from that on education systems. The know-how acquired with respect to identifying language needs (i.e. describing situations in which languages learned will be used) may be re-used to guide language education policies.*

*Furthermore, the experiences of other, especially neighbouring, states, are an important resource for decision-makers. International surveys are always enlightening, although the “league tables” of countries with respect to performance in one field or another (knowledge of mathematics acquired at school, literacy, adult education, etc) are too often their only outstanding feature in the eyes of the public and, indirectly, politicians. International comparisons should be seen not only as diagnostic but as an opportunity for research and action.*

### **4.1. Linguistic varieties present**

It should be possible to describe the uses of languages through categorisations established as objectively as possible. In order to avoid any ambiguity, the term (*linguistic*) *variety* will be used – particularly in this chapter – to refer neutrally to languages, whatever their status. The denomination of linguistic varieties (and their definition) is in itself an issue for individuals and groups: talking of *dialect* or *language*, *regional language* or *autochthonous language* is not innocent, nor is it any more so to identify ‘*mother tongue*’ and *national language*.

An explicit typology of linguistic varieties will be outlined that can make surveys of linguistic varieties and their uses transparent. The speaker’s perspective will be considered first, then the sociolinguistic perspective of the status and functions of linguistic varieties in a state. Each category of linguistic variety may present specific educational and political problems that an attempt will be made to identify.

The education system and, through it, the government must establish balances or make choices among the linguistic varieties present in a country, and between the foreign linguistic varieties considered necessary: which one(s) should the state use in its relations with citizens? which should be taught in schools and used to teach other subjects? which linguistic varieties in the territory should be preserved - and so forth ?

These policies have to be determined on the basis of numerous, possibly contradictory, factors, such as collective needs, the degree of presumed usefulness of linguistic varieties, the claims concerning them, the rights granted to linguistic minorities, educational purposes, and general principles of democratic life, etc.

Such social choices with respect to languages should also take into consideration the knowledge, available or potential, of the linguistic varieties present. Such analyses are qualitative in that they concern the nature and functions of linguistic varieties. They may also have quantitative dimensions insofar as they may be relevant to decision-making, programming and investment (number of teachers to be trained), in particular with respect to national language needs. The *Guide* will concentrate on the qualitative aspects characterising the linguistic varieties to be considered, according to the political, social and cultural problems that have to be managed.

#### **4.1.1. Linguistic varieties from the speakers' point of view**

##### *4.1.1.1. Order of acquisition of linguistic varieties*

If the sequence (or order) of acquisition of linguistic varieties for each speaker is considered, the following distinctions have to be made:

- ***Mother tongue, first language***

*First language* is the term, of academic origin, used to refer to what is generally understood by the term *mother tongue*. It designates the linguistic variety(ies) acquired in early childhood, up to the age of two or three. This variety has a special status for the child since it is through it that he or she discovers the world in the framework of his or her early socialisation: linguistic interactions with other speakers are necessary for normal development. It is the one in which the human faculty of language is first vested in a natural language. It may also be the one through which the child begins to discover and appropriate the rules of language and, at the same time, the rules of linguistic behaviour (for example, who, how and when to greet).

*Mother tongue* is the corresponding everyday term which, however, has affective connotations such as family and origin that are not present in the term *first language*. Furthermore, it is not always correct since children do not acquire their first language only from their mothers and they may acquire several first languages (two or more) simultaneously in multilingual family environments. *Native language* and *heritage language* are other terms used in this sense and they also have similar associations with a group to which one belongs, with which one identifies. It will be noted that the linguistic variety in which one may define one's belonging to a group is not necessarily the first language, but may be a variety acquired later on.

It should also be noted that the *mother* variety is first acquired principally, if not exclusively, in its spoken form, which conforms to varying degrees with the norms of the national language or the language used at school. This proximity or distance may create linguistic advantages or disadvantages at school.

The sign languages used by the deaf and the hard-of-hearing and for communication with other linguistic communities will be considered from this viewpoint. Sign languages, which are structured like natural languages, differ from one another and may be used as languages of instruction. The same issues arise with respect to them as those mentioned earlier: intercommunication of one community with another, the possibility of creating plurilingual competence, the role in forming identity, and so on.

The language policy issues presented by the first language are as follows:

- when the language used at school is the same as the first language, it has to be decided whether and how to take into account in curricula and teaching approaches the language

competences children have acquired before starting school, which are socially differentiated. This is a social question since schools must ensure equality of opportunity despite the differences that already exist when children first start school

- when the language used at school is not the pupils' first language, it has to be decided what place is to be given to the first language. This is a political question since it is the conception of national cohesion and the creation of group identity that are at stake. It is also in this framework that sign languages should be examined, since they also have to be taught.

- ***Second languages, modern languages, etc***

These terms, and many others, refer to linguistic varieties that are not acquired in childhood but later: they should all, therefore, be considered *second*, third, etc. languages according to the sequence of acquisition. The languages acquired after the first language(s) may be of different kinds, hence the great terminological diversity.

They may be varieties that are permanently and significantly present in the environment and may then be acquired by contact with them, without formal teaching. This is often the case of regional languages. But such varieties *may* be taught, parallel to spontaneous acquisition: this is the case of migrants or their children for whom the language of the host country is not the first language and is learned autonomously and/or in the framework of institutional teaching. *Second language* refers not only to the order of acquisition, but also to the sociolinguistic status of a variety which plays the part of language of communication, above all present in the media and life in society (more often than not outside the family circle, therefore) and is also the language of instruction.

Second languages may also be varieties which have no significant presence in a given environment. The term *foreign* or *modern language* is often used here to refer to linguistic varieties the teaching of which is offered essentially in schools. Unlike the second languages present in the environment, there may be less motivation to learn so-called *foreign* languages in that learners are not in contact with those varieties, or only in an abstract or limited fashion (cinema, television, stay in the country where it is used, etc). They may therefore have little awareness of their needs as regards foreign languages, which they see as ordinary school subjects for which what matters is not always actual acquisition but the appraisals (tests, examinations) certifying achievement.

It should be noted that *first (foreign) language*, *second language*, etc are also administrative terms used to denote the order in which foreign languages are taught/learned in the school system. The terms are confusing since they do not denote the varieties learners acquire first, second, and so on, but the order in which they are taught in school. They foster the representation that the language teaching organised in school (in the sense of *systematic* and as opposed to *spontaneous*) is the only legitimate way of learning or acquiring languages, since learners' prior linguistic history is not taken into account.

The word *foreign* is absolute in that it stresses a clear distinction from the outside world. In fact, second languages known as *foreign* can seem more or less close, more or less easy or difficult to learn, for example. Some are considered *exotic*. This is the term used in ordinary discourse to express the perceived cultural and linguistic distance from another community or country. Great cultural differences are often perceived as going hand-in-hand with the complexity of the languages used by such cultural groups. Conversely, culturally close languages derived from the same source (Semitic, Romance and Slavic languages, for example), are seen as having features that may facilitate their appropriation by speakers of other languages of the same group. Such perceptions of the degree of foreignness of *foreign* linguistic varieties are probably also applied, though to a lesser degree, to the minority and regional languages of a particular country. The distance between the first language and all these second languages will probably be perceived as less if at least some mutual understanding is possible and/or if the groups that speak them are regarded as culturally close (see 2 below).

The language policy issues concerning second languages are:

- the choice of varieties to be offered in education, the social and educational arguments that justify those choices, the degree of acceptability of those choices, which are, in particular, a function of the collectively perceived proximity of the languages;
- the stage of schooling at which they should be offered: during pre-compulsory schooling, compulsory schooling (period of second socialisation when forms of belonging are created) or later?
- the order in which they should be taught, which does not necessarily correspond to the order of importance one wishes to attach to them in training;
- the coordination of the teaching of the languages with one another and with the national/official variety so as to make clear the continuity between the learning of all linguistic varieties.

It is essential to distinguish the different aspects of this classic problem in order not end up simply with “heavy-handed” solutions: for example, the foreign language taught first at school will have all the advantages, at least as these are conceived by ordinary representations - effectiveness of early learning, length of teaching, level of proficiency, supposed usefulness, etc - and the teaching of foreign languages conducted later is seen as superficial or incomplete.

The question of second varieties particularly concerns schools since, if choices are limited and easy with respect to the national/official languages taught, at least during compulsory education, those concerning second languages are vast. Language policies have to be devised that avoid putting second languages into competition with one another (exclusive choices from among several languages at a particular point in the school career) by offering them successively over time, and that take into account what has been acquired in one language in order to reinvest it in learning other languages.

#### 4.1.1.2. *Functions of linguistic varieties*

If, still from the point of view of the individual user, the functions of the linguistic varieties are examined, they can be classified according to their importance or the domains in which they are used.

The term *usual* (or *principal*) *language* will then be employed to refer to the one used in the most or the most important communicative situations (for work, life in society, etc), and this will be contrasted with the varieties used more sporadically or only in one particular domain (*family language*, for example). The term *dominant language* will also be used in this sense to refer to the linguistic variety in which a speaker is most competent, in general or in certain types of communication. This term also refers, however, to the special social status accorded to a linguistic variety (see 2 below).

The role of compulsory education is to make people literate (in the sense of being able to interpret documents and texts and process quantities and numbers) so that no citizen is excluded from the life of the community. However, recent definitions of literacy tend to include skills relating to foreign languages as communicative tools that economic globalisation has made essential. Proficiency in several languages no longer tends to be seen as a useful extra but as essential and basic. This suggests that the teaching of languages should be given more space by being offered in schools earlier.

In addition to these communicative functions, linguistic varieties also become factors in the cohesion of social groups. People are classified as belonging to a group according to the linguistic variety they use. Linguistic varieties are raw materials from which to construct the identity of groups and their distinctive characteristics. Such varieties, known as *varieties of identity* or *affiliation*, are of great affective or symbolic value to the individuals who define themselves through them, especially if they are in conflict with other groups or they are the languages of minority or immigrant groups. People try to maintain, by using the languages, their affiliation with groups which they had to abandon. But the linguistic variety of affiliation is not necessarily the first or official variety: any linguistic variety may

become the variety of identity, even if it is a second or foreign variety. For example, conversion to a particular religion may mean adopting the language of that religion as the language of identity. A variety that is dominant in working life may play the same role, examples being the world of finance or the cinema and English.

Groups that identify themselves through a linguistic variety may take action to have that variety recognised by other groups: such cases are permanent, as is witnessed by the case of “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia” where people identifying as a group, in particular through their use of Albanian, have had their linguistic variety recognised by the rest of the national community as one of the official national languages and as a language of instruction in the regions in which they live. Issues relating to languages of affiliation are always very complex to manage politically and require mechanisms for organising language teaching that are sufficiently sophisticated for negotiations among the groups making up a national community to be possible.

#### **4.1.2. Linguistic varieties from the point of view of their status in society**

All linguistic varieties are potentially capable of permitting communication between speakers and expressing and transmitting their beliefs and knowledge. Historically and sociologically, some have been vested with more important functions than others in societies. Such unequal status may be expressed through legal inequalities or derogatory representations. From a social viewpoint, languages are to a great extent judged on the basis of this legitimacy.

In order to counter such inequalities, the varieties may be placed in legal categories, such as the “regional or minority languages” of the *Charter* of the same name, defined as “traditionally used within a given territory of a State by nationals of that State who form a group numerically smaller than the rest of the State’s population and different from the official language(s) of that State”. The definition “does not include either dialects of the official language(s) of the State or the languages of migrants” (Part I, Article 1).

- **National language, official language**

A *national language* is a linguistic variety which has the role, sanctioned by the Constitution or other legal instruments, of language of communication between state and citizens (government departments, the judicial system, schools, etc). This supposes that in private communication citizens may use any linguistic varieties. But the official language(s) is (are) also in many cases the first language of numerically or socially significant sections of the population, although in the former colonies of western European countries, for example, this role may be played by a linguistic variety (usually, the language of the coloniser) which is not the first language of any group.

In national states (whether or not they are federated), the official language may become a factor of identity, i.e. of belonging to a national community. National language does not, however, coincide with citizenship (one is not an Australian citizen because one speaks English; French- and Flemish-speaking Belgians are citizens of the same state), even if some knowledge of the official variety is expected or required of those applying for citizenship. The term *national language* is, therefore, far more emotionally charged than *official language*.

The major question concerning the teaching of the official variety is its purposes, since they may be many: access to writing (comprehension and production, including acquisition of writing), training in communication, learning linguistic and sociolinguistic norms, transmitting knowledge, citizenship education, and so on. This diversity in fact implies the different purposes of language teaching: functional purposes (ensuring communication between members of the group and with other groups), educational functions (training in metalinguistic reflection, reading the major works written in those languages, linguistic tolerance, etc) and political purposes (creating a feeling of belonging to the national community). These purposes are not incompatible but their relative importance has to be clarified by relating them to the values adopted as the basis of language education policies.

- ***Dominant languages, minority languages (or languages of minorities) and regional languages***

The term *dominant language* refers to a variety that has a legal or social status superior to that of other varieties in a given territory. Pre-eminence may be general throughout the state or concern only one region of that state. A language dominant in one state may be a minority language in another state or in a region of the same state. This pre-eminence is not measured exclusively by the number of speakers. The place a community gives to varieties that have such a status suggests that the appropriateness of giving space to other varieties and the nature of that space should be examined.

The term *minority language* (or *language of a minority*) refers to linguistic varieties used (as first or second language) by groups who identify themselves as different because of their territory, religion, way of life or any other characteristic, and claim or manage their difference within a larger community. Other definitions are possible, and it should be noted that the Council of Europe *Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities* does not contain one.

The term *vernacular language* is sometimes still used to refer to linguistic varieties which are minority varieties, not because of the number of speakers (of whom there may be many), but because in the area in which they are used another, more prestigious, variety is used in certain restricted, but decisive, areas of society. Thus the use of Latin as the international language of educated people in the Middle Ages can be contrasted with local vernacular varieties (some of which later became national languages).

The minority status of the languages of some communities does not necessarily correspond to quantitative criteria: in their territory or community, such varieties may be the most widespread and most used. The status refers to rights these groups do not enjoy: use before the courts, in legal and administrative documents, in education as the first language (both in primary schooling and universities), in the national media, in signposting, etc. The *Charter for Regional or Minority Languages* lists the sectors of public life in which signatory states commit themselves to giving major recognition to such linguistic varieties.

The historical origins of minority languages differ and therefore present distinct political problems and language education policy problems, particularly when it comes to their management and to discussions and negotiations on changing education systems so they can be offered in schools. But all languages of minorities give rise to the same issues with respect, in particular, to their being taken into account and included in education systems: Should these minority varieties replace, in part or entirely, the national variety as the language of instruction? Should they have the same status in curricula as foreign varieties, be offered at the same time as them? Should they be available essentially in secondary education or, on the contrary, be taught early on in compulsory education? The *Charter for Regional or Minority Languages* lists among the measures to be taken making available education, or at least “a substantial part” of education, in these languages at all levels. At the least the purpose of these ways of organising teaching is to assist the transmission of these varieties, which is essentially effected in family and private life, and to give them increased collective recognition. Such transmission also implies the acceptance of minority varieties by majorities, and this can be based on linguistic tolerance and acceptance.

- ***Dialects***

The term *dialect* is sometimes used to refer to the regional and minority varieties which have just been discussed: they have in common the fact that they are varieties recognised as belonging to the national or federal territory. They are referred to as *autochthonous* or *indigenous* as opposed to newly arrived languages, those of recently settled migrant communities, for example. They do not necessarily belong to the same language family as the other regional and/or official varieties.

*Dialect* is also used to refer to variations in usage of the national or official language. The variations may be sociological in origin (age groups, educational level, formality or informality of the

communication, etc) and/or territorial. The variations are perceptible through particularities of pronunciation or vocabulary, for example. They raise the question of the official norm of the national language from which they are seen as deviating (but not necessarily intolerably so). The variations may crystallise and provide the substance for the creation of a new minority variety of identity (particularly in generational or professional groups).

Such linguistic varieties are fairly stable: they may have a written literature, dictionaries and reference grammars. It is therefore fairly easy for them rapidly to become a subject or medium of instruction. They have in common the fact that they have no official status or a specific exceptional status, but their acceptance by the rest of the national community varies. That acceptance may, among other things, depend on the possibility of mutual understanding between a variety of this type and the official/dominant variety and the cultural proximity of the group using it to other citizens. These linguistic varieties provide the foundation of a feeling of belonging to a community and are its clearest manifestation. In some cases, the sense of regional belonging does not clash with national belonging, but it may constitute a quite radical form of dissociation from the national political community. Because of this, some sectors of public opinion may see regional and minority languages as a potential threat to national cohesion.

This category of linguistic varieties, regional and minority languages, private use of which has sometimes been hampered and proscribed or, in any event, not fully accepted, therefore raises complex political questions, particularly with respect to their teaching, since, if they are to be satisfactorily transmitted down the generations, it is not enough for them to be offered in compulsory education and beyond.

If language teaching is expected to provide an element of belonging to Europe, it will be understood that the corresponding educational principles can be based neither on a dominant European variety, which does not exist, nor on the existence of one or more of these regional varieties which provide identity only for small sections of populations. The solution is therefore a non-territorial, translingual principle: it is these requirements that the overall concept of plurilingual education seeks to satisfy.

- ***Languages of immigrant communities, heritage languages***

The first languages of communities that have been obliged to settle in other countries are another type of minority language. These speakers have to adapt linguistically to their new environment, at least as far as adopting the dominant variety is concerned, which is then known as the *host language*, for everyday and professional communication. For adults, appropriation takes place outside academic structures. Such acquisition may go so far as attaining a high degree of mastery or stop when the most immediate linguistic needs have been satisfied. The family strategies for transmission of the first language of such communities can vary greatly and may be explicit or implicit: using the language systematically in private communication, regular visits to the country of origin, classes provided by an association or in host education systems. For others, the pressure of the surrounding community and the wish to facilitate integration in the host country lead to avoidance of the first variety. However, this abandonment of the heritage language may be experienced as a loss of identity by succeeding generations, who then try to reappropriate the linguistic variety they ought to have inherited.

The first languages of migrants have many origins: some are other European languages that may allow a degree of mutual understanding with the official varieties of certain countries and are themselves official or regional varieties. Others are from outside Europe, but familiar because of colonial history which provided some contact, or, conversely, are perceived as very different. These, in their turn, are the languages of countries or large cultural groupings or minority languages in the countries of origin.

The languages which have come to new lands where they were previously not present to any significant degree may already be offered in compulsory, upper secondary or higher education. But it is not certain that such mechanisms will be sufficient to avoid their loss. There is an ever greater risk that those that are not taught at all, whether they are foreign official/national or regional languages, will be lost within two or three generations. Unlike regional languages, these languages have no

territorial legitimacy and are actually of foreign origin: it may be thought that they should not be part of the formation of a collective identity, even a remodelled one, but should melt into the established identity, in other words, eventually disappear. These issues are an essential element of the reception policies countries which receive them set about organising for such communities, and are at least as important as the conditions for obtaining a residence permit.

- ***Foreign languages, classical languages***

Some linguistic varieties are not used by significant groups established in a given country. Such varieties are those used in neighbouring countries (they are thus not particularly “foreign” for people in border regions) or by more distant and less familiar groups. They may be national varieties or used internationally. They may be present in a state in television programmes (satellite, cable networks, subscription TV), the cinema, the media (the press and television) according to the general policy adopted (dubbing, voice-off simultaneous translation, sub-titles in the national language, etc). Their presence may be assisted or supported by official foreign educational institutions (foreign universities, cultural centres, etc), recognised in the territory.

One of these foreign varieties may play a significant role in a particular country, while still being considered foreign: one may then speak in terms of a *second language* of the country, whether it is one left by colonisation (ancient or recent) or a variety that is essential due to its prestige. These varieties may also be learned outside education systems, taught as a priority or used in public life (as official language or the language of instruction).

Classical languages are learned and taught as foreign (except, perhaps, in Italy and Greece, for Classical Latin and Ancient Greek, respectively). They are essentially taught from the point of view of reading comprehension and are used to provide access to the literary and intellectual productions which are one of the foundations of European culture. Their audience has shrunk everywhere since they are perceived as being less useful and are now part of the linguistic repertoire of very few adults. In language education policies, however, they should not be treated separately.

The issues the teaching of these varieties raise for education systems are identical to those mentioned with respect to individuals (see 1.1.1. above). A distinction has to be made, however, between a language which is foreign for a speaker and one which is foreign for the community: a language may be present in the family environment but be considered foreign by the national community: this is the case of heritage languages or languages with which people in border regions are in contact. Few languages are genuinely foreign in European countries since a great many linguistic varieties are in use in Europe, even though the number of speakers may be deemed small in absolute terms in relation to the total population of a particular country, though such proportional estimates have to be put into perspective, since the populations of European countries vary from three to around one hundred and fifty million. All this suggests that the very term *foreign language*, used in schools and elsewhere to refer to certain subjects, needs to be rethought in such a way as to emphasise the continuity of the learning of languages which require the activation of the same skills. It also suggests that the presence of languages in a territory should be turned to account as an economic and educational resource.

#### **4.1.3. *Linguistic varieties at school: written language, language of instruction***

From the point of schools, there are others ways of classifying linguistic varieties that are transversal vis-à-vis those discussed above and can usefully be taken into account when developing language education policies.

***Written language.*** One of the functions of education systems is to teach the written language, which is regarded rather simplistically as the transposition into writing of the oral or spoken version. In fact, the written forms of linguistic varieties are not particular to schools, but teaching is needed to ensure transmission.

From an educational point of view, it can be observed that every child, exposed to the linguistic variety of the home environment, will learn it in interaction with his or her usual interlocutors and without systematic teaching. The ability to write is not given naturally and requires varying amounts of teaching. It concerns first and foremost learning the writing system (the alphabet or ideograms), whose use may be complex, both as regards recognition (reading aloud) and production (writing in the ordinary sense). The prime goal is the ability to understand and produce texts according to the rules of correct discourse, which should not be confused with the rules of grammar. This skill is decisive for social and professional development. As regards foreign varieties, the processes of acquiring oral skill are also distinct from those of acquiring written skills: the latter have many affinities with learning to write the first or official language, and this calls for coordinated teaching.

Schools are therefore the depositories of written linguistic varieties, which are certainly close to the corresponding oral varieties but specific in that they bring into play distinct cognitive and linguistic faculties. Schools also play a very important part in making learners aware of the social norms of usage of the national variety. This variety therefore presents particular problems for language education policy: in order for a minority or regional language to be taught, for example, it is preferable for there to be a stable transcription system, but also and above all for there to be texts written in that variety (literature, academic works, textbooks, newspapers, etc) which can be used as teaching aids. It is also pedagogically desirable for children to learn first the written forms of their first language rather than those of the official language with which they may not be sufficiently familiar, and this is the case even if the writing system of their first language is considered more complex. Such an option calls into question the still widespread political principle that writing should be learned in relation to the official language.

### ***Language of instruction, bilingual education***

In order to teach subjects other than the language itself, schools use a linguistic variety which is generally the (or one of the) official language(s). Educational mechanisms have been developed for the children of migrants (whose first language is not the language used in schools) in which the children's mother tongue plays this role to make things easier for them, although some families may see this as an obstacle to their integration in the host country. There are however, many programmes in which the official language is used as the language of instruction: in situations in which learners who are speakers of a minority language are, as it were, immersed in the official school language, their first language will, if it is not in use in the community, tend to die out (this is known as *subtractive bilingualism*) or, conversely, acquisition of the linguistic variety used in the host country (*additive bilingualism*) will not lead to the loss of the first language.

The language of instruction may be another official variety in federated states or an actual foreign variety. In these cases, two languages are available for school, vocational and university education. This is known as *bilingual education*. Here, the objective is enhanced acquisition of foreign varieties: they are used to teach subjects other than languages (history or geography, mathematics, and so on). They are linked within a single subject (for example, the oral class is in one language, the textbook in another), are provided by a single teacher (a specialist in the subject who has a command of the other language) or by two (a subject and a language teacher), and so forth. There are other possible ways in which two languages may be present: alternating on different days; according to the linguistic skills taught (reading comprehension, oral presentations, etc); according to the functions of the languages: language for assignments, private conversation, relations with the school administration, etc. Bilingual education is one way of taking the languages of minorities into account. In other contexts where it does not have this function (as the language of instruction is foreign for all the pupils), it may be a sought-after type of education which has advantages over ordinary educational establishments or paths and may then become an elite path in a two-track system.

The profusion of terminology used to refer to languages needs to be considered from a political point of view: it underlines the great number of linguistic varieties present in a territory and the diversity of their functions, considered from the national point of view, the point of view of the communities that make up the country and the individual.

Such diversity is a fact that cannot be ignored. Knowing the status of the linguistic varieties in a particular territory and those of social groups does not necessarily guarantee that the linguistic issues which confront education systems and which are manifest in political life will be identified. In particular, one cannot deduce the degree of potential conflict such situations involve. It is nonetheless true that most linguistic conflicts result from the lack of concordance, from the point of view of particular communities or groups, between the linguistic varieties which are available to them and which they use in private and the place these are given in the life of the wider community, between forms of individual plurilingualism and forms of multilingualism supported by the state. Education systems have a major role to play in preventing and resolving such conflicts in that they can assist the transmission of threatened varieties, give legitimacy to others and make it possible for the linguistic varieties for which there is a demand to be learned or acquired successively.

## 4.2. Quantitative data on the use or knowledge of linguistic varieties

In order to conduct such policies, certain quantitative data are needed, at least technically, for the forward management of numbers of pupils and teachers. Generally speaking, despite their importance, little such data is available compared to the wealth of indicators available for economic and demographic change. They do not make it possible systematically to reconstruct the strategies of speakers and the communities to which they belong since they deal with individual languages rather than plurilingual repertoires.

### 4.2.1. Identifying the information available on languages

The most common sources of information concern the teaching of languages in education systems (essentially at primary and secondary level). The UNESCO/OECD/Eurostat data, compiled from information from within education systems, concern numbers of learners, teachers, exam passes, etc. Through them it is possible to understand how demand in schools reacts to the languages offered by education systems, but not, for example, to identify directly the level of proficiency acquired by the end of language training. These sources need to be completed by the data compiled for the education systems of each member State: they are however not all compiled in the same way. It is these data on the number of learners of particular languages offered in primary and secondary education which could provide the basis for European surveys like the one compiled by the *Eurydice* network (2001).

The other source of data concerns, not the teaching of languages, but their use. It consists of national censuses which are also not conducted using the same categories. For example, The *Survey of the statistical sources on religion, language(s), national and ethnic group in Europe*, published in 1998, shows that, of thirty seven European countries surveyed, nineteen had asked one or more questions on languages in the most recent census (p.32); in nine countries, general population surveys did not at that time contain questions on languages spoken (p.41) and no country classified the registration of births, marriages and deaths by language. The questions asked included terms such as *mother language*, *usual language* (spoken at home or outside the home), *language spoken in private life*, *language spoken at school or at work*, *languages spoken in addition to the mother language*, and so on. The census conducted in France in 1999 included a question addressed to 380,000 adults: “what language(s), dialect(s) or patois did your father and mother speak to you when you were five years old?”. Such terminological diversity sometimes makes it very difficult to compare findings in different countries.

Census questions on languages should also be simple and are often reductive: asking respondents if they *speak* a linguistic variety will not necessarily reveal anything about the ability to read and says nothing about overall competence. Finally, censuses often do not cover foreign varieties spoken: as they stand, in many cases they do not make it possible to gain a complete picture of linguistic varieties per speaker or to establish homogeneous groups of speakers from this point of view.

It would be perfectly possible to adopt a common terminology for surveying the use of linguistic varieties but, in societies that see themselves as multilingual or containing minority groups, it is precisely the mode of classification (and therefore definition) of linguistic varieties that may be at the

centre of political debate. This comparative lack of quantitative data everywhere seems, moreover, to reflect the fact that linguistic problems are marginal in the political life of some countries.

#### **4.2.2. *Adopting reliable, common methodologies for collecting data on languages***

It is probably desirable to devise at European level common ways of data collection in this field. Language data collection methodologies could adopt general principles comparable to those put forward by the Group of Specialists on the Demographic Situation of National Minorities (Courbage Y., in Haug W., Courbage Y. and Compton P. (eds.) 1998,:16):

- defining the classification system chosen (of linguistic varieties, fields of use, levels of competence, etc) on the basis of explicitly indicated scientific criteria and taking into account that mode of classification when interpreting findings
- taking into account the representations of the people questioned (for the denomination of languages, for example) by allowing several answers to the same question
- taking into account the multiple functions of linguistic varieties (in particular with respect to varieties of affiliation), by allowing several answers to the same question
- not linking such surveys to political or educational measures which may depend on survey results
- guaranteeing the confidentiality of statistics, by avoiding data being used for administrative purposes (taxation, for example)
- supplying questionnaires in all the linguistic varieties present in a territory so as to enable answers to be given in the first variety (the choice of questionnaire language by those surveyed providing an additional indicator).

Quantitative surveys may be conducted with the aid of indicators such as: the number (and readership) of newspapers, periodicals and other publications (literature, academic publications, etc) using one or other variety, the number of hours during which the media (television and radio) use those varieties, the number of religious services conducted in them, etc.

More often than not, qualitative surveys are also conducted. Conducting surveys using questionnaires can be problematic since they must take into account the complexity of the use of linguistic varieties (and their status) by individuals and groups that may perhaps be defined on the basis of common ways of using the same linguistic varieties. The following should therefore be determined:

- the functions of the different varieties in the social relations of each individual
- the choice of variety according to category of speaker (a superior, a known or unknown person) or subject of conversation (serious, trivial subjects, etc) in the case of oral exchanges
- the level of reading and writing skills (which may vary for the same linguistic variety according to type of text or subject), as well as speaking and listening skills
- the choice of school according to language-related criteria
- representations regarding the status of the varieties used: asking questions about languages may not make it possible to obtain replies on what those surveyed do not themselves regard as languages.

Whatever the need for such distinctions, questionnaires provide replies based on self-assessment and may therefore be biased by respondents' inability to assess their social conformity objectively (refusal

to admit one uses a dialect, for example), their personal commitment (stating that one uses a minority language in order to influence the statistical findings), and so on. It is therefore important to supplement them with qualitative analyses conducted by professionals by means of focus groups, for example, using the theoretical framework of communicative ethnography. This type of observation takes time and money and can involve only very small sections of the population. It is, however, especially appropriate to the study of regional or local characteristics in order to obtain replies relevant to them, in addition to national characteristics which may suggest that the situation is uniform throughout the country.

Such surveys may in any case show linguistic situations to be more complex than is suggested in political debate and to require detailed treatment. Incidentally, the surveys themselves, whether or not they are conducted on a large scale, provide an opportunity for those surveyed to become aware of the meanings they attach to certain ordinary terms such as *mother tongue*, *dialect* or *useful language*. They are therefore much more than a mere analytical tool but a form of action that should be regarded as such.

#### 4.2.3. *Language needs analysis*

In limited environments (city, enterprise, government department, school), the members of the groups concerned may be made aware of their linguistic aspirations and also establish their nature objectively on the basis of the notion of language needs. By *language needs* is meant an analysis of the linguistic varieties, usually foreign, and the competences (and level of competence) needed in those varieties that are essential for bodies of every kind to be able to manage efficiently their internal and external communication in particular communicative situations. This can be done by auditing and using data from many sources. The institutions that may benefit from language needs assessment are:

- all parts of public administration: ministries of foreign affairs, defence and foreign trade, international relations directorates of regions and major cities, etc
- all economic actors: international organisations concerned with economics and trade, multinational companies (national or foreign), small and medium enterprises (especially importers and exporters), particular economic sectors such as tourism, transport, sport, cultural exchange, etc, organisations such as chambers of commerce and industry and trades unions
- more specific fields such as law (international public and private), education (need for language teachers and teachers with a command of other languages), scientific and technological research, the political world, etc
- local bodies: cities, regions, vocational training establishments, universities, etc

The techniques for analysing language needs, considered from the point of view of the functioning of the institution or establishment are surveys that:

- Identify communicative inadequacies (data obtained from clients, consumers, users, speakers of the official/national language, etc)
- Identify the communicative situations concerned
- Identify the groups concerned
- Identify the resources needed to set up training: training establishments (in-house, use of language schools, using language specialists or specialists in the particular field who have language training, etc), funding, number of hours, learner availability

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In order to collect the information to be used as a basis on which to set training programme objectives, the following may be used:

- individual or group interviews
- questionnaires distributed to the persons concerned and/or their usual interlocutors (clients, partners, etc)
- analysis of job descriptions from the point of view of the types of communication involved (oral exchanges with whom and for what purpose? what types of texts have to be read or produced?). This involves ethnographic and linguistic analysis of the forms of discourse used by collecting samples of such exchanges (texts, meetings, etc)
- determination of learners' level of proficiency (self-analysis, tests, learner diaries, identifying problems and existing skills, using self-recordings or texts already produced in the course of work, etc.

The educational question that arises in these cases (and that as a rule concern adult training rather than schools) is attempting to link the language needs identified through the means described above and the *language needs* perceived by the people who will receive such language training, assuming that this term is appropriate with respect to them. They may coincide, but as such training is paid for by the institutions commissioning it, it will probably correspond more closely to the purposes of the institutions than private, personal expectations. Like all training, this training will only succeed if learners are committed to it. This means that the objectives, organisation (length, timing, etc) and internal recognition of training must be managed through consensus. This sort of negotiation is technically cumbersome but may prove essential if language education is to be precisely and acceptably structured, and vague global representations avoided that involve massive generalisations such as: *you have to speak such-and-such a language in order to have such-and-such a post in such-and-such a company*. Surveys of this type, which aim to define in detail the ways languages are used, often lead to questioning stereotyped representations of the intrinsic value accorded to some linguistic varieties, since they relate the supposed "value" of these languages to their actual relevance in precise situations. In this respect, language needs analyses make it possible to give the principle of plurilingualism practical expression, in particular outside initial language teaching.

#### **4.2.4. Exploiting information on language education policies in other countries**

Education policies and language policies were for long managed in national contexts according to the particular traditions of each country and the resources available locally. The formation of a European area, as well as the greater circulation of information and the many forms of international cooperation, have helped to decompartmentalise educational cultures and led to solutions adopted in other countries in relation to comparable social issues being regarded as relevant. This internationalisation of knowledge on education takes practical form in the field of research on comparative education, for example. It enables not only comparisons between systems but, fundamentally, greater understanding of one's own system by comparing it to others.

Comparative studies are conducted by national and international bodies which are also sources of quantitative data on language teaching: the International Bureau of Education (IBE), the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), UNESCO (including the *Report of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century*, 1996), the European Commission, etc.

If such surveys are to be relevant, language teaching in different countries must first be comparable. Quantifying investment in languages is one of the foundations for international comparisons between education systems. It takes into account data such as education costs, annual or total volume of teaching dispensed (by language, for all languages other than the national language(s), etc), the number of languages taught, how the supply of languages is structured, user response to it, etc.

Parallel descriptions which are difficult to quantify include analysis of the paths offered, the intensity of teaching, decision-making structures (with respect to languages, who decides to offer which varieties in a particular establishment). The findings are far harder to determine reliably but the dissemination of skills levels valid for all languages taught and recognised by language professionals will give such surveys credibility.

The same is true of teaching methods, i.e. those teachers actually use: in order for them to be observed, complex observation mechanisms have to be set up, while extrapolations from limited observations are a delicate matter. At the moment, it is therefore difficult to correlate types of teaching and results achieved in terms of skills levels over a comparable period. The sociolinguistic context in which institutional teaching takes place is another fundamental aspect of evaluation, but one which is extremely hard to assess in comparative terms.

Such international surveys often give rise to discussion on the detail, but very often have a great impact on public opinion. The usefulness of such analyses for decision-making is well-known in that they make it possible to identify inadequacies and suggest solutions that it may be possible to transfer. They are used in arguments in favour of one solution or another in political debate, especially with respect to how appropriate it is to change an existing system according to social changes observed elsewhere or expected improvements of which other countries provide the example.

Caution is needed with respect to comparative analyses involving classification by country, since what may easily be interpreted as an accolade may stimulate affective national reactions and re-open debates that have more passion than substance. On the other hand, it is possible that a comprehensive description of language education policies in each country conducted in the framework of a transparent protocol with the involvement of external observers, might not be restricted to technical findings, which are considered objective preliminaries to subsequent decision-making. The probable state of collective awareness of such issues may provide an opportunity to link up all the actors concerned and so make it possible to identify the issues, the different attitudes and the resources available or to be found. It is a protocol of this kind that the Language Policy Division of the Council of Europe is developing under the title *Language Education Policies Profiles*.

### 4.3. Conclusion

Taking into consideration the data so far collected, education systems and existing language education need to be analysed in order to enable them to develop new language policies. This analysis may be guided by the following questions:

- *What functions do education systems, and in particular the teaching of languages, have in society?*

For example, in compulsory education, the following goals may be set so as to prepare children for adult life: creating a feeling of national belonging; giving everyone the same opportunities; reducing inequalities, increasing social mobility, avoiding stratification from generation to generation; creating a feeling of belonging to Europe as democratic citizens, etc. But these goals may reappear at other educational levels, in the framework of lifelong training. Or again, what role does teaching languages play for regional and minority groups: should it be a separate, optional subject, should it be the language of instruction and until what stage in the curriculum, etc?

- *How are language curricula coordinated with each other?*

Are language curricula aggregates of knowledge and know-how that are horizontally separate (by school year, for example)? What longitudinal relations are established between the teaching of languages at different levels of education (from nursery school to university and beyond)? What subjects is it proposed to teach in other languages? With what results as regards knowledge of the subjects concerned? What relations have been established between the curricula of the various languages taught: mother, official/national, regional and minority, classical, foreign, etc? What

competences are regarded as appropriate to be re-used and developed from one language to another etc.?

- *What recognition is given to extra-curricular or post-school language training, for example in the framework of vocational training?*
- *What human resources are available, in particular in terms of teachers: are they specialists in one language or in several, in a language and another subject? Is there a shortage of teachers for a particular language? How are these shortfalls dealt with: by using native speakers who are not teachers, by some form of self-instruction, etc?*

These and other questions should show where action on teaching languages is needed in order to provide plurilingual education.

The major function of language education policies is to see that the provision of language education throughout life corresponds more closely to the *linguistic aspirations* of social groups in the framework of a European consensus. Such aspirations, which are not limited to languages needs as they are perceived (usually from the point of view of employment), are based on the way speakers apprehend the linguistic varieties they command and the way they want to see them change: they may experience themselves as being monolingual or bilingual and be satisfied with their linguistic possibilities; they may also perceive themselves or be perceived as having available to them insufficient or inadequate varieties; they may, lastly, perceive the fragility of some of the varieties they use, and this may lead them to adopt more militant attitudes as carriers of endangered linguistic varieties. Lack of congruence between first variety and official variety may in the long run create language policy problems, as may the first variety's becoming the second variety or foreign (disappearance of migrants' varieties) or the use of a foreign language as second language, etc.

It is by anticipating such changes, where possible, through better knowledge of the configuration of the linguistic resources of social groups that linguistic conflict can be dealt with and consensus created even beyond national borders. Language education policies are technically able to deal with at least some of the present complexity and diversity of sociolinguistic situations in Europe in ways other than the standard, diversity-reducing solutions so as to organise multiple forms of language education based on a common principle: plurilingualism as a democratic value to be promoted and a competence to be developed.

## **PART THREE: ORGANISATIONAL FORMS OF PLURILINGUAL EDUCATION**

*The principles for language education policies and the data that need to be taken into consideration when implementing those policies, whatever their goals, have been reviewed in Parts One and Two. Part Three returns to the different facets of plurilingualism, which needs to be clarified to facilitate its implementation in educational establishments. The means available for creating a social and educational environment favourable to its introduction in all kinds of teaching will be described (Chapter 5). The ways in which language teaching can be organised so as to put the principle into practice will be listed. These are sufficiently varied to leave each country responsible for the detailed arrangements for implementing what remains a major requirement for Europe: ensuring communication between European citizens, with respect for all linguistic varieties (Chapter 6).*

## Chapter 5: Creating a culture of plurilingualism

*The above analyses assume their full meaning in relation to the principles promoted in the framework of the Council of Europe, which propose goals for language education. These principles now have to be clarified in more practical terms in order to promote plurilingual education in European societies and education systems and show, not their political, social and educational relevance, but simply their feasibility.*

*The culture of plurilingualism does not have to be created from scratch: it is already present in some sectors of the educational and political worlds in groups of every kind (language teachers' associations, in particular). It has already been identified as a coherent approach to language teaching in view of changes in the modern world which have given rise to the issue of managing cultural diversity, balancing universalist standardisation and identity-centred isolationism. Recognition of the value of languages, despite the differences in their national and international status, is the basis on which languages can be taught in ways that are functional (adapted to the requirements of communication) and have a high educational value, providing the foundations for linguistic tolerance. Such goals have especially been justified in related formulations such as respecting diversity or as a factor in the protection of linguistic and cultural minorities, but their relevance goes beyond that. It is possible to use this existing awareness as a springboard for extending the culture of plurilingualism in educational establishments and elsewhere.*

### **5.1. Plurilingualism: the principle and goal of language, personal and citizenship education**

#### **5.1.1. Plurilingualism as a transversal project**

Education for plurilingual awareness as a value and education for plurilingualism as a way of organising language teaching are components of a project implemented in a framework comprising mother tongues, as well as national, regional, minority, foreign and other languages, which should not be compartmentalised in the teaching environment. Language problems concern many social agents and areas of the life of society: public opinion (representations of the usefulness of linguistic varieties, for example), the media (space given to varieties other than the official one), government and business (varieties used with consumers, users of public transport, advertising, etc), the political and trades union world (party manifestos and positions taken on language issues and language education policy in relation to the major political ideologies and values such as solidarity, freedom and democracy).

Plurilingualism is of particular importance to educational systems: national or official education organisations responsible for compulsory and subsequent education. It also concerns higher education, corporate universities, initial and continuing vocational training, training organised by the voluntary sector, the tourist industry, companies and chambers of commerce and industry, private language schools, etc. Awareness of the growing role of knowledge and intellectual skills in the definition of production, distribution and design tasks is displacing the question of compulsory language teaching from compulsory schooling to subsequent training: the need or opportunities to learn or take up again a linguistic variety may be many, created by career changes, new tastes or interests, leisure activities and personal development. A concerted language education policy should be able to determine the role of each training authority and provide transversal information in order to see that they complement each other.

Such training, whether successive or parallel, should be conceived in such a way that prior learning is taken into account so as to facilitate transfers of knowledge from one linguistic variety to another or from earlier learning of the same variety. From this point of view, it is by no means certain that the language teaching education systems now offer always provides the best example of longitudinal coordination.

### 5.1.2. *Plurilingualism and language education: enhancing the status of and developing linguistic repertoires*

As indicated at the beginning of this document (Chapter 1), the project of education for plurilingualism is to adapt language teaching to the needs of European societies individually and collectively and to speakers' aspirations. This is made possible by diversifying the languages taught and coordinating the teaching of the various languages, which are often regarded as separate subjects. They should be coordinated and approached with the development of plurilingual competence as the common goal of teaching systems. The corresponding teaching should be seen both as variable according to educational situations and speakers and as the expression of a common principle.

These two goals, education for plurilingual awareness (as a value) and education for plurilingualism (as the targeted competence), the first of which does not necessarily involve the acquisition of actual language skills, are closely linked since each interacts with the other:

- speakers' awareness of their plurilingual repertoires may lead them to give equal value to each of the varieties they and other speakers use, even if they do not have the same functions (in communication, for the feeling of belonging, etc)
- education for plurilingual awareness, which aims to make people aware of the way the various natural languages function in order to bring about mutual comprehension among the members of a group, may lead to increased motivation and a curiosity about languages that will lead them to develop their own linguistic repertoires.

Being plurilingual means, as seen above (Chapter 1) having a certain degree of competence (oral, written, etc) in several linguistic varieties, with varying functions, the whole being subject to changes over time. It is the potential and/or actual ability to use several languages to differing degrees of proficiency and for different purposes. More precisely, following the definition given in the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (p.168), plurilingual and pluricultural competence refers to “the use of languages for the purposes of communication and to take part in intercultural action, where a person, viewed as a social agent, has proficiency, of varying degrees, in several languages and experience of several cultures”. *Plurilingualism, which is seen from the speaker's perspective, is distinct from multilingualism, the presence of languages in a given territory.*

All the varieties available to a speaker or group of speakers is referred to as *linguistic repertoire*. 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. The way these linguistic varieties can be used in communication is observed, in particular, when two linguistic varieties are used successively or simultaneously: for example, going from the official to the regional variety in order to discuss subjects in a more personal way with a speaker (possessing the same regional variety) or using the mother variety as auxiliary during a discussion in a foreign language.

Plurilingualism as a potential of every speaker is typified by the diversity of individual repertoires, but some groups have identical, similar or related repertoires. The diversity of plurilingual repertoires may be described in terms of:

- the varieties of which they consist
- the functions of the varieties: usual or professional communication, identity, etc
- the distances between the varieties: between the first oral variety and first written variety, between the second oral variety and the first oral variety, etc. Some varieties may be close (first language and school language), others experienced as distant (first language and foreign language, etc)

- competences in a single variety: speaking, writing, understanding, etc
- level of proficiency in the various competences in a single variety and in a single competence in different varieties
- correlations between language competences and cultural competences/knowledge: acquisition of a variety may or may not be accompanied by knowledge of the society or group of which the variety is the first or official variety
- variations in the repertoire over time: acquisition of new varieties and dormancy of varieties used previously, modification of the degree of proficiency (per competence), acquisition of new competences, modification in the functions of varieties. Such variations over time are the result of all sorts of events - personal, occupational, etc - which mean that linguistic repertoires are really managed over the long term.

The following illustrates what might be considered the “ordinary” linguistic repertoire of a European adult who has gone through secondary school:

- first language (oral), in its standard variety
- written variety of the first language (command of written discourse, acquisition at school then at work)
- generational and/or regional variety of the first variety (particularly lexis or accent)
- possibly, a regional language used alternately with the official variety in some communicative circumstances
- proficiency (level B, for example) or school and/or tourist and/or media experience of foreign varieties
- partial competence (understanding) in other social, generational, regional or foreign varieties.

If it is accepted that plurilingualism thus defined is a competence individuals have as speakers, who are fundamentally rather than exceptionally plurilingual, education systems and all other training authorities should:

- make all speakers aware of their own repertoire, including in the “mother” tongue, and of the repertoires of other speakers and groups
- demonstrate the intrinsic equal dignity of all those varieties in that they are appropriate to the functions each speaker gives them
- demonstrate their changing nature
- develop the repertoires by increasing competences, levels of proficiency and the number of varieties known, etc
- develop plurilingual competence by developing the transversal competences of which it is composed.

The consequences for education policies of this principle of promotional, forward-looking management of plurilingual repertoires are:

- the forms of plurilingualism (number and nature of linguistic varieties) to be promoted and developed will be defined specifically in relation to each situation (national, regional or local),

the sociolinguistic situation (varieties present in the territory), and collective needs and group aspirations;

- the plurilingual objectives assigned to education may be interpreted differently according to available resources. *However, as a general rule, the less possibility there is to develop the plurilingual repertoire, the more education for plurilingual awareness there should be.*

This educational requirement is more broadly based on the hypothesis that the development of language skills (plurilingualism as the targeted competence) does not automatically change speakers' attitudes, making them more curious about languages or respectful of the languages of other communities (plurilingualism as a value). In these circumstances, education for plurilingual awareness is not rendered superfluous by an education that extends peoples' linguistic repertoires. On the contrary, it may be thought that education for plurilingual awareness should be a component of any language education, in the traditional sense, and have a more clear-cut place in the curriculum the more the language(s) taught is(are) dominant, legitimate or considered decisive in social representations.

It is therefore important that those responsible for teaching the languages most widely available in educational establishments should be particularly responsible for education for plurilingual awareness and that such education should be a central component of those subjects;

- since plurilingualism has to be managed throughout life, the role of teaching will be to enhance the status of and develop learners' initial repertoires. One of its essential tasks will be to show every individual how to take advantage of the resources of his or her repertoire in communication. Language teaching should above all seek to make learners autonomous, i.e. teach them to learn languages by themselves by developing a reflective approach to how they learn, what they know and their needs: all language teaching should include the development of learning strategies and not be seen as an end in itself;
- language education should be seen as an on-going process, not restricted to initial training. This means taking into account what has already been learned individually or at school and what is being acquired simultaneously, and no longer compartmentalising the teaching of different languages.

Defined in this way, plurilingualism is a characteristic of every speaker: it is not relevant only to officially multilingual countries, i.e. situations in which the multilingual nature of society is recognised and identified as such (federal structures, regions with a special linguistic status, urban environments). There is no doubt that recognising the plurilingual dimension of linguistic practices in the countries which experience themselves as monolingual will be a function of the collective feeling of linguistic homogeneity and the representation each person has of plurilingualism.

### ***5.1.3. Plurilingualism and the education of the individual: developing pluricultural awareness and intercultural communication***

Transmission of knowledge is not the only role of compulsory schooling. Every school subject, including languages, should be seen in terms of the educational function of preparing children for adult life in society. Schools may interpret such educational concerns, which are involved in the socialisation of individuals, differently: creating a feeling of belonging (national, federal, regional), giving each child the same opportunity to develop his or her abilities, favouring social mobility so as to create a more fluid society in which the same stratifications are not reproduced from generation to generation, creating a feeling of social responsibility, etc. One aspect of enhancing the status of and developing plurilingual repertoires is education in cultural differences and otherness.

Individual linguistic repertoires are produced where groups of which each of the varieties is the variety of affiliation or dominant use intersect: one can speak the language of young immigrants or a foreign language without belonging to those distinct communities. In European societies, where there are

communities identified by different linguistic varieties and different cultures, one may be plurilingual without necessarily being pluricultural. One should not be misled by the proximity of the terms *plurilingual* and *pluricultural*: while all speakers have a plurilingual repertoire, this does not necessarily make them aware of other cultures. Acquisition of a new linguistic variety provides an opportunity, but only an opportunity, to acquire some knowledge of other communities that use that variety, to whose practices and collective rules one must adapt, at least partially, in communication.

But even this contact with more than one culture is not of a kind automatically to result in cultural awareness, in the sense of awareness and acceptance of difference with respect to the collective values, behaviour, standards, representations and memory of a different society. Such awareness is a matter of education which can be linked with language teaching or dealt with more specifically. The relationship with language teaching is close, however: many areas of misunderstanding between cultures may be the result of lack of equivalence between words or meanings or, on another level, of differences in communicative behaviour (saying goodbye, making excuses, refusing, expressing disagreement, etc). Developing pluricultural awareness also has linguistic dimensions, both cognitive and affective; it therefore has the function of managing the cultural misunderstandings which may result from lack of linguistic understanding, lack of mutual knowledge or difficulties accepting other ways of behaving or doing things as a result of ethnocentric assessments. The purpose of pluricultural education is to create a degree of adaptation to other cultures so as to establish with the members of those communities forms of communication as free of prejudice and stereotypes as possible.

While pluricultural awareness concerns adapting to the Other's culture in order to ensure communication and understanding, the purpose of creating intercultural competence is to manage relations between oneself and others. This competence, which is not a matter of education alone but of a genuine teaching/learning process, can be broken down into elements such as:

- knowledge, in the sense of knowledge about other societies
- the ability to learn, understood as the ability to develop knowledge about a society on the basis of what is known and to inform oneself by searching for and processing new data: in other words, the capacity to identify the relevant information and sources of information
- the ability to interpret and assess, understood as the capacity to give meaning to cultural objects of whatever kind on the basis of frameworks of reference (historical, sociological, anthropological, etc) and values (such as those on which human rights are based, etc). Such interpretations and assessments can be effected by putting oneself in the other's place (modes of interpretation and forms of assessment used by the members of the community they concern) or by adopting the point of view of an outside "observer" who can base his or her interpretations on other systems of reference and other social experiences. This capacity for critical distance is therefore distinct from value judgments dependent on one's own cultural background;
- attitudes and personality factors underlying the ability to suspend one's judgment and neutralise one's representations about others, and detach oneself from one's own culture (by explaining what is implicit or questioning consensus views) so as to perceive it from a (fictive) external point of view comparable to the way those foreign to the community view it.

Such intercultural competence will result in an understanding which is not strictly linguistic, as free from misunderstandings as possible and marked by willing reciprocal cooperation between interlocutors from different communities. Defined in this way, intercultural education is an essential goal of language education in that it contributes to personal development. This goal should have a place in teaching alongside those of transmitting or instilling linguistic knowledge, which are often regarded as primordial. It would be contrary to the spirit of education for plurilingualism as presented in this *Guide* to allow functional objectives to eliminate this educational function.

Historically, the educational dimension, a permanent preoccupation of language education, has been expressed in many forms. It may be adopted in the framework of language teaching where the communities are in contact, even in an abstract or virtual way. But, as an educational goal (especially in compulsory schooling), it also concerns other subjects such as literature, philosophy, history, geography and citizenship education.

#### 5.1.4. *Plurilingualism and educating citizens: education for democratic citizenship in Europe*

The question of languages is one of the many issues involved in creating a feeling of belonging to the same community based not on a supranational identity but on the political concept of democratic citizenship. A complex debate on the nature of that citizenship is clearly taking place. Here, a few observations are offered about the concept seen from the linguistic viewpoint, which is only one of many ways of approaching it.

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European democratic life presupposes, from the material point of view first, the formation of a public space in which everyone may play a part and be recognised as belonging to this *community of citizens*. In a national context, political life takes particular concrete forms: types of activities of political parties and their internal modes of functioning, characteristics of parliamentary activity, habits regarding election campaigns, forms of public debate, types of arguments used in debate, etc. If such a space for democratic debate and confrontation is to be created at European level, various linguistic varieties will have to be used: it is hard to see how such forms of public communication can take place in a *lingua franca* except, for example, at multilateral official meetings at the highest level.

European citizenship cannot be reduced to a form of communication between Europeans. The concept of citizenship is also a legal one, indeed it is this that constitutes its classic definition: the modern states of Europe viewed as a whole are made up of different (linguistic, religious, cultural, economic and social, etc) communities, often referred to as *ethnic* communities, which coexist in the political framework of national states or throughout Europe (the deaf or the Roma Gypsies, for example). The democratic principle, which is abstract, is to transcend these differences or particularisms in order to see the members of the national (or European) community as citizens, i.e. according to the rights (particularly rights-freedoms) and duties which are identical for everyone and are reciprocal between the state and individuals. This conception of citizenship involves identifying the rights and duties that will be considered common and those that will be a response to special requirements: those of particularly weak or threatened groups, for example, for whom ordinary legislation will be adapted in the name of equity or solidarity or in the framework of *differential citizenship* taking into account cultural particularities.

Linguistic varieties are part of this general issue: the state communicates with citizens in an official linguistic variety (or in several) with which not all the citizens necessarily identify, because it is not their first variety, for example. In addition, political life takes place in the official language, the use of regional or social varieties being sporadic or aimed at specific effects. This situation may exclude minority groups from public life and democratic processes or lead them to withdraw from it; they may turn to other means of making their voices heard. The issue to be tackled is the forms of recognition to be given to speakers of linguistic varieties who do not feel recognised as they would wish to be.

The plurilingual perspective may provide some answers to such problems: it recognises and accepts the diversity of all speakers; it makes it a principle of plurilingual education that the management of plurilingual repertoires and their development should be differentiated; techniques are available for establishing ways of teaching linguistic varieties which are not a matter of exclusive choices, but can be modulated (over time, for example) and are therefore negotiable. From this point of view, plurilingual education can enable both majorities and minorities to have a better understanding of the nature of their relationships and of their own aspirations.

There is also the possibility of constructing European citizenship as citizens' adherence to a civic ideal in linguistic terms. It is possible that the large number of first-language linguistic varieties and repertoires would be an obstacle to the formation of European awareness, although this is debatable. Furthermore, there is no linguistic variety in which Europeans can identify with one another and for the rest of the world as "Europeans". However, it does seem that complicity between individuals belonging to different communities may be created independently of whether or not they share one or more linguistic variety(ies). In these circumstances, the plurilingual project has a European valency since, in the final analysis, its goal is not for European citizens to have common linguistic varieties, but a common value which, in a sense, is a goal that could inspire tangible support.

The most immediate experience of the diversity of Europe is the day-to-day experience of the languages used: plurilingualism could therefore be a basis for 'civic friendship' between speakers, whatever linguistic varieties they use. Citizens would regard one another as plurilingual and could constitute a "linguistic community" based on a common linguistic ideal. The idea is to detach first or official language from national or European belonging by recognising that a shared culture of languages is an informal element that could be a component of democratic citizenship.

Plurilingualism as a principle on which to organise language education can be implemented by reorganising sectors of education systems as they now exist. More is involved, however: a change in educational philosophy that would mean language teaching was no longer seen as consisting of autonomous subjects (national language, classical languages, foreign languages, heritage languages, regional languages, etc), but as a homogeneous, diversified education on language and languages. This is not a radically new notion, since it appeared, for example, in Italy in the 1980s as *educazione linguistica*, conceived as integrated education in all languages (verbal and non-verbal) in the framework of compulsory schooling.

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Such integration should be brought about at the level of goals and teaching methods and by coordinating syllabuses. It would not result in the disappearance of language lessons or the replacement of actual mastery of linguistic varieties by vague elements of general linguistics, comparative grammar or civic education, but it involves at least greater coordination, in parallel and over time, between the constituent parts of such plurilingual education. Setting up curricula that apply this principle and are compatible with decision-makers' and teachers' educational culture will take time and depend on the resources of each member State. It will certainly be a gradual process, as it involves transforming curricula and mentalities. It is nevertheless the option Europe could choose to respond to the challenge of linguistic diversity, as Australia, South Africa and India have done in their own ways.

## **5.2. Disseminating plurilingualism: expected political benefits**

Plurilingualism as the principle of language education as it has been described above is not self-evident since it is not a dominant ordinary representation and only partly corresponds to speakers' direct experience. Its purposes, other than the educational perspective discussed so far, therefore need to be explained. Some of the social and political reasons that can be invoked to establish its relevance as a focus of language education policy will be discussed below.

The hoped-for consequences of putting in place language education based on the principle of plurilingualism should be seen in relation to the European project, but are also independent of it.

Regarding everyone's language competence as plural and evolutionary should make it possible:

- to adapt language education to changes in European society, which is increasingly multicultural and multilingual, as can be seen from the visible multilingualism of the major centres (tourists, migrants, foreign residents, etc)

- to manage more efficiently the linguistic capital represented by speakers' existing repertoires (maintaining migrants' languages, for example) and develop them, by anticipating collective language needs: language skills could prove key advantages for penetrating foreign markets
- to bring together the constituent cultural groups of Europe around a peaceful "philosophy" of languages which should help to prevent conflict by providing the means of constructing linguistic compromises
- to help to create a feeling of common belonging to a political and cultural space in such a way as not to exclude languages and cultures other than those of Europe or those present in Europe
- from the point of view of educational value, to try to limit the loss resulting from language teaching that is too spread out over time and not explicitly interconnected (including with respect to the same linguistic variety), by reducing dispersal through more targeted, decompartmentalised teaching that would allow plurilingual competence to come into play. For example, language teaching would no longer focus on the relationship between the official language and the variety being learned and could also, in some clearly defined activities, use two foreign linguistic varieties.

While plurilingual education is based on sociolinguistic (notion of plurilingual repertoire), psycholinguistic (notion of plurilingual competence) and pedagogical (notion of education for plurilingual awareness) considerations, it is nevertheless clear that its legitimacy for decision-makers and officials is essentially political in that it should make it possible to respond to the questions raised by European citizens.

Some of these questions, not all of which are necessarily always topical, are:

- the question of regional or minority languages which speakers wish to see recognised: this may be based on differentiated forms of teaching and not only on use as a language of instruction in compulsory schooling
- the national question: plurilingualism does not call into question national cohesion by questioning the status of the national language: it simply recognises the plurilingual dimension of every individual repertoire and involves making space for some of those varieties, in ways to be defined, in, but also outside, the education system, during compulsory schooling and throughout educational careers. The European rationale, however, suggests that citizenship should be based on something other than an official language that citizens are bound to learn. The choice of languages might be regarded as a private question, like religion, which in Europe is no longer a factor in a citizen's affiliation to a particular state
- the question of incivility, which is connected to educating citizens in the collective values of democratic *conviviality*. Deploring social egotism, which manifests itself in some forms of what is perceived as verbal violence, means that the question of social cohesion has to be approached in linguistic terms: ordinary incivility is not only the result of differences between the social varieties used in ordinary exchanges, but also arises from the fact that rules of linguistic behaviour are no longer shared. Reintegration also means learning to communicate with everyone again. This educational task can be expressed technically in terms of plurilingualism
- the question of the efficiency of the education system and its supposed lack of adaptation to the job market: this widely held view cannot be empirically verified with respect to languages if language education is not defined in terms of explicit objectives. The plurilingual approach means that syllabuses have to be structured according to competences and levels of proficiency (see Chapter 6) which enable language education to be evaluated (including quality control) and investment in education systems accounted for.

From this point of view, the *Guide* simply seeks to underline the relevance of renewed discussion of the frequently recurring language question so that it is less systematically approached only from the point of view of establishing a European *lingua franca*. European programmes have probably increased student and teacher mobility (twinning, exchanges, study visits abroad, etc) and have certainly had an effect on language learning but, in the absence of quantified evaluation, it is not known if they have had an effect on the extension of plurilingual repertoires or attitudes to linguistic tolerance. It may however be thought that these actions have helped to develop a common European educational culture. Evidence of this is the reception given to the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* and the *European Language Portfolio*, which have been disseminated because of their intrinsic relevance and adopted by education systems without the need for special technical agreements. The voluntary adoption of common reference tools indicates there is a consensus a great educational and political potential

### **5.3. Disseminating plurilingualism: creating social consensus**

Making the plurilingual option acceptable in education systems involves showing its relevance to the common experience of languages and language teaching which characterises schooling. Creating the external conditions favourable to the plurilingual idea is a collective task which requires training (in education systems or elsewhere) and is not in this respect very different from education for tolerance or for combating racism.

Education for plurilingual awareness will probably need support from social intermediaries such as trades unions and the voluntary sector (especially parents' and teachers' associations and cultural associations, etc). It is the product of a democratic spirit, since its aim is to enable the strategies of all social groups to take the language parameter into account for what it really is, rather than on the basis of beliefs that might rapidly become obsolete.

This could take the form of education campaigns (similar to the *European Year of Languages 2001*) or could be disseminated in the form of recommendations or "languages code of practice" drafted by all the groups of bodies involved in languages, above all professionals (schools, institutes, language centres outside the national system, and also advertising agencies, the media, etc).

The objective of such concerted action targeting macro-social representations should be to explain the nature of what is at stake, collectively as well as personally, with respect to knowledge of languages and to clarify what learning a language really involves, whatever stereotyped images people may have. This should make education systems better able to react to social demand so that they are no longer asked only to respond to that demand, which is often vague, but also better able to guide it in the name of accepted principles.

#### **5.3.1. Making "ordinary" representations of languages and language teaching more sophisticated**

Creating a context favourable to plurilingualism means above all dedramatising the common view of languages and language learning: social representations are often monolingual. The national variety is favoured by those whose first or usual variety it is, the first variety (regional, heritage) is favoured as the only variety of affiliation, and so forth. Languages are often thought of in terms of reciprocal exclusion, probably because it is believed that knowledge of one language hinders knowledge of another. This perception is accentuated by the compartmentalised treatment of each variety in schools and by the system of choosing among languages (options), one of the current modes of educational provision.

It is no easy matter to make these representations, which are often reinforced by schools, more sophisticated, but it is possible to try to provide the means by which such prejudices can be challenged by simple arguments. Ordinary conceptions of languages and language learning often consist of reductive generalisations:

- people say, *you have to be gifted to learn languages*, whereas language competence is an equally distributed characteristic of the human race; some speakers learn more varieties than others because they live in multilingual environments and have been able to develop their plurilingual competence and their learning-to-learn ability
- people say, *you have to be intelligent to learn languages*. If analytical or self-study approaches are favoured, some intellectual discipline may be necessary, but it is not a prerequisite and plays little part in mimetic approaches of the type favoured by communicative, natural and unconventional methodologies
- people say, *languages are for the élite*. Learning foreign languages was indeed long considered a form of education for the privileged, but speakers' repertoires have been extended in recent times by the creation of less compartmentalised national and international spaces. Knowledge of languages has become commonplace and is one of the competences needed in working life. It is now a component of quality of life
- people say, *it takes a long time to learn a language*. If the objective is some sort of perfection, this may be the case, but one can learn a language partially and to a level regarded, at least temporarily, as sufficient, and this will probably require less investment. There are also intensive forms of teaching. It is also possible to abandon learning a language and to take it up again later
- people say, *language learning is boring*. Current teaching methodologies emphasise active methods, learner participation, acquiring competence in communication rather than forms (grammar and vocabulary)
- people say, *language learning is difficult*. The effort required to learn a language is hard to quantify in comparison to the acquisition of other skills or knowledge. This representation has its origin in a particular teaching model in which languages are subjects with the same constraints as other subjects (time, length, frequency). They may also be subject to ever-present evaluations and used by schools as a selection criterion. Such "academisation" of language learning and teaching makes test results (and hence the marks to be achieved) more important than the linguistic skills themselves
- people say, *you learn languages when you're very young*. It is true that the first language is acquired naturally in the earliest years of socialisation and therefore at a very early age. Those acquired during childhood are probably experienced as being easier, not only for psycholinguistic reasons, but because the teaching is not very academic and produces little social inhibition (the obligation to achieve *good results*). Learning languages in adult life presents no more intrinsic difficulties: it may be supported by previous experience of learning to learn and the plurilingual competence which enables learning strategies and known varieties to be used in the acquisition of unknown varieties.

Such common ideas muddle perceptions of the nature of individual plurilingual competence and sap motivation to learn. They may be perpetuated for as long as the favoured model of communication is communication between a (monolingual) native speaker and a non-native speaker who uses the usual variety of the former. There are, however, forms of communication other than the one used as the model: official exchanges between a native and a non-native speaker, for example. The following have been described:

- ordinary exchanges which include a sort of teaching dimension: the native speaker adapts to his or her interlocutor's mistakes and imprecisions and helps him or her to learn and communicate better
- exchanges involving a third language (perhaps an international *lingua franca*) common to both speakers

- exchanges based only on understanding each other, each speaking his or her usual variety and being understood by the other
- exchanges using several linguistic varieties at the same time and possibly for all speakers present, where code-switching is used
- exchanges in which each speaker uses the other's usual language, and so forth.

Accepting the non-native speaker's mistakes, regionalisms, imprecisions, linguistic "inventions" and changes in linguistic variety as manifestations of human creativity and diversity are forms of linguistic benevolence, which is itself a form of civility. The acceptance of plurilingualism as an objective of language education policies depends upon the acceptance of the existence and legitimacy of such plurality in modes of communication.

### **5.3.2. *Increasing and diversifying the forms in which languages are present in the media and public space***

Creating a context favourable to the acceptance of plurilingualism also requires putting European citizens in actual contact with the plurality of linguistic varieties. In order to afford them more substantial experience of linguistic plurality, languages could be given more visibility in public space. These sorts of actions are not necessarily the state's responsibility since they concern sectors, such as the economy, which are not under its control. The state could, however, have the role of making the operators concerned aware of their responsibilities in this respect.

The forms in which linguistic varieties are present may be diversified in sectors such as:

- government services: through plurilingual notices, training the civil servants responsible for receiving speakers of different linguistic varieties
- public places: public transport, airports, shopping centres, department stores, etc, through texts and announcements in several linguistic varieties
- television programmes, particularly news programmes, where it would be preferable to allow people's voices and the languages they use to be heard, rather than dubbing everything (sub-titles could be used as well)
- the cinema, where it would be useful to encourage the distribution of films in their original version, sub-titled in the spectators' usual language or even using sub-titles in the language of the film in order to facilitate access to meaning, thus making the dialogue and its written form available to spectators
- there could be comparable mechanisms for cable-TV channels and bilingual channels, similar to the Franco-German *Arte*, which is essentially based on translation
- the written media: lifting the self-imposed prohibition against publishing articles in their original language, not for the purposes of teaching. Translations are for the moment insisted upon, which is in itself a real step forward
- training, by extending to all initial language teaching, and also initiations to languages, some form of brief trial contact in order to stimulate curiosity and change attitudes. Adult training is the most neglected area. Language Centres could be established (as has already been done in some countries in certain cities and regions), also offering the public a language assistance service (information about private language schools, translators, assistance with the translation of administrative documents, etc), a self-access language learning resource centre, a

plurilingual reference library, etc. The legal status of such bodies could vary widely according to local contexts (public, private, private-public partnership, voluntary, foundations, etc).

Such developments towards a more obvious presence are under way, particularly in tourist areas where they are a response to practical needs. One hears many languages being spoken in cities. National governments could facilitate the presence of varieties other than the national language and a *lingua franca* and make a financial contribution to language education and plurilingualism awareness actions in companies, local authorities, voluntary organisations, etc.

#### **5.4. Preparing education systems for plurilingualism**

Introducing the plurilingual perspective in education systems is not merely a question of changing foreign language syllabuses or the way foreign language teaching is organised. It is something that concerns all schools which should be made aware of the goals of those transformations and the issues involved. The dissemination of a culture of plurilingualism is a precondition for the success of the technical transformations by which plurilingualism will be implemented in education systems.

##### **5.4.1. Raising the awareness of partners, particularly at local level**

Just as it is important to make social demand, often based on traditional representations of language teaching, more sophisticated, plurilingualism also has to be explained within educational establishments.

In order for the relevance of plurilingual education to be recognised, it is important to know what opinions on language issues are held by head teachers, administrative and technical staff (especially those in charge of information and communication technologies), teachers (and their associations), language teachers, parents' associations, and local government representatives (especially at district level). Since in this framework citizens' demands are expressed in practical terms (opening a language class, for example), they can be understood by the rest of the community which is in contact with such linguistic realities and receive an appropriate response, all of this being independent of theoretical debates.

Such awareness-raising is particularly important for members of municipal councils and those in charge of schools (head teachers of primary and secondary schools, etc). They often have decision-making powers with respect to subjects (options, for example) and the allocation of funds for specific types of training. It would certainly be appropriate to make them more aware of the complexity of language issues so as to avoid systematically favouring a few standard options (such as early teaching of English). Such decisions are prompted by practical (choosing the options that are simplest from an organisational point of view, the same foreign language for everyone, for example) or financial (choosing the options which require the fewest teaching hours) considerations. Decision-makers, however, would benefit from being in a better position to assess the long-term effects on results.

Teachers are parties to such reflection: they have to take care of their working conditions (for example, a reduction in the number of teaching hours devoted to their subject and changes in their duties), but it is important for them to have a more transversal understanding of the general issues involved in language education policies. This is particularly true of unions and associations of teachers and head teachers with whom the prospect for plurilingualism for Europe should, for example, be addressed in terms of issues such as the differentiation of subjects and the principle of equality in schools.

##### **5.4.2. Learner awareness**

If the plurilingual option in education is to gain acceptance, learners themselves have to be convinced of its validity. Their previous experience or the social representations transmitted to them will not necessarily lead them to recognise the plurilingualism of speakers or the equal value of linguistic varieties. There is therefore a need for education for plurilingualism in schools and universities, particularly for adults and young children. It could be part of the teaching of the official language.

Defining plurilingual repertoires, stimulating awareness of the existence of such repertoires on the basis of the linguistic varieties children already speak or hear around them, showing their roles in the formation of identity, showing them the distinct functions speakers assign to those varieties in social communication, all these are essential elements in generating awareness. It is also important to make them understand that the first foreign language will not necessarily become the most usual variety for them and, more generally, to show that, with respect to languages, everything is not decided once and for all at school: the school years are a strategic time, but linguistic varieties may be acquired later on, outside educational establishments, by teaching themselves.

The ways of instilling such perceptions of languages are well-known:

- introducing *early language learning* in primary schools, at the same time as children are discovering the writing system of the national or first language and starting to learn to think about language. Such education for plurilingualism can be used to motivate language learning and develop one's own plurilingual competence.

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- introducing learners to the concept of the plurilingual repertoire, enabling them discover the history of their contact with languages, the linguistic varieties spoken in their territory and school, in their class by other pupils, those of their family (what varieties do or did their grand-parents speak?). The *European Language Portfolio* could be used as a basis on which to enhance the status of linguistic varieties and repertoires.

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#### **5.4.3. *Raising the awareness of and training language teachers***

It may seem paradoxical to suggest ways of making language teachers aware of plurilingual issues, since they are particularly open to pedagogical reflection and make a decisive contribution to it. But the plurilingual option requires that new elements be taken into consideration and included in initial and continuing teacher training:

- the European objective of plurilingual education, in that it contributes to the development of democratic citizenship and intercultural education. These political and educational goals may involve a presentation of those concepts and an introduction to language policies
- the very notion of plurilingual competence, which should be dealt with as such (in a module on sociolinguistics and its relation to language teaching, for example)
- more didactic contents such as teaching approaches based on competences with proficiency levels defined according to reference levels. These perspectives may be unfamiliar to some teachers, such as mother tongue/official language, in particular
- developing their own linguistic repertoires: it may be appropriate to increase the number of linguistic varieties learned by teachers so that they are able to teach them at particular levels and also to approach the description of languages they do not know analytically: varieties used by immigrants, regional varieties, and so forth.

The redefinition of the competences covered during such training should also take into account the type of language teacher one wants to train: this requires thought about other ways of dividing subjects than those most widely used at present. It would be beneficial to examine the usefulness of training:

- pre-school teachers familiar with early language learning methods

- primary school teachers trained in foreign, regional and heritage varieties, etc and able to teach them at elementary levels (A2 or B1 of the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*) and familiar with the early-learning techniques for language and language awareness
- secondary school teachers with transversal competences (a national variety and a foreign variety, a national variety and a regional variety, two foreign varieties from distinct linguistic groups, a national variety and classical varieties, etc), who have also been trained in intercultural education
- subject teachers who are able to teach their subject in a variety other than the national variety, and are themselves familiar with language teaching issues.

All these are merely suggestions and deserve further discussion and development.

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This training focuses on teaching, but might also take into account the existence of new language professions:

- tutor in self-instruction centres (resource centres)
- distance learning tutors
- education officers (responsible for recruiting teachers, promoting products, management), course directors (companies and private sector)
- language centre or language school directors or managers with local authority or foreign contacts
- training officers (language or teacher training) responsible for syllabus design, in companies, non-governmental organisations, associations, etc
- official representatives in international relations departments (particularly in the framework of the European Union: managing European programmes)
- producers and/or authors of textbooks and training materials (especially CD-ROMs, Internet distance learning modules) for companies, on a free-lance basis, etc, editorial secretaries (academic publishing), commercial secretaries
- language auditors, consultants (language needs analysis, syllabus and skills assessment, quality control, staff assessment, language education policy evaluation), education inspectors, officers responsible for training trainers
- official representatives for language education policies (at local, regional and central levels)
- project designers and/or creators of businesses in these fields: private establishments, language schools, training schools with a language component (tourism, etc), service companies, consultancies, etc.

This type of organisation of teaching duties can be established within varying time-scales according to the present state of education in member States: for example, where teachers' contracts are drafted on the basis of teaching hours it will be more difficult to put in place language teaching that requires teacher cooperation and coordination than where teachers are normally present in schools full-time and have responsibilities other than teaching in the strict sense of the term. Adjusting teacher training along these lines is a precondition for the establishment of plurilingual education, as is the production of appropriate textbooks.

## 5.5. Conclusion

Putting in place a form of education directed by and towards plurilingualism requires a clearly stated political will developed within a democratic framework and based on principles requiring long-term explanation and dissemination. Different linguistic varieties in different forms will only find a place

in education systems with the consent of those who will be receiving it: there are numerous historical examples of resistance to imposed language teaching. This does not prevent common standards or objectives being set if they are first discussed in civil society. The development of language syllabuses and language teaching/learning is merely the technical outcome of a collective examination of the role of education systems that involves civil society, particularly at local and regional levels.

It takes time to organise education policies whose goal is the acquisition of plurilingual competence, but national education systems already contain a great many elements that could form the basis of such a mechanism if they were rethought to some extent. It is not a question of starting from scratch, but it is necessary to rethink teaching objectives, produce teaching materials appropriate to the new policy emphases, train teachers and education staff, and raise awareness in schools, universities and civil society. This requires long-term action not all of whose effects will be immediately obvious in terms of knowledge acquired. The political and cultural significance of such educational choices, however, will be visible immediately.

It is strongly recommended that the national education system, particularly compulsory schooling, be used as a basis for the creation of a culture of plurilingualism. State education establishments play a crucial role in creating the feeling of belonging. Language curricula help to create this feeling, and increased attention to the plurality of linguistic repertoires and developing them will also help to create linguistic affiliation to a community broader than the national, regional or *ethnic* community, at the same time as a knowledge of languages appropriate to their different purposes (ordinary communication, work, study, the media, etc). Educational and training establishments outside the state system (in commerce and industry, for example) have their own priorities, partly determined by market mechanisms and professional needs, which may run counter to plurilingualism. It is therefore state establishments which will above all be responsible for plurilingual education, just as they are for education for citizenship.

## Chapter 6: Organising plurilingual education

*If the cultural and political conditions are established, it will be possible to organise language education on the basis of the principle of plurilingualism. It will not, however, be implemented in exactly the same way everywhere since the aim is not to produce citizens with identical linguistic repertoires throughout Europe, but to enhance the status of and extend repertoires according to local situations in the framework of a shared plurilingual education. There are various technical options available for this purpose and it is for each member State to identify those most appropriate to its situation, educational traditions and material and human resources. The technical options concern choices in relation to:*

- *the courses organised (in the sense of the curriculum and curricular scenarios: the order in which languages are taught) for each individual or group*
- *the organisation of teaching: teaching methods and goals, syllabuses and expected results, educational establishments involved.*

*This chapter offers an outline of possible options, particularly in terms of structural mechanisms for the school system and educational establishments in general.*

*If plurilingualism is a human capacity, schools are responsible, in the framework of compulsory education, and then in (upper) secondary, vocational and higher education, for raising awareness of this personal capital, enhancing its status, making it operational and increasing it so that all speakers are able to continue to enrich their repertoires through autonomous learning.*

### 6.1. Principles for the organisation of plurilingual education

There are no ready-made solutions for introducing education that embodies this principle, but numerous options for creating plurilingual education based on the principle that language courses can be tailor-made: languages can be acquired in various ways and to differing degrees. It is important to get away from the received idea that there is some sort of single, as it were, compulsory, form of language teaching which is unavoidable. In fact, teaching can be diversified with respect to target competence levels, types of competences (oral comprehension or oral expression, for example), types of discourse, timing (order of acquisition), etc. This plurality of courses, competences and levels is the basis on which plurilingualism can be organised: if it is accepted that compulsory education, for example, should not seek the same degree of competence for all linguistic varieties taught, more varieties can be offered. More precisely, the organisation of education for plurilingualism requires decisions to be taken about objectives and therefore the definition of what will be expected of learners. The following must be specified:

- the characteristics (regional, social, etc) that may lead particular forms of language teaching to be introduced: border regions, territories where immigrant communities have settled or where an historical regional language is spoken, and so forth
- ways of coordinating the various language courses with each other (with respect to grammatical terminology, the teaching of literature, the organising principles of syllabuses, etc) and with other subjects (teaching subjects in a language other than the national language, for example)
- the form of syllabuses: the combinations of competences that will be taught
- the competences and proficiency levels to be attained in each skill taught at a particular stage in schooling (for example, end of compulsory or secondary schooling, etc)

- the thematic content covered with respect, for example, to the criteria for choosing cultural content: learners' supposed interest, the availability of relevant teaching aids, the intercultural education goals pursued, etc
- the educational establishments involved (schools and language classes/courses, language resource and autonomous learning centres, associations, local authority schools, etc)
- the ways in which languages are present (compulsory, optional, etc)
- the format of language education (total number of hours, hours per year, semester, week, etc)
- how the languages are taught (*teaching methods*)
- assessment and certification.

Each of these characteristics of language teaching may be given different specifications, which means that an enormous number of practical forms of language teaching may be imagined, capable of managing linguistic repertoires and developing them according to learners' life plans and needs. Choices will be made among them according to the configuration of each educational context, and the resources available, which have to be identified or created:

- how appropriate the choices are vis-à-vis any political problems with a linguistic dimension in a particular society
- the state of the education system and resistances to change (form, geographic location, etc)
- the timetable and timescale of implementation
- the human resources needed or available: teachers, native speakers to be given teacher training, etc
- the financial resources needed or available: premises, funds for teacher training, post creation, materials (audio-visual, computers, etc), grants, study or vocational training visits, documentation, etc
- specific material needed or available: text books, grammars, dictionaries, appropriate assessment tests, etc.

In order to guide decision-making, a probably very incomplete list will be found below of the structural resources needed for the organisation of diversified language education that is coherent over time.

## **6.2. Equipping education systems for plurilingualism**

In order to organise an education system embodying the hoped for plurilingualism as a value and competence, new management and coordination instruments are required, since language education involves different players and is not limited to the national education system.

### **6.2.1. *Periodic review of the languages on offer in educational establishments***

National education systems should periodically evaluate the language education they are providing in terms of what is known of user expectations. Such studies can be undertaken by internal structures (statistics units or planning departments) or external, particularly European, ones (including the *National Language Education Policy Profiles at national level*, which this *Guide* can help to put in place).

The supply of languages can be quantified: numbers of teachers and trends, numbers of learners following courses in a particular linguistic variety, as well as distribution and longitudinal courses (by generation), level of competence attained at a particular stage (end of compulsory education, for example). With the aid of systems of references on which international comparisons can be made, the evaluation can also be qualitative: nature of language syllabuses (of whatever sort), linguistic varieties available, the order in which they are introduced, whether they are offered for successive choice or only at a particular stage in schooling, and so on. Analyses of this sort are available but often restricted to foreign languages and do not cover the supply of languages in other educational establishments, such as higher education and vocational training (supplied by companies) or those offered by the voluntary sector.

It would be instructive to cross-reference this data and user reactions (pupils, students, professionals) to educational establishment supply with:

- indicators of the extent to which learners' initial repertoires have been taken into account
- indicators of the degree of learners' and society's satisfaction with the education provided
- indicators of learners' and civil society's linguistic aspirations
- analyses of the linguistic strategies of social groups and communities.

If these are lacking, analyses based entirely on data on language teaching will simply be descriptive and will not on their own be a tool for guiding policy. Clearly, other sorts of studies may be extremely complex, but analysing the educational supply of languages also involves examining its social reception. Developing such an analytical protocol could be the subject of research carried out at European level.

### **6.2.2. *Identifying the obstacles to plurilingual education***

Factors relating to representations of languages and of knowing and learning them that might hinder the introduction of education for plurilingualism have already been identified. There are also administrative obstacles, some of which are structural and theoretically easier to tackle since they are technical in nature. A few examples of these are discussed below.

- The cost per hour (teaching hour) of courses in relation to the number of hours allocated to languages and the total number of hours available to each establishment. It is not a matter here of going back over the question of the economic cost of language education, but of dealing with the issue of teaching posts and their management. Language teaching in schools is usually based on a system of parallel options, costly in terms of hours. Courses of study defined over time (compulsory education, (upper) secondary, etc) and teaching outside the normal cycle (in the sense of not being offered for any particular year of study) might enable such costs to be reduced and new languages to reap the benefit of such economies of management. However, it is no secret that any increased investment to introduce plurilingual education will probably involve post creation, at least when the system is being introduced.
- Teacher profiles and terms of service. The ease or difficulty with which plurilingual education can be introduced will depend on whether teachers teach one or two languages, a language and another subject, a group of subjects (with a specialisation in languages), a (non-linguistic) subject which they are able to teach in a foreign, regional, heritage or other language, and so on. This may also be the case if time for the activities common to language courses (carried out by teaching teams) is not paid for by the school in ways which may vary greatly (reduction in teaching load, priority promotion, access to posts of responsibility, obtaining study grants, paying overtime, specific local, regional or international funding).
- Availability of teachers or, if they are lacking, speakers authorised to teach or with a general educational background enabling them to teach under the supervision of a teacher (such as lectors, assistants, specialists with a mother or heritage language, etc) for regional, heritage and some foreign varieties. This is a human resources issue which requires recruitment to be possible

beyond the local environment. Internet sites offering posts of this sort at national level (with European and international links) might be an effective tool. Alternatives to the traditional class model (a single teacher for the same group for a certain period) might be sought on a temporary basis: using information and communication technologies for teaching, intensive courses, evening classes (outside normal school hours), residential courses abroad or in the region where the linguistic variety is used, and so forth.

- Teacher workload and timetables. These management issues involve important criteria such as the threshold for opening (or closing) classes (groups or language sections), i.e. the number of parents or pupils asking for a certain language to be taught that is, in principle offered by the education system. In fact, this sets a profitability threshold regarded as administratively acceptable but should, in the last resort, depend on political considerations. The volume of hours per week, which affects teachers' conditions of service, is also involved. If, as a result of such factors, teachers (especially of a particular linguistic variety) have to work in several schools, this imposed mobility has to be taken into account and shared language resource centres provided for groups of neighbouring schools.
- The place of languages in examinations: if knowledge of languages (national, regional, foreign, etc) is not assessed by national examinations (at the end of compulsory schooling or (upper) secondary education, by university admission examinations, etc), it may be considered of secondary importance and abandoned by learners. If there are no language examinations or examinations in languages, learners could be required to demonstrate their ability by obtaining certificates specific to languages, such as those offered by approved establishments.

These and many other organisational problems may hinder the introduction of more flexible plurilingual education better suited to learners' linguistic repertoires, but it is important not to lose sight of the fact that they are essentially political since, in the final analysis, they depend upon budgetary or financial choices which are themselves dependent on the priority the community accords (or does not accord) to language teaching as a way of constructing a European cultural space.

### **6.2.3. *Diversifying teachers' roles***

The profile of teachers involved in education for plurilingualism and plurilinguality needs to be redefined, without prejudging the resultant status and category issues (which are a matter for negotiation with teachers and their representatives) this gives rise to.

At present, language teachers fall into a number of categories:

- Senior teachers, teachers in compulsory schooling, assistants, expert native speakers, lectors (the latter are often native speakers)
- Non-native speakers, native speakers teaching for a limited period (exchange teacher, for example), resident native speaker, temporally resident native speaker, etc.

Furthermore, language teachers' responsibilities are not exclusively pedagogical: they often organise extra-curricular activities such as corresponding with pupils who speak other languages, language study trips and stays, theatre activities, competitions, as well as looking for and managing international programmes, study groups, etc. It would probably be useful to identify the different functions - educational, institutional, cultural and intercultural - and take them into account in the duties officially assigned to teachers, since they are at present often carried out on a voluntary basis, although they are in fact essential to the smooth running of language teaching programmes. It would be preferable for the various duties to be distributed among different teachers in the school with very different profiles, rather than simply managed on a language-by-language basis.

The diversification of teacher profiles also concerns teaching competences: the traditional separation of languages at school often leads to the domination of a particular teaching model: the teacher of a

single language (English, German, Spanish, etc). However, education for plurilingualism implies the possibility of transferring competences and knowledge from one language to another and therefore suggests the development of different competency profiles for teachers, who should have a range of linguistic experience and the possibility of teaching a wider range of material. In addition to teachers trained and qualified to teach a single foreign language (including the corresponding literature), there might be teachers trained to teach:

- two or more foreign languages (at different levels)
- the (a) national variety (including literature) and a foreign variety (including in particular the variety of newly arrived populations)
- a modern language and one or more classical languages (Latin, for example)
- a language and a humanities subject (such as philosophy or history)
- a language and a science subject
- a language and a technical or vocational subject
- a language and an artistic or sports discipline, etc

As a response to the diversification of subjects, there might also be specialised teachers (there are already some):

- exchange teachers (a teacher of a mother tongue who teaches that language as a foreign language abroad; their specific role should not be defined simply in terms of replacing a colleague)
- lecturers, assistants, etc
- tutors in self-instruction, distance learning, etc establishments (whose advanced learners would play this role for other learners)
- foreign language speakers who are not teachers, temporarily acting as resource persons
- teacher responsible for international relations
- teacher responsible for promoting the languages less frequently taught in schools and the immediate environment, responsible for raising their colleagues', parents', users', businesses' and others' awareness of language education policy issues
- continuing education teachers responsible for coordinating educational experimentation, research and evaluation
- teachers responsible for coordinating the use and production of teaching materials (particularly digital), coordinating the management of the material and the computer room, in cooperation with technical staff, etc.

It is for each education system to define the most appropriate types of teachers for putting in place education for plurilingualism, paying due attention to the question of forming teams of teachers responsible for languages, defining syllabuses, assisting learners, choosing textbooks, etc according to the particular autonomous status of the establishments.

#### **6.2.4. *Stimulating, managing and evaluating pedagogical innovation***

The plurilingual project also requires the creation of new ways of organising courses. Plurilingual education spills over the usual boundaries between subjects, the usual pacing of teaching, and the usual structure of educational cycles and even School. Its gradual implementation will require collective creativity in administration, the definition of products (curriculum and syllabus design), and in “ways” of teaching itself.

A culture of plurilingualism can therefore be brought about through the formation of clearly identified study groups with specific tasks (in particular, specifications and a timetable) that bring together around common objectives and projects people in the education world who are not usually in close contact with each other: administrative staff and teachers, teachers from schools and from other educational establishments, teachers from different levels of the system, teachers of languages and

teachers of other subjects, teachers of official linguistic varieties and teachers of other varieties, teachers of different foreign varieties, and so forth.

Teaching teams should move beyond ordinary multidisciplinary interpreted thematically (the same subject dealt with by teachers of different subjects). They could also deal with questions concerning:

- methods of teaching by competence
- self-directed learning and training for this
- ways of transferring competences and knowledge from one linguistic variety to another
- the relation between teaching language competences and teaching cultural competences
- developing language courses (concerning languages approached in a diversified way) that satisfy the expectations of regional communities and national requirements.

Contact with university teams in these areas would be desirable. The findings of such research on the ground could be assessed by administrative, academic and political authorities so as to gauge the appropriateness of implementing them in educational establishments, at least on an experimental basis.

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Creating a culture of plurilingualism also involves collective research on how it can be put into practice in a particular place. This is not a purely administrative question, but also requires converting mentalities to the reorganisation of language teaching. It cannot be put in place in the absence of political continuity, medium- or long-term financial planning, and a timetable for reform that enables implementation to be assessed and its cultural and social benefits to be identified.

### **6.3. Longitudinal coordination of education and language provision in the education system and educational establishments**

The development and management of education for plurilingualism is a matter for a number of educational institutions, not only the national education system, because educational resources may be available in many places whose legal status may vary, and because such language education is lifelong: the means must therefore be available to respond to educational demand at different stages of education, not only in compulsory or (upper) secondary schooling. Even in the framework of national or regional education systems, the Ministry of Education does not necessarily control all educational sectors: some may be controlled by local authorities (such as the pre-school sector, ICSED<sup>1</sup> level 0) or regional authorities (the vocational sector, ICSED 3 or 4, for example). Universities usually come under a specific ministry and also enjoy special forms of internal autonomy.

One of the prerequisites for the introduction of this education for plurilingualism is the identification and linkage of all language courses, in all institutions, unless, obviously, they are confined to specific groups. Information about conditions of access and functioning must be given, courses identified, users advised and syllabuses clarified (by calibrating proficiency levels, competences and certification). Such linkage has to be carried out locally but must be nationally coordinated.

For education systems, this means organising the supply of languages, not on a sector-by-sector basis according to administrative rationales, but designing courses of varying length and complexity that take into account learners' possible or desirable ways of progressing from pre-school to university and beyond, according to their initial linguistic repertoires and linguistic aspirations, which are likely to change over time. This synergy may involve common teacher training, coordinated development of teaching materials that can be used for several linguistic varieties, public funding (dependent on technical and quality control, for example) for associations, small and medium-sized industries, local

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<sup>1</sup> International Standard Classification of Education

authorities, private schools offering training in the less widely disseminated and taught varieties, in particular.

The development of language education policies itself may involve institutions and departments whose work may be insufficiently coordinated. Language policy and language education policy are legislative, educational, cultural, social, economic and even diplomatic issues (the last, for countries with cultural institutions abroad (institutes, cultural centres, specialised bodies like the British Council and the Goethe Institute, and so on)). The decision-making process may involve the national parliament, regional assemblies, the national or regional ministry, local elected representatives, administrative and education officers (education inspectors, for example), head teachers, and so on. Such decision-making channels lead to measures which are not necessarily coherent with respect to language teaching/learning paths.

The essential requirement is that education for plurilingualism should be thought out in its entirety and in terms of its continuity for users. The post of national coordinator for language policy might be created at the highest level with duties including coordinating and ensuring the coherence of all the institutions involved in language teaching. Other posts and bodies might be created according to the political and administrative traditions of member states. Their main objective should be to give greater visibility to language teaching and its coordination, through local agencies, for example.

It is essential to bring learners and adults to languages by opening up schools and universities to the general public and making schools, universities and other educational establishments complement each other in such a way as to ensure that plurilingual education is not entirely subject to market forces. Such coordination, which would provide satisfactory individual learning paths, could be effected at the level of each school (by teaching teams) or groups of neighbouring schools, at municipal level (especially in large cities) or among groups of municipalities, or in a regional framework which might coincide better with the presence of regional, migrant or border communities. Linking up language teaching, of all kinds in identifiable learning paths, is a fundamental characteristic of plurilingual education.

#### **6.4. Decompartmentalising language education**

Curricula have traditionally been designed as sets of subjects that are broadly consistent throughout an academic cycle, but with little to interconnect those subjects. Learners are left to make the connections and, more often than not, to do so on their own. In the early twentieth century, ways of integrating subjects began to be adopted for primary education (where there is often only one teacher). The situation remains substantially unchanged with respect to language teaching where the national language, foreign languages and regional and heritage languages (which are often optional or absent from the curriculum) are taught as separate subjects. The only notable exception to this is the use of a foreign variety as the language of instruction for other subjects. Such bilingual programmes enable one foreign variety to be learned to a high level of competence but generally give little space to the acquisition of others.

Such compartmentalisation leads to a false perception of languages since the acquisition of each is presented as being in competition with the acquisition of the others: the national/official varieties are compulsory at every stage of primary and secondary education, while others are optional in various ways and this leads to the introduction of a hierarchy of languages according to the order in which they are offered (first language, second language, and so on) which reinforces social representations of the supposed usefulness of linguistic varieties.

Plurilingual education is based on a contrasting educational principle, namely that the acquisition of a new linguistic variety is based on competences and possibly knowledge developed during the earlier acquisition of other varieties. Such competences (e.g. the ability to read a text) and knowledge (e.g. the ability to recognise words of Latin origin in Russian) can be transferred from one variety to another through a teaching approach that exploits rather than ignores them. This approach does not imply the abandonment of current school subjects in favour of new, rather vague, verbal

communication classes, but simply recommends that these subjects themselves and non-linguistic subjects should be harmonised and to some extent linked with each other.

Without excluding other possible means of harmonisation according to the linguistic varieties concerned, a number of ways in which curricula might be made more compatible and interconnected are suggested. Such synchronic linkage has already been recommended many times with respect to foreign varieties, where they are more acceptable to teachers. They are also highly desirable between the teaching of the national/official variety and others, but resistance to this is likely to be stronger because of the role of school in identity and the weight of educational tradition in this area. The following possibilities are suggested:

- including in the teaching of all languages some elements of language awareness to show what is common to the functioning of all natural languages. This might usefully be offered in pre-primary and primary schooling as a form of initiation to language learning and a way of making learners aware of the nature of their linguistic repertoire, valuing all children's first languages and countering linguistic prejudices
- explicitly defining all the goals of language teaching (see below)
- designing curricula in terms of fixed and explicit competences and proficiency levels on the basis of the proposals contained in the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*
- promoting the use of common methods, defined by competence (particularly communicative competences), applicable to all linguistic varieties: strategies for teaching writing systems, teaching/learning reading comprehension in the national and heritage language, analytical activities on the first language and other varieties, oral comprehension approaches based, for example, on television programmes in the national and regional language, and so on. Such harmonisation of teaching methods is the core of plurilingual education
- activating learners' transversal competences by clearly identifying their learning strategies, particularly by training in autonomous learning as a common competence and one taught as such
- fostering acquisition strategies by allowing detours through linguistic varieties other than those explicitly being taught in a given framework: using several languages alternately in oral interaction, comparing language systems (contrasting the descriptions of languages, and patterns of discourse, etc)
- harmonising, to some extent at least, the terminology used in teaching (names of language activities), the description of languages (concepts and categorisations), by relating the grammatical description of the national/official and other varieties and of those other varieties to each other, etc
- harmonising assessment methods.

Such harmonisation may lead to the simultaneous or parallel learning of several linguistically and culturally related linguistic varieties (Romance languages and Latin), but limited to certain competences (reading comprehension, oral comprehension, or whatever).

Integrated management of language teaching is also possible in the relations between languages and other subjects. For example, the teaching of literature need not be confined to national literature but could include an opening to European literature (in translation or the original language). This could be especially relevant for covering major European periods (the Enlightenment, the Romantics, Surrealism, etc). The issues surrounding the translation of poetry make up another ideal area for the encounter between language and literature, as does drama. History and the sociological and economic study of society (in the framework of a subject such as geography) are loci of intercultural contact of prime importance for the creation of national representations and should also be dealt with from the point of view of intercultural education. Many other subjects may involve the use and

teaching/learning of linguistic varieties other than the language of the school, especially in projects, problem-solving, simulations and games, as may activities promoted by the education system, such as study trips, school exchanges, twinnings, sports training and competitions, international social activities (youth workcamps, cooperation programmes with developing countries, archaeological digs, ecological workcamps, etc).

One last way of integrating language teaching with general education is teaching certain subjects in another language: this may be a national/official variety other than the usual one or one that is recognised in a particular region (in the case of multilingual federal states) or regional, minority or foreign varieties. This question has already been covered several times; here, it will simply be recalled that the organisation of such teaching requires:

- subject teachers trained in the language or language teachers trained in the subject, who are at present still a rarity and whom education systems should address themselves to training
- teaching teams (for coordination and follow-up, all members of which should be involved in presentation) in which the role of each individual (language teachers, subject teachers) should be clearly defined
- textbooks in the foreign variety used, which will probably have to be prepared in the country itself since textbooks borrowed from other education systems (where they are written in the national language) may not be linguistically suited, may cover a different syllabus and involve different teaching approaches. In the last case, it is essential to examine the teaching theories thus brought into contact with each other
- consistency with future teaching (from secondary to university education, through cooperation agreements with foreign establishments) so that subject teaching in another language is not an isolated episode.

When deciding which subjects will be taught in a variety other than that of the school it is important to look at the social hierarchy of linguistic varieties and the functions they perform in group repertoires in conjunction with the social hierarchy of subjects (their role in educational selection) and with their role in socialisation and the creation of a feeling of belonging, so as to avoid, for example, English being systematically chosen for biology and Italian for music.

## 6.5. Structuring diversified educational paths

Setting up plurilingual education is a long-term matter for learners: at least during their school years, they must be able to choose not only the linguistic varieties to acquire but also paths in which the learning of certain subjects will follow upon one another. The essential characteristic of such paths is that they should enable varieties and competences in those varieties to be covered successively when otherwise they would be dealt with in isolation at a particular stage of education. This should make it possible to help learners maintain their motivation for languages insofar as the different languages are dealt with according to varying goals and the ways of teaching/learning them are not always identical.

This way of organising education for plurilingualism has already been described in the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (Chapter 8, especially 8.3), which also makes it possible. It is based on the phased introduction of, among other things:

- linguistic varieties
- (specific) competences learned in those varieties (for example, understanding in an initial phase and oral interaction later)
- different teaching formats (intensive courses, residential courses abroad)
- alternating types of teaching and learning (presentational, i.e. by a teacher and autonomous, in an external language resource centre, for example).

### 6.5.1. *Alternating types of teaching and learning*

Social representations of the teaching of languages are dominated by academic types of teaching: these highlight presentation by a teacher for a pre-determined period to a group (in the form of a class or course) or a private tutor teaching a single learner (the modern form of this being individual private lessons). Self-instruction is less common, but often takes the form of distance learning. Furthermore, institutions often do not take into consideration individual, non-academic learning or learning that takes place outside any education system, although the *European Language Portfolio* has now made good this lack of recognition. All the many possible ways of acquiring and teaching languages should be exploited when devising language education.

#### 6.5.1.1. *Centrality of autonomous language learning*

Language acquisition is above all the product of individual, autonomous learning outside the teaching organised by an educational establishment (this is particularly true of oral and comprehension skills): it is a human characteristic to be able to appropriate linguistic varieties. Such acquisition, based on the capacity for language, may take place independently of any explicit form of teaching through prolonged contact and interaction with speakers of the unknown linguistic variety. Teaching is the institutionalisation of what is often referred to as *natural* acquisition. This in no way means that it is the only legitimate way of learning or that it is more effective than others: it is simply stressed that it would be useful for teaching to recognise this type of learning, capitalise on such linguistic experiences and assist, by making more explicit, learners' ability to learn alone through self-instruction.

Making learners autonomous should therefore be a component of plurilingual education present in any language teaching, whatever the variety, competences, goals, etc. This does not exclude the setting-up of assisted self-instruction facilities (in language resource or distance learning centres, with the assistance of tutors: see below). Such autonomy requires at least some sort of reflective teaching/learning to which teachers of all subjects should contribute.

Such attention to learners' personal acquisition of languages also involves devising ways of including it in institutional education so as to take into account:

- the learning of languages that takes place directly (on the spot), outside teaching but parallel to it: exploiting media access (television, the press, the Internet, etc) by guiding and making it a field for research, observation, information gathering, etc. These sorts of activities, which are possible ways of making teaching less academic, involve setting tasks, sharing and exploiting the information gathered, etc. They make it possible to take advantage of the linguistic varieties accessible in a particular place: media, language communities, etc
- the acquisition of languages abroad, without teaching: the goal here is to prepare for and exploit such experiences in school through prior guidance in self-instruction, keeping a learning diary (in which impressions, problems, comprehension strategies, intercultural attitudes, etc are noted), structuring knowledge, and self-evaluation of what has been learned, etc
- the learning of linguistic varieties through non-expert speakers teaching each other (in tandems/pairs, through presentation or on the Internet, in knowledge exchange clubs, etc), especially learning each other's first variety.

The purely pedagogical issue to be dealt with here is the coordination of such autonomous individual experiences and institutional teaching and particularly how the latter takes the former into consideration.

### 6.5.1.2. *Language lessons in school: presentational teaching*

Language classes (or language lessons) are now the dominant form of teaching. They are typified by presentational teaching to a group of learners in an educational establishment according to set rhythms (length and timetable set annually or by semester).

This dominant form is also the most restricting, requiring the presence of a teacher, a set place which may mean learners have to move about, set hours, etc. It is the most visible way of making language learning academic since it aligns language teaching with the teaching of other subjects, although language learning may be on-going. The varieties and the stages of their teaching/learning for which this form of teaching should be reserved or used as the preferred form need to be examined.

Despite such rigidities, teaching in the form of language classes can be modulated according to desired learning paths. The ways in which groups of learners are formed, at present an (annual) class group or a stream, could be altered. Some institutional flexibility could be introduced according to whether the group:

- consists of a class-group, by taking into account what is considered the optimum number of learners for effective learning (half-class groups, sub-groups, etc). However, this is costly in terms of teaching hours (parallel groups). Small group teaching could concern only some of the learners and be assigned to an assistant rather than a teacher
- is a large one, for example at university: the methodological consequence is the increased importance of autonomous learning, which should be organised in class, probably through an analytical, descriptive presentation of the target variety and its forms of discourse (rules of conversation, for example). Another possibility is to alternate a large group and small groups
- is formed, in school, according to level and/or language and therefore outside the class-group framework, which implies that such teaching is outside the ordinary cycle. These kinds of groups might be used for optional subjects
- consists of groups of learners from different schools (where it is feasible to bring children together).

The class-group option makes it possible to reserve certain classrooms for language teaching: the material conditions in which teaching takes place are not irrelevant to the image learners may gain of its importance. Setting aside such enhancement of its value and group organisation, the technical means educational establishments make available for language teaching (and the teaching of other subjects) are also one of the preconditions for modulated teaching. Varying ways of teaching is also facilitated by having material and technical resources such as:

- a fully equipped library, including multimedia facilities
- a documentary resource centre
- a language laboratory (at least in the form of individual audio cassette players)
- television sets or television laboratories (with access to various channels, video recorders, etc), DVD drives
- rooms with Internet access
- multipurpose rooms (for cinema and theatre).

### 6.5.1.3. *Presentation teaching in a homophone environment (abroad, for example)*

Languages may be taught in the places where the target language is spoken usually or by a majority (known as a *homophone* environment). Formal teaching may be organised to reinforce the individual learning that takes place. This dual type of teaching/learning is considered profitable and motivating for learners. However, it requires sometimes significant funding (cost of the stay, teaching, etc), which

has to be found by the learners or their families or funded collectively (by the school, association or local authority). An institutional context is also required that gives such trips a legal and institutional status.

Study trips may be short (one week) or long-term (several years, which may lead to cultural adaptation and re-adaptation problems). They may also be individual (study grants) or involve groups. These are often class groups that go on exchange visits in the framework of the twinning of cities, regions or establishments (schools, university departments, companies, etc).

This sort of external teaching provides opportunities for exposure to the target variety, but also possibilities of new educational experiences which should be identified and assisted. A group may go with their teacher(s) but, with a view to the educational value of exchange, join existing classes when they arrive. This means lessons in the linguistic variety taught as the national variety (the foreign variety for the learners), classes in other subjects (so the target variety becomes the language of instruction) or teaching activities such as discovery classes (heritage, sports, etc), where the context becomes that of a project group.

Another type of educational experience is that the teaching of a linguistic variety on the spot by native teachers specialised in the teaching of that variety as foreign, may include the use of very different teaching methods from those the learners are accustomed to. They may, for example, go from grammatically based methods to ones that involve learners a great deal through group activities or creativity exercises. Teaching in a homophone environment thus has great potential for methodological unfamiliarity, something that should be carefully managed (especially where international groups of learners are involved, some of whom will adapt more easily than others to unknown teaching methods), in order to avoid blocks and make for a positive experience of other forms of teaching/learning. It is a form of educational culture shock to which teachers (the usual teachers and those on the spot) and the institutions organising such visits should pay attention.

Such trips may also provide an opportunity for discovery, reinforcing initial motivation, or a culmination, opening the way to vocational training (abroad): in-company traineeships, university training (usually at the higher levels), and so on. They provide an important opportunity to extend plurilingual repertoires since they bring plurilingual competence into play in authentic communication and put learners in contact with other cultures (including educational cultures).

#### 6.5.1.4. *Self-directed learning*

Some language education may be made available in ways other than group teaching and based on learner autonomy, i.e. the ability to take responsibility for one's learning. Learners consciously determine the length (and frequency) of their course, its general purposes and precise goals (what linguistic variety, which competences), the learning paths and methodologies considered appropriate, assessment methods, etc.

This way of appropriating linguistic varieties is particularly appropriate for creating teaching/learning paths because it can be set up flexibly in education systems: outside the class-group, outside weekly timetables, outside the academic year, etc. It should, however, be prepared for by enabling learners to profit from this type of language learning, which will be the fundamental means (one might say, by default) of post-school acquisition. It should be made possible by creating a learning environment that gives access to the necessary information and includes adequate technological and educational resources.

The creation of such structures for self-instruction (often known as language resource centres) requires investment in premises, materials and staff (for administration, teaching and information), but the centres then have a transmission function – they may be shared by several training establishments, be situated in companies, etc – which can make them viable in the medium term.

The technical decisions that have to be taken concern:

- the linguistic varieties that can be learned (different from those already covered earlier, pursuing the acquisition of known varieties)
- how the material on offer is to be selected, classified and accessed (authentic materials, language methods available from national and foreign publishers, creation of specific teaching material, etc)
- how learning to learn is to be dealt with (by tutors, self-access)
- assistance with learning: simply registering attendance, possibility of a tutorial on request, regular tutorials with periodic meetings and external assessment in tandem with self-assessment
- marking out learning paths
- types of materials (paper, sound, CD-ROMs, video, digital, etc), whether or not accompanied by instructions; modules for preparing for language examinations or examinations which include language tests, availability of tests for specific levels
- conditions of access: hours, subscriptions, etc.

This type of teaching has been used to a significant extent for some twenty years: there is therefore enough collective experience available to enable the problems and possible transferable solutions to be identified.

#### 6.5.1.5. *Distance learning*

Distance learning involves some self-directed learning but is usually supervised fairly restrictively for the learner by the teaching materials. Up to now, it has been little used in language training, particularly for the early levels and oral skills (especially interaction). Materials on paper were for a long time the only ones available and are probably the least motivating. There are also radio broadcasts (especially at local level) which are still widely used because they are inexpensive and quite easily allow interaction between learners and the training centre. Teaching through television may be motivating but is extremely expensive and, since it is likely to attract a large audience, it is very difficult to follow up learners, unless local teaching intermediaries are available. Internet resources are promising as they combine the above resources and also enable interaction: this makes individualised tutorials possible in real time or otherwise. Distance learning centres can then be linked to resource centres.

Distance learning is traditionally used to make training available to learners such as distant residents, scattered over large areas, non-mobile audiences and people who work, but the provision of distance training by specialised companies and education systems is becoming far more widespread as an ordinary type of learning (on-line universities, for example). This way of teaching could profitably be used to provide education in linguistic varieties for which there is little demand, especially regional or migrant varieties which may interest learners who are scattered but who can be reached in this way. They are of particular interest for such communities, which could then take responsibility for such learning within or outside the education system in order to make themselves better known and try to assist the transmission of their linguistic variety.

These different forms of teaching/learning provide alternative methods of appropriating the same variety or different varieties which can activate individual paths. It is not desirable to make a particular form of teaching coincide *a priori* with a particular stage in education. Such choices should be made according to the characteristics of educational situations. What is essential is that schools, learners and society should recognise the legitimacy of these forms of teaching and that the non-academic or non-traditional means of appropriation should be closely coordinated with ordinary teaching.

### **6.5.2. *Adapting teaching formats***

Parallel to the various ways of teaching are teaching formats, which are more familiar to curriculum designers. The factors that may be adjusted will be reviewed briefly. In order to construct courses that give space to several linguistic varieties at once, adjustments may be made to:

- the total amount of teaching time for each linguistic variety (in terms of class or learning hours), each educational establishment allocating a volume of hours according to its own criteria and constraints (including over more than one year, by teaching cycle). It is this allocation of hours that determines the target objectives with respect to competences and proficiency levels in those competences. Objectives may also be precisely defined, and schools and their teachers left to decide how many hours will be needed in order for their learners to reach them;
- the length and frequency of teaching, considered according to short cycles: length of the basic class, number of classes per week. Frequency should result in the conception of classes which are parts of units of teaching time, that are not diluted (because they are too spread out) by learners losing sight of their internal coherence;
- length and frequency that can be modulated according to age of learners or level of mastery attained. Classes may be structured in the same way in order to create reference points for learners or, on the contrary, diversified (according to competences and teaching activities) so as to create methodological variety;
- long periods (month, term, semester, year) which should not necessarily be planned homogeneously: intensive phases (several hours in one day or within a short period) may be alternated with extensive phases with teaching approaches corresponding to differences in pace (intensive for stays in allophone environments and extensive for self-instruction, for example). Frequency need not be regular: certain times may be favoured, such as late morning, evening, the end of the week, holidays, and so on.

This type of varied management (from self-service classes to year-long classes) is not always compatible with the requirements of education systems, especially because of the management constraints of other subjects. It may nonetheless be set up by playing on the diversity of the ways in which language teaching is present in education and the different places where teaching takes place.

### **6.5.3. *Adapting the ways in which language teaching is present in education***

Here again, the idea is to vary the teaching of languages as it has been conducted for many years. From the point of view of the nature of its presence in school and university curricula, language teaching may be:

- limited to specialist university institutes, for example, or available only in foreign cultural establishments, without there being any teaching of these varieties in secondary education. Such localisation may be sufficient for linguistic varieties for which there is little demand, so long as such training is also open to people who simply wish to appropriate a new language they find attractive;
- offered experimentally or as a pilot scheme in secondary or compulsory education and limited to a few schools (in each region, according to social demand, etc). This may be some sort of introduction which will later be offered everywhere;
- offered as purely optional: the course not being assessed or only partially so, and not included in the curriculum, it may be chosen from among various subjects or languages.
- offered as compulsory, but as an option to be chosen from various subjects or only from various linguistic varieties. This is the classic solution and is a convenient one but introduces tension

between linguistic varieties since not all of them may be chosen. It may lead to the devaluation of languages when they are offered at the same time as subjects considered more attractive or easier (according to the marks learners hope to obtain) or be offered simply to fulfil the requirement to diversify language teaching: the range of options offered to pupils has to be selected appropriately and it will be found that some are chosen by only a tiny minority of pupils, which leads to their being eliminated later from the list of options. Such successive choices have a way of constructing a hierarchy of linguistic varieties, while the order in which a variety is introduced into the curriculum does not systematically prejudice the level of proficiency aimed for: as has already been pointed out, there is nothing to prevent goals set for a language offered at a later stage being higher than those for one offered in the early years of schooling or more teaching hours being devoted to it;

- available as an optional or compulsory back-up or subsidiary subject for some learners for certain linguistic varieties (the first languages of migrants) or certain categories of pupils (ones with difficulties or who want to specialise);
- compulsory, with no possibility of choice, in other words, part of the curriculum along with many other subjects. One or more linguistic variety(ies) may be compulsory throughout primary, compulsory secondary and upper secondary (and sometimes even university) education or only for certain cycles (with the possibility of continuing or beginning a new variety at the end of the cycle). The fact that such subjects are compulsory should not confuse the learners concerned. It is not necessarily an undemocratic refusal to take social demand into account, since public opinion is not always consulted on the collective interest of introducing or eliminating one subject or another from school curricula. Choices of this sort should be the result of negotiations between all social parties and result in curricula that, overall, take into account group demands, national needs and educational purposes.

The different ways in which languages are present, from the most optional to the most integrated in learning paths, are a matter for education systems and do not prejudice their being learned later on, when they may be available in such a way as not to exclude one another. They may be applied successively to the same linguistic variety (which is compulsory at first and then becomes optional, for example) so as to extend the plurilingual supply in education systems.

#### **6.5.4. Alternating and linking teaching establishments**

Throughout the *Guide* attention has been drawn to the fact that it is not only schools (in the sense of compulsory education), or the national education system from nursery school to vocational and university education that are concerned with education for plurilingualism. In order to organise educational paths in initial education and throughout individual educational careers, it is essential to increase the number of places in which linguistic varieties are taught and learned and link them in order to exploit and develop existing complementarities and create new ones so as to increase plurilingual educational supply and diversify learning paths. Linkage certainly presents numerous practical and administrative problems (quality control, certification, etc.), financial problems and even problems of principle for those who are opposed to linking public and private education, for example. It is possible at local level, perhaps with some financial assistance and information and awareness campaigns.

Places for language education, which come under various partnerships, are:

- abroad, for all categories of learners, families, schools and universities, other educational establishments (networks of language schools), centres specialising in the teaching of one linguistic variety as a foreign variety, companies, government departments, professional and cultural associations, etc
- locally, language teaching centres for the general public (parents who want to learn at the same time as their children, for example) that are national but not attached to primary and secondary

schools. They may also be set up as information centres (providing information on language education networks, tests, examinations, language professions, etc) and provide linguistic assistance to newly arrived immigrants and people with linguistic problems. They might also provide the services of modern public letter-writers for the translation of official forms and assistance with administrative matters involving writing

- municipal language schools that also teach the national variety as a foreign language
- university language centres for students, which might also be open to teachers and the general public
- official foreign institutes operating in the territory, in the framework of cultural agreements
- service companies offering only foreign language education, training of every kind (including languages) or language education as an adjunct to other courses (tourism schools, for example)
- private universities, which often emphasise languages
- teaching offered by voluntary bodies, which often concentrate on adult literacy in the mother or national variety
- vocational education (including corporate universities)

Financial incentives might be given to companies or associations fostering language teaching/learning with a view to diversification and plurilingualism, especially in fields such as tourism, humanitarian aid, international cooperation and youth associations, as well as “language vouchers” for company employees. Seeing that the various institutions that provide language education complement each other would enable paths to be marked out, so long as they are identified and that the information is readily available to the general public (in town halls, primary schools and libraries, for example).

The diversity of where languages are taught also concerns educational establishments. Some establishments or training courses might specialise in languages. There is already a wide variety of educational establishments teaching languages:

- in addition to language classes, there are language clubs or centres in schools (linked to or part of information centres or reference libraries, etc)
- there are schools and courses that specialise in languages: *Liceo Linguistico* in Italy, the *Language College* in the United Kingdom, *Bilingualer Zweig* in Germany, “bilingual schools” (Bulgaria, the Czech Republic and elsewhere), or that have bilingual, international or European sections (in international or ordinary schools), where language teaching is reinforced (teaching of three languages, a foreign language used as the language of instruction for certain subjects) or more diversified
- the inclusion of language teaching in multi-purpose educational establishments (technical colleges, universities, government departments, companies, associations, etc) may be promoted.

The main organisational task is to identify the educational resources available for subjects and build bridges between them:

- identify parallel courses addressed to the same public in terms of age, level of competence in languages, general educational level, length and number of hours, etc that may provide alternatives
- identify the courses that may constitute possible paths over time: a succession of courses that are complementary in terms of level (for example, type C level courses in foreign language and cultural institutes that are not available in schools or open only to students in universities), in

terms of competences (for example, academic-type courses with fairly undifferentiated goals, then courses that focus on vocational or leisure needs); a succession of different linguistic varieties, and so forth.

This means linking up language courses and the establishments offering them in order to create economies of scale and synergies, at least at local level, in conurbations, particularly major urban centres. Creating a more joined-up supply of languages, in which it would be more a question of bringing out what was complementary than creating competition among the languages on offer, would probably make courses in less frequently learned languages more visible. Structures such as all-purpose municipal facilities for various associations (information centres for languages themselves offering some courses in mother, regional and foreign varieties) would be particularly well-suited to the social management of plurilingualism in that it would enable each linguistic variety to emerge from its ghetto and become part of collective plurilingual supply. Such coordination of education system establishments would not only have a functional role (bringing courses together), but would also signal the coexistence of languages.

## 6.6. Adapting language curricula

The potential flexibility of the material and social organisation of language teaching stems from the now recognised flexibility of the content of language teaching. Specialists in language teaching theory no longer believe there to be just one way of teaching a single content (*a language*): learning a language is a question of gradual, differentiated and specific appropriation leading to types of knowledge and know-how, all of which are legitimate so long as they allow all learners to reach their goals, be they to read the press, communicate in everyday situations, exchange impressions with neighbours on a camp-site, pass themselves off as natives, watch sub-titled films, etc. The potential diversification of language teaching is dependent upon the choices made according to the purposes assigned to it in the educational establishment and elsewhere. It is based on the possibility of breaking down the learning of a language into competences and the target level for each of those competences.

### 6.6.1. *Differentiating the target linguistic and cultural competences: The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*

Knowledge of languages is commonly perceived as overall knowledge, subject only to degrees: *knowing (or speaking) a language well / a little / badly* are the usual ways in which knowledge of a language is assessed. These ways of knowing a language are regarded as imperfect if they are not as close as possible to the capacities of a native speaker of the linguistic variety concerned.

Conversely, contemporary linguistic thought and theory stress the diversity of ways in which languages can be mastered and the changing and non-homogeneous nature of individual linguistic repertoires. Language teaching cannot everywhere and always aim to create perfect competence, the model of which is, moreover, hard to define in practical terms. Abandoning the objective of perfection, identical for all the languages offered in education systems, enables teaching to be diversified, considering that there may be later teaching or learning that will develop existing competences or create new ones. The role of education systems is to define learners' minimum linguistic competences, make them all aware of their plurilingual repertoires, and provide the means and opportunity to develop transversal competences and broaden their repertoires and awareness (new varieties, new competences in a variety, higher level in an existing competence, etc).

The results expected of learners following a particular language course may be defined in terms of competences using precise, common indicators, i.e. regardless of the languages learned. A typology of such competences or components of competences has been established by the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*. This document, which is proposed as a common basis for language syllabus design, is an essential instrument for the creation of coherence within education systems and between the education systems of member States of the Council of Europe.

Reference will therefore be made to this instrument, which can also be used as a basis for individual self-assessment of language competences as described in the *European Language Portfolio*. The language competences and elements of competences identified in the *Framework*:

- oral production (*speaking*, in the sense of making a presentation to an audience, for example)
- written production (writing a text)
- aural and visual reception (watching television, listening to a song, lecture or radio programme, etc)
- reading comprehension (in the traditional sense of *reading*)
- spoken interaction (in the sense of taking part in a conversation, debate, or whatever)
- written interaction (in real time: Internet chat groups, e-mails, etc).

These competences involve the recognition or production of *types of* written or oral *discourse*, which may vary in form and organisation in different language communities (ways of greeting, making excuses, writing a business letter, for example).

Such competences may be acquired by developing strategic know-how (such as planning a text) and knowledge, especially grammatical (also known as *linguistic*) knowledge:

- Competence in phonetics and intonation (very important for oral communication)
- Lexical and semantic competence (*vocabulary*)
- Morphological competence (such as verb forms)
- Syntactic competence (the combination of words and their order in a sentence)
- Writing competence (spelling).

Language teaching also involves cultural competences<sup>1</sup> (see Chapter 9), which may be separate from linguistic competences. For example:

- skills and know-how: instrumental competence (ability to manage an unknown environment) and interactive competence (ability to manage verbal and non-verbal interaction with others)
- ability to discover: knowing how to find and appropriate relevant knowledge and information about a particular society
- ability to interpret unknown cultural, social, political, etc facts, from one's own point of view and from that of members of another society (external personal interpretation and the interpretations made by the social actors concerned)
- *savoir-être* as an intercultural competence in the strict sense: ability to manage culture shock, adopt an attitude that is not that of a tourist, be detached, put things in perspective, develop an open, tolerant attitude, play the role of cultural mediator, etc.

In order to design syllabuses it is essential to determine the competences concerned (all competences, some of them, a single competence, etc), but also the target level in each competence. This definition of levels is made possible by the reference levels offered in the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*. Reference levels by language have been or are being drawn up, according to common principles and in relation to the *Framework*.

A syllabus may therefore lay down objectives explicitly. They may be different for different linguistic varieties.

The choice of competences to be taught and the level to be attained in them by learners is a matter for education authorities in the framework of collective decisions. Those decisions should be taken on the basis of teaching objectives and available resources (see Chapters 3 and 4). The common elements will

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<sup>1</sup> As in Chapter 5, the following typology is not exactly identical to the one adopted by the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*.

be the development of plurilingual competence and the organising principles of language syllabuses (types and levels of competence). This lowest common denominator makes language courses consistent with each other, longitudinally and between sectors of the education system (educational cycles, regions, different educational establishments, etc). Depending on the respective roles of central education authorities and those operating at regional or local level, educational establishments may be allowed a degree of autonomy as to how they organise courses that enable learners to reach common objectives that have been specified in analytical, concordant, explicit terms.

### 6.6.2. *Adapting teaching content*

The choice of competences to be taught and the levels to be attained in them, which make up language teaching syllabuses, may be based for each linguistic variety on:

- language needs, i.e. actual or foreseeable ways of using languages for a particular group at a particular stage in their educational career
- the expectations of users/learners who want to develop their repertoires in a particular competence or to a particular level of competence
- the expected role of language teaching in relation to other subjects (transversal learning to read, for example)
- the educational goals of teaching establishments. From this point of view, language syllabuses should not be organised exclusively on the basis of communicative goals.

These decisions require negotiation and mediation among the parties concerned (users, teachers, the economic world, voluntary bodies, political parties, etc). They should be made taking into account all learners' language learning paths: what they have already done and the choices they plan to make, at least in the short-term.

#### 6.6.2.1. *Education for plurilingualism: a transversal concern*

Some language courses may be designed essentially according to goals focusing on linguistic aspects of proficiency, but it may also be decided to give space to broader educational concerns. For example, language teaching may be linked to civic education conceived at national level or to education for democratic citizenship. This involves designing language courses at once as a means of exercising such citizenship (i.e. undertaking exchanges with European citizens using other linguistic varieties), and as education for linguistic tolerance by exposure to other languages and cultures. Acknowledging the potential of all linguistic varieties, showing how each responds to the requirements of human verbal communication, seeking to counteract primitive reactions of distrust or rejection of other sounds, accents and discursive behaviour, are all objectives in themselves.

Similar objectives might include:

- enabling a better approach to writing (writing system, textual forms)
- stimulating thought about communication, human languages and language
- introducing the common linguistic heritage
- developing verbal creativity
- introducing an aesthetic of verbal creation and the reading of literature
- providing the basis for critical examination of the production of knowledge in relation to languages (in the case of philosophy and modern science)
- opening the way to knowledge of other societies

These objectives are shared by subjects other than languages and their implementation requires that existing subjects be redefined. It nevertheless remains the case that plurilingual education may be interpreted as going beyond the strict area of knowledge of linguistic varieties and be seen in broader

educational terms which make it possible to see the learner other than as a speaker. Such choices are potentially appropriate to all educational contexts.

#### 6.6.2.2. *The content of language teaching and learning in compulsory education*

The content of language teaching organised in the context of compulsory education presents special problems. Learners' language needs are not identifiable at this stage: learners' future career paths cannot be a decisive factor. The content of syllabuses and the target language competences, in the strict sense of the term, as well as the corresponding educational activities, may therefore be chosen on the basis of many considerations, including:

- their presumed communicative usefulness in the medium term
- their immediate and short-term value for motivating learners
- their role in the management of group projects (at class or school level)
- their educational usefulness (learning to learn, for example)
- their role in aesthetic experience
- their role in intellectual training
- their role in the formation of identities (in relation to which communities of affiliation?)
- their role in intercultural education
- their role in education in democratic values and the creation of social cohesion and solidarity

Keeping to the strictly linguistic level, it may be thought that, from a teaching point of view, contact with a large number of language competences (with respect to one linguistic variety) is positive in that it allows varied teaching activities, creates extensive experience of languages and may help learners to become more aware of the plurilingual nature of their linguistic repertoire.

However that may be, syllabuses centred on acquiring a large number of competences should not, even in compulsory education for children or young adolescents, result in all-encompassing teaching but in specific forms of teaching for each competence that are identifiable and coordinated. The dominant model in many types of language teaching seems still to be of a syllabus consisting of undifferentiated competences aimed at acquiring a single competence: the language. It is this all-inclusive model that an approach by competence and by level of competence should break down, thus making it possible to diversify language syllabuses and organise diversified language courses in school and post-school.

#### 6.6.2.3. *Content of language teaching and learning and language needs*

Choices as to the nature of the competences to be taught and the target level in each of them may be determined in accordance with the language needs of the learners concerned (see Chapter 4, 2.3). Such analyses are relevant to all education (including when it is part of compulsory education) but concern essentially those undergoing vocational training. They particularly concern language courses organised in companies or government departments. As was stressed earlier, it is important for the goals of such learning to be negotiated between company managers, the (internal or external) training department and those who will be receiving training so as to avoid objectives being set along exclusively functional lines, since learners may not commit themselves to language learning that is too narrowly utilitarian.

With respect to such programmes, questions such as the following need to be clarified:

- identification of the initial level of proficiency, which enables potential learners to be identified
- more broadly, how these people are to be selected
- company recognition of training: bonuses, access to certain posts, career, etc
- when teaching/learning is to be undertaken: during working-hours or during leisure time?
- proposed certification (internal, external, official, etc certification)

The immediate objectives will be actually acquiring certain competences in certain languages. They are necessary as priorities since, more often than not, the time devoted to teaching and learning is limited. For certain categories of staff, however, for example, those who already know one or more foreign languages, plurilingual education is more effective since it is a question of learning to communicate in several languages, alternating use of several linguistic varieties to fill gaps in knowledge and often proving particularly effective.

#### 6.6.2.4. *Content of language teaching and learning in higher education*

Higher education institutions have an important role in plurilingual education since they are, in a sense, the locus of transition from imposed acquisition at school to freely choosing to learn languages. It is absolutely essential for languages to continue to be offered as part of university education and even to make them an integral part of it, whatever subject the student is specialising in.

The teaching of languages may be well-established in higher education but, often, only a very few hours are devoted to it and it essentially concerns non-initial training. It is therefore fundamental to ensure that there is continuity at this level with earlier, secondary education. In order to use the limited time available profitably, it may be decided to specify courses according to competences. Such specification, as well as the actual content of courses, will vary greatly according to the subjects in which students are specialising: the target competences will not necessarily be the same for those specialising in mathematics, biology and cinema. It is also governed by students' level of competence in their specialities (degree of initiation, research, and so on). In most cases, some place can probably be given to reading comprehension (reading untranslated texts written in other languages: articles in specialist journals, the press, etc).

Usually, very little time is allocated to languages in higher education in courses other than those specialising in languages and the arts, and this may result in language courses having a poor image. University language policies should probably be thought of in overall terms and this transversal competence not abandoned. In particular, it would be useful to give some thought to whether or not it would be appropriate to create space for elementary language education (level A1), which may, however, not be considered the role of higher education. This is a point of view which regards the university as a stage in the process of acquiring knowledge, but not as a stage in a linguistic itinerary. Setting up common language resource centres would be a way of encouraging learning for other than academic or professional purposes (travel, personal interest, etc) and might provide irreplaceable opportunities for training in autonomous language learning.

University language teaching should therefore be diversified, at the level of syllabuses, according to, among other things:

- the function of languages in the course followed (in the framework of university departments, for example)
- the function of languages in students' personal education
- the function of languages in the transmission of knowledge (the use of languages in teaching)
- the function of languages in the international relations of higher education institutions: international agreements, on-line education, teacher and student mobility, training periods abroad, presence of foreign students.

But such diversification according to speciality should be supplemented by transversal courses that avoid losing sight of plurilingual competence. It would be even easier for universities to assume this role in language learning itineraries if the language courses they offered were also conceived in relation to the territory and therefore according to their accessibility to people from outside the university and in terms of how they might complement other languages courses available in a particular place.

#### 6.6.2.5. *Content of language teaching and learning according to personal interests*

Motivation to learn languages may derive from personal aspirations, which are always present and need to be taken into consideration in courses, if only to a minimum extent. Learners do not usually analyse the desire for languages and tend to see it in overall terms: usually, their only certainty is which variety or varieties they would like to learn.

Conceived as leisure activities, courses focusing on themes (friendly relationships) or cultural activities (cooking, cinema, team sports, etc) could be organised for learners who have limited time or cannot make an unlimited investment in language courses. The necessary linguistic competences are identified according to choice of activity.

Some language courses may be sought because they enable certain groups to tell other groups who they are in a language other than their first language, if that language is not widely spoken or taught. The competences that need to be taught and the corresponding contents then have to be organised on the basis of this role of cultural mediation. Similarly, some people want to learn or improve their knowledge of a language because of its value to them in terms of identity: for example, the children of immigrants might want to learn the first language of their parents or grand-parents; others may want to learn a regional or foreign language that enables them to create some sort of sense of affiliation to another group. In these cases, it is probably oral competences that should be stressed (since they constitute the strongest form of incorporation), the writing system (as a clear sign of Otherness) or the classic/ancient forms of those languages (the most prestigious). Such representations of needs may result in diametrically opposed teaching: traditional teaching (based on writing and metalinguistic thought) or “modern” teaching, based on the new technologies in order to enhance the value of unprestigious varieties.

Syllabuses based on a single competence may be suited to situations in which learners seek a response to personal expectations: often, only a limited module is available (50 hours, for example). Learners may also have advanced levels of language competences or vocational or academic training which generate very circumscribed linguistic needs. Syllabuses focusing on the acquisition of a single competence are also likely to be suitable for the teaching of languages for which there is little demand.

In all teaching situations, syllabuses that cover a single competence may give prominence to passive/receptive competences, such as reading (which can easily be integrated in the reading component of national language teaching) or listening comprehension (using aids such as television, cinema and radio). Writing skills may cover the writing of personal or private texts (in creative writing workshops) or professional or academic texts for those with level C. Pronunciation may be the essential competence for activities connected with performing arts (singing, theatre) as early as level A1. However, oral expression is always extremely motivating, even if it has no immediate functional relevance for these learners. Syllabuses focusing on a single competence are quite well-suited to leisure activities with a linguistic dimension, but not only to them.

Teaching content (competences, themes or content in the real sense, target level in the competence) is not a function of the target linguistic variety itself, but a matter of educational criteria. In this respect, as in many others, the development of language curricula is a social issue and not a matter of exclusively technical decisions (pedagogical or didactic).

### **6.7. Diversifying language teaching methods**

Plurilingualism was originally adopted as a principle for language policies because of the increased need for Europeans to communicate with one another. This perspective was expressed in the wish to make the teaching of languages more effective. The solution then adopted was to use what are known as *communicative* teaching methods which are based on a division of the subject matter, not into units of form (such as article, adjective, main clause, subordinate clause and so on), as was previously the case, but into functions (apologising, offering someone something, giving advice, etc). Teaching is therefore based on methods that are active (simulating authentic communicative situations) and more

practical (using texts and materials that have not been produced specially for teaching) so as to involve learners more directly. Such methodological authenticity was thought to enable languages to be learned, perhaps not more quickly, but in ways that were more immediately operational in actual communication.

Such choices are still on the agenda, as is witnessed by the place communicative methods are given in European teaching syllabuses<sup>1</sup>. It should not, however, be concluded that the answer to questions on language diversification is essentially a matter of universalising what are regarded as more effective communicative teaching methods. This *Guide* shows clearly that the solution to language policy problems is to be found at the political level rather than in language teaching theory.

It should be noted that language teaching methods should probably vary depending on different groups of learners, different objectives and different educational situations, and that, in this field, like any other, there is no single solution. While active, authentic teaching methods are likely to be more effective, they are not always appropriate to every group of learners and all teaching/learning situations. Just as it is essential to learn to learn languages, it is wise to lead some learners gradually towards communicative teaching methods so that they do not reject them, since, however effective they may be, they do not correspond to their representations of language teaching.

Care should therefore be taken to diversify teaching methods in such a way as to take into account, among other things:

- the age of learners: young learners will enjoy active approaches involving *games*, which are not necessarily suitable for all adult groups, who may consider them puerile
- their level: level C learners are more likely to want grammatical explanations or explanations of precise language questions than beginners (level A) and prefer more analytical methods
- their style of learning: some learners are prepared to take risks and make mistakes in order to learn, while others want to understand intellectually before producing
- educational traditions, especially the type of teaching used for the national language. If the tradition is very formal, language teaching may also be planned according to this first experience of language learning. Similarly, if the traditions of language teaching are all-encompassing (in the sense of not being organised in relation to competences), teaching by competence, even if the competences are linked up with one another, will have to be justified and, as it were, acclimatised to the educational context
- the nature of the languages present: if the new linguistic varieties to be incorporated into linguistic repertoires are very different (from the point of view of linguistic structures and cultures) from those already present, learners may feel the need for an intellectual, descriptive transition before embarking on even simulated communication. This may lead to receptive competences being emphasised in the early phases of learning.

These characteristics of educational situations call for teaching methods appropriate to the learners concerned, *appropriate* not necessarily meaning conforming to learners' and teachers' representations, but essentially that they should not be too divorced from their expectations. Such educational prudence can be expressed by choosing different methods according to competences, levels, types of plurilingual repertoires and educational cultures.

## 6.8. Diversifying approaches to assessment

With respect to assessment and certification, the purpose of plurilingual education requires that different types of certification be allowed to coexist through which learners are recognised to have reached certain competence thresholds. It is however important to ensure that:

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<sup>1</sup> Eurydice (2001): Foreign Language Teaching in Schools in Europe, p. 158.

- proficiency levels are defined in the same way for all linguistic varieties, especially where they are taught as foreign or national in the education system
- self-assessment is included as well as institutional assessments
- institutional certification takes all linguistic experiences into account
- official certification is modular, like teaching based on acquisition competence by competence (unit/credit system that can be used even in secondary education if language teaching is not strictly linked to a particular cycle)
- languages figure in the most decisive national certification systems (end of compulsory schooling, access to higher education, etc)
- school certification and certification by non-academic bodies (including foreign bodies) are linked to each other
- tests of knowledge of forms do not turn into certification
- teaching syllabuses are not based solely on the syllabuses of assessment examinations
- specific examinations are devised to assess the transversal competences making up plurilingual repertoires and intercultural competence.

For obvious practical and social reasons, knowledge and competences will probably continue to be assessed linguistic variety by linguistic variety, but it is also highly desirable for the very dissemination of the principle of plurilingualism in Europe that plurilingual competence as such should be recognised by some form of certification so that it is not reduced to the sum of competences acquired in each variety.

## **6.9. Adapting education for plurilingualism according to linguistic contexts**

The diversity of sociolinguistic situations and their rapid rate of change (because of the settlement of new groups, for example) mean that the characteristics of contexts have to be taken into account. These characteristics consist of the linguistic varieties common in them and the varieties considered necessary to a community in a particular place: those in neighbouring regions, those of important economic, political and cultural partners. It is possible to think, for example, of the relations established between some regions of Europe, such as those bordering the Atlantic, Mediterranean, etc.

Such regional linguistic planning does not necessarily call into question national cohesion, so long as the resources allocated to education are fairly distributed and the standards by which knowledge and courses are assessed are transparent. Nor is the role assigned to the national (or regional) language called into question, as long as the educational purposes assigned to each linguistic variety are clearly defined. Seen from this perspective, plurilingual education clearly has a role to play in safeguarding, enhancing the value of and enriching linguistic diversity in a particular place.

“Regional” diversification is not necessarily carried out in territorial areas of this type but may be planned at other levels: all regions, major conurbations, districts, neighbourhoods, etc. The special characteristics to be taken into account in relation to general (eg national) objectives are dependent on the degree of autonomy of educational decision-making at local level, which is, for example, that of each school (setting curricula, managing a proportion of total teaching hours, recruiting teachers, etc). The principles of differentiation may concern local exemption or exception (regions with a special status, for example), in the framework of federal or national structures, or be a general rule. Such specific adaptations may also be temporary or provisional. They may concern ways of organising courses (goals and objectives remaining common) or specific objectives in the framework of particular interpretations of common goals, based on shared values enshrined in the Constitution.

In order to make linguistic diversity perceptible and develop plurilingual provision in education systems seen at this local level, the following will be taken into account:

- the linguistic varieties present in the particular territory: regional varieties, those of residents of foreign origin or of newly arrived people, identification of social contexts and groups of speakers for whom the national language is a second variety; other linguistic varieties of groups of speakers

who have settled temporarily (multinational companies, refugee reception centres, etc). Special attention will be paid to the sociolinguistic characteristics of the major conurbations which are particularly well-placed for the formation of multilingual areas and plurilingual groups (as a result of migratory flows, economic and cultural activities, etc) and to become modern cosmopolitan centres

- the linguistic varieties present in the school environment (which are not always the same as the above). These are often *de facto* plurilingual and are an irreplaceable resource for education for plurilingualism in that they provide controlled experience of the diversity of human languages
- physically close linguistic varieties: by virtue of cross-border continuity, geographic proximity (with respect to and across the sea) forming contact areas that may be bilingual or once shared the same linguistic variety, according to national political borders, but also more ancient, internal, cultural divisions
- linguistic varieties that are symbolically close as a result of traditional or recent relations, whether or not constructed within the European framework, such as twinning and sporting or economic partnerships, etc
- linguistic varieties accessible through the media (radio and television reception areas, for example).

This differentiation may result in each territory being left to decide how to help learners reach objectives set at national level (linguistic varieties, competences, target levels in each competence) or to set specific objectives. In this particular framework, it then becomes possible to make space, within and outside the education system, for linguistic varieties, in which some degree of proficiency in some competences makes sense for that territory, as a component of a plurilingual competence that is not identical for everyone but corresponds to common educational values.

It is probably within these educational spaces that innovative solutions could be developed and tried out which might then be universalised. The conditions for the success of plurilingual education as a common denominator of European language education policies are the adjustments to existing courses, whether or not they are local. They should make possible improved coordination of the teaching of the national language or languages (especially its/their written varieties), regional languages, those of newly settled communities, those of neighbours and partners, and those less often studied or taught, in differentiated learning paths which will be all the more acceptable for corresponding to perceived requirements at local level.

## **6.10. Implementing education for plurilingualism and education for plurilingual awareness**

Language education (national, mother, regional, foreign languages, etc) conceived as the integration and coordination of the teaching of linguistic varieties of differing status and in the framework of lifelong education is a comparatively recent idea. It has as yet not been fully implemented anywhere, though it is a field in which there is no lack of experience – some of it substantial – in terms of curricula or concrete, institutional and administrative ways of organising language teaching. Some of these will be mentioned, not because they are to be considered as exemplary, but because they demonstrate the feasibility of such a language education policy in Europe.

### **6.10.1. Enhancing coherence in language teaching**

The following may be cited from this point of view:

- teaching that takes advantage of the possibility of mutual comprehension of similar languages which makes receptive competences (especially reading comprehension) possible in several languages: examples of this are projects concerning the mutual comprehension of Scandinavian languages and

Dutch, among Germanic languages and Romance languages (Eurom 4 Group, the *Galatea* Project, etc). Such so-called *simultaneous* teaching may result in curricula in which the languages concerned can then be offered separately for certain other competences (spoken interaction)

- bilingual education in all its forms which combines subject and language teaching. Teaching subjects (such as pure sciences, human sciences, artistic subjects) in languages other than the national/mother tongue is a well-known type of language teaching which, if certain conditions obtain, can be introduced at all levels of education and at levels B and C of acquisition of non-mother tongues. How ambitious it is will vary from total immersion to some teaching of a single subject in a non-mother tongue, in ordinary establishments or in special establishments or types of education (such as international schools)
- creating crossborder training networks at regional level, in particular in the framework of joint mechanisms involving the harmonisation of curricula in crossborder regions. Developments of this sort are under way between Austria and Slovenia, and between Germany and France, for example<sup>1</sup>
- harmonising the teaching of the national linguistic variety and other linguistic varieties in ways such as *educazione lingusitica* in Italy, which are designed to instil awareness of the diversity of languages, their profound functional unity, their internal variation in relation to communicative situations and the means used by each variety to express common notions such as the present and the past. Other possibilities have been explored such as linking the teaching of reading in the national language and another linguistic variety (the *bivalence* experiment in Brazil)
- higher education including the teaching of several foreign languages as well as other subjects in departments or establishments that focus on trade exchanges and international negotiation, European studies (as preparation for exchanges with the European Union in its economic, legal, linguistic and cultural aspects, including business cultures), the management of cultural property, teaching (training to teach two foreign languages), and so forth
- research on integrating language awareness (as opposed to actually teaching languages) in primary schools in order to develop positive attitudes to linguistic varieties spoken by other speakers and instil metalinguistic competences. This type of teaching could be a component of the teaching of the national language or mother tongue, run parallel to language learning or be a preparation for language teaching properly so-called, and may stimulate the desire to learn.

A first step in this direction would be to draw up curricula for the teaching of all linguistic varieties (including the national) in the same way so as to identify the objectives whose complementarity would then be easier to identify (eg learning reading comprehension) and standardise, for example, the didactic and metalinguistic terminology employed, using the proposals contained in the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* as a basis.

#### **6.10.2. Curricula to diversify the range of languages offered and to develop plurilingual competence**

If plurilingualism is not directly introduced as an explicit principle for language education policies in Europe, language teaching paths that foster the development of such a competence and education can nonetheless be organised. These must organise the chronological linkage of language teaching in such a way as to avoid exclusive choices between languages. These sometimes frustrating alternatives foster the impression that the acquisition of one linguistic variety prevents the acquisition of another.

The order in which languages are introduced must be planned not only in the framework of learning paths in schools but also in the context of individual learning paths after primary education. Hence the

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<sup>1</sup> See, for example, Raasch, Albert (ed.) (1999): *Language Teaching and Learning in Border Situations*, University of Saarland, Saarbrücken.

need that has already been stressed many times for close coordination between all language education so that it is organised into paths identifiable by users. The distribution of language teaching in the curriculum can be planned on the basis of considerations concerning:

- the linkage of languages, including foreign languages, with other subjects
- the linkage (over time) of languages with each other: mother tongue/national and foreign/regional languages, languages of recently settled communities, and foreign languages with each other: foreign language 1, foreign language 2, other foreign languages, etc.
- teaching based on a modular (unit credit) approach, which allows more flexibility than annual courses (or any form of treatment independent of the normal cycles of education) but may involve significant changes in the organisation of all subjects.

Diversifying the languages offered is a precondition for introducing truly plurilingual educational paths. It is, furthermore, the longitudinal coherence of what is offered that enables the coherence of language education policies to be evaluated. These paths cannot, however, be organised without taking into account certain social representations which give a decisive, and even definitive, role to the early learning of linguistic varieties other than the mother variety. It is often thought that education received at a very early age (though the age at which children start school is, from this point of view, already too late) is more effective and better able to form a sense of group identity. Everyone therefore presses for his or her reference linguistic variety to be introduced into the curriculum as early as possible. While such beliefs are to some extent justifiable, there is no doubt that:

- other linguistic varieties may be acquired later
- the linguistic varieties learned in the early years of schooling are not necessarily those that will be best remembered, since this is a function of the regular use one makes of them
- the linguistic varieties learned in the early years of schooling will not necessarily be the ones in which the highest levels of proficiency are achieved in relation to other varieties learned later
- the linguistic variety learned in the early days of schooling will not necessarily prove the most useful for social, occupational, personal exchanges, etc
- the linguistic variety learned in the early days of schooling will not be the definitive sign and form of belonging to a community with which one identifies, since social and cultural identity is variable and multiple.

Once again, what is at stake when educating the social demand for languages is to show that the presence in the early days of schooling of any linguistic variety (national, first, foreign, in great demand, etc) is acceptable if the aim is not absolute mastery but competences that are differentiated in kind and in level. Therefore the first linguistic variety taught may not necessarily be the one in which the greatest number of competences and highest levels of proficiency are targeted.

The social demand for English can be approached from this viewpoint. It is likely to prove lasting which means that it should be addressed rather than ignored. Because of its dominant position in social demand, curricula for teaching English and English teachers themselves have a special responsibility, namely to respond to social demand, but also to act upon it in order to make learners more aware of the function and value of plurilingualism. It is possible that, without such “education from within”, some command of English will be perceived as exempting learners from having to learn other languages.

For example, it is technically possible to introduce the teaching of English very early on in compulsory education in response to the demands of parents who consider proficiency in it to be a profitable investment preferable to any other, whatever the future personal and professional paths their children follow. But the objectives to be reached in the framework of compulsory schooling can be set at levels A2 (for spoken interaction) and B1 (for reading) and major objectives left until later stages of schooling and/or certain specialised forms of secondary education. The acquisition of a higher degree of proficiency might even be left to the initiative of learners, who will have been taught to learn languages by themselves. This mechanism would create space in compulsory schooling and elsewhere for the teaching of other linguistic varieties and the target competences in them could be pitched at

higher levels than those for English: for example, the target for Italian pupils might be to reach level B2 in Spanish reading comprehension, even if the language were introduced two or three years later than English; such an objective is not completely unrealistic from a teaching point of view.

Similarly, in order to diversify forms of teaching, English could be used as the language of instruction for *non-linguistic* subjects (such as mathematics or geography), on condition, however, that it is not the only language used in this way and that the subjects taught in it are not systematically the most prestigious or the most decisive for learners' academic futures. This to avoid indirectly giving undue legitimacy to proficiency in the language.

Intercultural education also has a crucial role to play since it can enable learners to clarify the relations between their community and English-speaking communities in their often contradictory aspects: is English sought after as a *lingua franca* or as the language of prestigious nations taken as role models? Attitudes to English-speaking communities are a good subject for intercultural study: for example, is it relevant to make people aware that such attitudes could be excessively positive (and therefore constituting a sign of unacknowledged acculturation or an already partly outdated social distinction strategy) or, conversely, over-critical in the name of "local"/national identities or "anti-globalisation" ideologies, for example, which are simply modern varieties of ethnocentrism?

What is essential with respect to the teaching of English is to see that individual linguistic repertoires continue to be developed by everyone and are not, as it were, frozen by the acquisition of one linguistic variety regarded as taking the place of all others. It is important that English, or any other language with the same status in linguistic representations, should take responsibility for the necessary education for plurilingual awareness as a value, which is of course not to be confused with knowing any particular language. If these educational responsibilities are not assumed, the teaching of dominant languages (the "high" varieties in socio-linguistic terms) may strengthen social demand.

Another particular issue: the long-term management of the paths, taking into account leaving the education system, of all those who do not go on to higher education, which means designing specific programmes for learners such as the children of newly arrived people, learners who are already bilingual, plurilingual, etc. It is a matter of elementary economic logic, the relevance of which has already been pointed out, not to allow language competences already acquired outside national (or regional) education systems to be lost.

Curricula based on the principles and tools developed by the Council of Europe are already in operation, an example of which is to be found in Chapter 8 of *the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*.

The application of these principles is relevant also in some reorganisations of education systems, a particularly detailed example of which is to be found in the Expert Report *Quelles langues apprendre en Suisse pendant la scolarité obligatoire* (Conférence suisse des Directeurs cantonaux de l'Instruction publique, July 1998) and others in the *Eurydice* survey (2001).

## **6.11. Conclusion**

At the end of this inventory of educational and organisational resources available for introducing plurilingual education, it is recalled that the essential part of the task to be accomplished is not necessarily didactic or pedagogical. Changing existing curricula in order to integrate the teaching of different languages and to diversify languages throughout education fundamentally requires that the social representations of users and decision-makers need to be more developed. Ultimately, what is important is to give people a better understanding of what languages are in relation to:

- national affiliation and individual social and cultural identity
- how easy they are to learn and the supposed advantages of *early learning*

- the social recognition of all forms of teaching and learning and in particular of the competence, intrinsically linked to plurilingual competence, of learning to learn languages as the basis for learner autonomy in language learning
- the relationship between the acquisition of a particular language and acquisition of transversal linguistic and communicative competences that may be used for the learning of any linguistic variety
- the plurilingual potential of every speaker and every individual's linguistic history which involves the management of his or her unique plurilingual repertoire
- the democratic values that can be based on awareness of possessing such plurilingual competence, namely and in particular, linguistic tolerance, which is the goal of plurilingual education, and social integration.

Making such representations more sophisticated is an educational responsibility collectively incumbent upon all European citizens, their elected representatives and democratic cultural organisations, since it is not only an organisational question but fundamentally a political and cultural matter.



## GENERAL CONCLUSION

The *Guide for the Development of Language Education Policies in Europe* opened by stating that it advocated no particular language policy measure. It concludes having attempted to show that member States may conduct different language education policies according to a common principle and objective, relevant for Europe: developing the plurilingual competence of every individual throughout life so as to make perceptible to everyone the economic, social and cultural value of plurilingualism. It is not so much a matter of promoting the diversity of languages as of placing citizens as language users at the centre in order to give impetus to their professional lives and ensure their adequate social integration and their recognition by cultural and social communities other than those with which they themselves identify. In other words, the crucial social function of language education policies based on the principle of plurilingualism as a fundamental value of democratic tolerance and a specific competence to be developed, is to counteract linguistic disparagement and intolerance in order to bring about democratic fraternity and peace.

This objective, which has been expressed in similar terms in other international bodies, is far from dominant in public opinion or among political decision-makers. The fact that it has still gained so little acceptance can be explained by the deep-seatedness of certain social representations, which include overestimating the value of one's own language, regarding the competence of the 'native' speaker as the only acceptable goal when learning a language, the belief that only early learning is 'worthwhile' and the universal value attributed to knowing English. In addition to this, language and language education policies are not always defined explicitly enough or discussed as such in the public arena.

The aim of the *Guide* is to provide a reference for the shaping of policies for language education and therefore for establishing goals and identifying the technical means of implementing them. As this is not a new requirement, member States may consider it appropriate to examine the state of the language teaching provided in their countries in order to identify any adjustments that need to be made to them.

The analysis could be conducted taking into account data such as indicators on education for languages (see Chapters 3 and 4) and could probably involve political and management criteria concerning:

- consideration of the Council of Europe's ideas and proposals with respect to languages and language education
- the nature and role of linguistic ideologies in public life (particularly the relations between these ideologies and political party manifestos)
- the nature of linguistic conflicts, their intensity and coverage by the media (especially linguistic demands)
- the conflicting arguments in the language policy field
- the identification of the political, cultural, trades union, voluntary-sector and other actors involved in these debates (including teachers' associations)
- the nature of the main language policy issues to be dealt with by the education system
- the coordinating authorities for language and language education policies
- the decision-making processes for language policy (the institutions and government departments involved), the ways in which language programmes are designed (technical

committee, public debate, national conferences, official surveys by experts), their political validation and supervision of their application (official pilot schemes, supervision of textbooks, etc)

- the frequently mentioned administrative and technical problems encountered in this field
- the role of head teachers, parents, learners, etc with respect to languages.

The analyses would cover all education sectors: pre-school, primary and compulsory lower secondary schooling, upper (general and specialised) secondary education, higher education, continuing education, etc. It should also be possible to describe the role played in this area by “non-national” bodies such as companies, voluntary bodies (lay, confessional, etc), “private” language schools and so forth.

This examination, if conducted in the form of a debate, should bring out the ways in which the principle of plurilingualism as a value and competence is implemented with respect to:

- actions concerning education for linguistic diversity (to be distinguished from the teaching of languages), in terms of interest in languages and acceptance of the languages of other communities, for both learners and educational actors (teachers of languages and other subjects, head teachers, etc)
- “theoretical” diversity (possible choices available) and actual diversity (distribution of language teaching at a particular stage in education and in its longitudinal dimensions), in other words, the strategies adopted to broaden linguistic repertoires (more competences and/or a higher level in a language, introduction to new linguistic varieties, etc)
- the relationships established between the teaching of different languages of whatever kind (national / foreign / regional / classical / other languages, between foreign languages taught successively or simultaneously) and therefore the nature of the language education envisaged
- the expectations of majority and minority communities (ancient or recently settled, including communities with no regional affiliation, such as the deaf)
- the academic selection and social distinction processes of which languages may be the vector and locus in education systems, and therefore non-discriminatory access to languages
- the diversified syllabuses and paths introduced according to specific territorial and cultural characteristics
- the overall place given to intercultural education and education for democratic citizenship in the education system (especially in compulsory schooling) and the role language teaching/learning plays in this respect.

Clearly, there are numerous solutions to be identified or found. The possible decisions will be a function of a number of well-known factors, such as:

- the human and financial resources allocated to languages, which may be a function of the size of the territory concerned
- the general priorities assigned to education: from combating illiteracy to monitoring the quality of language teaching
- the domestic sociolinguistic situation: the status of the languages in the territory, the existence of any linguistic conflict, etc

- the diplomatic/geopolitical context and the international role played by the national language(s)
- educational traditions and teaching cultures
- the range of languages offered : the education sectors concerned, the diversity of provision and use of that diversity
- the nature of social representations of languages (by social and regional group, etc).

The *Guide for the Development of Language Education Policies in Europe* is not just a factual analysis, undoubtedly limited from this point of view, but one of a number of instruments whose purpose is to structure future actions. These might, in particular, take the form of evaluation by member States, with the assistance of the Council of Europe (Language Policy Division), of their policy on the management of languages in the education system. Placing these issues in the public arena and opening a debate involving experts, politicians and citizens on the basis of objective data related to clearly articulated principles is in itself a real step towards collective awareness of the many issues involved in language teaching and the learning of languages by citizens, and towards the creation of greater consensus, leading to new forms of cooperation between member States. It is by no means the least important function of the plurilingual, pluricultural perspective for education to form one of the realisable Utopias necessary for structuring a political and cultural Europe open to a form of globalisation that is itself plural.