

**Languages in Education
Languages for Education**



Language Policy Division

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A platform of resources and references
for plurilingual and intercultural education

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After producing reference documents such as the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* taught as “foreign” languages, the Council of Europe’s Language Policy Division proposes a new instrument, in the form of this *Platform*, enabling member states to benefit from the experience and expertise of other member states in formulating their programmes relating to languages of schooling and all language teaching.

Access to education and success at school depends heavily on language competences. Some pupils may be disadvantaged as soon as they start school because their competences do not match the school’s expectations: children from disadvantaged backgrounds, children from migrant families, or children whose first language is a regional language. But all, whatever their language repertoire, must learn to communicate in school. A command of the language(s) of schooling is vital to success at school and social advancement.

One major challenge for education systems is to give learners, during their school education, language and intercultural competences which will enable them to operate effectively as citizens, acquire knowledge and develop open attitudes to otherness: this vision of the teaching of languages and cultures is referred to as *plurilingual and intercultural education*.

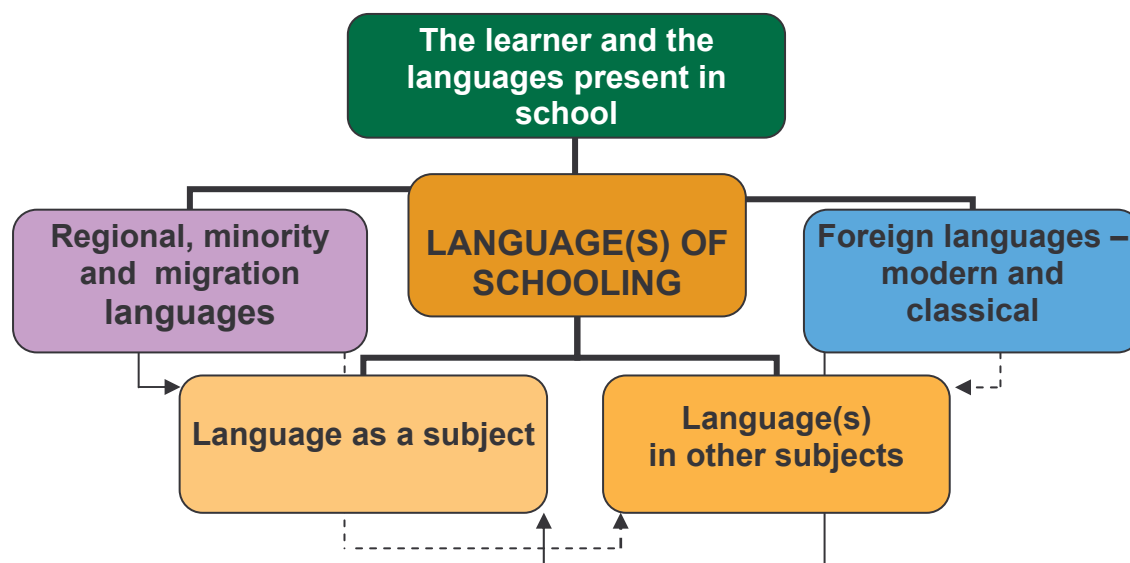
The founding principles of plurilingual and intercultural education are therefore:

- recognition of linguistic and cultural diversity as guaranteed by Council of Europe conventions;
- everyone’s right to use their language varieties as a medium of communication, a vehicle for learning and a means of expressing their affiliations;
- every learner’s right to gain experience and achieve a command of languages (language of schooling, first language, foreign language etc) and the related cultural dimensions according to their personal needs and expectations, be they cognitive, social, aesthetic or affective, so as to be able to develop the necessary competences in other languages by themselves after leaving school;
- the centrality of human dialogue, which depends essentially on languages. The experience of otherness through languages and the cultures they carry is the precondition (necessary but not sufficient) for intercultural understanding and mutual acceptance.

Plurilingual and intercultural education covers the languages and cultures which are present in school but neither recognised nor taught, the languages recognised by the school but not taught, and the languages taught. Its aims are to:

- implement a holistic approach to the teaching of the different subjects, i.e. identify and organise the transversal links and points of convergence among them, because language competence is a single entity, even if it has been divided into different school subjects;
- define the teaching goals and forms of competence to be achieved explicitly and coherently in order to ensure in particular that learning is assessed fairly and transparently.

The chart below illustrates the different statuses of languages in school and the relations among them: the languages taught are first or second/foreign languages for learners; they are studied as a specific subject or serve as an instrument of learning in other subjects.



The purpose of the *Platform* is notably to offer reference tools that can be used to analyse and construct curricula for languages of schooling which are

- taught as subjects in their own right, for example, Polish in Poland, Swedish in Sweden, German in the schools of the German minority in Denmark etc)
- and used for the teaching of other subjects (maths, biology, history, geography etc), such as Swedish in Sweden etc, or regional or minority languages in some education systems.

The *Platform* offers an open and dynamic resource, with system of definitions, points of reference, descriptions and descriptors, studies and good practices which member states are invited to consult and use in support of their policy to promote equal access to quality education according to their needs, resources and educational culture. These documents, which differ in their status, will be put on line gradually.