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Division des Politiques linguistiques

FROM LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY TO PLURILINGUAL EDUCATION:

GUIDE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF LANGUAGE EDUCATION POLICIES IN EUROPE

Executive Version

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PRELIMINARY NOTE

The present document is the final version of the “Executive Version” of *Guide for the development of language education*. It replaces the pilot version of November 2002, and version 1 (revised) of April 2003.

The preparation and production of the previous *Main Version* and *Executive Version* were undertaken by Jean-Claude Beacco and Michael Byram, programme advisors to the Language Policy Division.

- The *Main Version* is intended for political decision-makers and educational authorities in the field of languages. It is the reference version which presents the arguments and exemplifies the principles and approaches for developing and implementing language education policies. The *Main Version* was originally written in French and then translated into English. A new revised version was published in January 2007. The document has been enriched and reorganised by means of a consultation process. It was rewritten by Jean-Claude Beacco.
- The *Executive Version* is for decision-makers involved in language education policy but who may have no specialist knowledge of technical matters in the field. It was initially written in English, based on the *Main Version*, and then translated into French. The revised version was prepared by Michael Byram.

The revised versions have taken into account the suggestions and remarks received during the consultation process, which took place between the Conference: *Languages, Diversity, Citizenship: policies for promoting plurilingualism in Europe* (Strasbourg, 13-15 November 2002) and the political Forum: *Global approaches to plurilingual education* (Strasbourg, 28-29 June 2004).

The *Guide* is accompanied by a series of Reference Studies (see Appendix 1) which provide in-depth analysis of key issues. References to these studies are made in the text of the *Main Version*. Both versions of the *Guide* as well as the Reference Studies are available on the website of the Language Policy Division (www.coe.int/lang).

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INTRODUCTION

1. Purpose

The fact that Europe as a whole and Member States of the Council of Europe individually are multilingual is a fundamental characteristic crucial to all social policy in Europe. The development and implementation of language education policy is therefore an important aspect of social policy in general, and in particular of policies which aim to develop a sense of inclusion and of shared democratic citizenship among Europeans. Language teaching and learning will thus not be treated from a pedagogical perspective but rather from that of language education policy.

Policy responses to multilingualism lie between two ends of a continuum of attitudes and approaches: on the one hand policy for the reduction of diversity, and on the other the promotion and maintenance of diversity. Both can be pursued in the name of improved potential for international mobility, of intercomprehension and of economic development.

The Council of Europe and its member States have taken the position that it is the promotion of linguistic diversity which should be pursued in language education policy. For in addition to mobility, intercomprehension and economic development, there is the further important aim of maintaining the European cultural heritage, of which linguistic diversity is a significant constituent. Thus it is a question not only of developing or protecting languages but equally of enabling European citizens to develop their linguistic abilities. This means, then, that language teaching must be seen as the development of a unique individual linguistic competence ('knowing' languages whichever they may be). This competence needs to be developed not just for utilitarian or professional reasons but also as education for respect for the languages of others and linguistic diversity.

Policies for language education should therefore promote the learning of several languages for all individuals in the course of their lives, so that Europeans actually become plurilingual and intercultural citizens, able to interact with other Europeans in all aspects of their lives.

The purpose of this *Guide* is therefore to consider

- the necessity of formulating and implementing language education policies which are coherent with the promotion of social inclusion and the development of democratic citizenship in Europe
- how policies of language education can be developed and maintained whose outcomes will be in accord with the pursuit of linguistic diversity in societies and plurilingualism for citizens of Europe, i.e. new policies of education for plurilingualism.

2. Audience

This 'Executive Version' of the *Guide* has been written for those who influence, formulate and implement language education policies at any level, e.g. individual institution, local government, national education system or international public or private institution. It is a document not for language specialists but for policy makers who may have no prior specialist knowledge of technical matters in language education.

The Executive Version of the *Guide* presents for this audience approaches to the development of policies rather than policies as such. Every geographical area, be it a town or a country or a transnational region, is multilingual if its inhabitants speak in private or in public more than one language or variety of a language, and every multilingual area therefore needs its own language education policy. The *Guide* presents approaches to the analysis of multilingualism and the development of policies appropriate to a given area whilst asserting that the aims of all language education policies should be to promote and maintain the concept of linguistic diversity in society and plurilingualism for the individual.

This Executive Version is derived from the ‘Main Version’ of the *Guide*, which has been written both for those deciding policy and for those responsible for its implementation; it provides the scientific and professional argument and evidence in much more detail. The *Guide* is also accompanied by individual ‘reference studies’ on particular themes for readers who need further detail on specific issues.

3. Definitions: multilingualism, plurilingualism and plurilingual education

The *Guide* deals with ‘linguistic diversity’ under two concepts: ‘multilingualism’ and ‘plurilingualism’:

- ‘multilingualism’ refers to the presence in a geographical area, large or small, of more than one ‘variety of language’ i.e. the mode of speaking of a social group whether it is formally recognised as a language or not; in such an area individuals may be monolingual speaking only their own variety.
- ‘plurilingualism’ refers to languages not as objects but from the point of view of those who speak them. It refers to the repertoire of varieties of language which many individuals use, and is therefore the opposite of monolingualism; it includes the language variety referred to as ‘mother tongue’ or ‘first language’ and any number of other languages or varieties. Thus in some multilingual areas some individuals may be monolingual and some may be plurilingual.

Plurilingualism is defined in the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* in the following way:

(Plurilingualism is) the ability to use languages for the purposes of communication and to take part in intercultural interaction, where a person, viewed as a social agent, has proficiency of varying degrees, in several languages, and experience of several cultures. This is not seen as the superposition or juxtaposition of distinct competences, but rather as the existence of a complex or even composite competence on which the user may draw.
(Council of Europe, 2001: 168)

To illustrate the meaning of plurilingualism, there follows a description of the linguistic repertoire which an adult European who has completed secondary education might be expected to have at a given point in time:

- a ‘national’ language spoken and written according to the standard norms of the country acquired in the education system
- a variety of the first language spoken according to the norms of the region and/or generation to which he/she belongs
- a regional or minority language he/she speaks and/or writes where appropriate as well as the national language
- one or more foreign languages understood, but not necessarily spoken, to a basic level as a consequence of education and/or experience of media and/or tourism
- another foreign language mastered to a higher level with ability to speak and write

At a later or earlier point in time the languages and varieties spoken and/or written might be different, as a consequence of further education or experience in the pursuit of leisure or work, since plurilingualism is dynamic and changes over a lifetime.

Since plurilingualism refers to the full linguistic repertoire of the individual, including their ‘mother tongue’ or ‘first language’, this *Guide* is concerned with the whole of language education, including education in the ‘mother tongue/first language’ when it is the official and/or national language of the area in question as well as education for the maintenance of (im)migrant communities. It is not concerned only with ‘foreign’, ‘second’ or ‘minority’ languages.

Plurilingualism develops throughout life: individuals may acquire new languages and lose old ones at different points in their lives for different purposes and needs. The *Guide* is therefore concerned with

policy not only in schools but also in further education, university education and lifelong learning. The purpose of this *Guide* is to suggest how language education policies can and should be developed which enable all Europeans to become plurilingual in ways which are appropriate to the area where they live and to develop a shared feeling of belonging and of democratic citizenship.

One of the purposes of the *Guide* will therefore be to examine language education policies and the ways in which they promote plurilingualism with respect to two fundamental concepts:

- **education for plurilingualism**
- **education for plurilingual awareness.**

This means that **plurilingual education** includes both education for plurilingualism and education for plurilingual awareness.

4. Principles: why plurilingualism?

Language education policies are not simply a matter of pedagogy but are of major political significance because language questions reflect tensions within national communities. Plurilingualism needs to be actively promoted to counter-balance the market forces which tend to lead to linguistic homogenisation, and which limit the potential of the individual. Plurilingualism provides the necessary conditions for mobility within Europe for leisure and work purposes, but is above all crucial for social and political inclusion of all Europeans whatever their linguistic competences, and for the creation of a sense of European identity. Language education policies in Europe should therefore enable individuals to be plurilingual either by maintaining and developing their existing plurilingualism or by helping them to develop from monolingualism (or, as is often the case for members of minorities, bilingualism) into plurilingualism.

The justifications and principles for this position will be explained in this *Guide* but summarised here:

- *language rights are part of human rights*: education policies should facilitate the use of all varieties of languages spoken by the citizens of Europe, and the recognition of other people's language rights by all; the resolution of social conflicts is in part dependent on recognition of language rights
- *the exercise of democracy and social inclusion depends in part on language education policy*: the capacity and opportunity to use one's full linguistic repertoire is crucial to participation in democratic and social processes and therefore to policies of social inclusion
- *economic or employment opportunities for the individual and the development of human capital in a society depend in part on language education policy*: individual mobility for economic purposes is facilitated by plurilingualism; the plurilingualism of a workforce is a crucial part of human capital in a multilingual marketplace, and a condition for the free circulation of goods, information and knowledge
- *individual plurilingualism is a significant influence on the evolution of a European identity*: since Europe is a multilingual area in its entirety and in any given part, the sense of belonging to Europe and the acceptance of a European identity is dependent on the ability to interact and communicate with other Europeans using the full range of one's linguistic repertoire
- *plurilingualism is plural*: because of the variation of multilingualism in different parts of Europe, the plurilingualism of individuals has to be appropriate to the area where they live; there is no preferred or recommended model of plurilingualism and the plurilingualism of the individual may change with mobility and throughout lifelong learning; plurilingualism is not only a matter of competence but also an attitude of interest in and openness towards languages and language varieties of all kinds
- *plurilingualism is possible*: the potential for all individuals to become actually plurilingual is proven; the technical capacity for developing plurilingualism is available in language teaching methodology, and already realised in practice even though it is still not widespread; the Council of Europe's *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*, its *European Language Portfolio* and other technical as well as legal instruments already provide the basis required; the

opportunity to develop one's plurilingualism should and can be made available to citizens of European education systems and in the context of lifelong learning

- *plurilingual education is practical*: education policies, curriculum patterns, teaching methods exist which permit the re-consideration of existing concepts of first, second, third etc language, and the development of a plurilingual competence which enables individuals to acquire whatever language they need or are interested in at a given point in time
- *a common discourse for the discussion and, where appropriate, co-ordination of language education policies is needed*: the purpose of this *Guide* is to provide the means of developing a common approach to language education policy development, but not a common policy since every situation needs its particular policy.

5. Content of the *Guide for the Development of Language Education Policies in Europe*

Within its overall purpose of promoting linguistic diversity in the form of plurilingual education, the *Guide* is divided into three parts:

- the first analyses some common weaknesses of current language education policies (Chapter 1) and explains the principles and recommendations of the Council of Europe, (Chapter 2);
- the second presents ways of identifying and analysing the factors in a given geographical area necessary as a preliminary to developing an appropriate policy for diversity, dealing with social factors (Chapter 3) and linguistic factors (Chapter 4);
- the third discusses approaches to creating appropriate conditions for the development of plurilingualism as a principle and purpose (Chapter 5), and then describes the range of technical forms of organisation of language education which those developing policies can draw upon in the implementation of their policies (Chapter 6).

PART I: LANGUAGE EDUCATION POLICIES

Part I of the *Guide* explains the principles and recommendations of the Council of Europe on which education policies promoting linguistic diversity and plurilingualism can be based. Its aim is to promote critical reflection on widely held views of language learning and certain current approaches to language education policy.

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

This chapter presents a critical analysis of the main trends in contemporary policies in order to provide a starting point for developing new policies for linguistic diversity and plurilingualism. It will do so by considering the role of languages and language education in nation-states. This includes languages considered to be ‘national languages’, those of minorities and those considered to be ‘foreign’ languages. The chapter will recommend a holistic and coherent approach to language education policy planning and implementation which involves all the languages and the varieties of languages in question.

1.1 Some Current Ideologies concerning Languages and Language Learning

There are a number of ideologies and perceptions of languages current in European societies, which inhibit the acceptance of plurilingualism and linguistic diversity. The first stage of innovative planning for language education is to confront these ideologies and take them into account as factors which need to be counter-balanced. The following are some of the most important:

1.1.1 Stereotypes of value

The ideology of ‘value’ refers to the beliefs and perceptions about the relative richness or poverty of languages. This may be expressed in terms of the ‘image’ of a language and its culture, the ‘sound’ of a language - ‘melodious’, ‘harsh’ etc - or its usefulness and capacity for expression - ‘not able to communicate scientific ideas’, ‘a logical language’, ‘not a proper language because it is not written’, ‘useful because of its high status’ etc. These ideas often have a detrimental impact on interest in learning certain languages, and policy development needs to anticipate and counter such unfounded perceptions.

For, scientifically speaking, all languages are of equal value, whether they are recognised as ‘languages’ or not, and it is for this reason that the term ‘language variety’ is used to designate any linguistic system, irrespective of whether it has a recognised status as a national language for example, or of whether it has been codified and standardised by the publication of dictionaries, grammars and other works of reference. All languages are able, for example, to handle scientific concepts by the same process of borrowing and creation of neologisms as is used in the languages currently dominating scientific discourse.

One underlying function of this ideology of value is to justify the suppression of language varieties which symbolise the independent existence and political legitimisation of minority groups. A language or variety can be more easily suppressed if it is said to be of little value. In some cases, the denigration of a language is powerful enough for even the speakers of that language to accept its low status and abandon its use; this can be the case for example with children of immigrant minorities.

Clearly, this ideology of value is incompatible with the pursuit of linguistic diversity and the development of the plurilingualism of the individual.

1.1.2 Language and nation

The evolution of the modern concept of the nation-state in its European form included a process of identifying one or more language varieties as national language(s). The ideology of the nation-state assumed that all the citizens of a state did or should speak the national languages. Where this was patently not the case, suppression or reduction of the role of other languages by deprecation of their value or by legislation took place. Obligatory schooling was a location for the imposition of the national language(s) in written and spoken form at the expense of the mother tongue. This process is still at work and can be a cause of conflict where the language rights of minorities are not respected in education systems.

This ideology need not be incompatible with policies for diversity and plurilingualism if language education is developed as a coherent whole, including education in the national language(s), and in other varieties of language within and beyond the borders of the state.

On the other hand, the hypothesis that there should be an identical process for Europe as a whole, where one language would symbolise and unite all its citizens, is clearly incompatible with a policy of diversity and plurilingualism which is rooted in the basic principles of democracy. It would undermine all the principles and justifications for diversity mentioned in the introduction. Furthermore, such a policy would repeat the iniquities of suppression of other language varieties evidenced in the history of nation-states.

1.1.3 Language and economy

Perceptions of the relationship between language learning and economic factors focus on two issues: the presumed advantage of using one language - a 'lingua franca' - for all economic affairs, and the argument that the language should be English because it is particularly suitable. The suitability of English is said to be justified by its 'simplicity' and therefore the ease with which it is learnt.

The issue of whether it is in fact advantageous in terms of cost and efficiency in any given multilingual area to pursue the teaching of a lingua franca for economic marketplace reasons is not in fact proven, and this will be dealt with in a later chapter.

The perception of English as a 'simple' language is of the same nature as other stereotypes of value mentioned earlier, and similarly hides ideologies of status. Other languages are perceived as of less value for economic purposes. The acceptance of such views is comparable to the acceptance of the supposed low status of some language varieties by speakers themselves. The effects are also comparable in that there is then a reduction of the status of other languages and the value of learning them as foreign or second languages.

In the case of English however, it is not the imposition by an authority within the multilingual geographical area of Europe, as in the case of the nation-state, but of an association with the values and life-style of a major power outside the territory. There is a possibility that the strength of impact of English will lead to the disappearance of a range of languages from the language learning curriculum, especially those which have little apparent marketplace value. However other values than those of the marketplace should be introduced into decisions on language education policy, as will be shown in a later chapter.

Policies which are based on these misperceptions of the relationship between language and economy are incompatible with policies for diversity and plurilingualism. However, they are powerful and widely held misperceptions and language education policies need to anticipate and inform those who hold them if the implementation of policies for plurilingualism is to be successful.

1.2 Languages in "Nation-States"

The role of language in the creation of a sense of homogeneity and belonging in nation-states is one of the ideologies addressed above. It is maintained in some cases by suppression or denigration of other languages and varieties in the context of assimilation (rather than integration) policies, and the mechanisms of this process include the following:

- the standardisation of the national language(s) by reference to traditions of 'the best language' and use of norms embodied in dictionaries and similar reference works; such norms change over time and are incorporated into the reference base, but it is the existence of norms which is crucial
- the definition of competence in the standardised language(s), instilled by the public education system as part of a process of socialisation into a national identity, but also used as a condition of entrance to nationality for 'outsiders'.

Where, as is usually the case, other languages than those defined as 'national' are present in a state, the idealised definition of a linguistically, culturally and often religiously homogenous state is confronted by the reality of the existence of non-majority communities. Such groups have various kinds of origins, often the consequences of political treaties and changes of frontier or the consequences of economic migration, for example, but their significance is the same. In many cases the recognition of their languages for the exercise of social functions, including particularly education, is one of the most powerful claims for independence they make. In some cases, states refuse recognition in order to maintain homogeneity but in others alternative models are found.

These models include federation and the use of different languages and varieties in different regions of a state. They also include the promotion of autonomy for a minority and the development of bilingualism through schooling and other measures. This ensures that all the citizens of a state speak the national language(s) but may also use other language(s) for some purposes, including public institutions. These models are developed for established minorities which usually have identification with a geographical territory.

The treatment of new immigrant communities is usually based on different models, some of which lead to the indirect suppression of the immigrant languages by the second and third generation, others of which provide rights and opportunities to use their languages similar to those of territorial minorities.

The existence of sign language communities is a further element in profiles of languages in nation-states, often recognised only in recent decades. Models adopted here may be based on those in operation for other minority communities, but other approaches are also present in many countries.

1.3 Language Education in "Nation-States"

Language policies in nation-states are therefore ultimately related to the maintenance of the language(s) of the nation-state, rather than to the promotion of policies which take account of the position of a state in the European context. They do not lead to a vision of language learning and a development of a linguistic repertoire as a contribution to the development of a European linguistic identity, but are developed under separate concepts and approaches as follows:

1.3.1 National/official language(s)

The symbolic and practical significance of national language(s) for nation-states means that education policies concerned with the acquisition of these languages are much debated. The presence of speakers of other languages within the borders of the state in turn leads to careful formulation of policy.

One effect of the introduction of obligatory education is the potential it affords states to ensure that children are socialised into the use of the national language(s) and into a sense of national identity. Failure to achieve competence is stigmatised and can cause problems for children whose language or language variety of primary socialisation in the family is not that of the school. This applies to children with regional or social class varieties of the national language(s) as much as to those of minority languages. In many cases they are obliged to attempt to adapt to the new language or variety without help, despite the fact that already in 1953, UNESCO recommended that children should be schooled in their mother tongue or first language, a recommendation which has been supported since in many places. Obligatory schooling in the national/official language(s) can lead to the abandonment of the language of primary socialisation and as a consequence of ethnic identity.

In other cases, education systems provide schooling for a time in the mother tongue but usually lead learners into the national language(s) after a period of transition. Such transition programmes do not therefore threaten the equation of national language with language of education and the creation of national identity.

Where federalist systems of education or autonomous education for minorities exist, the development of competence in more than one language or variety may develop, representing the beginning of

plurilingualism. These remain exceptional however and the majority of language education policies for national language(s) remain little concerned with plurilingualism, in part because they are not developed in coherence with policies for 'foreign' languages.

1.3.2 "Foreign" languages

The recognition of processes of globalisation and internationalisation is leading to increased emphasis in education systems and lifelong learning on the importance of foreign language learning but simultaneously to an increased focus on one language, namely English. This is evident within compulsory education in the form of increased time and curricular status afforded to languages in many countries.

On the other hand, foreign language teaching in obligatory education still largely follows long established policies:

- languages are treated as subjects like any other in terms of time allocation, organisation of curriculum time, assessment and certification, as if languages were objects of study like other subjects
- languages therefore compete with other subjects for curriculum time and learners' attention
- different languages are treated as separate subjects and also compete for curriculum time
- foreign languages are put in competition with regional and minority languages
- languages were until recently excluded from the primary curriculum on grounds of cost but also for fear that they would interfere with the acquisition of the national language(s).

In particular the treatment of foreign languages as options to be chosen by learners, though apparently responding to social demand, leads to concentration on two or three 'major' European languages, and thereby counteracts the development of a plurality of linguistic diversity and plurilingualism appropriate to different situations. It also leads to specialisation and competition among language teachers. This too is inimical to diversity and plurilingualism since these can be best pursued by a holistic policy and methods of implementation which break through teacher specialisation, as will be seen in a later chapter.

Furthermore, this treatment of foreign languages creates a separation from minority and/or national/official language teaching. The separation is evident in the lack of recognition within the foreign language curriculum of competence in languages not acquired in school but, for example, through primary socialisation in the case of immigrant families. It also leads to a confusion of categories when such children are offered their languages in the curriculum but as 'foreign' languages, because this does not correspond to the significance of those languages for them in their lives and identities.

In order to overcome these separations, all language varieties, whether 'national', 'indigenous', '(im)migrant' or 'non-European' need to be recognised as 'languages of Europe' and their presence in whatever form in compulsory schooling and beyond assured. Only in this way can an education for plurilingualism and plurilingual awareness, and the development of a sense of being a European citizen replace the identification of languages with national identities only.

1.4 Progress towards Language Education Policies for Europe

There are also other technical and structural obstacles to be overcome and it is the purpose of this *Guide* to suggest possible solutions.

1.4.1 Costs

One issue is that of cost. The costs of providing language education, both obligatory and in opportunities throughout life, are already substantial, and policies which propose greater diversity in language learning may be perceived as more costly still. Costs of teacher education are also cited as an obstacle to change and the same concern about increased costs would apply. In part, current costs are due to approaches which separate national languages and systems of options in foreign languages,

whereas a holistic approach would reduce some of these costs. Costs are usually measured in terms of investment and not in terms of the resulting benefits. If plurilingual education allows countries to reduce translation, improve intercomprehension and above all ensure civil peace due to respect for others and their languages, the investment can be considered as far modest in comparison with the results.

1.4.2 *Quality and effectiveness*

Concern about quality and standards in all education applies equally to language education. An increase in language education might be perceived as a threat to other subjects in a curriculum, or if more languages are to be taught in the same time, this too might be seen as a threat to standards. Again approaches which integrate languages into language education as a whole will meet these objections. Furthermore the European Language Portfolio is an instrument which can improve learning by helping learners to become autonomous and monitor their learning.

1.4.3 *Stereotypes and values*

Other obstacles to plurilingual education of the kind envisaged in this *Guide* arise from stereotypes of languages and their values described earlier. The social demand for plurilingualism is not widespread as a consequence of stereotypes and of misperceptions of economic justifications for language learning. Stereotypes depend on various factors such as historical relations between countries, religious convictions or educational traditions. Misperceptions about languages and the economy are a consequence of the impact of mass media. There is a need to create an understanding throughout society of the need for plurilingualism.

1.4.4 *Management and organisation*

There are also obstacles felt in the management and organisation of language education whether in the public or semi-public sectors. These include: recruitment and training in less widely taught languages; initial opportunities for use of these languages until they become more established; practicalities of timetables, certification and co-ordination across different sectors of education systems. Such technical difficulties can, however, be overcome if the aims of plurilingual education are clearly defined and maintained over time, and if time is allocated for the preparation of teachers and others responsible for education.

1.4.5 *From the technical to the political*

More serious is the lack of attention to languages education policies in the public and political arenas, where the issues are largely treated as technical when in fact they are political. Decisions need to be made at all levels of society and decision-making needs to include politicians, administrators, employers and employees and their associations, parents' and students' associations, and the general public. It is only in connection with the language rights of minorities that public debate is likely to be generated at the moment, but similar debate needs to be stimulated for all language learning. A process of education should be undertaken to create the appropriate conditions for language policy development and especially for its successful implementation.

It is clear, therefore, that the issues which arise in language teaching (e.g. of language varieties to be taught, curriculum organisation, co-ordination of learning throughout life, modes and means of teaching and learning) are not primarily technical but political. Language education policies are no less political than other social policies. Once this is recognised, the technical levels of policy development and implementation can be approached, and the later chapters of this *Guide* provide help in identifying problems and obstacles as well as possible solutions to them. In doing so it will make it less easy to hide any lack of political interest in developing appropriate language education policies behind supposed technical difficulties.

Those responsible for developing and implementing language education policy need to consider the importance of plurilingualism in the lives of citizens, in the processes of democracy, in the evolution of democratic citizenship. Policy development needs to be in accordance with the clearly defined and agreed principles of the Council of Europe which are presented in the next chapter.

Chapter 2: The Council of Europe and Language Education Policies: Plurilingualism as a Fundamental Principle

2.1 Introduction

The Council of Europe has developed an international consensus on principles to guide the development of language education policies.

Recognising the significance of language education in a multilingual Europe, the Council of Europe recommends the promotion of linguistic diversity in member States and plurilingualism for their citizens.

Formally this position is formulated in the following documents:

Conventions:

- European Cultural Convention (19 December 1954)
- European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, treaty open for signature on 5 November 1992 (www.coe.int/minlang)
- Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, treaty open for signature on 1 February 1995 (www.coe.int/minorities)

Policy recommendations:

- Resolution (69) 2 elaborated at the conclusion of the CDCC "Major Project" established following upon the Conference of European Ministers of Education (Hamburg 1961)
- Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe (<http://cm.coe.int/>)
 - Recommendation R (82)18 based on the results of the CDCC Project N° 4 ("Modern Languages 1971-1981")
 - Recommendation R (98) 6 based on the results of the CDCC Project "Language Learning for European Citizenship" (1989 – 1996)
- Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (<http://assembly.coe.int/>)
 - Recommendation 1383 (1998) devoted to "Linguistic Diversity"
 - Recommendation 1539 (2001) on the European Year of Languages 2001

These instruments and recommendations provide the legal and political basis for language education policies at all levels which not only facilitates the acquisition of a repertoire of language varieties - linguistic diversity for the plurilingual individual - but also ensure that attention is paid to diversification of the options for language learning. The latter refers to the need to encourage and enable the learning of a wide range of languages, not only those which have been dominant in language teaching traditions, and not only the contemporary demand for English.

The documents in question focus primarily on languages which are defined as 'minority languages' or 'modern languages' ('langues vivantes' in French). These terms usually exclude the languages considered to be the national and/or official languages of a state, and education policies dealing with the teaching of these. There is however a need to include such languages in language education policies because they are part of the linguistic repertoire of individuals. In the third part of this *Guide*, options for the implementation of policies will include the teaching and learning of national/official languages, which for many, but not all individuals, are their mother tongue/first language.

These documents are the realisation of a political will in member States to manage and guide the development of language education policies rather than leave them to evolve according to tradition or market forces. They are thus the rationale for language education policies in pursuit of linguistic diversity within member states and their institutions, and at international levels. These policies can contribute to other social policies which pursue social inclusion, geographical mobility, the free circulation of people, goods and ideas, and the maintenance of human and democratic rights.

2.2 Instruments for diversification

The conventions and recommendations listed above are complemented by a series of tools for planning and implementing language education policy developed since the early 1970s. These include:

- the series of *Levels* (Threshold and higher/lower specifications and Reference Level Descriptions) which provide descriptions of learning objectives for individual languages¹,
- the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: learning, teaching, assessment*¹ which establishes a common approach to describing levels of attainment in language learning and a common terminology for describing the processes and means of language teaching and learning,
- the *European Language Portfolio*² as a personal document in which learners can record their linguistic and intercultural experiences and achievements and in which they can develop autonomy through planning and monitoring their language learning.

These instruments have been widely adopted in European countries and have created a common educational culture of understanding of language learning and teaching among 'foreign' language professionals. It is in the course of this work that the concept of plurilingualism has evolved and it is therefore inherent and implicit in the instruments and the common culture. This means that language education policies which promote plurilingualism will be supported in 'foreign' language teaching practice.

There is, however, much work to do to facilitate the development and implementation of holistic policies which bring together teachers and learners of all languages and varieties including mother tongue, 'national', 'minority' and '(im)migrant') languages.

2.3 Plurilingualism and Democratic Citizenship in Europe

The position of the Council of Europe challenges the ideologies outlined in Chapter 1 and the outcomes of homogenisation and reduction of diversity which they would engender. The pursuit of diversity and plurilingualism however, requires a political will and action to counteract economic factors and popular misperceptions, which will otherwise lead to reduction of the number of languages known and linguistic homogenisation in general, with the plurilingualism of individuals only existing among social elites.

Policies are necessary not only for plurilingualism for its own sake but also because it is a condition and a constituent of democratic citizenship in Europe. This has been asserted by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe in 1999 (Document: CM (99) 76) and by the Heads of State and Governments in their declaration of 1997.

The significance of plurilingual competence in this context is twofold. First, it allows participation in democratic processes not only in one's own country and language area but in concert with other Europeans in other languages and language areas.

Secondly, the acquisition of plurilingual competence leads to a greater understanding of the plurilingual repertoires of other citizens and a respect for language rights, not least those of minorities and for national languages less widely spoken and taught. Understanding and respect should moreover extend beyond languages traditionally considered 'European', to include all languages spoken in Europe today and those of other parts of the world. The distinction between 'European' and 'non-European' is thus eliminated and the significance of plurilingual competence in education for citizenship enhanced.

The teaching of languages has aims which are convergent with those of education for democratic citizenship: both are concerned with intercultural interaction and communication, the promotion of mutual understanding and the development of individual responsibility.

¹ See the Language Policy website: www.coe.int/lang

² See www.coe.int/portfolio

PART II: DATA AND METHODS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF LANGUAGE EDUCATION POLICIES

This second part of the *Guide* provides an overview of the questions which need to be asked in policy development and the ways in which information to answer such questions can be found. For convenience the questions are divided into two categories: social and linguistic factors. Chapter 3 deals with general social issues and linguistic factors are introduced in Chapter 4.

Chapter 3: The Development of Language Education Policies: Social Factors in Decision-Making

3.1 Introduction

The development of language education policies for linguistic diversity needs to be preceded by analysis of existing conditions in society and the provision of education and opportunities for language learning. Acceptance and successful implementation of policies depend on the following factors:

- public perceptions of particular languages and language learning which influence choices and take-up of provision;
- the interplay between public perceptions of which languages are needed and systematic analyses of the needs of a society with respect to anticipated economic, diplomatic and commercial developments, and the integration of a state into the European and global scene;
- demographic change, as a consequence of migration and reduced reproduction, requiring policies which integrate language learning into learning throughout life and into the structures of a 'learning society' as a response to global economic and cultural change;
- the systematic analysis of costs and benefits of policies which are responsive to public perceptions and societal change.

Since these factors can vary within a country, policies need to be designed which take into account regional and local specificity within a framework of policy development for a whole country.

Options for implementation of policies are dependent in part on how existing structures can be modified, and the development of policy should take place in the context of the analysis of existing and alternative curricular models in both compulsory and post-compulsory education. The traditional separation of the teaching of one language from the teaching of another - including the teaching of official/national languages, minority languages and foreign languages - is a fundamental barrier to the development of policies to encourage linguistic diversity and plurilingualism. Policies should take into account alternative models integrating all language education, and the importance of vertical cohesion in language learning in different educational institutions, both compulsory and post-compulsory.

The special position of English as a global lingua franca necessitates a different approach to the teaching of English. As a lingua franca it does not have as its main aim to enrich learners culturally but is above all considered as a skill whose perceived market value leads to social demand for it to be taught. This has to be done, however, without impairing the teaching of other languages.

Similarly, convention and tradition are frequently the reason for the dominance of a small number of languages in the foreign language curriculum in many countries. Certain widely taught languages could/should in some circumstances be replaced by less widely taught national languages not on account of their value in the employment market, but because of the role they play in the development of identities and linguistic tolerance.

Policies which advocate linguistic diversity and plurilingualism must take particular note of the availability of teachers, since the expansion of languages which might not have been widely taught or the introduction of new ones in a particular country pre-suppose the acquisition by teachers of new languages in relatively short periods. Language education policies pre-suppose teacher education policies and the two need to be integrated and related to alternatives to teacher-dependent learning, including the use of new technologies.

This chapter provides guidance in the analysis of societal factors which need to be taken into account in the planning of policy. It does so in the form of a number of questions, and suggestions for ways of answering them. They are divided into questions dealing with macro-factors in a society and those dealing with the micro-factors within its education system.

3.2 Analysis of societal change and its impact on policy development

Before dealing with the detail of education policy, there needs to be a consideration of the ways in which language education is perceived in society, can benefit society and should respond to demographic change in society.

The following questions need to be asked:

3.2.1 *How does the population likely to be affected by new policies perceive languages, and what impact might this have on the reception and implementation of policies?*

As was pointed out earlier, people in a specific country, region or locality often have positive or negative attitudes towards and perceptions of specific languages. Essentially these are stereotypes attached to languages and similar to over-generalisations about people; they often lead to prejudice and rejection.

Such perceptions and prejudices influence choices made by learners or, in the case of children, by their parents. If new policies include the offer of languages not previously widely learnt in a society, then some education of learners and parents needs to be included in the plans for implementation, which will otherwise be resisted.

The analysis of perceptions and prejudices can be carried out scientifically, drawing on a sample of the population and using the usual techniques of survey research. National cultural institutions commission such surveys from time to time, often as part of wider market research surveys of images of a country abroad, since the perceptions and prejudices concerning a language are influenced by (lack of) knowledge of the country/ies where the language is spoken.

This factor is absolutely crucial to the success of language policies. Any policy for language, especially in the system of education, has to take account of the attitude of those likely to be affected. In the long run, no policy will succeed which does not do one of three things: conform to the expressed attitudes of those involved; persuade those who express negative attitudes about the rightness of the policy; or seek to remove the causes of disagreement.

3.2.2 *What perceptions does the population of potential learners have of language learning?*

Potential learners or their parents often have out-dated beliefs about how languages are learnt and about the methods used in language teaching, even though methods of language learning have changed radically in the last two or three decades, as have the purposes. Whereas language learning might have been experienced by older generations as an academic exercise involving the study of grammar and exercises in translation, with little or no attention to speaking, contemporary methods emphasise the spoken as well as the written word. Similarly, whereas the aims of language learning in the past were fulfilled only at the end of a long period of study when learners had acquired enough knowledge to study the texts of high culture, such as literature and philosophy, contemporary aims are to enable learners to use what they learn immediately for simple exchanges in everyday situations.

The model which learners of the past were attempting to imitate was the educated monolingual native speaker, and any ability which fell short of this was treated negatively as a failure and a weakness. It is now recognised that a more appropriate model is the person who can speak and/or write to differing degrees of competence a number of languages - a plurilingual competence - and that peoples' repertoire of languages will change in emphasis as they meet varying linguistic needs throughout life, and thus need to add to their repertoire through options of lifelong learning.

This concept of a linguistic repertoire has been evident throughout history as Europeans have always had multiple contacts with speakers of other languages within Europe and beyond. Members of ethnic or religious minorities have such repertoires but not as a consequence of formal education and therefore in the past their repertoires were not recognised as a valuable asset. As demonstrated in Chapter 1, the imposition of national/official language(s) in multilingual regions has often led to the

wastage of valuable language potential as the plurilingualism of individuals has been denigrated implicitly or explicitly.

Thus the perceptions of language learning usually lag behind contemporary developments, and learners and, in the case of children, their parents, assume mistakenly that language learning still involves a long period of intellectual study before there is any reward for the investment of time. These perceptions need to be taken into account and modified by education of the public if the implementation of language education policies for linguistic diversity is to be successful. Otherwise learners and parents will imagine that they need to invest many years of study before there is any pay-off in the use of languages, whereas in fact pay-off can be immediate and languages used after brief periods of learning.

The *European Language Portfolio* is a personal document to encourage the development and recognition of the linguistic repertoires of plurilingual individuals, whatever the sources of their abilities and whatever levels of competence they may have reached in different skills in different languages.

The *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* is an instrument to promote plurilingualism and the development of the linguistic repertoire of individuals. It includes a six level scale of proficiency and provides common reference points, and a common language for the elaboration of syllabuses, curriculum guidelines, textbooks, teacher training programmes, and examinations, and for relating examinations to one another.

3.2.3 *What does the population likely to be affected by new policies consider to be its needs, and to what extent do these coincide with 'objective' analyses of future needs in a society?*

A distinction should be made between the 'wants' of a population and 'needs' as identified by scientific analysis. For example, a population may consider on non-scientific grounds that the most 'useful' languages are those of international distribution, especially English, whereas an analysis of what is needed for clearly defined purposes, such as economic development in a specific region, will show that other languages are more significant for the population in question.

The population which should be considered is not necessarily that of a whole country. Different regions of a country whose borders touch several different countries - as is typically the case in continental Europe - may have different needs in their interactions with their immediate neighbouring countries. Similarly, the linguistic composition of one part of a country, perhaps as a consequence of migration or the existence of long established minorities, may require a different policy of linguistic diversity to that which might be developed for a country as a whole.

At another level of analysis, the anticipated economic, diplomatic and commercial interactions of a country might lead to a projection of anticipated linguistic needs which are different from the current perceptions of the population as a whole. This may in particular lead to the inclusion of what are perceived as 'difficult', 'exotic' or 'useless' languages, and as suggested above for Question 1, the education of the population is a necessary pre-requisite for the implementation of policies.

Thirdly, a policy of encouraging linguistic diversity and plurilingualism in Europe may require the inclusion of languages which are again perceived as unnecessary by the population in general, even though they may be part of a process of making Europeans more well-known to each other. Policy development should anticipate where possible the evolution of the ways in which European countries will cooperate, and again economic, diplomatic and commercial needs in the present and future may diverge from perceptions of needs in the population.

Fourthly, the analysis of needs should also include languages not (widely) spoken in Europe either indigenously or through recent migration. Although migration has brought many languages to Europe which, if included in policies of education for linguistic diversity, will provide links to many countries outside Europe, there are nonetheless significant areas of the world which would not be represented if only languages spoken in Europe were to be included in policy development. For example, there has

not been enough immigration from Japan to make Japanese a ‘European’ language in the way that Arabic or Chinese are, but Japanese is an important language, both economically and culturally. The significance of such languages is on the one hand economic, diplomatic and cultural, but also fundamental in ensuring that Europe does not become linguistically and mentally isolated from countries which do not have an existing link through historic or recent cooperation, migration or trade.

The analysis of needs is a well established methodology in the language teaching profession, conducted in a variety of ways according to the scale of the population and sample to be taken. Those involved in policy planning can call upon expertise without difficulty.

3.2.4 What is the significance of demographic change for policy development?

The changing nature of the population of a country or region needs to be taken into account in developing education policies, particularly those which create opportunities for learning throughout life. European countries have, to different degrees, ageing populations and populations whose composition is changing as a result of migration.

Secondly, the effect of economic globalisation and the changes in economic policies and trends means that people will probably need to be more flexible in their employment, both in terms of the nature of the employment and in terms of their willingness to move place of residence to seek employment. This has been encapsulated in the call for a ‘Learning Society’ at national and international levels, and in the European context, language learning throughout life is part of the conceptualisation of a Learning Society.

In such a context, language learning does not necessarily mean the acquisition of one or two languages to high degrees of skill in all aspects of language learning. It may also commonly include the acquisition of different languages for different purposes and therefore with different emphases on what should be learnt at different stages in life, as discussed above under Question 2. The *Common European Framework of Reference* provides guidance on these issues.

Furthermore, the concept of lifelong learning means that language education policies need to be inclusive: to predict demographic trends so that language learning opportunities can be offered throughout a person’s life; to anticipate economic mobility so that both temporary and permanent migrants can acquire (partial) competences in a number of languages as needs arise, without having to invest many years of learning before languages can be used for particular purposes.

The analysis of demographic trends is available in contemporary sociology, and policy planners can draw upon existing analyses or commission new ones.

3.2.5 What are the economic costs and benefits of particular language education policies?

In an economic perspective, the market value of language learning can be demonstrated by showing that individuals have higher incomes if they and society have invested in language learning through the education system. In so far as the benefits to individuals can be considered, when aggregated, to be benefits to society, the market value of language learning can justify investment in language learning from the perspective of society as a whole. Language learning can thus be seen as part of a policy of investment in human capital which is widely held to be a valid approach to the economics of education in general.

Language learning can also have non-market value for individuals, allowing them, for example, greater social contact with speakers of other languages, increased access to cultural artefacts in other languages, a feeling of personal achievement, and so on. Some people also value the presence of diverse languages in their environment just as they value diversity in their natural environment; this too is a non-market value. The cost to a society of facilitating language learning for non-market purposes can also be considered an investment in the provision of a environment desired by some or all members of the society.

At the level of the state, the main component of expenditure on investment in human capital with market value and/or in a linguistically diverse environment with non-market value is the provision of language teaching. The benefit to individuals and to society in market value can be calculated in terms of the rate of return on investment over the economically active life of individuals.

In principle, an economic analysis is possible and can compare the efficiency of different language education policies in terms of cost and benefit, if a state is willing to carry out the necessary research. However, for both cost and benefit to be calculated, data are required which are not routinely collected, and empirical surveys are needed before calculations can be completed.

It is important, however, to note that economic analyses are subordinate to political analyses and decision-making. For example, a society may decide that a policy of maintaining the presence of minority languages in an education system as languages offered to learners from the majority is sufficiently important on legal and political grounds to ignore a cost-benefit approach focused on market value. Similarly, a society may accept that a linguistically rich environment is sufficiently important to the population as a non-market value to outweigh the purely market-value calculation.

3.2.6 *What approaches to the teaching of English should be considered?*

The position of English is unique. Although there are other languages which act now or have acted in the past as a common language for native and non-native speakers in particular regions of the world, English (or various Englishes - see below) plays a role not hitherto seen. It is clearly as a consequence of past British colonialism and contemporary American influences that English has been introduced into some other countries as a national or official language and into every country as a symbol of modern life, often associated with wealth and development. This symbolic function is unique because it is only through contemporary technology that English can be heard and read everywhere. English is therefore unlike other languages in its status: it is not a 'foreign' or 'second' language in its symbolic function.

It is unclear how long this situation will last precisely because it is unique and there are no historical parallels to help prediction. However, the situation is unlikely to change substantially in the next few decades, and this means that language education policies need to take account of the following special characteristics of English when it is used as a *lingua franca*:

- it is spoken more among non-native speakers than among native speakers or between native and non-native speakers,
- it is not directly associated with a country where it is spoken by native speakers, and there is no need, in language teaching, to teach about a country where the language is spoken by native speakers.
- norms of correct pronunciation, grammar and the meaning of words vary from one part of the world to another and new varieties of English (new 'Englishes') are appearing, some of which are only comprehensible with difficulty to speakers of other varieties.

This means that English can be taught as a *lingua franca* and not have the function of introducing learners to other cultures since it is possible to use it to refer to aspects of one's own culture when communicating with other non-native speakers.

The attraction of English for language learners, as observed above, is that it seems to guarantee a market-value return on investment in learning. As long as this expectation is realised, learners are very unlikely to accept substitution of any other language for English in the curriculum of compulsory education. Similarly, there will be a high demand for English in institutions for lifelong learning. On the other hand, specific circumstances, for example in border regions or in a society with linguistic minorities, encourage the view that plurilingualism is advantageous, and combinations of languages are acceptable in the curriculum.

Different scenarios can be imagined to meet these demands but also ensure diversity of language learning and teaching. The following suggestions are not exhaustive and other appropriate solutions may be developed for specific contexts:

- English may be introduced as a basic skill from the beginning of schooling, provided there is a guarantee that other languages are learnt later.
- English can be used as a medium of instruction for teaching some subjects and therefore again leave room and time for other languages. However other languages ought to be used so that English does not become the only language of knowledge.
- English may be introduced for a brief period only, (at the beginning of schooling, for example up to Level A2 or B1), leaving learners to develop their competence in time outside compulsory education.
- English can be taught as *lingua franca*, without reference to English-speaking countries, although this may run counter to social demand and the perception that language and ‘culture’ go together.

Whichever solution is adopted, it is important to ensure that learning English does not lead learners to think that it is unnecessary to learn other languages. On the contrary, the teaching of English should include a significant emphasis on education for plurilingualism. This strategic responsibility is that of the teachers of English and, more generally, of all those in a dominant position. For further discussion, see Part 3.

3.3 Analysis of existing education systems and curricular options for language teaching

Except on rare occasions when an education system is re-constructed, language education policies will have to develop existing structures as part of the process of policy implementation. The analysis of the potential of such structures is a pre-requisite to developing new policies.

This analysis can be guided by the following questions:

3.3.1 What are the functions of education systems and in particular of language education in a society and how might these be modified in the pursuit of policies for linguistic diversity and plurilingualism?

In ‘preparing young people for adult life’, as is commonly stated, compulsory education involves some or all of the following:

- the creation of a sense of national identity;
- the offer of equality of opportunity and the potential for social mobility; the reduction of the reproduction of a society with the same structures and the same stratification from one generation to the next;
- in recent times, the creation of a sense of belonging to Europe as democratic citizens, and an awareness of global responsibilities through ‘global education’ or ‘education for world citizenship’.

The development of concepts of lifelong learning and a learning society means that the burden of these functions is not devolved only to compulsory education. Opportunities for mobility for example can be offered throughout life, and the creation of a sense of belonging to a European and world community can be pursued through adult experience.

Language education in the official/national language(s) of a country contributes to the creation of a sense of national identity. The acquisition of further (European) languages inside or outside formal education will hopefully contribute to a European linguistic identity and a sense of belonging to Europe.

Language education in minority languages has a similar function to that of education in the official/national language(s) in that it is crucial to identity-formation in young people and symbolic for adults of the maintenance of independence for their group.

Competences, whether complete or partial, in more languages facilitate geographic mobility and seeking employment opportunity, and are in addition the cultural capital recognised and required for social mobility. It is for these reasons, for example, that parents seek opportunities for their children to learn new languages at an early age, supported by the belief, which is not necessarily well-founded, that early language learning is the most effective, and will open up economic opportunities at a later date.

The introduction of language policies for linguistic diversity and the enrichment of the individual as a citizen of Europe, needs to take the existing functions of language education into account. Opportunities for acquiring additional languages need to be provided as a development of acquired linguistic competence and an extension of individuals' existing repertoires, and not seen as a separate activity from official/national or minority language learning, or as a separate subject in a curriculum.

Similarly, the acquisition of one new language needs to be seen as the basis for acquisition of others in parallel or at a later date, in the same educational institution or in a different one. For example, the teaching of languages in tertiary and adult education throughout life needs to be founded on the fact that learners have acquired languages as children inside or outside schools.

3.3.2 How can curricula be designed to take account of language learning opportunities offered at different stages of lifelong learning and in different institutions?

Curricula have traditionally been designed as aggregations of separate subjects and the task of integrating knowledge and skills from different subjects has been left to the individual learner to accomplish in a largely unconscious way. Furthermore, the vertical links between curricula at different stages of an individual's education have often been tenuous and sometimes non-existent. The introduction of attempts at integration of different subjects began in primary education in the latter half of the twentieth century and has progressed slowly into other sectors of education.

With respect to language teaching, the tradition of separation has scarcely been changed. The main exception is the integration of language teaching and teaching of other subjects such as geography or a science, the new language being used as a medium of instruction, in the expectation that both the medium and the content will be acquired simultaneously. The most highly developed version of this is the immersion programme where the whole curriculum is taught through a language new to the learners. This exception does not, however, allow for the acquisition of a number of languages but rather only of one, albeit in considerable depth.

The effect of the tradition of separation has been to create rivalry between languages, competition for curriculum time, and the implication that learners have to make choices which are mutually exclusive. This rivalry exists not least between 'official/national' languages and 'other' languages, but also among the other languages. The latter is symbolised in compulsory education by designation of 'first', 'second' etc foreign languages. It is also influenced by learners' perceptions of the economic and other usefulness of different languages, their perceptions of 'difficult' languages etc as explained above. Perceptions thus have an effect on curriculum design through choices made.

Alternative models of curricula can be developed once it is recognised that the learning of a new language is founded on the language(s) already learnt, that skills and knowledge of language learning are transferred from one to the other and that this transferral can be actively used in pedagogy, rather than ignored as traditional separation requires.

Such alternative models in compulsory education include staged introduction of languages from an early age, the use of languages as media of instruction, methodologies which help learners to use acquired skills and knowledge from one language in learning another, design of courses to develop

competences in some language skills but not others (partial competences), design of curricula to ensure vertical coherence across different education sectors, modular courses of relatively short duration with restricted objectives, intensive courses coupled with periods of residence in another country, etc.

Furthermore, comprehensive language education policies will take into consideration the opportunities for learning a person has throughout life. Post-compulsory, tertiary education institutions may require all learners to acquire language skills, and certification of such skills already exists in many countries. Commercial and industrial enterprises offer learning opportunities, for example in corporate universities. Institutions of many kinds offer opportunities through adult education which individuals take up as their needs and wants develop for economic, leisure and personal reasons. Such opportunities include specific training provided by employers to ensure their employees can carry out tasks in other countries, but also courses for general enrichment whose aims may coincide with policies of linguistic diversity. Such provision, however, often ignores previous learning, and language education policies need to encourage all providers to recognise and build upon previous learning, transferable knowledge and skills and the attitudes which accompany them.

A comprehensive language education policy needs to take all sources of provision for language learning into account, and ensure that those providers develop their own policies and practices in full awareness of others.

3.3.3 What effect does the availability of teachers have on policy development?

The traditional separation of languages noted above has often led to the specialisation of teachers in one language or, where they specialise in more than one, they continue to teach each as a separate entity. The potential for teachers to provide an integrated approach to language learning - enabling learners to transfer skills and knowledge or working within alternative curricular models - is enhanced when teachers have themselves a range of language learning experience. The potential development needs to be supported by appropriate teacher education policies and practices.

Where language education policies for linguistic diversity require new languages to be offered, the availability of appropriate teachers is crucial. In accordance with the principle of transferable skills and knowledge, those who are already teachers of languages are in the best position to add further languages to their repertoire, but policies need to take proper account of time lapses needed for this.

Lack of available teachers can be partially remedied by other models of teaching and learning than the traditional classroom where one teacher is responsible for the learning of a group of students over a specified period of time. Alternatives can be offered with the help of new technologies, intensive courses, courses with residence in another country where teachers may be more readily available, etc.

It is clear however, that language education policies pre-suppose teacher education policies and the two need to be integrated in overall planning.

Chapter 4: The Development of Language Education Policies: Linguistic Factors in Decision-Making

4.1 Introduction

Language education policies for linguistic diversity need to take into account, first, existing language capacities in learners, and second, the presence of languages and language varieties in a country, region or locality where a language education policy is to be developed and implemented.

The analysis can take place at a macro-level with the description of languages used for a variety of purposes in any given geographical area. It can also involve analysis of the repertoires of languages and language varieties individuals have and the uses they make of their languages. This will, for example, reveal that individuals have some mastery of more languages than might be expected, but that they do not have equal capacities in all their languages, nor equal capacities in the different language skills. Furthermore, they may not value all their languages equally due to their sharing public perceptions or prejudices about languages, as discussed in the previous chapter.

The techniques for analysis of language use are wide-ranging, from large scale surveys to micro-analysis of individuals and their language use. Such analyses usually make use of specialist terminology, some of which is also used in ordinary conversation, but not necessarily with the same meaning or precision, and a linguistic definition of terms used to designate languages is provided at the end of this chapter.

4.2 Answering questions about languages and language education policies

Questions which may arise in the preparation of policies include the following:

4.2.1 *What information is already available on language use in a given geographical area (country, region or locality)?*

The most common means of collecting data on language use is an official census. Data from this kind of survey is self-reported and therefore must be considered with caution. Questions have to be simple and are therefore often reductive. For example, to ask if the respondent 'speaks' a language does not necessarily reveal whether he/she reads the language. Similarly, to ask how well someone speaks, or writes or understands a language, leaves the respondent to make estimates which are unscientific and probably arbitrary.

4.2.2 *What methods are available for analysing language use where no information exists already?*

Methods of collecting data on language use can be categorised as quantitative and qualitative. The former are usually in the form of survey by questionnaire, although it is also possible to quantify use of language in terms of numbers of publications in a language, hours of media-time devoted to language, amount of business conducted in a language in a private company or a public institution, number of religious services conducted in a language etc.

The conduct of questionnaire surveys is a major undertaking since the complexity of language use overlooked by most census surveys needs to be taken into consideration, including for example:

- the use of different languages for different social functions by the same person;
- the choice of language according to interlocutor and/or topic;
- the degree of literacy in a person's languages, and ability to write or read may differ substantially in the same language according to the topic;
- receptive competence (ability to hear, or read, and understand) and productive competence (ability to speak or write) and the estimate or measurement of the level of competence in each language of a person's repertoire of languages;
- the choice of schooling according to language;

- employment options dependent on language capacities;
- the problem of distinguishing language and dialect: if asked to describe competence in their 'languages', respondents may not reveal their competences in what they consider to be dialects.

Despite the introduction of such distinctions into a questionnaire, there is still a problem of self-report: respondents may be unaware of their language use and unable to report accurately; respondents may also provide socially desirable answers, unwilling, for example, to admit that they speak a disparaged dialect; they may also provide politically desirable answers, knowing that if they say they speak a language, they will be supporting the cause of that language by augmenting the official statistics.

In-depth qualitative studies can overcome some of these problems. Skilled observers can chart the use of languages in detail by participating in the daily life of a social group. The ethnographic analysis of language use which this produces provides the most accurate and sensitive account of language use. Such observation requires a substantial time commitment and can usually only report on a relatively small social group. This is worthwhile particularly when the group - an ethnic minority for example - is little known and might be unwilling to complete survey questionnaires.

Since, as pointed out in earlier chapters, language education policies need to be sensitive to regional variation within a country, the combination of national census with regional questionnaire survey and ethnographic study is the best means of gaining an accurate picture of language use, and consequently the potential to tailor policies to the needs of different areas and social groups.

4.2.3 *What methods are available for identifying language needs in a given situation?*

Where there is a need for developing policy in a specific situation such as the schools of a particular town or village, or for the employees of a particular public or private institution, there are approaches to 'needs analysis' and to 'auditing' which allow policy development to be precisely targeted.

An audit of the existing languages potential in a given situation is an important first step since people often have undisclosed language skills. The investigation of present and projected needs can be integrated with this audit using a number of modes of collecting data. It is important to distinguish between *objective* information (relating to learners' biographical data, learning purposes and language proficiency) and *subjective* information (relating to learners' attitudes, preferences, wants and expectations).

A variety of procedures can be used to collect information:

- questionnaires administered to learners themselves and/or to other people who are familiar with the context;
- structured interviews (often used in conjunction with questionnaires) involving a series of set questions relating to needs;
- group discussions with learners;
- textual analysis of documents in the public or private domains of institutions;
- recording and linguistic analysis of conversation, for example in meetings, to determine the nature and level of needs and current abilities to meet them;
- language tests and assessments of individuals and planning of programmes of learning to help them meet requirements;
- case studies of individual learners to identify their actual and potential uses of different languages in their professional or private lives, by use of interview or journal of language use, or tracking individuals with the help of audio-recordings.

The analysis of the information gathered should be the basis of a policy and programme of action which takes into consideration the existing capacities of individuals, the regional or local configuration of languages and language varieties, the projected interaction with speakers of other languages, all of which may vary from region to region within a country.

4.2.4 *What information exists about language education policies in other countries?*

Language education policies are being increasingly analysed in academic journals, developing a well established tradition of the study of language policies and language planning in general. International organisations produce reports on education which include information on language education: the European Union collects data on language education in Member States published under EURYDICE; the OECD includes information on language education in its country reports; the International Bureau of Education focuses *inter alia* on education for citizenship; the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement has produced some international surveys.

International information, however, has to be treated with care as parameters differ considerably from country to country; the use of such comparisons in public policy-making often leads to misunderstanding by public media and the public at large (see below).

4.2.5 *How can comparisons with language learning in other countries be taken into consideration?*

The media often seize upon international comparisons in education and influence popular opinion about education policy. Furthermore, there are widely held perceptions of the supposed capacity of some nations for language learning. However, scientific international comparisons have in fact been few and evaluations of national capacity are more like stereotypes than valid scientific generalisations.

Studies which have carried out direct comparisons among countries have been very few. The collection of information about language teaching in European countries is carried out by EURYDICE but this does not include evaluation of achievement by comparative study.

The investigations which have been carried out show that some factors in the level of achievement of a national group in foreign language learning are generalisable and within the control of education systems: the time factor - the amount of curriculum time allocated to learning a foreign language - is a significant predictor of achievement in all the language skills. Some factors are beyond the direct control of education policies: the level of exposure to a specific foreign language outside the education system, in the media, through international travel or personal contacts, is a significant factor in achievement. Other significant factors may be influenced by education systems and policies: the level of motivation among learners, the use of the language as a medium of instruction, the linguistic proficiency of teachers.

4.3 **Some terminological definitions**

The designation of languages is a political act: to speak of *a* language or *a dialect*, of a *national or majority language* or of *mother tongue* or *first language* is to take up a specific position. We shall therefore provide here definitions used in sociolinguistics to designate language varieties as explicitly as possible. The terms are widely used although not all have acquired a fixed and determined meaning since linguistic research advances in part by refining conceptualisations of language and language use, visible to all but not totally understood. These definitions which will probably not prevent the use of ordinary terms, will provide the opportunity to identify questions which each type of language presents in language education policy development

- *bilingual and plurilingual*

An individual is designated as 'bilingual' if they have a degree of competence in two languages or varieties of language. It is thus sometimes used to designate a person who speaks two varieties of 'the same' language (e.g. Low German and High German or Swiss German and High German). The designation of a variety of a language as the national language of a polity gives that variety a special status. This means that someone who speaks High German and Low German may not be considered 'as bilingual' as someone who speaks (High) German and Dutch, even though there are no objective differences between the bilingual competences of the two people. 'Plurilingual' as used in this text (traditionally referred to as "multilingual") designates those individuals who speak more than two languages or language varieties, but in most respects there is no essential difference between being bilingual and plurilingual.

The innovative use of the term ‘plurilingual’ as defined in the introduction to this *Guide* underlines the fact that learning languages throughout life for different purposes and with different degrees of proficiency is an educational process involving conscious holistic planning and specific monitoring, (which can be facilitated by the use of the *European Language Portfolio*).

The level of competence required if someone is to be designated bilingual cannot be defined in absolute terms as the designations are used according to the expectations of the society in question. A level of competence in two or more languages admired and described as bilingualism in one context, where it is rare, may be considered inadequate in another context because of the banality of bilingualism in the population.

There is no scientific basis either for defining bilingualism in terms of range of skills (some bilinguals are literate in one language not the other, for example, or more literate in one language than the other). People who are ‘balanced bilinguals’ with equal capacities in their two or more languages/varieties, are very rare since it is unusual to experience all aspects of one’s life in both languages: different languages tend to be used for different activities.

Both terms are also used to describe countries, regions or localities. A country with two or more official languages is described as bilingual or multilingual, but a country in which there is one official language but many people who speak other languages in their daily lives is also called multilingual. There are in fact very few, if any, European countries which are not multilingual in this sense.

In the case of a country having two or more official languages, individual inhabitants may be monolingual in one of the languages, even though two or more languages are used in the country or region as a whole. They usually learn the other language(s) at school but may perceive them almost as foreign languages i.e. with no use of them in their daily lives or in their environment, for example.

- *bilingual education*

Technically, ‘bilingual education’ is used to refer to education in which two (or sometimes more) languages are used as media of instruction. It is found most often in situations where the speakers of a minority language receive their education in their own language and in the dominant language of the society in which they live. The term is thus often used loosely to refer to the education of minority children, but many minorities would prefer to have their children taught solely through the medium of the minority language, other languages being taught as second or foreign languages.

‘Bilingual education’ is also used to refer to the use of a foreign language as a medium of instruction for some or all subjects of the curriculum in secondary education or later (see below).

There are thus different purposes for different forms of bilingual education and consequently much ambiguity in the use of this phrase both colloquially and in the scientific literature.

- *difficult or exotic language*

‘Exotic’ is not used in scientific descriptions of languages but betrays rather the perceptions people of one geographical region may hold of languages from a distant country or region.

On the other hand, for a given group of learners, some languages may be properly designated as more difficult than others. This is a function of the ways in which languages develop and form ‘language families’, where several languages can be traced back to the same origins, French, Spanish and other Romance languages being ‘descendants’ of Latin, for example. This means that contemporary languages with the same origins share some underlying similarities which facilitate language learning. It also means that in some language families there is ‘intercomprehension’ (see below).

Languages of different families are less easy to learn since there is less existing (unconscious or conscious) knowledge which can be transferred from the learners’ existing language competence to other languages.

A popular mis-conception is that some languages are easier to learn because they have fewer morphological changes i.e. use fewer changes in the form of words, to express meanings, e.g. to express possession or to express time or tense. Yet such languages use other means for the same purposes, for example the order of words, which are less apparent to learners but equally difficult to master.

- *dominant language*

‘Dominant language’ is used to refer to the language or language variety in which an individual bilingual/multilingual person (‘plurilingual’ in our terminology) has highest competence, either in general, or with respect to a particular domain of life or a particular theme of discussion or writing.

It can also be used to refer to the status of one language over others in a given country, and the dominance of one language in one region may give way to the dominance of another in another region. In the case of societal dominance, the reference is above all to use in public institutions or in the public domain in general, where it has a formally official or informally accepted higher status. This does not necessarily mean quantitative dominance, since other languages may be spoken more frequently and by more people in private domains despite the formal status afforded to one (or more) specific languages.

- *first language*

‘First language’ is a scientific term to refer to what is more popularly called the ‘mother tongue’. It refers to the language acquired first in early childhood, which has a special status for the child as it is acquired as part of its discovery of the world in primary socialisation, and is in fact crucial to the success of the child in developing normally. Without interaction through the first language in early childhood, development is likely to be abnormal.

For bilinguals/multilinguals (plurilinguals in our terminology), the first language may in fact be more than one language if the child is exposed to and uses more than one language to acquire knowledge and experience of the world.

- *foreign or second language*

These are terms used to refer to languages acquired through formal learning in an educational institution or informally by exposure to the language in the environment in which one lives. They are not the language(s) of early childhood and primary socialisation. Acquisition by informal exposure to a language in the environment is typically the case of migrants or immigrants. It is widely believed that the psychological processes of acquisition are very similar or even identical in formal and informal acquisition. The scientific literature on the acquisition of languages thus simply refers to second language acquisition.

The distinction between ‘foreign’ and ‘second’ is more important in describing the social environment in which learners acquire a language. If learners have opportunity to acquire another language present in their environment - irrespective of whether they have formal lessons or not - then their opportunities, and in most cases their needs, are different from those learners who are exposed to another language only in a classroom. This is ‘second’ language learning. A ‘foreign’ language is typically one spoken widely and often as official/national language in another country with which the learner has limited or no contact except in the classroom, whereas a ‘second’ language surrounds the learner on a daily basis.

- *heritage language*

Immigrants often feel they should quickly acquire the dominant language of their new country or region, and in doing so may use their first language(s), or language(s) of origin, very little. Some immigrants deliberately avoid speaking their first language(s) to their children in order to facilitate their acquisition of the dominant language in the new environment. Nonetheless, the first language is psychologically important for the first generation of immigrants because they first developed as

children through that language. It also is perceived as important to subsequent generations as a symbol of their origins and identities. The term 'heritage' language is used to refer to these languages and 'heritage language programmes' have the purpose of maintaining the language from one generation to the next, to be used in some private domains of life and to carry the symbolism of origins.

- *indigenous and immigrant language*

These are terms used almost exclusively to refer to the languages of ethnic or religious minorities, although they could equally be used for socially dominant languages. The distinction is ultimately arbitrary since there are few if any regions of Europe where languages currently spoken did not arrive from other regions at some point in the past, as a consequence of migration.

However migration in the second half of the twentieth century has been of such a kind that speakers of languages newly arrived in a country are often spread throughout a society. In contrast, migration in the past, and changes to political frontiers as a consequence of war, led to speakers of languages not dominant in a society usually being located in the same geographical region. This has significance for the ease of provision of education in minority languages. When all the learners are in the same region, education can be provided in cost-effective ways. For learners who wish to maintain their heritage languages but who are spread throughout a society in relatively small numbers, there is a need for higher per capita spending and consequently greater political commitment on the part of those in power.

- *intercomprehension*

The fact that languages can be grouped in 'families' according to their origins - see 'difficult or exotic languages' - means that those which are 'descendants' from the same origins may be 'intercomprehensible', i.e. if the speakers of the languages in question each speak their own language they can be understood by the others. Thus speakers of French and Italian can usually understand each other to some degree, as can speakers of Danish and Norwegian, but not Danish and Finnish since the latter is of a different family. The degree of understanding depends on a number of factors, such as the topic of conversation or correspondence, the ways in which the participants make efforts to help their listeners, the speed and clarity of pronunciation, and the awareness the participants in the conversation have of where potential difficulties lie and how to find other ways of expressing themselves.

The degree of intercomprehension is increased in reading the written language since readers can take their own time to reflect on what they might not fully understand, to use dictionaries or grammars, to consider possible related terms in their own language, but this too requires a degree of awareness of the relationships between languages which can be enhanced by teaching.

Irrespective of such linguistic proximities, the least costly forms of communication are those which are based on mutual comprehension, where each person speaks his or her first language and understands the language of the other.

- *language as medium of instruction*

This term refers to the language in which the teaching of other subjects is carried out in schools and universities. Usually, the dominant language of a society is used but languages of indigenous or immigrant minorities may be used. This gives status to the languages and ensures that those who speak them as their first language also become literate in their first language.

It is widely agreed that children prosper better in education if their first years of schooling and in particular their acquisition of literacy takes place in their first language even if this is not the dominant language of a society. This is advanced as a justification for the use of minority languages as media of instruction in the early years of schooling.

Nonetheless, there have long existed education programmes where, from the beginning of schooling, children have been instructed in a language other than their first. The purpose of these programmes is to ensure more efficient acquisition of a second or foreign language. The success of these 'immersion

programmes', mainly in Canada, is widely acknowledged, but it is important to note that the learners involved speak the dominant language of their society and are adding a new language to their repertoire - described as 'additive bilingualism'. In situations where speakers of a minority language are in similar situations of immersion in the dominant language of a society, their first language is not supported by their environment and they often lose or do not develop in their first language. This is called 'subtractive bilingualism'.

In other countries, a medium of instruction other than the first language is introduced later, in secondary education, either to teach one or two subjects, or to teach the whole curriculum. The former is for example to be found in Germany and the latter in Bulgaria. The purpose of these programmes is to enhance the effectiveness of foreign language learning by greater exposure to and increased use of the language in a greater variety of ways. This has become a major development in many countries under the acronym CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning).

- *minority language*

The term 'minority language' is used to refer to the languages spoken in a society by minority ethnic or religious groups. The status of minority does not necessarily refer to numbers of speakers but to the rights and privileges of groups in society, their right to educational institutions, to representation before the law, to access to certain types of employment, to their own mass media. Many such groups attach very great importance to the use and maintenance of their language for use in society. In particular, they demand the use of their language as a medium of instruction in their own schools and universities, and as a medium of transactions in social institutions such as courts of law, banks and the media.

- *mother tongue or native language*

The term 'mother tongue' is less used in scientific discourse than 'first language'. It is not synonymous with 'first language' because it includes emotional associations of ideas with 'family' and 'origins' which 'first language' excludes. It is not an accurate term in the sense that children do not learn their first language only from their mothers, but it is used to carry the same sense of identity and origins as the phrase 'heritage language'. It is largely synonymous with 'native language' which carries similar associations of ideas.

It is popularly believed, and also argued by some scientists, that someone whose native language is X has an authority over learners of X as a foreign or second language. The 'native speaker' has long been the model against which the success of language learners was measured. This idea has been strongly challenged in recent years. It is not clear for example what the definition of 'native speaker' might include or exclude since, although most native speakers share the same intuitions about the grammar of their language, their degree of skill in different dimensions of language use - speaking, writing, knowledge of vocabulary etc - varies substantially, and depends in many respects on their level of education.

More explicit descriptions of levels of competence have been defined independently of the native speaker, for example in the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*.

- *national or official language*

A 'national' language is the term used to designate the language(s) dominant in a state, and used in all public domains. It is often directly associated with nationality, but 'nationality' may not coincide with 'citizenship', and language can be the focus of identity for major groups in a country as it is for minorities.

National languages can be given 'official language' status in law or constitution. Thus national language and official language are often synonymous but 'national' language carries emotional associations as an indicator of nationality.

In some cases a language which is not the first language of any group in a country is given official status, particularly in former colonies of Western states.

- *varieties of language (register, dialect, accent)*

Consciously or unconsciously, people vary their language according to the situation, the topic, the people with whom they are interacting, i.e. according to the *use*. They speak or write in more and less formal ways, in ways which are more or less close to the standard language norms determined for a national or official language. Such variations of use are termed 'registers'.

Secondly, people of a particular geographical area or a particular social group may have a variation on the standard language which they all use, particularly when speaking. They have different word forms, different grammar, and different habits of speech. This reflects their sense of belonging to an area or group and the variety is shared by all the speakers, i.e. there is variation according to *users* of a language rather than the *use*. Such varieties are called 'dialects'.

Part of dialect variation is in the pronunciation as well as in the form of the language and this variation in pronunciation is called 'accent'. It is also possible to speak the standard language with an accent which varies from that deemed to be standard, without varying in other respects, e.g. grammatical forms.

Varieties can be described independently as languages in themselves with no reference to the formal standard language. The distinction between a dialect and a language is not linguistic but a consequence of whether a dialect is deemed to be the national or official language of a country. A dialect can, through historical events and changes of sovereignty for example, be deemed to be the language of a newly formed state. This usually involves the creation of dictionaries and grammars to describe the dialect/language so that a standard can be set. This is the process of 'standardisation'.

- *vernacular language*

This term refers to a language which is widely spoken in a particular geographical area even though another language might be deemed the official language, or is a language of wider communication on an international level. In the Middle Ages Latin, used throughout Europe for international communication, was contrasted with the vernacular languages spoken in the different countries.

- *written and spoken language*

It is important to distinguish 'written' from 'spoken' language for educational reasons. Unless there are congenital defects or lack of exposure to a language, all children learn to speak a language as a natural part of their development, with some help from their parents or others taking care of them. The acquisition of the ability to write is however not natural and needs to be taught. The ability to write requires quite different capacities from those of speaking and usually includes the ability to create texts of specific genres according to specific rules and expectations. Writing is then used as one of the indicators of successful education and as a means of selecting people for further education, employment and the like.

For learners of a further language at a later point in time, the acquisition of the spoken language is different from the process of acquisition of their first language, and does not happen with the same spontaneity. Instruction of some kind is often required. The acquisition of the written language for such learners is more similar to the acquisition of the written version of their first language and requires similar efforts.

It is therefore clear that formal education has a particular role to play in the teaching of writing in any language, and secondly that the acquisition of the written version of a foreign or second language involves different processes from those involved in the acquisition of the spoken language. It is thus possible that some learners will be more successful in spoken than written language and vice versa. This needs to be taken into account in determining the aims of foreign or second language teaching

and in the integration of language education policies to cover the whole linguistic repertoire - first, second and foreign languages - a learner develops throughout life.

- *Sign languages*

Sign languages are languages which are expressed primarily through the medium of gestures and understood visually. They use movements of the hands but also of other parts of the body such as the eyes, mouth, head and shoulders. They have the same general characteristics of human language as spoken languages. Particular sign languages, like spoken languages, are named in relation to their geographic location, but again like spoken languages are not necessarily limited to a specific location. Sign languages used by communities of people who are deaf are the most well known, even though others exist. Communities of deaf people, like other communities, share a language, common life experiences and cultural traditions, and a common sense of identity. Sign languages are analysed and described in grammars and dictionaries, and are taught as foreign/second languages to hearing people. Teacher training for deaf people to learn to teach their language to the hearing exists in some countries.

- *Lingua franca*

A language which is used to communicate between people with different native languages is called a lingua franca. The term originates from a language used in the Mediterranean in the Middle Ages among traders. In this case, the language was based on a combination of French and Italian, with Greek and Arabic elements. In other cases, one existing language is used. The reach of a lingua franca can range from its use in an institution, where there are speakers of several languages speaking the lingua franca, to a major geographical region (e.g. Swahili in eastern and central Africa) or an international use. The international use is currently dominated by English with other languages also playing this role. Usually a lingua franca is a natural language, but simplified natural languages, called pidgins, or artificial languages, have also been used as a lingua franca. Natural *linguae francae* are usually the languages of dominant communities.

PART III: ORGANISATIONAL FORMS OF PLURILINGUAL EDUCATION

Part 3 of this *Guide* provides brief explanations of the options available for implementing policies with purposes of promoting linguistic diversity and plurilingualism.

Chapter 5 takes further the issues discussed in Chapters 3 and 4, where environmental factors which need to be considered were presented, and presents an overview of the ways in which favourable conditions for the promotion of plurilingualism and policies for plurilingualism can be identified and encouraged.

Chapter 6 then presents a range of curricular and teaching/learning options which have the potential to aid the implementation of policies for plurilingualism.

Chapter 5: The Creation of a Culture of Plurilingualism

5.1 Introduction

In earlier chapters, it was emphasised that the obstacles to successful implementation of policies are political (lack of public and political engagement), social (mis-perceptions and stereotypes) as well as technical (organisation of curricula, supply of teachers etc). It is therefore necessary to create favourable conditions for the implementation of policies which are both internal to education systems and in the external context. This chapter discusses the creation of favourable conditions in more detail by listing the factors which need to be considered. The relative importance of factors varies from one situation to another and there are no prescriptions here of priorities or actions. These are decisions to be taken by policy planners for their own situation.

5.2 Factors in the social context

Since the creation of favourable social conditions for language learning depends in part on the education of the population about language learning, it is valuable to recall first the justifications and rationales for policies for plurilingualism as these can be used in the educational process:

- social reasons: the evolution of multilingual societies, the integration of countries in a European and global scene require new approaches to language learning and conceptions of identity
- economic and environmental reasons: the need of contemporary societies for human capital with plurilingual competence in the marketplace, and the enhancement of quality of life in multilingual environments
- political reasons: the creation of understanding and respect for language and other human rights in Europe and beyond, and the conditions for participation in democratic and other social processes dependent on plurilingual competence; plurilingualism as a condition for active citizenship in Europe.

These rationales are supported by resolutions and recommendations of the Council of Europe and its Member States.

Plurilingualism is realised in different forms in different situations but is relevant for all European states whatever degree of multilingualism they embody. Plurilingualism is a condition for the evolution of societies and a constituent of that evolution.

The external factors which impinge on the implementation of policies include the following:

- the perceptions of languages and the cultures associated with them which impact on the take-up of language learning opportunities offered in education systems
- the false, simplistic perception of the relationship between English as a lingua franca and economic prosperity
- the perceptions of what is required of the learner for success: outmoded perceptions of the need for a long period of learning, of linguistic mastery measured against that of a native speaker, of a focus on formal knowledge of language rather than use of language for communication
- the impact of mass media which draw attention only to dominant foreign languages.

Response to such factors might include:

- advertising campaigns for the general public to change the social demand for languages and misconceptions about the significance, usefulness and level of difficulty of specific languages; public information about contemporary methods and approaches to learning languages which lead to rapid pay-off in language use and removal of the misconception that language learning is only for an academic elite

- the development of public policy for languages and language learning in a country supported by high-profile politicians, by trades unionists, by sportspeople and entertainment figures and other public figures
- encouragement to mass media to provide information in other languages, to use sub-titles rather than dubbing and to support public policy for diversity and plurilingualism
- encouraging representation of a variety of languages in public institutions, in street signs, advertising and public information
- the involvement of employers' and employees' associations, and associations of parents and students in policy development and in practical activities such as the European Day of Languages
- the involvement of politicians and other public and media figures in the positive evaluation of plurilingualism and partial competences to remove the misconception that languages must be learnt to perfection and require major investments of time.

5.3 Factors internal to education systems

The implementation of policies can be impeded by conscious and unconscious acts on the part of administrators, heads of institutions and those in charge of budgets. It can equally be impeded by the preconceptions and prejudices of language specialists including teachers, who for example see advantage in the continuing separation of languages in curricula. In addition to general perceptions listed above which such people might share, the following technical factors need to be considered and discussed, as was explained in earlier chapters:

- assumptions that language teaching must be organised in regular sessions over extended periods like other subjects;
- assumptions that language learning is an intellectual exercise and ignorance of other modes of acquisition in and beyond formal schooling;
- lack of awareness of transferable skills in language learning and the consequent options for integration of the teaching of national languages, minority languages and foreign languages;
- assumptions that languages necessarily interfere with each other and must be kept separate;
- assumptions that languages need to be learnt 'in entirety' and to high levels of attainment before there are benefits for the costs invested.

The lack of understanding of the nature of language learning and teaching is widespread among those responsible for the implementation of policies, as it is among the wider population. Any policy developed to promote plurilingualism needs to be accompanied by information and a process of education of those involved in policy issues if it is not to be undermined by ignorance of the conditions in which language learning can take place.

It must also be recognised that there are many mis-apprehensions in the teaching profession - beliefs that languages should be taught separately and in competition with each other, that the only valuable goal is near-native competence, for example - which are impediments to implementation, and a programme of education for teachers is often as necessary as one for non-language specialists.

Responses to these factors might include the following:

- an enriched definition of 'language teacher/language specialist' to include the functions of being an adviser on policy, on approaches to introducing greater linguistic diversity into the environment, into public institutions and information;
- the development of teacher education which breaks through traditional conventions of separate language subjects and the separation of language teaching from the teaching of other subjects in compulsory and post-compulsory education;
- curriculum innovation which raises learners' and, where appropriate, their parents' awareness of plurilingualism as defined in earlier chapters;
- introduction of the European Language Portfolio as a means of encouraging recognition of all language competences at whatever level and wherever acquired;

- special training for policy makers at every level of education on the nature of plurilingualism, the need for and advantages of linguistic diversity and the options for policy development and curriculum planning.

Chapter 6: Organising Plurilingual Education

6.1 Plurilingualism

Plurilingualism in its various guises is characterised by:

- a repertoire of languages and languages varieties
- competences of different kinds and levels within the repertoire
- an awareness of and ability to use transferable skills in language learning
- a respect for the plurilingualism of others and the significance of languages and varieties irrespective of their social status
- a respect for the cultures embodied in languages and the cultural identities of others
- an awareness of plurilingualism as a condition for participation in democratic and other social processes in multilingual societies.

In order to promote this kind of plurilingualism, education systems - formal and informal, obligatory and post-obligatory - need to develop policies and implement forms and organisations of language learning which promote an integrated competence and a consciousness of learners' existing repertoires and of their potential to develop and adapt those repertoires to changing circumstances.

6.2 Identifying appropriate purposes and objectives

The purposes of plurilingual education may be perceived in a variety of ways:

- as part of the education of learners for better understanding of speakers of other languages in their own and in other societies;
- as the acquisition of commercially useful skills and/or the means of enjoying leisure opportunities in other countries;
- as the means to acquiring knowledge of other modes of thought, aesthetic experience and modes of human interaction than those accessible through their own language(s);
- as the means of ensuring in a society a minimal pool of knowledge of and skills for interacting with other societies;
- and as a pre-condition for participation as a citizen in a multilingual area, whether local, regional, national or European.

Social demand is often focused on language learning for commercial and leisure purposes, and in particular on English for these purposes. Policies and their implementation need to take account of and integrate social demand with other purposes, designing curricula and programmes of content accordingly, and this is then realised in the definition of objectives for plurilingual education.

The first phase of policy implementation thus involves the formulation of precise objectives: what kind of plurilingualism is to be the target, in the first instance. The objectives need to take into account the geo-political situation: which languages are present in the territory in question, which languages are present on its borders, what social and economic ambitions does the polity have for the future.

If this formulation is to be realistic, then the potential of the current education system, both formal and informal, needs to be taken into account: which languages are already present, which ones could be introduced most efficiently, which teaching methods, modes of assessment and certification already exist and have potential in the development of plurilingualism, which institutions could be implicated in implementation.

Linguistic and learning objectives can be defined with the aid of the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*. Instead of following traditions of setting as an objective the attainment of 'perfection' or 'mastery', linguistic achievement can be planned and assessed using the levels defined in the *Common European Framework*. The plurilingual individual will have a number of languages

each at different levels of achievement. The recognition of this achievement is facilitated by the use of the *European Language Portfolio*.

Language education policies will therefore need to provide opportunities for developing plurilingualism through the diversification of languages offered.

6.3 Implementation of policy objectives

6.3.1 Using the potential of existing institutions

The analysis of the potential of the current education system to offer diversification in languages and language learning opportunities should focus both on what is currently offered and on the obstacles to change: costs of (re-)training of teachers, of 'small' class sizes, of assessment and certification of lesser-taught languages etc. The removal of obstacles requires innovation and management of change at a number of levels: teacher education, curriculum design, teaching/learning methods. This might include

- re-definition of the functions of language teachers, to include, for example, the oversight of learning rather than directing learning in real time
- re-allocation of resources to promote autonomous learning, for example through distance learning
- re-design of curricula to break through the boundaries of established subjects/disciplines, for example by integrating all languages into one curriculum element.

6.3.2 Modification of traditional curricula

Existing visions of curriculum organisation are determined by traditional separations of subjects/disciplines. Furthermore, separations exist between different sectors of education systems and are often experienced negatively by learners because of lack of recognition in one sector of learners' development whilst in previous sectors. Modifications can thus be undertaken horizontally within sectors and vertically from one sector to another.

Horizontal modification can be envisaged on a cline of increasing integration and diversification:

- the separated learning and teaching of national/official languages and all others, each treated as a subject of study comparable in methodology, assessment and certification with other subjects
- the separate study of national/official languages but an integrated approach to other languages where learners' experience of one language - whether acquired in formal education or informally in the community - is consciously drawn upon in the acquisition of others
- the integration of all language learning and teaching including national/official languages and the promotion of a consciousness of languages, language learning and the significance of plurilingual competence in multilingual societies and international regions
- the integration of language learning and teaching with other learning e.g. of other subjects in the curriculum by using the languages being acquired as media of instruction
- the integration of language learning with education for citizenship and the development of a consciousness of the significance of plurilingualism for participation in democratic and other social processes
- the integration of opportunities for language learning with the development of vocational education and training either in formal education institutions or on-the-job, in learners' familiar environment or in a new environment which work opportunities have offered them.

Vertical integration is above all attained through policies which are not limited to a sector of education whether formal or informal, public or public-funded. Policy planners may be able to propose different degrees of integration in different sectors of an education system, depending where each sector finds itself on the horizontal continuum. It is crucial that language education policies should be holistic not only in horizontal terms but also with respect to vertical co-ordination.

Views that 'the best age' for language learning is in early childhood should not exclude concepts of languages in lifelong learning, whether in tertiary/higher education or beyond. Options for language

learning can be placed at any point from pre-school learning to post-retirement; the co-ordination of and links between these stages of learning need to be developed by individual learners with the aid of the *European Language Portfolio*.

6.3.3 *Considering alternative modes of teaching and learning*

Alternative curricular models can be seen at system and learner levels:

- instead of perceiving each language (including the learner's first language(s)) as separate entities, to be learned at separate times, a languages curriculum can offer a range of languages to a range of levels of achievement, through a variety of teaching modes (distance learning, intensive courses in the learner's home territory or in a region where the language is widely spoken, bilingual use of languages as media of instruction in other subjects etc)
- instead of perceiving learners as dependent on teachers, they can and should be offered opportunities to determine and organise their own learning, whatever their age; this involves the introduction into the learning programme of an initiation into learning to learn and the offer of learning opportunities by means which allow them open access (distance learning, on-line learning, learning centres).

Learners may be allowed to seek their opportunities not just within the public institutions of their own territory. They can be offered opportunities and resources to seek learning and assessment and certification of their learning outside the territory: intensive courses abroad, study or work experience abroad, commercial institutions locally and abroad.

6.3.4 *Choice in teaching/learning methods, content and assessment*

Methods of teaching to meet objectives of plurilingualism and capacity to communicate with speakers of a number of languages have developed in recent decades under the general label of 'communicative language teaching'. Techniques within this general approach vary in application and emphasis, and innovation in this as in other aspects of policy implementation needs to take into account a variety of factors:

- the age and level of competence of learners: younger learners may need more play-oriented methods, other learners with previous experience of language learning by other methods will need more emphasis on techniques with which they are familiar as well as new ones; at more advanced levels, learners will require greater use of meta-language and analytical explanation
- learning styles and educational traditions: in some educational traditions and for some types of learner, an emphasis on cognitive analytical styles of teaching/learning creates expectations of learning which are not met by emphasis on using a language and acquiring it synthetically.

The introduction of communicative techniques needs to be managed carefully like all innovation, and imposition by fiat is unlikely to be successful.

With respect to the substance and content linked to the acquisition of skills, traditions of language teaching have not questioned the assumption that a language is located in a specific country or countries, that learners need to learn about those countries, that the variety of the language to be learnt is that of a national standard determined by custom and authority in a specific country. There is, however, choice, because languages are often spoken in several countries, with several standard varieties. It is also possible to teach about several countries in which a language is spoken, about a range of social groups within those countries with norms of language use other than those of a national standard.

Furthermore, learners may be invited to learn about their own country or region and its interactions with other countries whilst engaged in language learning. This applies both to education in first language(s) and to education and learning in other languages from within and outside their territorial homeland. This is 'intercultural competence'. The innovative use of other languages to present outside perspectives on learners' own culture(s) and modes of thought in order to challenge these is a new option which also needs careful management.

Finally, choice of the content of language learning includes options of teaching other subjects through the medium of another language than learners' first language(s), and also the introduction of European themes, including democratic citizenship and human rights.

Choice is also a characteristic of modes of assessment. Learning for plurilingualism involves more complex factors than learning single languages measured against standards taken from native speakers of a particular country and social category. Abilities which need to be assessed include:

- linguistic competence at a variety of levels and in some but not necessarily all skills
- transversal skills of learning acquired through developing plurilingualism: skills of learning to learn
- ability to communicate using plurilingual competence rather than competence in a single language: for example, capacity to draw on intercomprehension between language
- capacity to interact with people of other cultural identities, to recognise difference and manage intercultural interactions
- competence in varieties of languages not formally recognised in formal education systems.

Methods of assessing these diverse aspects of learners' abilities need to go beyond traditions of testing capacity in a single language by an authorised individual on a single occasion, to include modes of self-assessment, documentation of linguistic and cultural experience, recognition of plurilingual ability. As well as helping learners to plan their learning, the *European Language Portfolio* offers the best approach to the demands of complex assessment, and is increasingly available with appropriate experience of the management of its introduction into formal and informal education institutions and systems throughout Europe.

6.4 Teacher education

The costs of diversification of opportunities offered to learners can be met in part by re-conceptualisation of language learning as indicated throughout this document, but one immediate concern is inevitably the implications for teacher education. This too needs to be seen in the context of the re-definition of language teachers such that they are not the sole source of learning, that they are not required to have near-native mastery of the language(s) they offer, that they can teach learners to learn, that they can facilitate learning, for example by managing centres for learning or working as on-line consultants.

In addition, innovation is necessary to change perceptions among teachers and learners of the role of teachers:

- to allow speakers of lesser-taught languages to act in conjunction with trained teachers of other languages
- to encourage teachers of other subjects to teach through the medium of other languages
- to ensure that teachers have and understand the nature of intercultural competence and the pedagogical means of developing this as well as linguistic competence among learners
- to develop teachers' own plurilingual competence and understand the nature of this and the pedagogical means to develop it in learners, including the alternatives for curricula and modes of learning mentioned above.

Options for the introduction of diversification of learning opportunities may be realised by means other than dependence on trained teachers. For example, policy planners may wish to introduce a less widely taught language but have few or no teachers available. In such circumstances the following approach could be taken:

- the use of distance learning combined with materials which draw upon learners' existing understanding of languages and their transferable skills
- options of intensive study in an environment where the language is spoken

- at a later stage, teachers who might themselves have followed this programme might offer tutorial support in the programme and also begin the introduction of the language into the language education programme of obligatory schooling
- native-speaker teachers might be seconded for a period to support the policy
- use of the language as a medium of instruction for another subject might be developed in higher education with the help of teachers of the subject from a country where the language is spoken.
- the offer of the language for recreational purposes might be encouraged in private sector education or in adult and continuing education.

6.5 Possible options: Summary

Those who plan and implement language education policies need to be aware of the range of options when considering implementation. The following check-list presents some illustrative options arising from the above discussion:

Objectives:

- teaching and learning objectives: alternatives to the assumption that the objectives should be perfection of all skills are provided by definitions of partial competences and differing levels of attainment (see *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*)
- courses with diverse objectives: the definition of diverse objectives leads to courses which emphasise some competences rather than others and different levels of attainment.

Curricular models:

- familiar patterns of class-room based teaching and learning as part of a traditional curriculum and time allocation over a number of years
- intensive class-room based teaching and learning with suspension of other activities
- intensive programmes located in dedicated institutions in learners' own environment or in a country where the language in question is spoken
- intensive programmes taught by qualified teachers from other education systems working for short periods in the system where teachers are otherwise not available
- varying teaching formats: curricula and timetables can be varied along a number of dimensions: blocks of time for intensive study; intensive study followed by periods of minimal contact with a language; blocks of time allocated to 'languages' including mother tongue rather than specific languages; blocks of time for 'international dimension' combining languages and social studies, geography and other subjects
- regional variations: curricula can take account of regional and cross-frontier opportunities varying from one part of a country to another; learners can take advantage of the proximity and intercomprehension among languages with curricula extended to include out-of-school/college education
- distance learning provision of various kinds ranging from postal services to the use of modern technologies, with learners and teachers either acting in simultaneous time or with open access at any time.

Teaching/learning and assessment:

- alternatives to forms of learning dependent on a teacher are provided by models of autonomous learning, tandem/mutual instruction by learners of different mother tongues, intensive learning courses in one's own or foreign environments, self-access learning through media centres, distance learning including e-learning
- alternative locations of learning: teaching and learning need not take place only in traditional institutions such as schools and universities but can include on-the-job learning in commercial and public bodies, placements in other countries' institutions for intensive or extensive periods of study, e-learning based in the home

- methods of teaching and assessment: traditions of teaching include many methods but can be supplemented by Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), immersion programmes of various kinds, task-based learning; and approaches to assessment include portfolio and coursework, self-assessment, electronic assessment as well as traditional tests and examinations on paper or in oral form
- combination with mother-tongue/national language instruction: instead of separation and competition between the first language of the school and other languages, there exist methods of raising awareness about language which combine the objectives of both traditions of teaching, with similar cooperation on the teaching of literature in national and other languages.

Teachers

- the concept of the specialist teacher of one or maximum two languages educated and trained in higher education can be complemented by other models including native speakers seconded for periods of teaching in other countries, teachers of languages combined with other subjects, teachers acquiring less-widely taught languages in later career, teachers as advisers on language learning opportunities.

The co-ordination of policies is crucial, and the level of co-ordination - from individual institution, through city, region to nation and perhaps beyond on a regional European basis - will depend on specific circumstances and opportunities.

Diversification in education systems can take place on many dimensions and policy development should take place on the basis of knowledge of the options which exist, matched with the existing level of diversification in a specific education system. The management of innovation requires development from existing situations rather than the implementation of radical change, which frequently leads to rejection by all stakeholders: learners, teachers, parents, employers and professional associations and trade unions.

This *Guide* cannot provide specific solutions to specific problems and analyses of need but offers a philosophy and principles for language education which reflect European needs as identified in Council of Europe member States. Further details are provided in the accompanying 'Main Version' of this *Guide*, which will serve those charged with the implementation of policies reflecting a philosophy of linguistic diversity in society and plurilingualism for the individual.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: List of Reference Studies

The texts of the following Reference Studies are available on the website of the Language Policy Division of the Council of Europe: www.coe.int/lang

Ager Dennis	<i>Language Planning and Language Policy</i>
Alexander Neville	<i>Language education policy, national and sub-national identities in South Africa</i>
Beacco Jean-Claude	<i>Languages and Language Repertoires: Plurilingualism as a way of life in Europe</i>
Breidbach Stephan	<i>Plurilingualism, Democratic Citizenship in Europe and the Role of English</i>
Castelloti Véronique / Moore Danièle	<i>Social representations of languages and teaching</i>
Churchill Stacy	<i>Language Education, Canadian Civic Identity and the Identities of Canadians</i>
Costanzo Edvige	[L'Educazione Linguistica in Italia: Un'esperienza per l'Europa?] <i>Language education in Italy: an experience for Europe?</i>
Doyé Peter	<i>Intercomprehension</i>
Gogolin Ingrid	<i>Linguistic diversity and new minorities in Europe</i>
Grin François	<i>Using language economics and education economics in language education policy</i>
Huhta Marjatta	<i>Tools for planning language training</i>
Johnstone Richard	<i>Addressing 'the age factor': some implications for languages policy</i>
Neuner Gerd	<i>Policy approaches to English</i>
Lo Bianco Joseph	<i>Language policy: an Australian perspective</i>
Ó Riagáin Pádraig	<i>The Consequences of Demographic Trends for Language Learning and Diversity</i>
Piri Riita	<i>Teaching and learning less widely spoken languages in other countries</i>
Raasch Albert	<i>Europe, frontiers and languages</i>
Seidlhofer Barbara	<i>A concept of international English and related issues: from 'real English' to 'realistic English'?</i>
Skutnabb-Kangas Tove	<i>Why should linguistic diversity be maintained and supported in Europe? Some arguments</i>
Starkey Hugh	<i>Democratic Citizenship, Languages, Diversity and Human Rights</i>
Truchot Claude	<i>Key aspects of the use of English in Europe</i>
Willems Gerard	<i>Language teacher education policy promoting linguistic diversity and intercultural communication</i>

Please also consult the [List of Publications](http://www.coe.int/lang) available on the website: www.coe.int/lang

Appendix 2: Council of Europe Reference Texts

COUNCIL OF EUROPE – www.coe.int

➤ **Conventions** [www.conventions.coe.int]

- Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, 1950 (STCE 005)
- European Cultural Convention, 1959 (STCE 018)
- Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, 1995 (STCE 157)
- European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (STCE 148) - www.coe.int/minlang

➤ **Recommendations of the Committee of Ministers to Member States** [www.coe.int/T/CM]

- Recommendation N° R (82) 18 concerning modern languages, 1982
- Recommendation N° R (98) 6 concerning modern languages, 1998

➤ **Recommendations of the Parliamentary Assembly** [<http://assembly.coe.int>]

- Recommendation 1383 (1998) on *Linguistic Diversification*
- Recommendation 1539 (2001) on the *European Year of Languages 2001*
- Recommendation 1598 (2003) on *The Protection of Sign languages in the member states of the Council of Europe*
- Recommendation 1740 (2006) on *The place of mother tongue in school education*

LANGUAGE POLICY DIVISION – www.coe.int/lang

➤ **Reference Documents and Selected Publications**

- *Plurilingual Education in Europe*
- *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages : Learning, Teaching, Assessment* (CEFR)
 - *Guide for Users*
- *Manual for relating language examinations to the CEFR*
- *European Language Portfolio* www.coe.int/portfolio
 - *Guide for Developers of a European Language Portfolio*
 - *Guide for Teachers and Teacher Trainers*

➤ **Reports of intergovernmental Policy Conferences**

- Conference on *Languages of Schooling: Towards a Framework for Europe*, Strasbourg, Council of Europe, October 2006
- Forum on *Global Approaches to Plurilingual Education*, Strasbourg, Council of Europe, June 2004
- Forum on *Language, Diversity, Citizenship: Policies for Plurilingualism in Europe*, Strasbourg, Council of Europe, November 2002
- Conference on *Linguistic Diversity for Democratic Citizenship in Europe*, Innsbruck, May 1999

Appendix 3: Selective Glossary

The list below is extracted from a more comprehensive *Glossary* proposed in Appendix 2 of the [Main Version](#) of the *Guide for the development of Language Education Policies in Europe*.

Autonomy (learner autonomy): specific type of training, often proposed within the framework of language learning, which aims to help the speaker become aware of how he or she can take charge of language learning; aims to raise awareness of, and how to develop learning strategies.

Bilingual education (see also *language of instruction*): type of education which involves at least two languages of instruction (for example, one language from the surrounding geographical area and a foreign language) used to teach educational content and to transmit knowledge.

Community: historically constituted social group with a shared background and distinctive characteristics which connect them, such as language, religion, cultural practices and territory. This combination may even contribute to the creation of distinctive group characteristics, but these are portrayed as original or pre-existing characteristics.

Dialect: language variety without official status (or low status), employed infrequently or never in written usage, describes regional linguistic varieties and/or of minorities, but recognised as belonging to a national or federal territory.

Dominant language: (1) language variety in which a speaker has the highest level of competence; (2) language variety which enjoys legal, social and cultural status over other varieties.

First language: language variety(ies) acquired in early childhood (approximately before the age of two or three years) in which the human language faculty was first acquired. This term is preferred to *mother tongue*, which is often inaccurate as the first language is not necessarily that of the mother alone.

Intercultural competence: combination of knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours which allow a speaker, to varying degrees, to recognise, understand, interpret and accept other ways of living and thinking beyond his or her home culture. This competence is the basis of understanding among people, and is not limited to language ability.

Language needs: identification of linguistic varieties, most often foreign, and the competences required therein by all types of entities/institutions (businesses, organisations, States) in order to manage efficiently internal and external communication, in defined communicative situations. This identification is based on processes of auditing and analysis. *Language needs* may also be experienced or be perceived by individuals. In such cases, these may arise for reasons other than communication: the pleasure of learning, the desire to know other cultures and societies.

Language of instruction (or of schooling or of education): official language (one or, in some states, more than one) or foreign language which is used as language of instruction in school. This language is not always the pupils' "mother tongue"; the language of instruction includes forms of discourse (written discourse in particular) which are new to all learners.

Language of origin: language variety, often the first language, of persons or groups who have moved to live in other States. These speakers must adapt linguistically to the new environment and learn, at least partially, the language (or languages) of the host country.

Language variety: term used in this *Guide* as a neutral, generic term when it was considered useful to avoid the term *language*, thereby avoiding value judgments (language = *real* language). Any definition of a language variety as constituting or not constituting a *real language* is based on external factors and not on any intrinsic characteristics of the variety itself. Labelling a language variety involves social stakes for individual speakers and groups (see also, for example, *dialect*, *regional language*, *autochthonous language*, *mother tongue*).

Lingua franca: (1) historically, an invented language dating from the Middle Ages (drawn from French and other languages) from the Mediterranean region used as a shared language of communication; (2) a pre-existing language variety which is used as a language of communication between different speakers of other varieties, who learn and use it as a common language.

Linguistic competence: (1) the capacity to use one or more language varieties to communicate (see also *plurilingualism*); (2) capacity to analyse a language variety, for example, by means of descriptive categories based on its “grammar” or linguistics (the term *metalinguistic competence* is also used in this sense).

Linguistic diversity: presence of different language varieties in the same geographical areas (see *multilingual*, *multilingualism*) or in the language repertoire of a speaker (see *plurilingual*, *plurilingualism*, *repertoire*). The preservation and significance of linguistic diversity have become shared values in European societies; can be implemented through *plurilingual education*.

Linguistic repertoire (or *language repertoire*, or *plurilingual repertoire*) (see also *plurilingual*): group of language varieties (first language, regional language, languages learned at school or in visits abroad), mastered by the same speaker, to different degrees of proficiency and for different uses. This individual repertoire changes over the course of an individual’s lifespan (acquisition of new languages, “forgetting” languages learned).

Minority language (or *language of minorities*): language which may be spoken by a majority in a section of a national territory, and which may have official status there, but may not necessarily have official language or legal status.

Mother tongue: see *first language*.

Multilingual (see also *plurilingual*): used to describe the situation in a geographical area where several language varieties are employed; speakers in this geographical area may not be proficient in each of the different varieties represented.

Plurilingual (competence): capacity to successively acquire and use different competences in different languages, at different levels of proficiency and for different functions. The central purpose of plurilingual education is to develop this competence.

Plurilingual education: manner of teaching, not necessarily restricted to language teaching, which aims to raise awareness of each individual’s language *repertoire*, to emphasise its worth and to extend this repertoire by teaching lesser used or unfamiliar languages. Plurilingual education also aims to increase understanding of the social and cultural value of *linguistic diversity* in order to ensure *linguistic goodwill* and to develop *intercultural competence* (see also *linguistic repertoire*).