

THE CEFR COMPANION VOLUME: A KEY RESOURCE FOR INCLUSIVE PLURILINGUAL EDUCATION 2021 Webinar Series

Webinar 7: November 4th 16.00 CET

Putting plurilingual education into practice in primary and secondary schools

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Background reading

To be read before or after the webinar.

There are two short recommended readings in this document:

- A chapter summarising recent research on plurilingual education in the Netherlands (4 pages):

Duarte, J., Günther - van der Meij, M., & Robinson-Jones, C. (2021). Capitalising on Multilingualism in Education for the Vitality of Bilingual Regions. In: *Vital Regions* (pp. 236-253). NHL Stenden Uitgeverij: Leeuwarden.

- A chapter including principles and activities for primary school pupils in the Irish setting (but easily applicable to other multilingual settings; 9 pages):

Little., D. & Kirwan, D. (2021). Language and Languages in the Primary School. Some guidelines for teachers. Available at: <https://ppli.ie/teaching-and-learning/supporting-multilingual-classrooms/?gresource=ppli-primary-guidelines/>



Professorship Multilingualism and Literacy

Capitalising on
Multilingualism
in Education for
the Vitality of
Bilingual Regions

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languages play an essential role in the vitality of officially bilingual regions. An example of this can be seen in the province of Friesland which, with its official languages Frisian and Dutch, is a natural language laboratory for studying multilingualism (Duarte, 2020). As in other bi-/ multilingual regions, Friesland's mosaic of languages has become progressively complex due to the recent arrival of a considerable number of inhabitants with a migrant background (Duarte & Günther-van der Meij, 2018a), which is often reflected in an increase of diversity, including in educational settings. Schools in Friesland often pay special attention to the requirements of the regional (Frisian), national (Dutch) and foreign languages in the curriculum (mostly English in primary education) but are now increasingly confronted with the need to cater for a growing variety of languages and cultural backgrounds in education.

Teachers are generally open towards multilingualism, though they often lack the necessary knowledge and skills to implement forms of multilingual education that cater for different languages (Duarte & Günther-van der Meij, 2018b). In the present article, the work of the professorship Multilingualism and Literacy (Lectoraat Meertaligheid & Geletterdheid), a recent research group based at the Academy for Primary Education of the NHL Stenden University for Applied Sciences, will be discussed. Our research presents a number of recent developments concerning the use of all languages present in primary and secondary education aiming at fostering optimal language development for all pupils and thus capitalising on all forms of multilingualism in our region.

In recent decades, Europe has seen a rapid increase in the number of multilingual pupils in its schools, which has led to what has been termed "superdiversity" (Vertovec, 2007; Crul, Schneider & Lelie, 2013) in schools with pupils who speak a migrant or minority language. Unfortunately, education persistently suffers from an achievement gap between mono- and multilingual pupils (e.g. OECD,

2019), often resulting in an over-representation of minority-speaking pupils in the lowest academic tracks of vocational training and an under-representation in academic tracks and tertiary education (Duarte, 2020). If we are to tackle this educational inequality, change is needed. According to research, this change should encourage schools to move from immersion or bilingual/trilingual models based on monoglossic ideologies (Flores & Baetens Beardsmore, 2015) to multilingual educational approaches within mainstream schools based on heteroglossic ideologies (Duarte & Günther-van der Meij, 2018a). This has also been termed the "multilingual turn" in language education (Conteh & Meier, 2014).

Over the past decade, like many other European regions, the population of Friesland has grown more by migrant than by native inhabitants (CBS, 2019). In Friesland more than half of the population (55.3%) speak Frisian, the minority language, as their mother tongue (Provinsje Fryslân, 2015). With the increase in the number of immigrants, the number of speakers with a foreign mother tongue has also increased constituting of 15% the population (Duarte & Günther-van der Meij, 2018a). As a result, around 60 different immigrant languages are spoken by primary school children in the capital city Leeuwarden (Mercator, 2010). This has resulted in the emergence of a complex linguistic ecology consisting of Dutch, Frisian, regional languages, English as a foreign language, other foreign languages (e.g. German, French, etc.) and a variety of migrant languages (e.g. Arabic, Tigrinya, Polish, etc.). Consequently, the need for a "multilingual turn" (Conteh & Meier, 2014) in education is also being felt in Friesland. But how can we achieve this in a bilingual region in which the Frisian minority language also needs to be protected? Is fostering all languages a threat towards the Frisian minority language?

Multilingualism as educational norm

Although not an integral part of the educational *status quo*, capitalising on pupils' multilingual resources brings numerous advantages for pupils, their family members and schools in general. Research shows that not only do multilingual pupils perform better when their home languages are recognised and used in education (Sierens & Van Avermaet, 2014; García, 2009; Cummins, 2000; Duarte, 2011), but monolingual pupils also attain higher when they raise their language awareness and develop more positive attitudes towards other languages (Candelier, 2004; Hélot, 2012). Many teachers acknowledge that multilingual pupils need to be supported so that they can perform better in education and in centralised testing (Tajmel & Starl, 2009). At the same time, however, teachers often feel unprepared when it comes to how to provide their multilingual pupils with this support. Teachers are mainly afraid that pupils will not be able to distinguish between languages if they are used interchangeably, though this has never been empirically proven (Sierens & Van Avermaet, 2014). They feel that pupils will use their home languages - which the teacher cannot understand - to gossip, which may lead to the teacher losing control of the class. Nonetheless, research shows that pupils mainly use their home languages to learn and to discuss the subject matter and the classroom tasks (Rosiers, 2016; Jordens, 2016; Duarte, 2019), thus both enhancing their cognitive engagement with the task at hand and their overall participation in class.

Yet, monolingual ideologies leading to language hierarchies and separation in education still largely prevail. The current question on how multilingualism can be given a broader, more integrated place in education has been formulated by García (2007, xiii) as follows: What would language education look like if we no longer posited the existence of separate languages? How would we teach bilingually in ways that reflect people's use of language and not simply people as language users?

Also Lemke (2002, p.85) poses a similar question: Could it be that all our current pedagogical methods in fact make multilingual development more difficult than it need be, simply because we bow to dominant political and ideological pressures to keep “languages” pure and separate?

Setting up projects focused on multilingualism in a vital region

With these questions in mind, the professorship Multilingualism and Literacy of the NHL Stenden University of Applied Sciences has developed a number of projects aimed at promoting and researching multilingualism in education (see overview in Table 1). Each of the project schools has formulated its own research question regarding language education and multilingualism. The questions concern issues that relate to the Frisian “multilingual turn” (Duarte, 2020), such as connecting the different languages at trilingual schools or involving minority and migrant languages in regular education, so that all languages are given an equal place in schools that have high percentages of migrant language speakers. The project schools have indicated a need for the development and implementation of educational activities that:

- (a) reduce the separation between the languages of instruction (Frisian, Dutch and English);
- (b) integrate other languages into mainstream education; and
- (c) combine language learning/multilingualism and acquisition of subject content.

Table 1 – Overview of projects to promote multilingual education of the research group Multilingualism and Literacy.

Name of project	Aims	Age group of pupils	Nr. of schools
3M: Meer kansen Met Meertaligheid (More opportunities with Multilingualism)	Development, implementation and evaluation of a holistic approach to acknowledge and use multiple languages in primary education	6 to 10-year olds	12
Talen4all (Languages4all)	Development of positive attitudes towards Frisian and other languages in Frisian primary schools with an exemption to teach the Frisian language	10 to 12-year olds	8
Holi-Frysk (Multilingual secondary education for all)	Development and implementation of an approach combining Frisian, other languages and subject learning in lower secondary education	12 to 15-year olds	8

A Design-based approach for capitalising on multilingualism

The projects follow a holistic approach aimed at different school types such as trilingual schools (officially with Dutch, Frisian and English as instruction languages), asylum seeker schools (AZC), schools with many pupils with Dutch as home languages and schools with multilingual pupils with other home languages. All home languages of the pupils are taken into consideration in the developed activities, even though teachers are not always proficient in these languages. So how is this approach of capitalising on all forms of multilingualism being developed?

Using a design-based approach to co-construct teaching activities and materials (Cobb, Confrey, diSessa, Lehrer & Schauble, 2003; McKenney & Reeves, 2013), pilot-interventions are jointly developed, implemented, and evaluated. Teachers, students at the teacher training programme and researchers collaboratively develop tailored multilingual activities as an “answer” to the schools’ concrete question on multilingualism in education. Examples of concrete questions from our schools are:

How can we make our school a place where minority and migrant languages are valued equally to the official languages of the school? (question from a school with a higher number of pupils speaking Frisian and immigrant languages).

How can we integrate a foreign language in our existing trilingual concept without speaking the language ourselves? (question from a trilingual school which had recently welcomed immigrant pupils).

Co-developing activities is realised through school visits, evening study sessions and workshops with teachers, directors and language coordinators, as well as with pre-service teachers in our own teaching training programme. On these occasions, approaches are explained and activities are co-developed, implemented and evaluated together. In order to structure our work with schools, a model for a holistic approach on multilingualism in education has been progressively developed, directly reflecting our experiences when working with teachers. In the model, it is not only about language proficiency in a particular language but about describing a continuum of multilingualism that moves between the acknowledgement of languages and their use as a working language, as illustrated in Figure 1. In the following sections, we provide examples of activities which have been developed for each of the approaches of our model.

Language awareness

In order to raise awareness of pupils towards languages in the community and reflect on making their own language skills visible, the project school pupils implemented language portraits (see examples in Figures 2 and 3). Language portraits consist of the outline of a body silhouette, which pupils must colour in by choosing different colours to represent different languages, placing them on different body parts, resulting in a graphic visualisation of their linguistic repertoire (Busch, 2006). They show which languages pupils already know, which ones they still want to learn and where in their body the language is; for example, in the head, heart or on the hands. This activity encourages pupils to think about what each language means to them and in turn makes them aware of their own multilingualism.

In our projects, we have conducted 570 language portraits in which pupils reported speaking a total of 97 different languages (Tabaro, Duarte & Günther-van der Meij, forthcoming). Apart from the portraits themselves, interviews were conducted with pupils to get more insights on their language attitudes and proficiency. Below is an exemplary fragment from one of the interviews with a ten-year old boy who reported Polish as home language while attending a trilingual school in which Frisian Dutch and English are used in instruction:



Figures 2 and 3 - Examples of language portraits.

Interviewer: Why did you colour the legs with Frisian?

Pupil: Frisian sank down to my toes.

Interviewer: Why did that happen?

Pupil: I forgot it a little bit. I am not that good at it.

Interviewer: What does it mean when a language is in your feet?

Pupil: It means that I'm not that good at it, but I can understand it. If I were better at it, I would have drawn it on my belly or arms. I can understand it, but this is about speaking right?

Interviewer: It is all up to you.

Pupil: I can speak it just a little bit, like 'hi'. But understanding is fine.

Interviewer: So this all is Polish? (points at the chest area on the drawing)

Pupil: Yes, shall I tell you why?

Interviewer: Yes, please.

Pupil: Polish is nailed into my head.

Interviewer: What does that mean?

Pupil: Just that I am really good at all.

This fragment shows how receptive skills in Frisian are a valuable resource for the pupil to follow instruction, how he is aware of and can reflect on his different language proficiencies and how his home language Polish, although not officially used in instruction, is of great importance to him and is rated high on proficiency. We use such examples in our discussions with teachers in order to make pupils' multilingualism visible. In this trilingual school, for example, pupils are now encouraged to use Polish in class to discuss content with other Polish-speaking pupils.

Language comparison

Working with cognates, namely words in different languages that have a common etymological origin, is ideal for language comparison (Duarte & Günther-van der Meij, 2018b). Several activities have been developed within the projects to deal with similarities and differences between languages, such as a cognate quiz for Frisian, Dutch and English for which pupils had to answer questions in three languages based on clues. Two or three of the answers were always cognates in the same three languages (Figure 4). When giving the answers, it was discussed how similar the words were in terms

of pronunciation and spelling. For older pupils, a lesson on language families and the relationship between Frisian and English can be taken a step further; for example, pupils can make a language family poster on a certain subject, such as animals (Figure 5).

Receptive multilingualism

Receptive multilingualism is a form of multilingual communication in which people with different linguistic backgrounds both speak their own language and are still able to understand each other (ten Thije, 2010). This form of asymmetrical communication focuses on the development of receptive skills and the practice of language learning strategies. This can be done with, for example, Frisian and Dutch, but also with English, German, a dialect or migrant languages. Within the projects, we have developed several cooperative assignments for which pupils with different language backgrounds communicate in their own language and solve tasks together (e.g. finding treasure in a maze). Through these assignments, pupils learn to recognise words and structures receptively and to give answers in their own language. Pupils in turn develop positive attitudes towards the other languages and acquire language learning strategies in a playful way.

Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)

Learning a foreign language can be well combined with learning a subject. Content and language integrated learning (CLIL) is defined as situations where subjects are taught in a foreign language with a dual purpose, namely the study of content and the simultaneous grasp of a foreign language (Marsh, 2002). CLIL lessons are often given in English, such as a music lesson taught in English. It is, however, also possible to use minority, regional or neighbouring languages; for instance, think of a maths lesson in Frisian or a biology lesson in a variety of Low-Saxon. CLIL lessons thus integrate inquisitive learning with language teaching methods, in which the use of the language in concrete communicative situations is central for the pupils. Although the emphasis is not on language learning but on subject content, pupils are still able to acquire additional language skills, in particular domain-specific proficiency. In our projects, students from the teacher training programme "Biology" have developed and conducted a whole series of classes containing scientific experiments to explain physical phenomena to young pupils using English as instruction language. In addition, Frisian teachers working with subject-teachers have developed several lessons using Frisian in the History and Geography classes.

Immersion

Within the projects, the various languages are also used as working languages. These are mainly Dutch, Frisian and English; however, other languages are also used for instruction in digital environments. The 3M-project is currently working on an eight-language online learning environment, e-3M, for which assignments and activities in Frisian, Dutch, English, Polish, Arabic, Tigrinya, Chinese and Turkish were developed for subjects of Biology and Technology (Figure 6). The pupils can read and listen to the assignments, and easily change languages in order to be able to, for instance, compare the languages with each other. The learning environment e-3M mainly focuses on the subject content, but language learning plays an important role as a support function. By being able to switch between languages or to read in one language and listen in another, pupils' home languages can be used as a bridge to learn, for example, Dutch, Frisian or English.

2.1 Some pedagogical preliminaries

These guidelines address two educational challenges, to make Irish part of each pupil's "everyday lived language" (the Primary Language Curriculum) and to support the languages of the new Irish to the benefit of themselves and Irish society (Languages Connect). As we explained in Part I, taken together these two challenges imply the adoption of a "plurilingual" approach to language education, which is shaped by four pedagogical principles:

1. The teaching and learning of languages should be grounded in spontaneous and authentic language use: languages are "lived" only when they are used for communicative and reflective purposes.
2. Teaching and learning should draw on all the linguistic resources available to learners.
3. Teaching and learning should acknowledge that languages are discrete entities.
4. Teaching should help pupils to develop awareness of language and of what language learning entails, e.g. by drawing on their plurilingual repertoires to make connections between different languages.

The first of these four principles requires that Irish as well as English should be fully integrated in everyday classroom communication; the second acknowledges that the home language of each pupil is his or her primary cognitive tool and a valuable resource for the class as a whole; the third principle reminds us that the goal of all language education should be to develop the highest possible level of age-appropriate literate proficiency in the languages in each pupil's repertoire; and the fourth reminds us of the importance of developing pupils' reflective and metacognitive skills.

Current theories of second language acquisition differ in their understanding of the cognitive mechanisms that produce proficiency, but they agree that those mechanisms are driven by spontaneous and authentic language use.²⁶ They agree, in other words, that it is impossible to teach languages in the traditional sense; the best we can do is create the conditions that enable pupils to learn their target language by attempting to use it.

Our first priority must always be to involve pupils in genuine communication. This means providing them with the words and phrases that enable them to participate, supporting their efforts to speak (and in due course write), and ensuring that classroom talk is dialogic and exploratory (cf. section 1.3), so that it encourages them to take initiatives.

The more initiatives pupils take, the more likely it is that teachers will be diverted from their lesson plans. This is not something to worry about, however: if language proficiency arises from language use, all pupil-initiated discourse will lead to learning. Its effect may not be immediately apparent, but it will inevitably play its part in the hidden processes of language growth.

In order to meet the challenges of the Primary Language Curriculum and Languages Connect, we need to find ways of scaffolding pupils' attempts to use Irish (and English in the case of EAL pupils).²⁷

²⁶ See, for example, two chapters in J. W. Schwieter and A. Benati (eds.), *The Cambridge Handbook of Language Learning*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019: N. C. Ellis and S. Wulff, "Cognitive approaches to second language acquisition" (pp. 41–61) and J. Truscott and M. Sharwood Smith, "Theoretical frameworks in L2 acquisition" (pp. 84–107).

²⁷ The term "EAL (English as an Additional Language) pupil" is used to refer to all pupils whose home language is neither English nor Irish and who are thus entitled to receive English Language Support.

We also need to include home languages in classroom communication and in due course support pupils' literacy development in those languages. Teachers who are new to this approach may worry that because they do not know EAL pupils' home languages, they cannot understand when they speak and write them and thus cannot provide correction. This fear is, however, misplaced. When, with help from their parents and other family members, EAL pupils transfer their emerging literacy skills from English and Irish to their home language, they produce texts which native speakers of the languages in question judged to be no less correct than texts written by their peers in the country they or their parents came from.

2.2 What supports should the school provide?

A school language policy

The Primary Language Curriculum is a matter not just for the individual teacher but for the school as a whole. It is thus important to develop a school language policy that is endorsed by the Board of Management, shared with parents, and regularly reviewed and updated. We recommend that a language policy document should include:

- a mission statement that acknowledges the central role played by language in education, accords equal status to all languages present in the school, and emphasizes the importance of helping pupils to develop integrated plurilingual repertoires;
- a statement of guiding pedagogical principles similar to those at the beginning of section 2.1 and a summary of their practical implications;
- a commitment to regular review and (if necessary) revision in the light of experience and to accommodate changes in the linguistic and cultural profile of the pupil cohort.

In this way, the language policy document provides an important reference point as a statement of the school's interpretation of the Primary Language Curriculum.

A well-stocked library

Reading plays a central role in children's language development, so schools should provide them with a rich array of age-appropriate books (fiction and non-fiction) in English but also in Irish and EAL pupils' home languages.²⁸ From an early stage in their literacy development, pupils should have access to age-appropriate bilingual dictionaries in English and Irish/home languages.

²⁸ Grants are available from Post-Primary Languages Ireland to buy books in home languages.



Affirmation

It is important that the principal and all staff members (including non-teaching staff) show an interest in pupils' linguistic efforts and achievements: regular affirmation is empowering and motivating.

Initiatives that involve the whole school community are likely to have a greater impact than those undertaken by individual teachers without support.

Documentation of language learning and use

All languages present in the school should be seen on the walls of classrooms and corridors and heard in readings, recitations and performances of various kinds. We recommend that teachers maintain an archive of particularly interesting pupil work – stories and poems, projects of all kinds, portfolios, vocabulary notebooks, personal dictionaries. These can be drawn on for displays and exhibitions and used at staff meetings to inform discussion of school language policy and its implementation. A well-maintained archive can also provide research data for teachers who undertake postgraduate study. There are various ways of organizing a class archive – teachers will have their own preferences – but it is motivating for pupils to be involved in the construction and maintenance of the archive, especially in senior classes. Individual learning also benefits from documentation: there is a sense in which what pupils write in their copybooks *is* their learning. Teachers may find that documentation of learning is easier to manage if pupils use different copybooks for different aspects of their language work, e.g. homework and classwork in one copy, insights into similarities and differences between languages in another, a personal multilingual dictionary in a third. Teachers have also found it useful to keep their own log, recording classroom exchanges and pupil contributions of special interest as well as words and phrases that they learn in EAL pupils' home languages.

Language support classes

It is in keeping with the approach recommended in these guidelines to include all pupils in language support classes: native speakers of English benefit from an intensive focus on language, and they can help to scaffold EAL pupils' communication. Mixed ability groups benefit all learners: pupils with well-developed skills provide a model for those



Using templates of flower petals to create a welcoming recognition of all languages in the school. The empty petals are waiting for new languages.

whose proficiency is less well-developed, and the help they give enhances their own understanding of language. It should go without saying that effective language support classes require close cooperation between language support and class teachers. Especially in the early stages, classes should begin with an undemanding focus on the learners as individuals. If someone has a new coat or shoes or a new soft toy, that may provide a useful starting point for engaging everyone. EAL pupils can be asked the word for coat and shoes in their home language – the teacher should repeat the words and ask whether she has pronounced them correctly. When EAL pupils have begun to read and write, it is a good idea to write down what they say in English and Irish so that their learning is focused on their own attempts to communicate. In due course classes can deal with whatever topics are current in the pupils' mainstream class.

The importance of involving parents

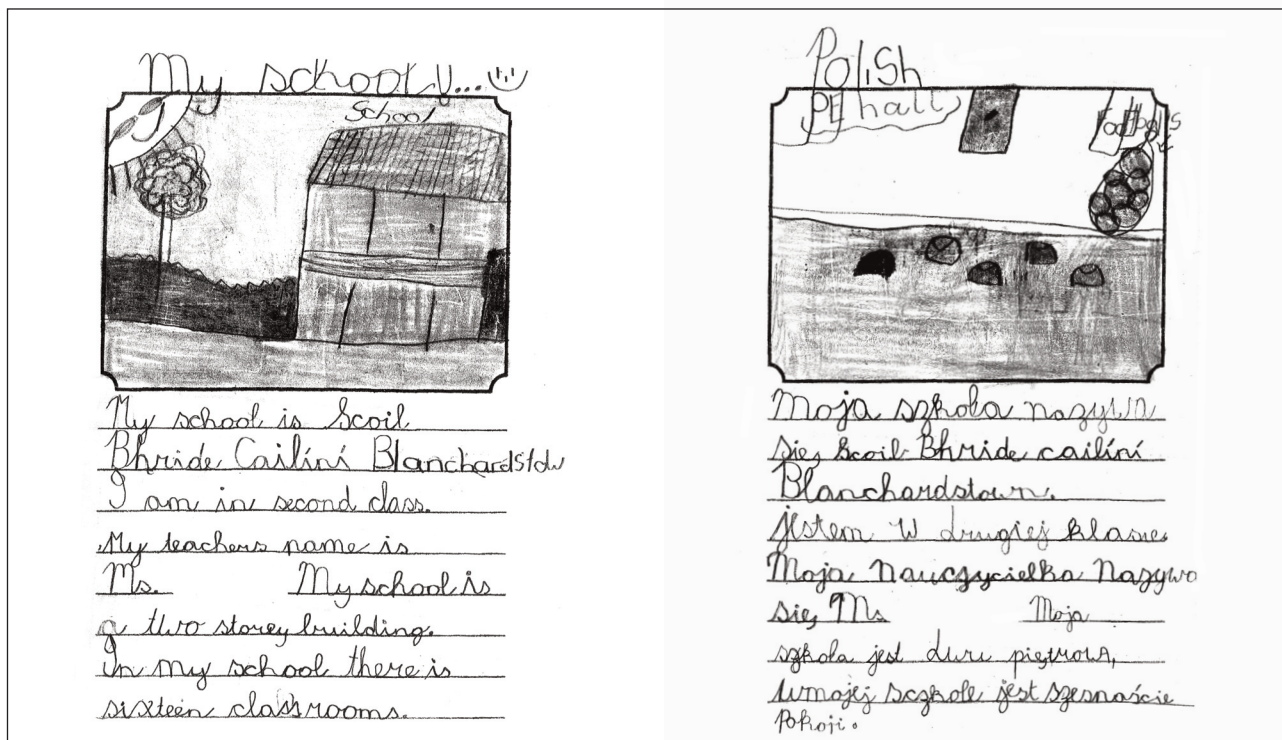
Parents of EAL pupils play an essential role in maintaining and developing their children's proficiency in the language of the home, especially when it comes to reading and writing. They should be encouraged to engage in the same literacy-supporting activities that teachers recommend to English-speaking parents, but in their home language: reading to their children every day, engaging in shared reading and writing activities, encouraging their children to communicate electronically with family members in other countries, and so on. It is important to make clear to them that their home language, in which they are expert, has an essential role to play in their children's development and education. When immigrant parents are unable to provide literacy support of this kind, the school may be able to help, for example by putting the family in touch with literate speakers of the same home language. Parents should be kept informed of the progress of their children's language learning; regular teacher–parent liaison is vital if EAL pupils are to develop literacy in their home language. One way of facilitating communication with parents who are not fluent in English is to create multilingual templates for frequently used messages; other parents are usually willing to help with translations.

2.3 Some activities that work

The plurilingual approach to language education is not a new method that teachers should follow slavishly. Rather, it is a general approach to teaching, learning and classroom communication that is shaped by the four principles summarized at the beginning of section 2.1. By emphasizing dialogic and exploratory classroom talk and encouraging pupils to take initiatives, the approach fosters reflective learning. It is never too early to make pupils aware of what they are learning and why. Even in the Infant classes it's possible to stimulate reflection on learning, its processes and outcomes by regularly asking five questions: What are we doing? Why? How? With what results? What next?²⁹ In senior classes, some teachers have used the WALT ("We are learning to ...") and WILF ("What I'm looking for ...") technique to develop their pupils' reflective skills. At all levels of the school, learning that pupils undertake on their own initiative should always be encouraged and applauded. It is natural that they learn fragments of one another's home languages; they may also teach one another the same song in all the languages of the classroom, or songs from the countries their parents came from.

As we explained in section 1.4, a plurilingual approach to the learning of Irish means providing pupils with three kinds of support: (i) especially in the early stages, interactive routines whose structure and meaning are already familiar to

²⁹ Cf. L. Dam, *Learner Autonomy 3: From theory to classroom practice*, Dublin: Authentik, 1995, p. 1.



Second Class: A description of 'Our School' in English and Polish

them in English; (ii) the regular use of Irish in the delivery and processing of curriculum content; and (iii) the transfer of developing literacy skills from English to Irish via the production of parallel texts in the two languages. A pedagogical dynamic based on these three kinds of support also accommodates EAL pupils' home languages and fosters the development of home language literacy. The dynamic of linguistic interdependence³⁰ supports the gradual development of academic language across the individual pupil's plurilingual repertoire. The next three sub-sections provide examples of activities for each of these support types, and a fourth sub-section briefly describes four ways of consolidating plurilingual learning. All the activities we describe were devised and successfully implemented by teachers in Scoil Bhríde (Cailíní), Blanchardstown.³¹

2.3.1 Using familiar routines and themes to support language learning in junior classes

Greetings

One of the earliest and most natural ways of introducing Irish into an English-medium school is by teaching pupils how to greet one another in Irish using the salutation *Dia dhuit*. This can be extended to all the languages of the classroom by asking if anyone knows a different way of saying *Hello*. The question can be put in context for very young children by asking them to think about what their parents say when they come to collect them from school. Very soon pupils learn that while one child says *Dobri den*, another says *Salut*, a third says *Ciao*, and so on. Pupils are encouraged to tell their parents the different ways in which classmates greet one another. In this way all pupils' languages are acknowledged and children are exposed to a new and important fact: that there are many different ways of performing simple communicative acts. To begin with, some EAL pupils may feel self-conscious when encouraged to speak their home language or volunteer information about it. Needless to say, their reticence should be handled sensitively.

³⁰ P. Ó Duibhir & J. Cummins, *Towards an Integrated Language Curriculum in Early Childhood and Primary Education*, Dublin: National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, 2012, pp. 31–36.

³¹ Many more examples are provided by D. Little and D. Kirwan, *Engaging with Linguistic Diversity: A study of educational inclusion in an Irish primary school*, London: Bloomsbury Academic, paperback edition, 2021.

Counting and addition

Pupils in Junior Infants are expected to be able to count in sequence from 1 to 10 in the language of schooling. They are also expected to be able to identify the various numerals involved and put them in the correct order. Some pupils will already know how to do this while others will not. In an English-medium school, counting will first be taught in English. When pupils can confidently count from 1 to 5 in English, they can be taught how to do so in Irish, and EAL pupils can tell the class how they count from 1 to 5 in their home language. Repeating the task in different languages reinforces basic curriculum learning. It also presents early opportunities to identify cross-linguistic similarities, e.g., *a dó, deux, duo, and trois, three, a trí*. The same approach can be adopted when teaching addition. Teachers should not be surprised or worried if pupils mix languages when they perform simple additions, e.g., *a two agus a two sin a four*. In time and with practice, they will learn not to mix languages.



Colours

Discussion of colours in English can include words for colours in Irish, and EAL pupils can be invited to tell the class the words for colours in their home languages. One way of teaching basic colours is to arrange mats of different colours in a circle and invite individual pupils to jump onto each mat in turn, calling out the word for its colour in their preferred language. The rest of the class repeats what each pupil says.

Days of the week

When pupils have learned the days of the week and their sequence in English, they can be taught their Irish equivalents. After that, they can learn the days of the week in whatever home languages are present in the classroom (parents are usually happy to write down the necessary words in their home language). Experience shows that children enjoy performing simple learning activities multilingually; they find it motivating to learn the languages of their classmates at the same time as they learn curriculum content in English and Irish. Regularly performing simple learning activities multilingually lays essential foundations for the increasingly complex processes of plurilingual learning in later years. Even at this early stage it is a good idea to support oral learning with print; for example, the days of the week should be written in each of the languages of the classroom and displayed on the classroom wall.

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
An Luan	An Mháirt	An Chéadaoin	An Déardaoin	An Aoine	An Satharn	An Domhnach
lunes	martes	miércoles	viernes	jueves	sábado	domingo
lundi	mardi	mercredi	jeudi	vendredi	samedi	dimanche

Senior Infants: Days of the week in English, Irish, Polish, Spanish and French

Food

Snack and lunch breaks provide daily opportunities to discuss food. They are also an ideal time to discuss likes and dislikes in Irish, e.g., *An maith leat _____? Is maith liom/ Ní maith liom*, and to compare the words for various items of food in different languages. When pupils are drawn into this kind of interaction, they very often begin to initiate such conversations among themselves. More formal discussion of food can be reinforced using pictures with labels in English, Irish and home languages. The teacher writes the English and Irish words for different types of food on the whiteboard. Pupils are asked to choose the foods they like, draw them and write the appropriate names beside them. EAL pupils then ask their parents to add the appropriate words in their home language. It is important that work of this kind is always read aloud to the rest of the class: by publishing it in this way the teacher signals the equal importance of all languages and reinforces pupils' interest in languages and their motivation to learn.

Music

Music provides numerous opportunities for pupils to practise their Irish and learn fragments of EAL pupils' home languages. Using topics with which the children are familiar, simple tunes can be used, e.g. "The Farmer in the Dell", to incorporate all the languages of the classroom. Starting with Irish, continuing with home languages and finishing with English, children can repeat the same phrase in different languages all through the song.

When Christmas is approaching, the song might begin:

Verse 1:

Tá Daidí na Nollag ag teacht (x 2)
Hé hó mo dhaidio
Tá Daidí na Nollag ag teacht.

Verse 2:

Le féiríní do chách (x 2)
Hé hó mo dhaidio
Le féiríní do chách.

Verse 3:

Santa's on his way (x 2)
Hé hó mo dhaidio
Santa's on his way.

The words in the second verse are translated by EAL pupils or their parents into their home language. The first verse is repeated and sung, this time in English. Simply by imitating their classmates, all pupils in the class can learn to sing the second verse in everyone's language.

Events in the environment

An important task in the Infant classes is to develop observational skills that contribute to all aspects of pupils' development, education and language learning. Both in the classroom and in the immediate environment, teachers can use pupils' observational capacity to support language learning; using Irish as the language of communication in these situations encourages pupils to associate the language with interesting events. For example, on a walk around the school grounds, the teacher stops and signals to everyone to be very quiet and listen to and/or look at the object of her attention. *Éistigí! Ar chuala sibh é sin? or Féach ar sin! Cad é?* Using body language to indicate what she is listening to or looking at, the teacher waits for a response from the children, who use whatever language they know to answer the question. Their answers are confirmed by the teacher in Irish: *Is éan é. Ta sé ag canadh.* Back in the classroom this event can be used to reinforce the language that has been learned. The teacher asks: *Cad a chuala tú? Cad a chonaic tú?* With her help the children answer: *Chuala mé... Chonaic mé....* Phrases like these can be reinforced until they are a fully embedded part of each child's linguistic repertoire and can be used as the basis for further language development. Encouraging children to draw a picture of the bird and telling the class: *Is éan é*, helps to further reinforce the language involved. Over the course of a week or longer, pupils can create similar pages with drawings of different animals or objects of interest. Stapled together, the pages make a book. Children can then use their books as prompts to recall the Irish they have learnt.

Draw pictures of food.
Write the names in Irish
and English

Butter / Milt
Apple / Ull
Orange / Orláste
Carrot / Cairéad
Cheese / Cáis

Blood / Afán
Cereal / Gránach
Egg / Ubh

Sugar / Súgúr / Spúca
Milk / Bainne
Chocolate / Seachbíd

Senior Infants: Drawings of food labelled in two languages

About Food


Food is what we eat.
Food is apples, peas, carrots, bananas, peppers and more. Healthy food is peas, apples, oranges, tomatoes. My favourite is apples, strawberries, peas, watermelon. Vegetables are carrots, peas, peas, corn, and the cobs. Pev ēdiens. Ēdieni ir tas ko mēs ēdam. Ēdieni ir āboli, zirņi, burkāni, banāni, ēdieni ir zirņi, āboli, speķi, tomāti. Mans mīļākais ēdiens ir āboli, zemenes, zirņi, aubūrs. Dārzeņi ir burkāni, zirņi, kukurūza.

Second Class: Text about food in English and Latvian written unaided in class


There are sixteen classrooms in the school. Our teacher is called Mrs. [redacted]. There are lots of activities in our school: Hurling, arts, Music, Gaelic, Scól Bhríde.

is ainm do mór scoile. Tógadh an sean scoil i 1956. Tógadh an scoil nua i 2012. Is foirgneamh dhá urlár é. Tá 19 múinteoir sa scoil. Tá 16 seomra mangama sa scoil. Ms. [redacted] is aurrebhulmór mhúinteoir.

Second Class: Description of our school in two languages illustrating the transfer of developing literacy skills from English to Irish

<p>有一天在一个很漂亮的小区住着二位小孩子，一个叫蛇沙和可摸私。有一天，一个不好的事情发生在这个美丽的小区上，一个巨大的火龙烧着了，他们又害怕又惊讶！但是，他们要打到大火龙，他们是有信心的！</p>	 <p>Once upon time there lived a girl and the boy in Westerd Village. Their names were Sasra and James. One day a terrible thing happened. A big fierce dragon burned down the village. They were very sad and shocked but they</p>
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Third Class: Dual language storybook written in Chinese (unaided) and English

<p>Na ishte një herë, një vajzë e vogël që quhej Lucy dhe një djalë që quhej Tom dhe kishin një gjyshe që quhej Amber. Ata jetonin në një kasolle në qytetin Waterfall. Një ditë gjyshja e tyre ishte e sëmurë. Amber i tha Lucy dhe Tom që të shkonin në dyqan për të blenë bukë. Dhe ata shkuan. Gjatë rrugës ata dëgjuan një sirenë që këndonte. Ata shkuan tek ajo. Dhe e pyetën "Si quhesh?" Dhe sirena tha "unë quhem Katie".</p>	 <p>Once upon a time there was a girl called Lucy and a boy called Tom with a grandma called Amber. They lived in a cottage at Waterfall Town. One day their grandma was ill. Amber told Lucy and Tom to go to the store for some bread. So off they went. On their way they heard a mermaid singing. They went to her. They asked "what is your name?" The mermaid said "I am Katie</p>
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Third Class: Dual language storybook written in Albanian (with help at home) and English