Education, mobility, otherness

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Foreword

This document has a dual purpose: cognitive, insofar as it proposes a simple – but wide-ranging – model for conceptualising language education policy choices based on the mobility of social agents; and institutional and political, because this model and the illustrations that are given of it in school contexts are not confined to teaching and linguistic aspects. They present an entire educational project in which mediation in its different forms plays an especially crucial role given the centrality of issues relating to otherness and social groups in the first decades of the 21st century.

Some reminders

The early 1990s were hailed, and actually experienced, after the fall of the Berlin Wall and in a relatively favourable economic climate, as a new departure for Europe. Movement and interaction were restored after being interrupted or restricted for a long time and, even if local conflicts were ready to break out, the future looked bright. It was at this time that, for example, a "common European framework of reference for languages", designed to be an instrument of convergence and sharing, came into being under the aegis of the Council of Europe, which was admitting new member states.

Published in 2001 by what was then known as the Language Policy Division, this *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEFR) is certainly one of the reference documents which have had the greatest influence on modern language teaching in the intervening years. So much so that it has become an indispensable point of reference on the European scene and beyond. This international resonance, due especially to the scales of communicative competence descriptors which it proposes, has affected different areas of the social sphere, including qualifications, adult language learning and the language requirements for the admission of migrants or the granting of nationality. But it is primarily in the key context of schooling and education that the CEFR has captured the attention of educational policy-makers, curriculum designers, teacher trainers and test and textbook writers.

The importance taken on by schooling and education was in tune with the Council of Europe's mission and priorities in the educational field: the right to education for all, equality in access to education, and the role of education in social inclusion and cohesion.

It is no coincidence that, in the years following the publication of the CEFR, the work carried out under the aegis of what has since become the Language Policy Unit (LPU) centred on language education policies, the national or regional profiles of those policies, plurilingual and intercultural education, and the diversity of languages in and for education. The result of this has been a much sharper focus than before on the language of schooling (which is also the language of inclusion and integration for adult migrants) and more visible recognition of migration languages and, generally, of the linguistic repertoires possessed by social agents (including pupils at school).

This more wide-ranging perspective has, of course, also led to attention being focused on social, political and ethical aspects which had previously attracted less interest. Taking account of social groups, migrants, disadvantaged groups, lower socio-economic groups, taking account as well of the obstacles to integration of immigrants or to the educational success of pupils, linking quality to equity in education: these are as many significant shifts away from the earlier exclusive focus on foreign languages per se, even if – and this is a strong element of continuity – these issues are still approached from a language perspective.

A new environment

Significant changes have taken place since the early 1990s, when work on the CEFR began, and have not been without consequences for the way language policies are conceived. A few decades and crises later, in a world with no shortage of trouble-spots, new divides are emerging in Europe, together with signs of increasingly inward-looking attitudes, rejection of those who are different, and even tension between states. The values championed by international organisations are being widely flouted. Intra-European migration is less newsworthy than the plight of all the migrants and refugees from elsewhere who are knocking on Europe's door.

Not only population movements but also the internationalisation of trade and the phenomena associated with globalisation (and the resistance which some aspects of the latter encounter) have increasingly clear implications in terms of linguistic and cultural plurality, which are not without consequences for education systems, although in ways, and with nuances, that are generally less positive and generous than in the past.

This document is set against the background of this changing environment. It is one of the outcomes of a project started in 2013 with the aim of building on the CEFR's achievements in terms of concepts and proposals by focusing specifically on the linguistic notion and activity of mediation. This initiative needs to be seen in the new context.

An overall conception

Despite its success, the CEFR has not been without its critics, particularly as regards certain uses of the proficiency scales or the legitimacy of using this tool in very different educational contexts from those obtaining in Europe (such criticism most often stems not so much from the CEFR itself but from a lack of adequate understanding of the conditions of its use for particular purposes). Yet, however much the uses of this instrument may have been questioned on occasion, the actual CEFR model and the underlying conceptual framework, outlined at the beginning of this paper (see 1.1.), in which communication and learning are part of an action-based model, remain very widely accepted.

Hence, building on the achievements of the CEFR clearly does not mean re-assessing the conceptual basis for its proposals, but rather, on the one hand, elaborating on and updating the descriptors it contains and, on the other, repositioning the basic model within a more all-embracing view of social agents' learning trajectory and personal development. The first aspect is the focus of work being done by a team co-ordinated by Brian North, and the second is the subject of this study.

The intrinsic value of reflection on the uses of the CEFR and in particular on the important "rediscovery" of the language activity of mediation (a notion with a long history in theories of learning and education) is therefore one of the main reasons for undertaking this study. An ancillary motivation lies in the widening of the scope of the LPU's work in a Europe affected, as we have just mentioned, by processes in which attitudes to migration, acceptance of otherness and inequalities between social groups are overriding concerns. Hence this need for an overall conception, a form of conceptual model which, without making any claim to originality, would apply to different contexts and different types of social agent along their respective migration, career or learning trajectories.

But the focus will be on education, and more specifically on school, in order to test the model, and also because this focus has transversal implications. It is here that young people, as well as developing knowledge and competences (and also by that very process), become aware of the practical implications of fundamental values represented by human rights, respect for diversity and the dignity of others, and responsible democratic participation in the life of the community.

The mobility of social agents

This study proposes a dynamic view of language policies, and specifically language education policies. The two key concepts brought into play here are mobility and mediation. The social agent's mobility

allows him or her to participate in and move between social groups (or communities). It is through this participation and movement that social agents first encounter, in the form of perceived otherness and distance, opportunities and subject-matter for, and experiences of, learning and personal development. Mediation, for which different agencies are responsible and which mainly takes place through language activities, seeks to facilitate the different aspects of this process: supporting mobility and rendering it more free-flowing; approaching and reducing or appropriating otherness; gaining access to, integrating with and participating in communities, possibly having recourse to social networks. The agencies in question, from social agents themselves to institutions, have responsibilities to bear in this process, the exercise of which involves, among other things, acts of mediation.

A general conceptual framework of this kind, designed to describe the paths of different types of social agent, serves no purpose unless it is tested in specific contexts and population groups. We could have chosen the example of migration flows, but we decided instead to focus attention here on the schooling of children and adolescents, another major issue in the language policies of European countries and a field in which the perspective adopted, although not innovative in itself, could possibly offer fresh perspectives.

Choices for school

In this approach, the pupil's trajectory through school and in educational communities is conceived in terms of internal and external mobility, attitudes towards perceived otherness, and the discovery of new communities. This means identifying possible obstacles, problem areas and the points at which mediators and mediation instruments and tools should help everyone to "stay in the race" and make the most of their opportunities despite initial social inequalities.

For the most part, the school we are concerned with here is still the kind inherited from the 19th and 20th centuries. It has walls, teachers, syllabuses, an internal organisation, a certain sequence of learning, and teaching aids and methods which are specific to it. It would of course have been possible to adopt a more predictive or utopian approach and to make assumptions about the impact of digitisation, "big data", self-instruction or standardised online courses and about the commercialisation and privatisation of education or the growth of informal networks assisting knowledge acquisition on a co-operative basis. Yet, however idealised some of the following statements might seem, we wanted them to be realistic (i.e. feasible) for school as, for the most part, it still is in European countries, over and above its diverse traditions. It should not be forgotten, however, that these early years of the 21st century represent a key stage in the technological revolution, which is already significantly changing ways of learning and teaching.

Links with other projects

This analysis follows on from earlier work of the LPU, including not only the CEFR but also the *Guides* published in 2007 (*Guide for the development of language education policies in Europe*) and 2010 (*Guide for the development and implementation of curricula for plurilingual and intercultural education* – supplemented and revised in 2015) and the collection of studies on *The place of languages of schooling in the curricula* (2015). It does not interfere in any way with these instruments, which have a more applied function. It seeks above all to restore the notion of mediation to its rightful place in a set of dynamic relations between mobility and education.

It is for this reason too that, over and above the differences of purpose and approach, it is both complementary to and consistent with the practical proposals being produced at the same time by the team co-ordinated by Brian North with a view to validating descriptors for different forms of mediation calibrated on the six levels of the CEFR. Furthermore, links will undoubtedly need to be established with the model proposed by Barrett *et al.* as part of the *Competences for Democratic Culture* project. These various projects have distinct aims, but each in its own way follows up developments that have occurred over the last few years in the education and languages field at the Council of Europe.

Earlier drafts of this document were read and commented on (often in contrasting ways) by several researchers and specialists, not all of whom are involved in Council of Europe activities. Their opinions were invaluable and provided material for the version presented here, although, to use the hallowed phrase, they are not responsible for the views expressed.

Part One

An overall conception:

The role of mediation

in mobility, otherness, social groups and networks

1. A look back

It is useful to look back briefly at some of the stages preceding this analysis in order to give a sense of continuity and progression to the work done within the Council of Europe's Language Policy Division[1]. We shall begin with a reminder of the CEFR's general conceptual apparatus up until its publication in 2001 (section 1.1), on the one hand, and the input provided by some of the LPU's more recent projects and publications (section 1.2), on the other. Next there will be a brief presentation of the general structure of the model that is the subject of this analysis (section 1.3), followed in the subsequent sections by more detailed discussion and then some illustrations.

This reminder is important because the current document must be seen as forming a continuum with those earlier texts and projects. The CEFR is a kind of starting point for certain key developments that have taken place since its publication. The approach adopted here does not call the CEFR's basic conceptual structure into question, but rather incorporates it, bringing it either directly or indirectly into play. However, the scope here is wider, in that it embraces in addition not only the social and educational dimensions, but also the language and cultural dimensions of the life paths of social agents, requiring, therefore, a more extensive and inclusive conceptual scheme.

1.1. Reminder of the CEFR basic model

The CEFR proposes a general model that is presented as applying both to communication and to learning (of languages). That model may be briefly summarised as follows:

- Communication and learning are the result of actions by a **social agent** possessing **general individual competences** consisting of **knowledge, skills and know-how, existential competence** (later redefined in terms of "attitudes and dispositions") and the ability to learn (described more generally as the "**ability to deal with the unknown**");

- These competences are part of **communicative language competence** which comprises linguistic, sociolinguistic and discursive/pragmatic components;

- Competences are operationalised in context through l**anguage activities of production, reception, interaction and mediation**;

- This activation occurs in social domains divided broadly into the **public domain, the personal domain, the occupational domain and the educational domain.**

- Competence is implemented in the performance of **tasks** related to **texts** (written and oral, texts to be produced, understood, interpreted, etc.) and through **strategies** which the social agent employs or devises for the performance of those tasks;

- Communicative competence is defined as being potentially **plurilingual and pluricultural** in that it calls upon a range of language and cultural resources, which are subject to change and mastered to varying degrees, reflecting the social agent's own experience and involving different languages and language varieties;

- By mobilising and implementing these resources in varied social contexts and in connection with new experiences, social agents increase and develop their communicative competence and benefit from learning opportunities.

It will be noted that although the CEFR was designed, and has been used, above all in relation to the learning of foreign languages, it presents a model that is just as valid for all other forms of language communication. This is why it can be incorporated as it stands into the model with its broad social and educational scope that is being analysed here.

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[1] In 2011 this Division became the Language Policy Unit, a part of the Education Department. To simplify, it will be referred to hereinafter as the LPU.

1.2. The dynamics of socialising agencies

Since 2001 and the publication of the CEFR, in addition to the *Guide for the development of language education policies in Europe* and the *Guide for the development and implementation of curricula for plurilingual and intercultural education[2]*, other changes have taken place in the work of the Council of Europe's Language Policy Division (LPU). Many contributions should be highlighted, in particular those stemming from the conceptions of intercultural competence developed by Michael Byram and from advances relating to the language of schooling as the vehicle for knowledge building in school subjects ("languages of other subjects")[3].

The option chosen here for relating socialisation and schooling is based on a combination of these various elements and with reference to documents published in other contexts[4]. This approach is important in two respects: firstly, the process of reflection is conducted from the dynamic perspective of the social agent's life path from a very early age, and secondly, linguistic and cultural pluralism is seen not as the culminating point, but as the starting point for that life path. The general conceptual framework for this can be outlined as follows:

a) The socialisation of young children is the result of their development through exposure to, and participation in, various **socialising agencies** such as the family, the peer group, the close environment (urban or otherwise), other groupings to which they belong (religious, sports, etc.), the media, social networks, the formation of which is also facilitated by virtualisation technology, mobility (geographical, tourism, migration, actual or virtual) and, last but not least, school.

b) Each of these socialising agencies may vary in terms of the homogeneity of its composition and they may overlap (for example, the family includes, to varying degrees depending on the circumstances, the impact of the media, relations with school, elements of professional life and possibly certain religious practices). Furthermore, within each agency (for example the family, school, television, the local neighbourhood, the internet), given its heterogeneity and the diversity of its members, several sets of values, representations, norms and practices (some of which may be in contradiction or conflict with others) may exist side by side.

c) Each of these agencies, whatever its internal diversity, has a certain relationship to values, conveys representations and has norms of access, behaviour, usage and interaction as well as sociolinguistic and sociocultural characteristics and modes of communication that are to some extent specific to it. Thus the language practices of families (here again, whatever their internal diversity and depending on the particular case and context) differ from those obtaining for children and young people in their peer groups and from those to which they are exposed by the media, or those of chat rooms and text messaging.

d) In the light of these characteristics, socialising agencies can be considered as cultural entities, where a culture is defined as constituting a set of norms, representations, resources and values for transmission to new members, and conditions governing their admission, which are distinct from those of other agencies. Although they are not necessarily shared or accepted by everyone, those

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[2] *From linguistic diversity to plurilingual education - Guide for the Development of Language Education Policies in Europe* (2007)*, Guide for the development and implementation of curricula for plurilingual and intercultural education* (2010)*,* the new version of which is dated 2015: *Platform of resources and references for plurilingual and intercultural education,* cf. www.coe.int/lang-platform

[3] *The language dimension of all school subjects. Handbook for curriculum development and teacher training (2015) ; The place of the languages of schooling in the curricula,* studies by Jean-Claude Beacco, Daniel Coste, Helmut Vollmer, Irene Pieper, Helmut Linneweber-Lammerskitte and Piet-Hein van de Ven (published as separate brochures in 2010, as a compendium in 2015). Other documents placed on the *Platform of resources and references for plurilingual and intercultural education*.

[4] This approach is prefigured in *A European reference document for languages of education?* (2007): www.coe.int/lang → List of Publications. It goes without saying that this conception makes no claim to originality: it draws on numerous sociological studies.

characteristics are recognised – even if non-explicitly – by the members of that culture as belonging to it, even if they disagree with them, since the very fact of contesting them implies their recognition.

e) In the process of identity building and identification that socialisation entails, the child's role is far from passive. The child becomes a more or less active member of several social groups stemming from or linked with socialising agencies; in entering new groups and moving between groups he/she develops into a "fully-fledged" social agent.

f) Apart from considering "communities" as defined in the narrow sense by geographical, ethnic, religious or other criteria, we are therefore led to **view every society as multicultural and every social agent as pluricultural,** owing to the multitude of socialising agencies and the multiple affiliations, or even plural identities, of each individual in modern societies. Children starting out at school already have some experience, practical or otherwise, of linguistic and cultural diversity, whether or not they are aware of it. Pupils are developing social agents with a plurilingual and pluricultural repertoire.

g) School is part of this same dynamic in at least two ways. First, and most importantly, it has norms of access, behaviour, language practices etc. that – with variations according to the context – characterise a school culture. Secondly, each subject taught at school also has its own norms and language practices and introduces pupils to, and initiates them in, a particular culture, such as that of mathematics, history or the study of literature.

h) In school as in society as a whole, **account needs to be taken not only of individuals but also of particular population categories**: vulnerable groups, children of foreign origin and, in particular, immigrant children, young people from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds or children who, although they are not from such backgrounds, have linguistic practices and forms of cultural behaviour that they themselves perceive as being looked down upon or even stigmatised by the institution or their peers.

1.3. Towards an inclusive conceptual model

Thus the proposal for an inclusive model being studied here builds on all the above-mentioned developments. Essentially, this model is organised as follows:

- The learner or **social agent** learns, constructs an identity and evolves through a process of **mobility that takes various forms (school, professional, social, etc.)**.

- Through mobility, social agents experience different forms of what they perceive as **otherness** (foreign or unfamiliar behaviour, scientific knowledge that they find incomprehensible), which they may wish or need to reduce or appropriate.

- That mobility takes place within **social groups** or **communities**[5] through an introduction to and participation in new communities. Social agents and groups must deal, at the various levels of organisation of society, with **institutions**.

- Mobility itself, in other words the encounter with and adjustment to perceived otherness, the introduction to and participation in new communities, presupposes the capacity for cultural and linguistic adaptation and requires/enables the development of linguistic and cultural **skills** and **knowledge**, some of which are new.

- Cultural and linguistic adaptation is not self-evident and it is important that the social agent's mobility, understanding of otherness and inclusion in communities should be facilitated by different forms of **mediation**. In all cases, the aim of the mediation process, defined in the most general terms, is to reduce the gap between two poles that are distant from or in tension with each other.

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[5] The questions raised by this choice of terms (social group, community, etc.) are addressed in paragraph 2.3.1.

- Whatever its modalities, mediation is seen either as aiming to provide access to information and knowledge and to competence building (**cognitive mediation**), or as contributing to interaction, the quality of exchanges and the resolution of conflicts (**relational mediation**).

- These two mediation forms – cognitive and relational – which are not mutually exclusive and are often combined, essentially involve **language as a means of mediation** (as defined by the CEFR, but in a considerably expanded form) within social contexts.

- Social agents increasingly are (inter)connected and belong to **networks**, the activation of which can facilitate mobility, reduce the perception of otherness, reinforce the sense of group belonging or prepare for entry into new communities.

- Mediation activities concern first and foremost the life paths of social agents. They fall under the **responsibility** of other social agents, groups or institutions but also of the social agents concerned themselves.

1.4. Different forms of integration

This model is described as *inclusive*, an adjective that calls for a brief commentary. In this instance it covers – at the risk of an excessive lumping of elements together – very different levels and types of integration:

- As stressed above, the model maintains and incorporates the language communication model adopted by the CEFR[6].

- The concepts used here are interlinked within a single system designed to account for the various types of development involving and affecting social agents.

- Three categories of "players" are identified: the **social agent** (as defined by the CEFR: an autonomous and responsible individual capable of acting within a given social context); the **social group** (composed of individuals but able to act as a group); the **social institution** (considered here as a permanent structure/organisation with a defined function and recognised within a social space)[7].

- It is accepted that the (inter)action of all these "players" (social agents, groups and institutions) is based on the competences they possess or acquire and also the **responsibilities** that they have to assume, including in the area of mediation[8].

The aim of a model with such a general architecture is to cover situations that at first sight may appear to be very different. It is equally valid for different social agents, including, in particular:

- the young child undergoing an initial process of socialisation within the family or peer group or on the occasion of sporting or religious activities or exposure to the media (see section 1.2);

- the child during schooling and the introduction to different subjects, in parallel to other forms of socialisation and learning outside the school framework (this will be addressed in Part Two).

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[6] In addition to the notion of mediation, it is this conception of the social agent as an autonomous and responsible player with a plurality of communication skills and plurilingual and pluricultural experience which provides the inclusive link between the current conceptual scheme and the CEFR.

[7] We will come back to this notion of institution and to the relations between social agents, groups and institutions in section 2.3.5.

[8] The notion of responsibility is extremely important for the overall conceptual framework being developed here. The social agent is presented as having rights, as well as duties and responsibilities. The same is true of groups and institutions; however, during the schooling process, as explained in the Part Two, there is a degree of polarisation between, on the one hand, pupils' right to a fair and high-quality education, and on the other, the responsibility of school and, more broadly, of society as a whole to provide that education.

- the migrant worker, refugee or asylum-seeker along his/her path: from preparing for departure, through the hazards of the journey, to becoming familiarised – or not, as the case may be – with the different (administrative and professional) groups and bodies in the host society;

       but also

- the tourist, the company executive posted abroad;
- the fan of fiction, of virtual worlds, of "escapism" through art[9];
- etc.

Clearly, the intention is not to elaborate in detail upon each of these examples in order to illustrate how it can be incorporated into the general model (at least as regards those elements that fall within the scope of the model), although such an illustration would be possible. Neither is there any intention of confusing the issues: a company executive posted abroad obviously enjoys forms of support that are cruelly lacking at every stage of the path followed by most migrant workers or refugees. But it is precisely the fact of drawing attention in this way to the discrepancies between situations (including in much less obvious cases than that of these differences of treatment) that may serve as the basis for a critical comparison or as an argument in favour of (re)mediation.

The following developments can be divided into two parts. The first part examines each of the concepts contained in the model in turn and explains the relationships between them. What makes this examination all the more necessary is the fact that the terms used to designate most of these concepts are used in an expanded or distorted sense compared with the way they are "commonly" understood. Reference will continue to be made in this first part to a range of different social contexts.

The second part focuses directly on the school context and on the trajectory of the pupil as a specific social agent who is learning and developing. It will be seen that, from pre-school through to the end of compulsory schooling, the proposed model offers a form of analysis of the processes at work. School functions in principle as an institution that initiates and accelerates present and later forms of mobility. It exposes the pupil to perceived otherness and helps him or her to appropriate it. It introduces the pupil to new communities while contributing to his or her integration and civic participation in society as a whole. In addition to the multiple social challenges involved in education, school is presented from this perspective as an important agency for mediation based extensively on language in all its forms and functions.

2. Mobility, otherness, social groups and networks: Major notions in an overall conception

Mobility, Otherness, Groups: the order in which these three terms are introduced is neither random nor insignificant. In addition to reflecting the model's dynamic structure as briefly presented in section 1.3, it brings out certain discrepancies in relation to the conceptual scheme informing the CEFR: mobility is barely present in the CEFR, groups are virtually absent from it and otherness is included, but lacks prominence. On the other hand, there is no doubt that while the notions of mobility, otherness and groups are routinely referred to today and their usage is often as vague as it is common, they were less in the forefront of the languages and education field in the 1990s when the CEFR was drafted[10].

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[9] It should be pointed out that the CEFR model is also considered as being cross-cutting in scope and that at its level of description it is relevant for the same examples of social agents, from the young child to the fan of virtual worlds.

[10] With the exception of the first studies of foreign language education conducted by the Council of Europe, at least some of which were designed to support language learning by adults as a response to their mobility requirements.

A fourth term, as we have seen, needs to be added to the system comprising mobility, otherness and groups. This is the term network, denoting a link between social agents that can take different forms and has to do with mobility, groups and the relationship with otherness. However characteristic it may be of the contemporary scene, it seems that network should not be placed on the same level as the other three terms. The manner in which it is dealt with will place it in a somewhat separate position.

These three or four notions are posited as structural elements in an overall conception of an education for linguistic and cultural diversity coupled with experience of such diversity. By overall conception we mean a perspective integrating the different activities and lines of inquiry pursued by the LPU in the last twenty or so years. Provided we specify their scope, Mobility, Otherness and Groups can serve as organisational elements applicable both to the education sector (and that of languages in education and knowledge building) and, in particular, to the migration sector in its linguistic and cultural dimensions (a sector that this document will refer to only incidentally).

Other key notions will need to be revisited and repositioned in relation to these three components, together with network-related issues. The notion of assessment will be addressed and considered here rather as a system for facilitating, impeding, endorsing etc. forms of mobility. But the decisive notion will be above all that of mediation, to the point that it will form the centre of gravity of the scheme that this study attempts to construct.

The approach adopted will seek to be fully consistent with the values upheld by the Council of Europe, in particular those of democratic citizenship and participation – which includes and presupposes critical thinking, with all that this implies if it is genuinely and actively applied – and the related values of social inclusion and cohesion.

2.1. Mobility of the social agent

2.1.1. The various forms of mobility

The notion of mobility is one which is heavily drawn upon in contemporary thinking, particularly in the context of globalisation and the movement of material and cultural goods, individuals and populations, ideas and ideologies[11]. It is considered in its various forms, as illustrated by the numerous adjectives used to qualify the term, which do not fall into homogeneous categories. Thus, to mention but a few, **mobility may be physical, geographical or migratory** (involving actual physical movement), **professional, school or education-related** (change of position, duties, school, course) or **social** (change of role and status in society, including of a transgenerational nature). Mobility may also be **virtual** (with communication technologies), or even **imaginary** (for example, inspired by works of fiction)**.** In general terms, it consists in a movement by a social agent or group to a different "space" or "world" (in the broad sense of the terms)[12].

In the area of language-education theory and the relationship to language policies it should be noted that the notion of mobility has been the subject of recent studies, dealing in particular with transnational student mobility or migratory phenomena, often in relation to the notion of otherness[13].

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[11] The work of American sociologists has focused above all on the professional and social (in particular transgenerational) dimensions of mobility. Reference may be made to Forquin (1997) for the sociology of education as illustrated by the research of American and British authors.

[12] Two quotes illustrate the general approach to mobility adopted by this analysis: Bourdin (2004) defines mobility as "*changing position in a real or virtual space which may be physical, social, axiological, cultural, affective or cognitive*", and stresses the relationship between increasing mobility and individuation. Fol (2009) notes that "*Park sees mobility as a factor for both enrichment and diversification of individual experiences, entailing by definition a risk of destabilisation*".

[13] See, in particular: Murphy-Lejeune, 2004; Gohard-Radenkovic, 2007; Yanaprasart, 2009; Zarate, Lévy & Kramsch, 2008).

It will also be noted that although mobility is somewhat absent from the CEFR (as published in 2001), it played a prominent role in the 1997 preparatory study on plurilingual and pluricultural competence[14].

In keeping with the perspective adopted here and in order to more precisely define the uses to which this notion is put in the present model, a few cross-cutting observations are called for[15]:

- The term mobility may have negative connotations. Thus in times of economic crisis, professional geographical mobility is often seen as a risk to the stability of the employment market and one of the hallmarks of destructive economic liberalism. Other circles value mobility because it provides the opportunity for new experiences and shakes up the status quo in a positive way. Mobility does not have the same meaning for everyone.
- Mobility may involve crossing a border[16] or a barrier of some kind and require controls, a right of entry or specific conditions of admission, and this may be the case in a wide range of mobility contexts: passport, visa and language requirements for migrant workers; school report, teachers' opinion and entry test for pupils moving to a new level of study[17]. Such forms of mobility may become factors for discrimination, failure or dropping out if they do not work, but also a source of satisfaction and progress when they are successful.
- The most extreme forms of mobility, involving a move to an environment perceived as totally "alien", will, provided the encounter with otherness proceeds smoothly and successfully, lead to the establishment of new reference points, the building of new networks and admission to new groups.
- These forms of mobility are also cultural in that they entail, in addition to a change of environment (physical, virtual, fictional, academic or institutional), new norms, systems of representation and forms of behaviour specific to those environments, as well as access to new social spaces.
- And this, precisely, is the framework in which language and cultural skills come into play, because all forms of mobility are greatly facilitated for those who have such a linguistic and cultural "capital" to draw on. And the various forms of mobility in turn constitute a kind of "mobility capital" that may prove to be of value in itself, for example in a professional career.
- Furthermore, the various impediments to some forms of mobility (breakdown of the "social elevator", "glass ceiling" in women's careers, etc.) are no longer taken for granted and are now perceived as societal problems in need of a solution.

These different points are of course relevant for the specific case of the relationship between mobility and school.

2.1.2. School as a factor for and accelerator of mobility

As a place of learning and personal development, school is a social institution with the task of promoting individual mobility and contributing to social change[18]. In keeping with the democratic conception of the right to a quality education, school is a factor for change through the promotion (in the original sense of the term: to advance, to push forward) of individuals and for the progress (moving

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[14] *Plurilingual and pluricultural competence* (Coste, Moore & Zarate, 1997). The section devoted more specifically to mobility is the work of Geneviève Zarate.

[15] This approach to the concept makes no claim to scientific orthodoxy. Although this study proposes definitions for the notions being introduced, it also uses illustrations and approximations (which is consistent with what it has to say about mediation). The components of the model must be allowed some leeway and flexibility to ensure their adaptability. It is by implementing the conceptual apparatus in practical situations that the necessary adjustments can be made.

[16] We know that physical mobility these days, including in Europe, may also be impeded by equally physical barriers such as walls or barbed wire, when it is not by losing one's life at sea.

[17] In what follows, we have chosen to limit the references made to school contexts, which form the subject of Part Two in which each of the three major notions is considered in terms of its relationship with mediation.

[18] It is not surprising therefore, that in communities anxious to preserve an established order, school may, for example, be closed to girls or reserved for the families in power, or organised in such a way that it functions as a place for reproducing the existing hierarchies when it comes to allocating status and places.

forward) of the community. Through the knowledge and know-how it is expected to help pupils develop it must prepare them to move and act within the social space. In its curriculum and methodology it must be capable to a degree of anticipating the future needs of society[19]. Through the values it conveys, it must also prepare pupils for living together in a democracy. All these aims require that school be perceived as an agency for and place of mobility.

It would be naïve to take the usual official statements about the goals of an education system at face value. For example, the much-extolled principle of "equality of opportunity" in movement between schools, choice of courses, etc. is not always reflected in actual school careers. School in some cases appears in reality to guarantee a form of social reproduction[20] or even to aggravate inequalities, by enabling some pupils to move forward faster while slowing down or even blocking the advancement of others.

The way in which families and the pupils themselves perceive the latters' chances of mobility within and beyond the educational system also have an effect on pupils' educational paths. Individual plans and expectations vary depending on the context, social background and how well the family is informed about schools, existing courses and possible job opportunities. The sociocultural differences affecting pupils' plans for the future, the way in which pupils adjust their level of expectations or ambitions to their own perception of the jobs they can aim for given the position they are starting from are well analysed and documented phenomena, although this does not of course mean that they should be considered as normal or ineluctable.

But school itself, through the image that it projects back to the pupil of his/her own performance and abilities, can encourage the pupil to revise his/her initial ambitions for mobility at school, and beyond, either upwards or downwards. Forms of assessment, marking, oral and written remarks, repeating a year (where this exists) all play an important role in nurturing or discouraging pupils' motivation to progress and also to consider learning opportunities in terms of mobility.

Similarly, but more directly, it is necessary to consider the way in which an educational system organises curricula and guides pupils towards courses that are more or less long, more or less valued, more or less open in terms of the career choices that they lead to. While contributing to the effective mobility of pupils within the school system, it leads to a strong diversification of educational paths which, particularly when this happens at an early stage without there being bridges between those paths later on, has consequences for the system's contribution to social mobility[21].

2.1.3. Assisting with mobility

The pupil at school is considered here as an evolving individual and a developing social agent engaged in a complex process comprising several forms of mobility, who must acquire and activate multiple competences, of a linguistic nature in particular, in order to complete the educational path successfully. Conversely, it is this path which makes learning possible: there is learning potential in the very fact of entering new areas of study or new environments.

As an institutional body with the responsibility, among other things, of triggering, supporting and facilitating pupils' mobility, school must strive to:

- build knowledge and develop competences in school subjects;
- provide access to the communities of practice (see section 2.3.3.) constituted by these disciplinary areas; and, of course,

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[19] Clearly, these needs can change rapidly and during an individual's professional life it may be essential to adapt to new jobs. Hence the importance of preparing for adaptability, of lifelong education and of a basic education that is not oriented too soon towards a specific profession.

[20] See, in particular, Bourdieu & Passeron (1970).

[21] These questions are the subject of numerous statistical and qualitative studies and of an equally large number of debates on the sociology of education. This analysis will not go back over the same ground. See, inter alia: Bourdieu & Passeron (1970), Dubet (2010, 2014), Forquin (1997), Boudon (2011, 1973).

-   provide openings to employment, as well as offering vocational guidance and facilitating personal choice.

But school also has the function – by no means the least important – of transmitting the values of which education is the custodian, for example by preparing pupils for living harmoniously with others in society and for active democratic citizenship.

Whatever the context and even – indeed above all – in cases where the education system appears to confirm or aggravate social inequality more than it guarantees the equality of opportunity it aspires to promote, it is important wherever possible to remove the impediments and barriers to internal mobility at school and to put into place the measures for achieving that. The second part of this document aims, among other things, to analyse in greater depth how the mediation activities of the different agencies (teachers, pupils, social groups, institutions) can achieve this.

The objective is to identify those sensitive areas or times where mediation measures are necessary in order to best ensure the different forms of mobility in educational paths. To this end, the key players – teachers and learners – have to develop or further develop particular competences. Institutional agents (school heads, inspectors, curriculum developers, etc.) and collectivities (families, associations, community groupings, etc.) also have parts to play, responsibilities to fulfil and competences to contribute. However, all these forms of mobility, and the types of mediation that support them, essentially call on a diverse set of language resources which are all the more in need of attention in that they are generally neglected.

2.2. A broad and relativist conception of otherness

2.2.1. Broadening and relativising the notion

The notion of otherness has been central to many recent studies, at least in the French literature[22]. Nevertheless, it is not always clearly defined. It generally denotes that which is other, new, alien, unfamiliar or different.

The word is used here to signify "**character of that which is other**", but this calls for two qualifications:

-   **"otherness" is not restricted to other human beings;**

-   **it is assumed that this "otherness" is always other in terms of how a social agent (or social group) perceives or views it,** in other words, otherness is a psychological construct that arises when a difference of some kind is perceived and emphasised due to the situation and/or the individual's psychological processes.

Indeed,

-   in the "ability to deal with the unknown" as defined in the CEFR (of which the "ability to learn" is merely a specific case), it is clearly understood that this unknown, **that which is perceived as different, can be an individual, a group or a culture, but also knowledge to be acquired or a work of art to be discovered**;

-   and the difference concerning that which is regarded as "other" is not necessarily an intrinsic difference, but, in a perspective of otherness, a difference perceived by me or by us, a difference relative to a subject who perceives, thinks and acts. It is in my perceptions, in interaction and action, that I encounter what represents for me different forms of otherness: interpersonal, intercultural, interlinguistic, interdisciplinary[23], interprofessional, etc. The stress on "inter", referring to an interlinking dimension, is important, but the difference perceived may be of a cultural, cognitive, aesthetic, social or other nature. In other words, it is the individual who draws

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[22] In particular: Aden (2009), Chini & Goutéraux (2011), Coste (2009), Férréol & Jucquois (2005), Goï, Razafimandimbimanana & Huver (2014), Groux & Porcher (2003).

[23] The adjective "disciplinary" and compounds such as "interdisciplinary" are used here as derivatives of "discipline" in the sense of "academic or scientific discipline" and therefore refer primarily to school subjects.

the boundary, and that boundary may not be the same as for another person from the same cultural group.

2.2.2. Otherness and the relationship to otherness

This broadened and relativised concept of otherness (without pre-empting what the relationship to the concepts of mobility and group will yield) calls for some further observations:

- The relationship to what is perceived as otherness may be chosen and intentional, but also accidental, unexpected, unavoidable or imposed.

- The perception of otherness may tend to see it in absolute terms (the other is viewed as a definitely alien homogeneous entity or to relativise it (the other is partly alien to me, to varying degrees).

- The relationship to otherness may be perceived as one of parity or equality, or it may be a relationship of the dominant/dominated type (in one direction or the other).

- It may give rise to extremely varied reactions and attitudes: interest, curiosity, involvement, hostility, indifference, rejection, etc.

- The relationship to otherness may also be viewed in terms of its effects, which, here again, can be described in different ways: alteration, transformation, absence of change, accommodation, assimilation, incomprehension etc.

These observations also apply to the relationship to individuals, groups, knowledge and practices. They concern both the school and work contexts as well as migration situations.

2.2.3. Forms of mobility and perceived otherness

For the mobile social agent, mobility may take different forms in terms of its relationship to perceived otherness:

- It may be movement in familiar places (or places regarded as such), which are not perceived as "other" and in which behavioural, linguistic and cultural routines are sufficient to be able to operate.

- It may be movement involving the mobilisation and application of knowledge, competences or cultures which are already present in order to deal with that which is (relatively) new. This involves simply activating abilities that are easy to contextualise.

- It may be movement where the perception of otherness is stronger, requiring adjustments through inference or transfer or the testing of hypotheses by trial and error on the basis of existing resources, knowledge and competences. These adjustments vary in nature: behavioural, linguistic, cognitive, cultural etc.

- It may be more disruptive movement giving rise in the event of contact with extreme otherness to rethinking or destabilisation, or causing more drastic shocks.

This graduated list of possible situations reflects a kind of continuum between fluid types of mobility and forms of mobility where the relationship to otherness is less smooth.

2.2.4. Otherness in the educational context

In an educational context, there can only be learning of that which is perceived at first sight to be "other", strange or foreign. Just as any learning process is linked with a process of mobility, all learning presupposes an encounter with otherness and an effort of reduction, approximation, and ultimately, appropriation of that otherness. The perceived otherness encountered by the mobile social agent appears at first to take the form of resistance (difficulty, obstacle, but perhaps also an attraction and a challenge). And this is where mediation comes into its own as a means of reducing the distance or facilitating a contact between the mobile social agent and that otherness.

As for each of the other concepts being examined in turn, one cannot adopt a mere conciliatory vision of school as far as the notion of otherness is concerned. By the very nature of its functions, school is a place in which there is a concentration of that which may be perceived as other: the knowledge, know-how and dispositions that the education system has the job of conveying (forms of cognitive otherness) are by definition other, as are the pupils in all their diversity who are brought together by this same system (forms of relational otherness).

It is here that differences of social origin are likely to be felt. A given pupil or group of pupils may, owing to a privileged family and socio-cultural background, not perceive the otherness of subject matter or of an aesthetic form that may appear radically foreign to another pupil or group from a working-class background[24]. Similarly, in terms of distance from/closeness to or relative familiarity with the genres and forms of discourse used at school and in an academic environment, the same social distribution is encountered.

In some contexts pupils confronted with perceived otherness, rather than seeing it as an incentive to learn, an opportunity for education and discovery, consider it as something to be rejected or stigmatised, something that is inappropriate and impossible for them to appropriate. The subjects and forms of such rejection vary. It may relate to a particular school subject: the pupil may have a mental block due to a perceived lack of a "gift" for the subject ("what's the point of trying, I'm no good at languages ", "I'm useless at maths"), or else the syllabus content may be considered unacceptable, for example on religious or ideological grounds[25]. Or, within the school or class itself pupils or groups of pupils may be bullied by others because of their origin or religion, a possible handicap or their supposed sexual orientation. The second part of this analysis will take a closer look at these phenomena, which may spread due to increased mobility and the cultural, ethnic or religious super-diversity that can result, particularly in certain urban areas.

2.3. Groups as social spaces of experience and learning

2.3.1. Social agent and group

While it is true that the introduction of the notion of social agent into the CEFR (and the fact of regarding all learners and students as social agents) constituted a significant shift in ideas about communication and learning[26], it is equally true that social agents' membership of and participation in social groups and their relations with other social groups were initially not more fully developed.

It was only gradually, as a result of the attention focused on regional, ethnic or religious minorities, migrant populations and socialising agencies, as well as on academic disciplines as communities, that the need to position the individual social agent in relation to a multitude of social groupings became apparent, in order to account for the language and cultural competences which every social agent will

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[24] One must be careful when using the term working classes, *milieux populaires* in French. To characterise this term we refer to the criteria proposed by Olivier Schwartz (2011), which are in line with our own approach. He describes them as "*a broad set of population groups with three characteristics: low professional or social status, limited economic resources – without this necessarily signifying poverty – distance from cultural assets and first and foremost from school, even if these days that distance is relative*". His qualifying remarks are equally significant: while pointing out that the risks of social relegation have increased since the 1980s, he notes that, "*even in the more modest categories of the social hierarchy, acculturation in the school context, permeability to the mass culture transmitted by the media, the experience of a wide range of contacts with 'customers' in the service sector – because many members of the working classes are employed these days in the service sector – have taken on considerable proportions. The world in which these categories live has also been affected (…) by processes leading to (…) disenclavement, opening up and an intensification of the relations between its members and the outside world*" (Schwartz, 2011).

[25] In this latter case, rejection is often not just on the part of the pupils, but also on the part of the families and/or community groups and their representatives.

[26] For a critical analysis of the advantages and limitations of introducing the notion of social agent, see, in particular, Zarate, 2008.

come to develop in his or her personal life path. ***These various social (sociolinguistic and sociocultural) groupings will be brought together as the third structural element under the heading and notion of "group"***.

We propose to define a **group as a set of individuals forming a social community** (occupational, academic, religious, sports or social club, etc.) **perceived and/or perceiving itself as being, in some respects** (e.g. shared interests, common characteristics or objectives) **different from other groups within a given society or a wider social structure.**

The choice of vocabulary is not self-evident. French, for example, has, among others, the terms *groupe*, *groupement, collectif, collectivité, communauté*. In the previous versions of this analysis the latter term, *communauté* – community – was used at first. Finally it was decided to use the word (social) group, which is more neutral than others (at least in French) and more firmly established in sociology and social psychology. However, we have allowed ourselves to use, in context, the term *community* (in particular in regard to the notion of community of practice) or *collectivity*, as long as the possible connotations are relevant or do not cloud the issue.

The fact that a group is composed of individuals perceiving themselves as sharing common characteristic or interests in no way makes it a homogeneous and consensual body. A given community – a peer group among adolescents, members of a sports club, pupils in a class, participants in a social network, etc. – may have one function or certain activities in common while at the same time being very heterogeneous in terms of origins, family background, attitudes towards religion, language biographies and individual language practices.

On the other hand – to repeat what was said about socialising agencies (see section 1.2) - every group operates according to certain more or less consensual rules, possesses its own norms, which vary in terms of their strictness and explicitness, and has values, rules of conduct, its own partly distinctive linguistic characteristics and, often, distribution of roles. It may have a history and pass on traditions. It has conditions of admission, here again varying in terms of their formality. In other words, the family, the peer group, school, the learned society, the religious congregation and the professional association differ amongst themselves in terms of their norms and conventions, including where language is concerned. Seen from that angle, every group is at one and the same time a cultural community and a discursive community.

Individuals have a greater or lesser margin of freedom in that they can comply with the rules in force to varying degrees; or even, they may not accept them completely or they may refuse them outright: their position can go from "centrifugal" to "marginal" or even to one of "exclusion", meaning that they no longer belong to the group.

2.3.2. Intergroup relations

Any group can also be a space of rivalry, power relationships, breaches of conventions, transgression of norms, rejection or exclusion. Similarly, the relations between groups can be marked by good neighbourliness, indifference or mutual unawareness, but also by domination, intolerance, stigmatisation and even extermination. Furthermore, groups define themselves and each other by comparison or in contrast to other groups of the same nature (mathematicians, for example, like to distinguish themselves from physicists). And the development and dynamics of relations between groups over time are also subject to wide fluctuations. The rejection of another group does not necessarily depend on actual contact between groups: there is no shortage of examples of self-contained, homogeneous groups which, based on firmly entrenched images and stereotypes, condemn and exclude, almost on principle, foreign groups with which they have no relations and about which they know virtually nothing.

Focusing our attention once again on the social agent, we must assume that the individual develops, becomes socialised, learns and grows through the experience derived from his or her introduction to and participation in new groups, i.e. in a process of mobility (see section 1.2). He or she in turn affects

those groups and contributes to their development. The distinction between *group of belonging* and *group of reference* links up perfectly with the notion of mobility. The group of belonging is the group of which a social agent forms part (it being understood that he/she is a member of several groups). The group of reference can be defined in particular as a group of which the social agent is not (yet) part, but to which he or she aspires or which he or she is led to join, in other words a group which can be a trigger for mobility (for example, upward social mobility or a plan to move to another country) from (or out of) a particular group of belonging.

2.3.3. Communities of practice

The notion of *community of practice*[27] was introduced in academic literature and taken up and adapted in the managerial field. It can also be taken up for our present purposes. It is a useful notion in that every community of practice is posited as an area of participation where learning is achieved thanks to the social sharing which takes place there and the collaborative construction of a repertoire of resources related to a common field. This is a particularly apt description of the learning contexts and interactions taking place in the educational area.

For example, combining different notions that have just been mentioned, we can say that the maths class is a community of practice where, based on a certain distribution of roles, the (primarily verbal) social interaction that takes places serves to build knowledge; this situated cognitive work is not simply due to the teacher's initiatives, but is a collective activity in which material and technological artefacts can also play a part. This is known as distributed and shared cognition[28]. So, in the case of the maths class as a community of practice, it can also be postulated that, for all students, the class represents one of their communities of belonging and that the mathematicians' community of practice acts as a community of reference in terms of knowledge building and mobility in the school curriculum. Viewed from this angle, all learning consists of initiation and active inclusion in a community of practice and continues through introduction to, and movement within, other communities of practice.

2.3.4. Belonging to multiple groups and individual positioning

Groups can be more or less compartmentalised, more or less open and more or less permeable, but **the degree of autonomy, development and new learning which the social agent can achieve depends partly on the number of groups to which he or she belongs, on the manner of his or her participation, and on the contacts, overlaps, bridges or tensions that exist between these groups of belonging.** Individuals who belong to several groups cannot simply be understood in terms of the collection of individual groups to which they belong: one has to refer to the unique positioning of each individual at the intersection between his/her multiple groups of belonging (for example, a young Belgian Christian

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[27] This notion is attributed to Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998). "Communities of Practice can be defined, in part, as a process of social learning that occurs when people who have a common interest in a subject or area collaborate over an extended period of time, sharing ideas and strategies, determine solutions, and build innovations. Wenger gives a simple definition: "Communities of practice are groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly." Note that this allows for, but does not require intentionality. Learning can be, and often is, an incidental outcome that accompanies these social processes". (http://www.learning-theories.com/communities-of-practice-lave-and-wenger.html)

[28] Research into distributed cognition assumes that cognitive phenomena transcend the individual processing of information and include interaction between individuals (human and social environment) and material resources, including information technologies (physical environment) (Hollan, Hutchins and Kirsh, 2002). Source: http://edutechwiki.unige.ch/fr/Cognition:_un_processus_situé,_distribué_et_perceptif. It seems legitimate to take the view that, although they are derived from different fields, the notions of community of practice and distributed cognition are compatible both from an epistemic standpoint and from that of learning and education. See also Mondada and Pekarek Doehler, 2000. It will also be noted that, although the notion of situated cognition is closely associated with the input from modern technology, the idea of collective, distributed knowledge building may be found in such authors as Bruner (1990), for whom this is due to the cultural nature of knowledge and, hence, of its appropriation. For Bruner, "coming to know anything is both situated and distributed".

woman with a Congolese family background may have her own specific concerns and be looking for very different answers than may be the case for other young people, other Belgians, other Christians or other Congolese).

2.3.5. Society, institutions and communities

This analysis has identified three "agissantes" social entities: the agent, the group (or community) and the institution. The latter has been only briefly defined (see sections 1.3 and 1.4) as a "permanent structure/organisation with a defined function and recognised within a social space". Here it denotes, in restrictive fashion, within a given society, the established structures that provide a public service, or are public authorities and/or transmit to society, or impose upon it compliance with, values that are collective in scope. School, obviously, is one such institution[29].

This raises questions such as that of the relationship of multiple groups to the same society or the existence of universal norms and values overriding the plurality of norms and values of what might be termed specific local groups.

The traditional distinction between community and society has been frequently revisited since Ferdinand Tönnies[30]. Whereas the community, according to Tönnies, is a quasi-organically structured whole, society is a group of autonomous individuals with divergent interests adhering to collectively agreed forms of regulation. Seen from this perspective, community and society are not opposite poles; fundamentally, society's distinguishing feature is that it is an overlaying structure that subsumes communities, but without absorbing or reducing them.

Obviously it would be naive and misleading to act as if, in relations between society and groups, the latter were all on the same level. Many groups may be looked down upon, stigmatised and ignored by society and institutions and may become scapegoats in times of crisis, while others are valued and favoured.

On the other hand, it is clear that groups and individuals may also fail to identify with the society to which they officially belong; that, in this age of worldwide webs, groups may, as it were, outflank societies and undermine their subsuming dimension; and lastly that, on the one hand, individuals may identify with several societies (at the same time and/or in their lifetime) and, on the other, the existence of diasporas means that a group which identifies itself as such may also perceive itself as belonging to several societies[31]. Mobility effects can be seen again here in the group/society relationship, with all that this entails in terms of conflicts of norms and values and levels and types of belonging.

Here again – should it need stressing – education systems, both at central level and at the level of schools and classes themselves, are in no way immune to the issues raised by the relations between society and communities. On the contrary, their responsibility is directly engaged: whether it is a question of making allowance, or not, for religious practices or cultural specificities (diet, dress), or the fact that segregation between neighbourhoods leads to forms of segregation and relegation at school, to the detriment of social diversity, clearly we are dealing with societal issues that fall entirely with school's scope of responsibility.

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[29] To the extent that it is compulsory and involves all social agents, school is in a certain respect a cross-cutting institution embracing all groups.

[30] Tönnies, F. *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft. Abhandlung des Communismus und des Socialismus als empirischer Kulturformen, [1887]; [²1912 Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft. Grundbegriffe der reinen Soziologie, Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, Darmstadt 2005].*

[31] A form of community that has existed down the ages but is also typical of modern times, the diaspora is a phenomenon whose economic and political importance is growing, a development facilitated by the new means of communication and, therefore, closely related to mobility and networks.

2.3.6. School and communities

A constituted society has a history and endeavours to hand on the social bond and collective contract on which it is based from one generation to another. At the same time, it must anticipate and look ahead to the future by preparing the new generations. For countries that have forms of public education, it is obviously to school that a responsibility falls for ensuring social inclusion, cohesion and participation and preparing for the exercise of citizenship. To the extent of the resources allocated to it, school is a central agency in the relations between the collective entity bound together by the social contract and the social agent with his or her multiple groups of belonging.

In many European countries, under the authority of their governments, schools in the 19th and 20th centuries were tasked with creating, if not uniformity, at least a degree of homogeneity among citizens. Now schools must find the ways and means of contributing to a society in which people live harmoniously together, without denying social agents the right to belong to the different groups with which they identify, while recognising and promoting forms of intercultural participation[32].

In such a perspective, one of the challenges countries face in terms of language is the recognition and use of a common language (or languages) allowing the members of the "national community" to communicate with and understand each other, but without ignoring or stigmatising the languages, linguistic varieties or characteristics of the groups that constitute society as a whole, in particular at school. This is clearly the aim pursued by the Council of Europe's LPU when it postulates that – in addition to the language of schooling with its internal variations – minority and regional languages and languages of migration, as well as foreign languages, are all languages of education that have their place at school. The Language Education Policy Profiles established for numerous member states and regions have enabled that principle to be put to the test as a logical step towards the goal of a plurilingual and intercultural education.

2.4. Some specific and cross-cutting features of situations

The generic notions employed hitherto are obviously not intended to erase the considerable differences existing between the different situations. It is in no one's interest to confuse the economic mobility of a single migrant arriving in a country where he/she hopes to find work with the social mobility of an employee who goes up a rung on the departmental ladder, or with the virtual mobility of a young person chatting with other adolescents all over the world, or with the forced displacement of a population of refugees or asylum-seekers fleeing a war zone or a dictatorial regime.

But however diverse these situations may be, they all share a number of features which are of relevance to this study. Indeed, in all cases:

- these forms of mobility involve social agents who have a history and a background and who, on becoming mobile, possess, among other things, language competences, cultural experiences and established cultural representations;

- the movement gives rise to discrepancies between the pre-existing language and cultural competences and the requirements involved in adjusting to the new context, whatever name they may take: accommodation, inclusion, integration, assimilation, progression;

- there is a need and often a demand for transparency as to the explicit conditions or hidden agenda of the rites of entry and passage to the new group;

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[32] In a different perspective, Dubet (2006: 635) underlines a change in the role and conception of the institution: *"The world of values, vocations and schools as sanctuaries for a long time created an 'institutional syllabus', whereby the universal nature of culture engendered disciplines and modalities of learning in which obedience on the part of individuals was the precondition for their future autonomy. This syllabus no longer functions: the process of massification has opened school up to the world; diplomas and courses constitute 'markets'; children and young people are recognised as social agents and the nature of institutional socialisation has changed".*

- part of the knowledge, skills and know-how, existential competence (*savoir-être*)[33]/ dispositions and attitudes of the individuals and groups in a mobility situation is called upon and put to the test, and has to be expanded, adjusted or even reconfigured to a greater or lesser extent;

- mobility may fail for reasons to do with the social agents or groups involved and/or the receiving groups, or indeed the groups of origin (requirements set, conditions of entry, admission controls and procedures, etc.)[34];

- the chances of long-term success of this entry into a new group through a process of mobility are all the greater if the characteristics of the group likely to constitute an obstacle or give rise to resistance are identified as such by the "new arrivals"[35].

2.5. Networks

Social agents have mainly been understood above as members of a plurality of groups. It is this membership of a plurality of communities (and hence, in the approach adopted here, a plurality of cultures) which enables them to avoid the dangers of confinement to a single community and confers on them their specific attitude and dynamics in the various interactions, movements and (im)balances permitted by that multiple belonging. But at the same time, depending on the individual's origins, life path and socioeconomic circumstances, the room for manoeuvre varies, as does the ease of coping with the experience of multiple belonging.

At this point in our study, we need to look more closely at a notion already touched on several times, that of network. We intend neither to limit the scope of this term to social networks such as those operating on the web nor to interpret it exclusively in terms of social capital (the "address book")[36]. More generally, **a social network is the set of agents with whom that individual has direct links (he or she is actually in contact with those other agents) or indirect links (he or she can only contact them through members of the direct network)**. For many analysts, networks are – increasingly – a level of social expression and action which needs to be distinguished from that of groups and that of social agents as such.

A social agent's network may be intra- or intergroup, and it may even comprise, as it were, "altergroup" elements: a candidate for migration to a country with which he/she is totally unfamiliar may have, in his/her networks, family members or family acquaintances who are already in the country in question and are "integrated" there. In a mobility dynamic, having networks with a dimension of otherness is an advantage, and a mediation strategy will consist in capitalising on that advantage. Familiar expressions such as "knowing someone" when looking for a job, when changing jobs or career direction or when seeking access to someone in a position of power refer to this way of using networks and it is clear that **the notions of network, strategy, mediation and mobility are of relevance here,** and that while maintaining networks also depends on exchanges of services or favours, networks presuppose, in the

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[33] See CEFR Chapter 5.1.3 'Existential' competence (*savoir-être*)

[34] Here again, we should mention the linguistic and cultural factors in these difficulties or possible failures: unrealistic language tests prior to departure for migrants, sometimes unduly difficult cultural questionnaires for access to nationality, language requirements for an assignment or job in another country or even for a new position within the same company, etc. And there is no shortage of examples of early orientation, based on linguistic criteria, towards "low-value" courses in the case of pupils from an immigrant or disadvantaged background with a poor command of the language of schooling.

[35] It has already been noted above that perceived otherness does not always correspond to an actual differentiation and that, conversely, a supposed familiarity may prove deceptive. Hence the importance, repeatedly underlined in the literature, of attitudes and dispositions, but also strategies, allowing social agents in a situation of mobility to find their bearings, lay down markers and test interpretative hypotheses as they seek to make sense of the workings, players and institutions of the new community: what they need, in other words, are skills of discovery and the disposition of an ethnographer.

[36] As defined by Pierre Bourdieu. *Le sens pratique,* Éditions de Minuit, 1980.

first instance, verbal contacts and modes of communication, both ritualised and informal, between members.

As regards maintaining links with groups of origin, networks – and in particular the new social networks – play important roles in ensuring the continuity (or resumption) of relations with family members and friends still in the country and the regular use of languages and varieties of origin. An important role is played also by satellite and other television services and the use of mobile phones and email with the diversity of formats and genres with their varying degrees of standardisation which this plurality of media and ways of transmission allow, in the reception and production modes, as the case may be. These contact and virtual mobility media offer new and extensively utilised opportunities to communities and social agents formerly separated by physical distances which lead to diaspora-type situations and possibly also to language loss and cultural distancing[37]. Furthermore, it sometimes happens that, in the resumption of contact and relations now made possible by social networks and technologies, it is a foreign language common to emigrants and members of the community of origin which serves as an intermediary, some emigrants having lost their language of origin.

Thanks to the technological possibilities, contemporary social networks have undergone considerable growth and diversification, blurring boundaries and varying between a diary open to all (blogs) and types of community of practice in which forms of mutual assistance, interpersonal help or collective learning operate more as a forum. Dating sites offer an interesting example of sites which may be visited on a one-off, short-term or "functional" basis, but where lasting, intensely emotional relations may equally well develop. It is doubtful whether one can still talk about networks in this particular case, just as, in the case of professional networks or networks based on shared interests (football fans or practitioners of a hobby), what is formed is actually a community. In short, technologies, in their rapid development, lead to uses which blur or erase overly strict categorisations and render the scene all the more complex.

In all cases, however, **forms of language communication emerge, codified to varying degrees by the platforms used or by users themselves**, and codes of conduct are put in place either by regulators or by members of the network themselves.

Needless to say, schoolchildren are – indeed increasingly so – users of and major players in networks, not only outside school, but also in parallel to and within it. But one must not think of these usages in terms of increasing uniformity of practices or gradual disappearance of social groups of belonging. These are, and will doubtless remain, sociologically distinct.

3.   Mediation, competences, cultures

The term and notion of mediation have been brought into focus several times in the preceding sections, but no real definition or description of their place in the conceptual apparatus that is the purpose of this study has been given so far. The explanations put forward – more in the form of a series of approximations than a linear set of arguments – in order to characterise mobility, otherness, groups and networks have laid the necessary groundwork for a more direct discussion of mediation. It is now appropriate to address the issue forming the centre of gravity of the proposed conceptual scheme, for which the notion of mobility provides the essential dynamic. The issue at stake here remains the social agent's life trajectory and the ways and means of facilitating it in its linguistic and cultural dimensions through measures that are of a cognitive or relational nature.

3.1. From one form of mediation to others

In the CEFR, the notion of mediation is defined as referring to the language activity of *reformulating, orally or in writing, for the attention of one or more third parties, an oral or written text to which those*

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[37] Which, of course, as noted above, does not mean that all "remote" agents choose to maintain links, even if they have the technological means to do so.

third parties do not have direct access. This may take the form of a record, summary, translation etc. Mediation is therefore the production of a text from a source text for the purpose of transmitting its content (if only in condensed form). This operation is fairly distinct from the other activities and it is significant that the CEFR does not contain scales of descriptors of proficiency for this activity like those that are proposed for the activities of reception, production and interaction[38]. In the logic of the CEFR, this linguistic and communicative mediation involves the/a foreign language. There can therefore be mediation within the foreign language, from the foreign language to another language, or from another language to a foreign language. In the perspective we have adopted in this document, the notion of mediation takes on a much wider scope, although this does not invalidate the sense in which it is used in the CEFR.

3.1.1. *Mediation as a reducer of distance*

Mediation can be defined as any procedure, arrangement or action designed in a given social context to reduce the distance between two (or more) poles of otherness between which there is tension[39] [40]. This tension may be due to the failure of one of the parties to meet the requirements of the other, to incomprehension or ignorance, to conflict or to unfamiliarity with phenomena, content, rules, norms etc. This reduction of distance and tension therefore covers a wide range of processes that are firmly embedded in various areas of social life: legal mediation, social mediation, conjugal or family mediation, intergenerational mediation, urban mediation, diplomatic mediation, economic mediation, etc. While mediation is mainly discussed today in connection with conflict resolution[41], its scope is not confined to this more spectacular aspect that receives the most media attention.

The notion of (inter)cultural mediation has been actively studied in the context of language and cultural learning in particular, but not exclusively, in relation to transnational mobility phenomena[42]. It will be recalled that Michael Byram and Geneviève Zarate introduced the notion of cultural mediator, a role they define as one of the objectives of language education.

The "poles", used here in the generic sense of the term, may refer:

- either to social agents on the one hand and to forms and types of perceived otherness on the other (new knowledge, different cultures, "foreign" values),

- or, on both sides, to individual social agents, social groups or institutions between which there are tensions or which are seeking contact (with the different forms of interaction allowed by these combinations: agent/agent, agent/group, agent/institution, group/group, group/institution, institution/institution).

In all cases at least one of the two poles is an individual or a social agency (social agent, collectivity, institution) and in all cases, third-party mediation as a means of reducing the distance between two poles also involves social agents (such as the teacher in the relationship between a learner and new knowledge) or social agencies (such as the school board in a dispute between a family and a teacher), with or without socially produced artefacts (e.g. internal regulations or a set of instructions). What we

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[38] The process of producing mediation descriptors has now started, in particular in the framework of an LPU project with Brian North as the coordinator. See also Maria Stathopoulou's study (Stathopoulou, 2015), which includes perspectives on plurilingual assessment.

[39] The term "tension" here is used in the totally non-negative sense of the state of "tending towards" or "moving in the direction of".

[40] In some, cases, mediation can help in understanding and accepting the distance, without for all that reducing it, and there are also circumstances in which the process of mediation serves, as it were, to accentuate the distance and render it more irreducible (for example, in connection with a work of art which defies normal interpretation). This is not inconsistent with the generic definition proposed here.

[41] It has become virtually a discipline in its own right with its own specialists and professionals.

[42] Byram, 1997; Zarate, 1993; Byram & Zarate, 1997; Zarate, Gohard-Radenkovic, Lussier & Penz, 2003; Zarate, Lévy & Kramsch, 2008, 2011, Zarate & Lévy, 2003. These inputs have not been re-analysed here in detail but played a decisive role in the present process of reflection. See also Garzone & Archibald, 2014.

wish to stress is that, for example, in the relationship between mobility and otherness, mediation is not confined exclusively to the relations between teacher and learner but also involves other levels and agencies within the educational community.

The function of teacher, just like that of textbooks or of any other teaching material, proposed exercises or even the pupil's peers in the case of group work – **indeed, the role of any school arrangement or measures – is to provide mediation between pupils and the knowledge, know-how, dispositions and attitudes (*savoir-être*) that they need or wish to acquire**. The tension that exists between the pupil and the knowledge may just as easily be due to curiosity, the desire to learn and the thirst for knowledge. Acquiring that knowledge requires successive approximations (in the various senses of the word) or processes of reduction of the distance between the learner and the elements of knowledge to be mastered. That reduction is imprecise to start with but becomes gradually more effective.

3.1.2. *Relational mediation and cognitive mediation*

Thus it may be postulated that the fundamental task of knowledge transmission and building and the appropriation of that which at first sight is perceived as otherness involves a series of operations that can be described as **cognitive mediation**. The management of interactions, relationships and even conflicts and, more generally speaking, everything pertaining to a reduction of distances between individuals, facilitating encounters and cooperation and creating a climate conducive to understanding and to work falls within the scope of a form of mediation that can be described as **relational mediation**. Relational mediation may, of course, also have a role to play in the school context as helpful to or a prerequisite for cognitive mediation.

But cognitive mediation and relational mediation both involve linguistic and semiotic reformulation, a form of **language mediation** working with terms, texts and discourse genres[43].

The institution with its diverse levels and bodies has a major responsibility for the functioning of school within the local educational community and the overall education system. The exercise of that responsibility implies a whole effort of mediation vis-à-vis social groups, teachers' organisations, parents' associations and the representatives of various communities. And that institutional mediation (in which, for example at the local level, the school head plays a decisive role), involves both a cognitive dimension (information to convey, new developments to explain), relational aspects (conflicts to resolve, a consensus to be sought) and, of course, a language component.

3.1.3. *Mediation and groups*

As already pointed out, there may be inputs of knowledge and a transmission of values, but also rivalry, power relationships and conflicts of values:

- within a group of belonging;

- between the groups to which one and the same social agent or group belongs;

- or between certain groups of belonging of the same social agent or group and a group of non-belonging (whether a group of reference or not);

That being the case, for a given social agent (or group) it may be necessary to exercise mediation within a group, between groups of belonging or with groups of non-belonging. Simplifying in the extreme, one might say that family or conjugal mediation is generally intragroup, social mediation intra- or intergroup, and diplomatic mediation inter- or altergroup. The situations in which mediation agents operate are obviously more complex than such a three-way division implies, but with an eye to the development of descriptors – and, in particular, descriptors relating to language competences and resources – this type of distinction may have some merit.

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[43] Cognitive mediation and relational mediation are therefore types of mediation that both involve forms of language mediation and can occur in different sectors: diplomatic mediation, conjugal mediation, economic mediation, etc.

3.1.4. *Diversity of mediation agents and means*

Mediation appears in many guises and calls on a range of means:

- **Professional mediator figures:** teachers, legal mediators, translators, popularisers, journalists (one part of their role), social workers receiving economic migrants or refugees, tourist guides, etc.

- **Informal mediation agents**: peers, siblings, parents when it comes to helping schoolchildren, established members of an immigrant population when it comes to helping newcomers with their integration, etc.

- **Instruments of mediation:** dictionaries, bilingual texts, contracts, charters, school textbooks, popularisation programmes, simulators (e.g. for training aircraft pilots), role games (e.g. in language teaching), etc.

- **Special mediation arrangements:** reception or initiation classes for pupils who do not speak the language of the host country, special tuition or teaching support for pupils in difficulty, language courses in preparation for a study visit to another country, sessions for managers and negotiators in international trade contexts to raise their awareness of intercultural relations, etc.

3.1.5. *Mediation and alteration*

Mediation is concerned with the "space between". It is more than a go-between function and more than a kind of filter because, mainly as a result of linguistic variation and reformulation and cultural information and advice, **it tends to modify the position of the two poles and bring them closer together through a process of two-way alteration**, both sides being affected by change. Part Two gives illustrations of the teacher's role as a mediator. In the case of conflict resolution, to take another example, the mediator's task, based to a large extent on a process of discursive moves through reformulation, is to reduce the distance between the two opposite poles and achieve a form of consensus through compromise.

The word "alteration" seems important here in that it implies a "becoming-other": otherness cannot be reduced without change, without self-alteration, without the self also becoming to some extent "other". In the case of students, this is actually the function of learning: learning is a (trans)formative process. But they cannot learn unless the perceived otherness of the object of learning is itself modified by the mediation process, if only temporarily.

To take the example of the integration of foreign immigrants into the national community, with mediation agents and arrangements contributing to that integration, the goal of the integration process and the interpretation of the term "integration" itself often suffer from ambiguity depending on whether the aim is to assimilate (the foreigner must integrate with society, which does not have to adapt to the new intake) or to transform (the integration of the new intake is perceived as requiring a dynamic adaptation on the part of society). Two possible and opposite goals or effects: assimilation of the foreigner by the host society, on the one hand, or a double process of alteration transforming both the foreigner and the national community, on the other.

Whatever its methods, agents and goals, the mediation process is based on strategies which may be individual, collective or institutional: strategies by professional mediators, strategies by each of the parties involved, strategies by teachers and learners, strategies of argumentation, exposition and narration etc. In most cases, implementation of these strategies involves verbalisation. Furthermore, however, because the process has recourse to variation of forms, diverse discourse genres and operations to reduce the gap between the respective language practices and resources, mediation, whether it is intra-, inter- or altergroup, gives rise to a profusion of language mixes and adjustments with a strong learning potential.

3.2. Competences and cultures

The 2007 document (section 1.2., footnote 4 above) established a relationship of partial mutual involvement between cultures and competences, with both referring to knowledge, know-how and skills, and attitudes and dispositions. Competences were posited – in the traditional way – as potential abilities and resources that could be mobilised for categories of actions, and cultures as ways of perceiving and behaving and as involving norms, entry conditions, etc.

3.2.1. Intra- and intercultural competences?

It may therefore be seen from **what has been said about groups that they fall into the category of cultures and that social agents participating in several groups are considered as pluricultural individuals** (see also section 1.2) who have developed competences which:

- allow them to act and interact within each of the groups to which they belong;

- help them to move between these different groups of belonging;

- are called upon (with varying degrees of success) in their mobility towards other groups which are new to them (especially groups of reference).

The competences developed by social agents are therefore, if these distinctions are accepted, **intracultural** in the first case (within a group of belonging) and **intercultural** in the second case (movement between different groups of belonging)[44]. Where the third case is concerned, since what is involved is contact with a new community and confrontation with a form of otherness, we will take the liberty of referring to "**altercultural**" competence.

However, another, less compartmentalising and more dynamic, approach is to posit the existence of a single (pluri)cultural competence comprising intra-, inter- and altercultural dimensions. This second approach has the dual advantage of not compartmentalising (pluri)cultural competence and allowing for movement between its different dimensions, mutual influences and change. Hence, if the social agent's intra- and intercultural capital, enriched with altercultural aspects, has enabled him or her to enter and be included in a new group, the intracultural functioning of this new community of belonging will in principle increase his or her competence potential, intercultural capacity and resources for other possible altercultural relations.

"In principle", because this cumulative (or indeed exponentially increasing) view of the social agent's development as he or she enters new groups has to be qualified by several of the observations made above referring to the existence of closed and open groups, dominant and stigmatised groups, and chosen and imposed membership. And to the fact that the boundaries between groups may be perceived as more or less permeable or indeed impermeable, more or less legitimate or indeed illegitimate. This perception may determine the social agent's attitude and how effective his/her action is. The social agent's pluricultural makeup is therefore not exclusively one of fluid movement and beneficial combinations. Tensions, obstacles and power relationships are also part of the social agent's internal experience of plurality and, in this field, there is a great deal of inequality, often of a lasting nature, between those whose pluriculturalism proceeds smoothly and might be described as problem-free and those for whom the pluricultural experience is the result of a troubled and painful history.

It has been said that every group also has its own language characteristics which vary in terms of how specific they are, how strict and codified they are, and how permeable or tolerant they are to other

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[44] This distinction needs to be qualified: intercultural aspects are not absent within one and the same group, in that each member is defined as pluricultural by virtue of his/her multiple communities of belonging and that the particular combination of communities to which he/she belongs is specific to that person and different from that of other members of the group: a difference that is conducive to intercultural exchanges within one and the same community. It should also be noted that this internal plurality is what constitutes communities of practice. In other words: however useful the distinction between intra-, inter- and possibly alter- may be in relation to mediation (see section 3.1.3 above), it has its limits when applied to pluricultural competence.

uses. These language variations are dependent on culture while at the same time contributing to its development. In this respect, in contrast to what has often been noted about the CEFR and numerous other instruments used in developing language education policies and in language learning and teaching, here, the cultural dimensions are neither subordinate to the linguistic dimensions nor left aside or "forgotten", but are central to the analysis[45]. In this approach, language competences in their different forms are operationalised within a given cultural entity peculiar to a specific group. Hence, it is also possible to draw a certain parallel between the distinctions made in the case of pluricultural competence and those applying to plurilingual competence. The latter would therefore comprise intracommunity dimensions (language competences and resources mobilised within a given community of belonging), intercommunity dimensions (language competences and resources mobilised in moving between different communities of belonging) and altercommunity dimensions (language competences and resources mobilised in order to gain an understanding of a new community).

3.2.2. Activation of competences and forms of mobility

The development and extension of these two types of competence (pluricultural and plurilingual[46]) depend on the different forms of mobility in which the social agent engages. Whether fluid or not, mobility may call for extensive mediation work. The language adjustments required for successful entry into a new group vary in extent and complexity and mobilise both the cultural dimensions already available and the potential offered by pre-existing language resources. Depending on the circumstances, pre-existing cultural and language resources will be perceived and/or utilised as being more or less suitable for inclusion in the new group.

The distinction "perceived and/or utilised" is important because the conscious use of available resources by the social agent in a situation of mobility depends also on how their potential usefulness is perceived. Moreover, this perception of the possible usefulness of prior learning applies not only to the social agent him- or herself, but also to the receiving community, and, for example, to teachers in their relations with learners. In any event, whether or not this perception is present on either side, and whether or not this conscious use takes place, prior learning obviously has an impact on the ways in which, and the degrees to which, new requirements are assimilated.

Here again, in this competence building process, the cumulative or exponential nature of social agents' pluricultural development and their mobility towards new groups cannot be regarded as self-evident. There may also be a distancing, a break or a sense of rejection, conscious or otherwise, in relation to where they come from. It is not uncommon for immigrant children to reject the language of their parents or for social "parvenus" to conceal their background and break with their origins, or for members of a minority group who join a majority group to conceal their origins (often by moving to a new geographical region where that minority is unknown). Although questioned in scientific circles, the distinction between additive and subtractive bilingualism is well documented, as is the stage of transitional bilingualism. Even in cases where the first language is maintained, the acquisition and active use of a second language which becomes dominant and the effects this has on the first language, which

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[45] The strong and very specific link between language and culture has been a subject of discussion, research and controversy for quite some time, from the hypothesis of Humboldt-Sapir-Whorf to the "neowhorfianism" of the 1990s and numerous more recent analyses and research papers (for a review of these theories and studies: see Risager, K. (2013): Linguaculture and Transnationality - The Cultural Dimensions of Language in Jackson, Jane, ed. *The Routledge Handbook of Language and Intercultural Communication.* Reprint edition. London: Routledge).

[46] Comparing the proposed notional framework to that of the CEFR, we will see that whereas the CEFR referred in somewhat ambiguous terms to a plurilingual and pluricultural competence, this paper distinguishes between the two types of competence but closely interlinks them. Furthermore, whereas, in the developments that followed the CEFR, the pluricultural aspect was disregarded to some extent in favour of plurilingual competence, and an element of dissymmetry was introduced between plurilingual and intercultural competence, what is suggested here is once again a symmetry between plurilingual and pluricultural and, within those general categories, between intercultural and intergroup.

are sometimes perceived in terms of forgetting, deterioration or gradual loss, become an occasional source of guilt, a feeling of betraying one's origins.

This also affects the dimensions of cultural competence. For example, long-established immigrants may have the impression that they no longer understand their culture of origin, that they have lost contact with it and that they are now like foreigners in their country of origin and are perceived by those who were once close to them as having changed, being altered, having become "other". The situations experienced are often very complex and ambivalent, and they are not confined to migration contexts but also include cases of upward social mobility or changes of social class. School trajectories may also give rise to this kind of intra- and intercommunity break in the case of particularly successful students or, conversely, students who drop out or underachieve. Works of fiction and personal history documentaries have not failed to portray this kind of distancing, which sometimes reaches breaking point. Complementing this, however, emphasis is also laid on the importance of intercommunity networks, the maintenance even of loose ties with "friends from before", a particular member of the community of origin, nostalgia for the community of origin, regular returns to the country of one's childhood, etc. All these circumstances, these steps backwards paths, are often accompanied by language variations, the re-adoption of "accents", dialect forms or local intonations of the language of origin, as if to reactivate old, but still vigorous, components of a diverse plurilingual competence.

Part Two

School and mediation

The challenges of mobility, otherness, social groups and networks

in the school context

4. School trajectory and mediation

For pupils, starting school is the beginning of a process designed to prepare them for mobility inside, outside and beyond school through encounters with new knowledge and in a context of collective work.

4.1. Mobility and mediation

Mobility is facilitated and rendered more fluid by the mediation work of various players within an institutional framework.

This help benefits in particular certain pupils whose family values, language practices and cultural capital diverge from or represent a mismatch with what the school offers and who may encounter many obstacles during their time at school. The school as a whole, and teachers in particular, must therefore accept their responsibilities and employ the resources and measures at their disposal to ensure that all pupils succeed[47]. This can be made possible by the two forms of mediation described in Part One:

> **Teacher**
> Can frame the discussion in a group by summarising, elaborating and weighing up different points of view and by outlining possible ways forward. (MD – V17 – 2015)

relational mediation works on relations between individuals and between groups, either to prevent or reduce possible tensions and strengthen social bonds or to establish conditions conducive to the social construction of knowledge; it creates an interpersonal and pedagogical climate which fosters each pupil's development and offers him or her the best possible conditions for learning;

cognitive mediation facilitates pupils' active construction of knowledge by means of appropriate teaching activities, including transmission (presentation by a pupil, a group, the teacher, an expert, viewing of a scientific report, etc.);

> **Teacher / Pupil**
> Can provide an input and formulate instructions that lead participants actively to use explanations given in the input to try and solve problems for themselves. (MD – V17 – 2015)

It is through these two types of mediation that the values on which all education is based and the ethical, affective and emotional dimensions related to experience are made concrete in the act of teaching.

In class, these types of mediation may be performed by teachers but also by pupils if the teaching situation allows (pair work, group work, peer tutoring).

> **Teacher and Pupil(s)**
> Can present his/her ideas in a group and pose thought-provoking questions. (MD – V17 – 2015)

> **School**
>
> *Relational mediation:* Can raise the profile of the languages spoken by pupils and their families (noticeboards, posters) and can present information for parents in a clear and understandable form in several languages.
>
> *Cognitive mediation:* Can explain developments and trends to stakeholders by means of charts/diagrams, setting out its current developments and future plans/projects and justifying its own

The institution itself also seeks to manage the school and its processes effectively and to ensure appropriate relationships with its institutional and community environments by making use of forms of cognitive and relational mediation.

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[47] "[…] the best school is not the one that enables a few children from poor families to join the elite but one in which the performances and school careers of children from poor families are close to those of children from privileged backgrounds", F. Dubet (2009), "Les dimensions des inégalités scolaires", in Montel-Dumont, O. (ed.), *Inégalités économiques, inégalités sociales*, Cahiers français n° 351, La documentation française. See also in *Pisa, Power and Policy* (Meyer & Benavot, 2013) the chapter entitled "The Finland Paradox".

Inherent in the concept of mobility is the dynamic of movement, change and transformation, i.e. the defining feature of any successful education process. However, this multifaceted mobility is only possible if the school assumes its own role as a facilitator of mediation. It is up to the school to set in train the different mobility processes at leach level which it must guarantee its pupils. It is up to the school to prepare its pupils before they experience mobility, to support them during the mobility process and, afterwards, to encourage them to look back critically on their experience. It should be added that it is important also for all players be aware of the decisive cross-cutting role played by forms of discourse and language competences, together, of course, with other competences associated with school subjects.

All mediation takes place through discourse: it involves linguistic and discursive (and more broadly semiotic) dimensions, which need to be recognised and effectively used and managed. For instance, the two descriptors above could describe, in the first case, mediation between school and parents and, in the second case, mediation between a head teacher and another institutional agency (e.g. education authorities) or a community (e.g. parents' association).

4.2. Otherness and mediation

The different levels of education have the same ethical and professional responsibilities: as far as possible to secure the success of all learners. They therefore face the same challenges, but the successive stages in the development of pupils and their school trajectory each require their own response to those challenges.

Focusing on language competences, these shared challenges may involve: learning to read and write and developing literacy skills; being introduced to literature; learning foreign languages; acquiring digital literacy; and constructing new knowledge and competences in subject areas. This places demands on both the languages of schooling and foreign languages – all of them as subjects in their own right and either or both as vehicles for teaching other subjects – and on all school subjects. No teaching and no teacher can evade this responsibility because all subjects are faced with the challenge, among others, of teaching so-called "academic" language. This language typical of school is characterised by terms, turns of phrase and rhetorical conventions specific to particular domains of knowledge, by formalised languages also specific to those domains, and by genres which vary to a greater or lesser extent from one domain to another.

Another major shared challenge is posed by the bilingual dimension of education when regional, minority, foreign and migrant languages taught as subjects are also used to teach other subjects.

A shared challenge which is perhaps even more complex is ensuring that pupils' plurilingual repertoires are used by school as an asset for learning (and not regarded as a handicap) and giving pupils the opportunity to draw on them and think about them in class.

All these shared challenges involve the various forms of mediation and the

> **Pupil**
> *Relational mediation* : Can interact flexibly and effectively in situations in which intercultural issues need to be acknowledged and tasks need to be completed together, by exploiting his/her capacity to belong to the group(s) whilst maintaining balance and distance (MD – V17 – 2015)
>
> *Cognitive mediation* : Can explain his/her interpretation of practices, beliefs and values, pointing out similarities and differences between his/her own and other cultures. (MD – V17 – 2015)

various mediation players referred to above, in particular a holistic school language policy that adopts a common, transversal approach to all language issues.

4.3. Groups and mediation

Seen from a transversal perspective of individual development, intercultural education and education for democratic citizenship go hand in hand with these challenges. The development of critical citizenship accordingly requires the acquisition of a *habitus* through activities that involve mediation dependent on language competences. These include: debate; arguing one's own point of view; offering counter-arguments to others' points of view; rigorous analysis and discerning selection of documents and information disseminated in all types of media and every kind of source; the mediated resolution of differences of opinion or disputes; regular reflection on hate speech; and the adoption of discourse that respects other people.

At the same time, the communal life which the school creates in order to develop the individual and ensure the best possible learning experience for all pupils will lead them to reinterpret, critically and in terms of belonging, their participation in other communities and will prepare them to join other social groups. At each level, one of the key responsibilities of the school and the teacher is to create an inclusive and safe environment that is conducive to learning and, where possible, compensates for the inequalities due to the various external factors which influence learning.

The school also has a duty to offer pupils diverse learning experiences which are meaningful to them. Designed according to different teaching options and adapted to their level of development, these experiences enable them to actively construct the language competences and knowledge that are essential for all learning. It is in the interests of the school and teachers to use such competence descriptors to make explicit their components to the pupils and ensure that they develop them.

4.4. Educational trajectory

Each level of education has its own characteristics and makes its own contribution to pupils' learning trajectory. This includes language enrichment and, more specifically, the development of competences relating to mediation.

The focus in what follows will be on the language resources intended to guarantee that the mediating actions of school as an institution and, above all, those of teachers lead in practice to competences defined by descriptors.

Language development at school will be addressed by level of education, with particular reference to:

- the characteristics of the **mobility processes** at each level and the contribution that school's mediating action can make to their implementation at each level,
- the way "**otherness**" is taken into account - both in terms of lesson content and attitudes to what is new and in terms of attitudes to other people, including interpersonal tension, conflict and discrimination,
- possible ways of putting in place **collective co-operative work** at each level to facilitate mobility processes, get beyond perceptions of otherness and, at the same time, educate in otherness.

Figure 1: Otherness, mobility, communities and forms of mediation
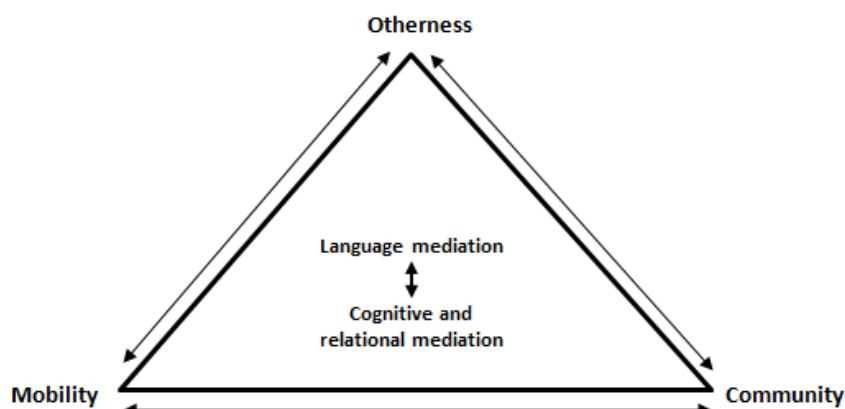
This approach will be illustrated by a number of learning experiences – taken from the *Guide for the development and implementation of curricula for plurilingual and intercultural education* (2015) − to which all pupils should have access. For each experience selected, one or more mediation descriptors will be indicated for teachers and pupils. Other descriptors focus on aspects of education considered of particular interest with regard to the conception of mediation presented here. These descriptors come from a variety of sources: most are taken from the work of the team co-ordinated by Brian North under the auspices of the LPU in Strasbourg, which, among other things, has produced descriptors for the language activity of mediation[48]. Other descriptors come from Council of Europe publications, such as the *Competences for democratic culture* project[49] [50]. Reference is also made to ECML projects, such as PLURIMOBIL and CARAP. Where no reference is made to any of these sources, the descriptors are the work of the present authors. Only the descriptors from the team working with Brian North are calibrated to the six levels for the CEFR, but it has been decided not to specify the level as the validation process is still ongoing. The other descriptors taken from a variety of sources need to be adapted to the stages of development of the learners at each level of educational provision.

The intention is to provide a number of examples which illustrate links – among the countless possibilities – between learning experiences to which pupils should have access and some acts of mediation performed either by teachers and/or pupils, depending on the case.

4.5. Stages of the school career: ISCED Level 0[51] (pre elementary)

Where it exists as a compulsory or optional level, ISCED Level 0 (early childhood educational development[52] and pre-primary education[53]) offers a great potential, which has been confirmed by research findings[54], in terms of ensuring the future educational success of all children.

Teaching at this level is of a general nature and is concerned with the development of social and emotional abilities and preparation for the next level through the use of creative and play-oriented activities and the development of initial forms of reflexivity. In contexts where it does not exist or is not attended by all children, it is for the next level to ensure the measures pinpointed below.

4.5.1. Mobility: towards formal learning in an institutional setting

External mobility[55]

Children enter new communities – school and the class – which have new norms and rules, including where language is concerned, and which offer them their first opportunity for formal learning and their first encounter with social, linguistic and cultural heterogeneity, except in situations where the nature of the geographical situation of the school results in educational segregation. Outings, walks and visits outside school – together with guided observations during and after these experiences – help children to connect school to the outside world.

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[48] The version of these descriptors used here is version 17 of July 2015. They will be indicated in the tables by the abbreviation MD − V17 − 2015 = Mediation Descriptors.

[49] The version of these descriptors used here date from a consultation phase of July 2015. They will be indicated in the tables by the abbreviation CDC − 2015 = Competences for democratic culture

[50] The descriptors from this project being at the evaluation stage, reference is made in the tables to capacities, skills, attitudes, knowledge and critical understanding of culture and cultures.

[51] International Standard Classification of Education, UNESCO,
http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Pages/international-standard-classification-of-educationFR.aspx

[52] 0 - 2 years.

[53] From age 3 to the start of primary school.

[54] According to the PISA 2012 survey, "students who reported that they had attended **pre-primary school** for more than one year score 53 points higher in mathematics – the equivalent of more than one year of schooling – than students who had not attended pre-primary education". (*PISA 2012 Results in Focus − What 15-year-olds know and what they can do with what they know,*. P. 12)

[55] What we mean here by "external mobility" is any process concerning relations between the school and the outside world, whereas "internal mobility" refers to processes of mobility taking place within the establishment.

Internal mobility

Physical movements from one area to another (reading corner, drawing table, shop, kitchen, gym room, chair circle or mat) constitute as many cognitive movements and displacements brought about by various activities which serve to develop a range of skills, such as learning to read through pictures, personal expression through drawing, oral narration or simulation of everyday situations, play, motor skills and listening skills (see Table 1).

Children also become aware of the transitions from one year to the next as stages in a progression, and of the transition to the next ISCED level as the first big hurdle to overcome in their school trajectories.

Virtual mobility

Entering the world of fiction, listening to music from around the world, learning different dance movements, making things by hand – all these things, and others, allow children to travel through the imagination, the senses and the emotions. The verbalisations associated with these activities, accompanied by the teacher's linguistic and cognitive support, are as many bridges between each individual's culture and other cultures.

Table 1 - Diversifying forms of expression

Experience	first forms of oral literacy (short poems, short plays, tales) and other first steps towards literacy (handling and looking at various types of book, albums, etc.)
Teacher	Can make accessible for others the main contents of a spoken or written texts on familiar subject of interest […] by paraphrasing it in simpler language (MD - V17 – 2015)
Pupil	Can express in a simple way that he / she does not understand (MD − V17− 2015)

School's responsibility lies in supporting all these forms of mobility, above all by ensuring their favourable reception by parents – especially where there are differences or discrepancies between the educational outlook of the family and that of the school. Institutional mediation consists in reducing the distance which some parents may perceive in relation to the school and fostering the beginnings of educational co-operation between the school and families by building trust. This dialogue between the two bodies will enable parents, for example, to take on an active role in preserving the family culture (particularly in terms of the language used in the family). This requires the school to be able to adapt its language in meetings with parents, avoiding officialese or over-specialised terms. The provision of information in several languages adds to a welcoming atmosphere, as does the presence of multilingual posters in the school.

Assessment is a complex and delicate process at the other levels of education, with some stages in this process representing milestones in children's school careers and transitions to other forms of mobility. It is not yet present at this level, at least not in its summative or certificative form, which makes it possible to avoid some of the (pernicious) effects of a wrongly interpreted assessment, such as the early stigmatisation of certain pupils. On the other hand, ongoing formative assessment is very important, both for ensuring that objectives are attained and for diagnosing the difficulties experienced by some pupils so that they can be provided with support at an early stage. The teacher's mediation will gradually lead all pupils to reflect on their progress, become aware of what they have learnt and identify what they need to learn, and hence to develop a sense of mobility.

4.5.2. *Otherness: new environment, new encounters, new knowledge, new attitudes*

Children experience otherness in a range of forms at ISCED Level 0: mix of pupils in the class (relational otherness); other pupils' cultures and the culture of the school (cultural otherness); new knowledge (cognitive otherness); and the school's demands on speaking in the **language of schooling** (not speaking too loud or too fast, speaking in turn, learning when to speak and when to remain silent, etc.) (linguistic otherness). A diversification of linguistic knowledge occurs when children take their first steps in

literacy, begin to learn to write and/or acquire a new language – whether it is the language of schooling or a foreign language – and engage in their first metalinguistic reflection activities (see Table 2).

Table 2 – Reflexivity

Experience	first forms of reflection on languages, human communication and cultural identity, which are within children's (affective and cognitive) reach
Teacher	Can formulate questions and feedback to encourage people to expand on their thinking and justify or clarify their opinions. (MD − V17 − 2015)
Pupil	- Can use simple words to ask someone to explain something. (MD − V17 − 2015) - Can explain and clarify ideas. (CDC − 2015) - Can explain why it is necessary to behave in an appropriate and sensitive manner when interacting with another person. (CDC − 2015) - Can explain how different forms of language are used in different situations and contexts. (CDC − 2015)

Children are also called on to use different modes of expression drawing on all their senses (see Table 3).

Table 3 – Multimodal and multisensorial experiences

Experience	restitution in one mode of expression of content registered through another sense (listening to a piece of music and then talking about it, listening to a story and producing a drawing based on it, etc.)
Teacher	Can create a positive atmosphere and encourage participation by giving both practical and emotional support. (MD − V17 − 2015)
Pupil	- Can create a drawing or diagram to illustrate a short, simple text written in very simple, high frequency language and read by the teacher. - Watches other people's body language to help him/her understand what they are trying to say. (CDC − 2015)

It is at this level, where it exists, or at the next (ISCED 1) that pupils' **cultural and linguistic diversity and plurality** present an initial challenge for the school, in that their **repertoires of resources** may not always appear to be "in tune" with what is expected at school. The school's – and in particular each teacher's - first acts of mediation involve welcoming this diversity and plurality as a means for children to pursue a healthy identity-building process, as an indispensable basis for expanding their repertoires and as a source of reflection and enrichment for the class as a whole. The key is to employ appropriate teaching and learning activities to make pupils both aware and proud of their cultural and linguistic capital, whatever it may be, and at the same time both aware and respectful of those of other children (see Table 4). However, the reverse may often occur: some children feel shame with regard to their origins and cultures[56], and, without explicit mediation work, this feeling is likely to be exacerbated by school.

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[56] If the classroom is not the place of mediation advocated here, an immigrant child may not wish to display his/her linguistic and cultural difference and may be ashamed of it and deny in class that he/she speaks his/her first language at home. Roma families often teach their children to conceal their origins in class out of fear of the social stigmatisation to which they are frequently subjected.

Table 4 – Linguistic and cultural diversity and plurality

Experience	acceptance by teachers (and other children) of each child's language(s) and language variety/varieties, and way of speaking
Teacher	Can engage a multilingual group in an activity and encourages contributions in different languages by narrating a story / incident in one language and then explaining it in another. (MD – V17 – 2015)
Pupil	- Can use non-verbal strategies and expressions from other languages to help express his/her reaction to a suggestion. (MD – V17 – 2015) - Demonstrates confidence and ability to deal with challenges and obstacles. (CDC − 2015)

Where cultural and linguistic learning is concerned, by learning a common language – the language of schooling - children are guided towards their first conceptualisations in **different areas of experience**: the language of schooling and knowledge of the world are developed together thanks to the mediation of the teacher (or other school staff) and their constant linguistic scaffolding. Group games, which involve movement and contact with others, provide experiences in which language becomes a relational and cognitive mediation tool, helping pupils to socialise and learn the first rules of living together. Encounters with other children and with their different experiences of the world are so many opportunities for starting to build intercultural reflection. Awareness or learning of a **foreign language** contributes to this.

In the case of migrant pupils, mediation in relation to the language of schooling may be performed by other professional figures, such as linguistic and cultural mediators, in association with the class teacher. In their absence, the help of other bilingual and bicultural persons may be enlisted (other parents, students, retired people, other volunteers). It is for the school to find human resources in the immediate environment to help certain pupils cope with their difficulties when institutional arrangements are lacking.

Basic elements of **digital literacy** are taught through contextualised uses of new technology (sending of emails dictated to and written by the teacher to real or imaginary persons, first experience of using a computer or tablet for children who do not have one at home, collective use for virtual exchanges with other classes, etc.).

ISCED Level 0 helps to narrow or fill any gaps between the knowledge and competences needed for school and those conferred by the family and home environment. By way of example, children's exposure in the family to basic literacy skills (through the reading by adults of short poems, nursery rhymes, stories, albums etc.) varies greatly. Given that the early development of basic literacy is considered – by international research on learning outcomes – as a decisive factor in overcoming adverse effects associated with the family's socio-economic status, ISCED Level 0 is the ideal place to compensate for any shortcomings in family practices in this area[57]. Lastly, ISCED Level 0 can detect specific (and sometimes specialised) needs in some children and provide appropriate support.

Institutional mediation in this field may involve making parents aware of the importance of practices in the family which, together with the work of the school, facilitate these first steps in literacy (reading stories to children in their first language or the language of schooling depending on the circumstances, discussing the themes of the stories with them, asking them to give arguments in support of their opinions, collaborating with the school in building up a circulating multilingual class library by completing stories in the first language).

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[57] For a definition of the linguistic competences which this level of education should enable children to acquire in the language of schooling, see Verhelst, M. (ed.), Branden, K. Van den, Nulft, D. Van den and Verhallen, M. (2009): *Framework of Reference for Early Second Language Acquisition*, Strasbourg, Council of Europe Language Policy Division, under the auspices of the Nederlandse Taalunie - www.coe.int/lang-platform → Language(s) of schooling.

4.5.3. The Class and the Group: learning to live and work with others

This level of education, like all the others, but in its own specific way, is organised around two dimensions: group social organisation and group awareness.

Group social organisation varies according to the activities typically associated with this level: daily routines in large groups, but with provision for individual tasks to be performed by the children in turn; the whole class around the teacher for a collective learning exercise, to listen to a story read to them or express their feelings; games in teams or small groups; singing together; sessions devoted to motor skills; moments of rest and meals taken together.

Group awareness is built in terms of a sense of belonging to a specific class, working group or play team. These groupings obey different socialisation dynamics (co-operation in the successful completion of a joint task, individual responsibility and autonomy, solidarity and, at the same time, competitiveness in team games, etc.).

Contrary to a fairly widespread preconception, *teachers* at this level of education have all the more *responsibility* because their pupils are young, defenceless children in the process of development. This requires the teacher to accept them in their diversity, value them as individuals, provide them with meaningful learning opportunities, support and encourage them in the various forms of mobility, have positive expectations in terms of their educational success, develop a sense of competence and trust in their own abilities, and create a calm, co-operative and secure climate in which everyone can express themselves without fear.

If they are given every opportunity to make their way through school under the best possible conditions, pupils undergo a gradual process of decentring in relation to themselves and what is familiar to them and become more sharply aware of others. With guidance, they can advance gradually towards the unfamiliar, whether this takes the form of experiences, knowledge, competences or people. At the same time, they can gradually learn shared rules and become aware of the fact that living together means establishing and complying with shared norms. They can perform a joint task with others and take on an individual task independently, and they can express their point of view and support it to the extent of their cognitive and linguistic competences. The expression of prejudices, stereotypes or verbal stigmatisations and any incidents involving the exclusion or segregation of an individual or group require very close attention and call for immediate remedial pedagogic action (see Table 5).

Table 5 - Education in respect for otherness

Experience	the norms of interaction within groups (not all speaking at once, knowing how to listen, but also how to get a hearing, etc.);
Teacher	- Can ensure that the language used by children is respectful of others. Faced with critical incidents (expression of a negative prejudice, a verbal stigmatisation, a stereotype or an insult, or exclusion of a child): - Using a carefully selected piece of fiction, can bring out the characters' attitudes and perceptions and compare them with the children's attitudes and perceptions in these critical incidents. - Can guide collective thinking to make children aware of the attitudes and perceptions expressed in these critical incidents.
Pupil	- Listens attentively to other people's arguments. (CDC – 2015) - Can advocate and promote ideas. (CDC – 2015) - Can express their negative and positive feelings and opinions while respecting others and using measured language. - Can correct their manner of expression if they happen to lose their temper.

Institutional mediation takes place within the context of an extended co-operative educational community. This involves, for example, inviting parents to participate actively in the life of the school, if

only through the intermediary of representatives, but also maintaining close relations and co-operation with other outside agencies.

4.6. ISCED Level 1 (primary education)

While ISCED Level 0 can lay solid foundations for every pupil's school career and remedy certain sociocultural inequalities, and although all levels have a specific contribution to make to the pupil's trajectory, it is at **ISCED Level 1** (primary education[58]) that the major educational challenges are posed. In our approach based on the conceptual triangle of mobility, group and otherness, it is not wrong to see this level as possessing the greatest potential in terms of mobility, especially in the case of children who are out of phase with what is required at school: initial inequalities can be corrected more effectively at this level or, on the contrary, seriously exacerbated depending on how the school's and the teacher's responsibility of mediation is discharged (or not). While underachievement may not manifest itself until ISCED Level 2, its roots run deep.

4.6.1. Mobility: acquiring basic skills and discovering school subjects

For pupils entering ISCED Level 1, *external mobility* is seen first of all in terms of entering a new community: a new level and often a new school, involving a change of norms and requirements, including as regards language. This mobility is often experienced as progress and awaited impatiently by pupils because it marks a transition which is perceived as being important and is indeed crucial for the ensuing stages in their education. It is often combined with a change of friends and hence a coming into contact with forms of heterogeneity which differ from those encountered at ISCED Level 0. External mobility also takes the form of outings in the immediate environment – for local surveys, environmental studies or walks – and visits to new places associated with new knowledge (museums, theatres, libraries, class exchanges etc.). Mobility at this level ends with entry into ISCED Level 2, a transition which sometimes constitutes a rite of passage in the form of an examination or test.

Internal mobility consists in moving not only from one school year to the next, as at ISCED Level 0 (and in some cases from one stage of education to another), but also from one subject area to another (reading vs. writing, geography vs. history vs. natural science), sometimes from one teacher to another (language of schooling vs. foreign language), and from one place to another (classroom, gym, swimming-pool, sports field etc.).

Assessment, whose primary function is to check what has been learnt, becomes increasingly important as time goes by. In principle, it serves pupil mobility because it enables necessary remedial action to be quickly taken to ensure that some pupils do not lag behind. The formative assessment practised by teachers on a daily basis to guide them in their work is accompanied by more formal assessment of learning outcomes (at school, regional, national and even international level).

It is for school as a whole to put in place a culture of assessment in relation to various players. The mediation provided by school, and in particular by school heads, involves informing parents properly, in non-technical language, about the primary function of assessment. Its importance needs to be put in perspective and emphasis needs to be laid on its secondary and complementary role in relation to learning. It is often at ISCED Level 2 that the focus on evaluative aspects (marks, position in class etc.) encouraged by some educational traditions influences the attitudes of the various educational partners and deflects attention away from the learning process itself[59]. Where educational legislation permits him or her to do so, the school head is also responsible for promoting a common culture of evaluation among teachers. Lastly, the mediation performed by teachers is an everyday part of their educational relationship with the pupils. Explaining assessment criteria, varying the methods and forms of assessment, stimulating reflection on this subject and introducing pupils to peer assessment and self-assessment practices (see Table 6) are all things that teachers can incorporate into their teaching in

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[58] Pupils aged 5-7 and 10-13.

[59] School is also accountable for the results of its work to other (more or less central) bodies, for which assessment data are important in the running of the education system.

order to prepare pupils for summative, institutional and certificative assessment and for certain conditions governing their future mobility.

Table 6 – Self-assessment and peer assessment

Experience	awareness of self-assessment and peer assessment (of and by peers); developing the practice of keeping a personal portfolio (handwritten, digital, multimedia)
Teacher	- Can systematise self-assessment and peer assessment situations in which criteria are established collectively through argument and debate. - Can develop (or ensure the development of) and use tools appropriate to the different situations (personal portfolio, list of criteria, assessment grid)
Pupil	- Can identify gaps in his/her own knowledge independently. (CDC – 2015) - Provides balanced feedback to improve group collaboration and functioning on a continuous basis. (CDC – 2015)

Lastly, it is essential not to overlook the major role played by assessment in mobility processes, dependent as they are on pupils' perceptions of their own mobility potential and the goals they can set themselves. The family's initial perceptions and intentions regarding their children's "chances" of success and, more generally, what can be expected from school weigh heavily on these young pupils' own perceptions. It is very difficult for some of them to cross this first horizon of expectation when the family has limited ambitions. This applies in particular to working-class backgrounds[60]. And it is already at ISCED Level 1 that the process of adaptation to adults' expectations is set in motion. This process and the goals pursued are conditioned both by the social (and cultural) differences between pupils and by school's capacity to empower pupils, which depends, among other things, on the evaluation methods it employs.

4.6.2. Otherness: basic knowledge and new subject areas

When pupils move to ISCED Level 1, their experience of otherness may include new relationships (with classmates, teachers and other school staff) due to the change of institutional setting and the fact of having to learn a new educational culture with new rules requiring reflection on their part and an adjustment of their behaviour. Their proxemic relations with the teacher become more distant, settings differ according to the particular school activity, and the organisational aspects of the school and the roles of the different staff categories (principal, teachers, cultural mediator, psychologist, nurse, secretaries etc.) stand out more clearly.

The approach to **subject areas** – which, although still broadly conceived, are more explicitly defined than before – constitutes another form of otherness, perceived this time in relation to the knowledge and competences to be developed. The language of schooling – whether used by teachers, by each pupil or by/with peers (see Table 7) – plays a mediating role.

In terms of the **language dimension of all learning,** ISCED Level 1 represents an absolutely crucial stage.

The **language of schooling** is a key medium for the development of basic learning, with the following expected outcomes:

- enrichment of oral language through the acquisition of a wider and more precise vocabulary and the use of increasingly complex syntax
- development of speaking skills and construction of discourse exhibiting coherence and substance
- "technical" learning of the written language and reading (literacy)
- further exploration of the world of fiction – accessed at ISCED 0 – through diversification of reading experiences (albums, tales, short stories, booklets, books for children etc.)

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[60] The term "working-class background" refers here to family contexts whose main characteristics, as defined by historians and sociologists alike, are relationships of domination and cultural otherness. Unless the necessary measures are taken to remedy possible inequalities deriving from these characteristics, the school careers of children from these backgrounds are likely to suffer.

- gradual acquisition of a reading *habitus* through the reading – first under supervision, then more and more independently – of a wider variety of text genres
- continuation of the learning of the poetic function of language begun at Level 0 through word games, rhymes, nursery rhymes, tongue twisters etc.
- production of increasingly long and structured written texts and gradual transition from the writing of expressive texts in the narrative and experiential mode to descriptive texts in a more objectively oriented style
- discovery of a certain number of textual genres representing the main subject areas typical of this level of education, including maths and arithmetic (textbooks)
- initial development of information processing skills by reading daily newspapers and listening to and watching radio and television programmes designed for children.

None of these forms of language learning, which are decisive for the future, can be taken for granted. The competences and knowledge to be acquired differ to varying degrees from pupils' previous experience and are by no means confined to formal literacy and numeracy practices, however crucial these may be.

Table 7 – Learning to read and write / literacy

Experience	initial reflection on the discourse genres of school (textbooks, presentations, forms of group interaction, etc.), including the new technology-related forms
Teacher	- Can use paraphrasing to explain the content of a spoken or written text in a simplified, more concrete form. (MD – V17 –2015) - Can elaborate meanings contained in a text by adding redundancy, explaining and modifying style and register in order to make the meaning more accessible to the target audience. (MD – V17 – 2015)
Pupil	Can report the main points made in simple TV or radio news items reporting events, sports, accidents, etc., provided that the topics concerned are familiar and the delivery is slow and clear. (MD – V17 –2015)

The language of schooling may be a second language and sometimes, in its forms and varieties at school, a less familiar language for some pupils, especially those from minority[61] or working-class[62] backgrounds. As pupils who fall behind at this level of education have great difficulty in catching up later, school has a duty to introduce measures and, if necessary, specific arrangements enabling all pupils to master this language according to their specific needs. In the case of migrant pupils, for example, this may take the form of specific periods reserved for them, care being taken, however, to ensure that such measures do not lead to discrimination and compartmentalisation in view of their frequency and duration. A language mediator could be present in the classroom to offer them appropriate support (reformulations, systematic language alternation, production of plurilingual and multimodal documents in the languages known and/or being learnt, *translanguaging* and *multiliteracy*).

When such arrangements are not made, it is always possible to have recourse to the mediation of older and more experienced migrant pupils or to "informal" and "occasional" mediators such as parents or members of the community of origin. In this way, the **other resources in pupils' repertoires** – in particular their *first language* – also contribute, as mediation tools, to the learning and active knowledge-building process, provided their use is supervised by teachers, while continuing to be central to pupils' identity. And they are very useful, together with the language of schooling, when migrant pupils take on the role of mediator between the school and their family.

With the help of appropriate teaching activities, the use of pupils' initial repertoires can be a source of enrichment for the class as a whole. Under no circumstances should the first language spoken by these

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[61] The term "minority backgrounds" refers here to backgrounds in which languages (or language varieties) other than the language of schooling are spoken.
[62] See footnote 60 above and Part 1, footnote 24

pupils become the opportunity to exclude them from learning certain subjects, particularly foreign languages: school is responsible for the ideas which circulate within it and among its staff and other players about bi-/plurilingualism, the plurilingual repertoire and how bilingual people – and the potential bi-/plurilinguals which all pupils are – function.

In the development of the language of schooling, the early acquisition of the reading *habitus* depends heavily on the pleasure derived from reading and the meaning that reading takes on for the reader. For many pupils, the technical aspect (how) would not be enough to motivate them if the question of the meaning of the social practice of reading (why) were neglected.

Increasingly, this level of education includes the study of a **first foreign language**. If approached in conjunction with other subjects and combined with the everyday experience of diversity in the classroom, this experience enhances the opportunities for contact with otherness and contributes to intercultural education.

Most pupils have already been introduced to new technologies and make intensive use of some of them at ISCED Level 1, and mediation work can be undertaken in this area too in order to confer recognition on these "spontaneous" individual or group practices, while respecting any confidential or coded elements in them. **Digital literacy** therefore presupposes a major process of relational mediation to ensure that some of these external practices (text messaging, participation in social networks, online games etc.) are validated and valued by also being made subjects of study. At the same time, they give rise to cognitive mediation by providing the opportunity for language work which does not involve correction and, still less, stigmatisation, but rather reflection on the creative and play aspects, aesthetic value and the genres used. This work of mediation can also help to obviate the risk of a digital gap within the school population itself.

To the extent that it is able, school, through the recognition given to digital resources at this level, encourages forms of virtual mobility and network use for knowledge-sharing purposes, often in the context of interdisciplinary projects; this also requires prior recognition of pupils' practices outside school, with any critical feedback that may entail.

Reflexivity starts to play a more decisive role in direct connection with the active building of linguistic and subject-specific knowledge and competences. The overall aim is to gradually raise awareness – as a means of rendering technical learning processes and discourse norms more meaningful – of such phenomena as:

- the differences between, and the respective functions of, oral and written language
- the distinction and relationship of complementarity between "natural language" and "artificial language" (arithmetic) and between "natural language" and other semiotic means of representation (maps, photos, graphs, diagrams etc.)
- the first sociolinguistic variations associated with communication situations, in relation also to the competences already acquired in the first language and/or the early stages in learning a foreign language, without overlooking power issues between languages (the major international languages, the position of English) and between languages and their varieties (national, official, regional, minority and migration languages) (see Table 8)
- otherness as reflected in the linguistic and cultural diversity of the class and access, mediated by the teacher, to a foreign culture.

Table 8 – Metalinguistic and metacultural reflection

Experience	variations (historical, geographical, social, written/oral, etc.) in the language of schooling; becoming aware of the historical relativity of spelling rules, as well as their grammatical, communication and social functions
Teacher	Can sensitively explain the background to, interpret and discuss aspects of cultural beliefs, values and practices drawing on intercultural encounters, reading, film, etc. (MD – V17 – 2015)

Pupil	- Can reflect critically on the different ways of speaking that are employed in other social groups or cultures. (CDC – 2015)
	- Can explain how social relationships are sometimes encoded in the linguistic forms that are used in conversations (e.g., in greetings, forms of address, use of expletives, etc.). (CDC – 2015)

These challenges become more complex as the child develops cognitively and emotionally, and in turn stimulate that process.

In short, while the learning trajectory at ISCED Level 1 is quite intensive, the teacher's mediating action and support are crucial to every pupil's success. Faced with such complex and delicate processes as the acquisition of the language of schooling and, through it, new knowledge, mastery of a new language and the journey of discovery into a new culture, teachers have a responsibility to welcome and make use of the experience, knowledge and competences previously acquired by pupils in various fields (their first language, technological skills, experience of "new literacies", etc.). Reflecting on one's bilingual practices, being part of a social network, building up a knowledge of contemporary history by listening to the reminiscences of an elderly person or reading albums, picking up a knowledge of geography through family holidays: all this prior experience shapes pupils' perceptions. Knowing, recognising, valuing and sharing these individual heritages through verbalisation are some of the mediation tasks falling to the teacher, who, on this initial experiential basis, can then put the pupils in a position where they can actively and collectively build knowledge of a scientific nature, including – indeed, especially – where that knowledge is counter-intuitive and sharply at odds with pupils' everyday experience and prior conceptions.

Lastly, by reflecting on the meaning to be given to the knowledge and practices it conveys, school is able to find solutions to the distance which pupils sometimes perceive, in some cases negatively, between the knowledge and practices of their milieu of origin and those of school. The gap between the culture of the school and their culture of origin becomes a dilemma for some pupils: they may feel that they are called on to make a choice: abandonment of the family culture or rejection of the school culture.

Mediation with regard to the question of meaning, these perceptions of otherness and these tensions between what are felt to be opposing cultures is therefore one of the most crucial responsibilities of school and teachers. It is an especially complex task when it concerns subtle aspects of these perceptions of otherness which can hinder learning and of which school cannot always be aware. When mediation is performed under optimum conditions, school becomes a place of change, a place with transformative power, a place of empowerment for all pupils, thus fully meeting its aim of giving impetus to their mobility.

Following the work done at ISCED Level 0, Level 1 can quickly detect difficulties experienced by some pupils and adopt a varied range of support measures to remedy them.

4.6.3. The Class, the Group: learning to be autonomous, learning with others

The social organisation of the group changes considerably between ISCED Levels 0 and 1: play has a smaller role and work – whether individual or in small groups – requires greater autonomy on the part of all pupils and the groups of various kinds they are called upon to form. Already at this level, the class and the group are seen – where active knowledge building and competence development are concerned – both as a medium for learning **about** communal living and as a medium for learning **through** communal living. This dual learning process is also related to such goals as living together, democratic culture and intercultural relationships, and the associated values. It is not geared exclusively to present learning but is aimed also at the future development of attitudes and dispositions favourable to otherness in all its forms, a spirit of co-operation and learning to learn with others. This process often provides a unifying framework for co-operative interdisciplinary approaches and brings school tasks

closer to the collaborative tasks which may be encountered at subsequent educational stages and in working life.

Pupil

reporting orally to the class on a group scientific experiment

Can describe orally to the class, after some preparation, a scientific experiment conducted by a small group in the laboratory while remaining faithful to the report written with the other members of the group and making use of jointly produced illustrative aids.

Group awareness may be manifested in a sense of belonging to a certain group, a certain class, a certain educational level or a certain school: it is in situations of co-operation or competition that this awareness can best be displayed and, at best, take the form of pride at being part of the group and a feeling of solidarity with it. It should not be forgotten that interpersonal and intergroup conflicts are always possible because they are an integral part of communal living and relations with others. The teacher may have to intervene to settle disputes or deal with cases of exclusion or stigmatisation of (groups of) pupils, and even incidents of actual harassment. The latter call for particular vigilance, especially as they tend to occur far from adult supervision and in specific places, on school premises or in the close vicinity.

This relational mediation involves verbalisation after episodes of verbal or physical violence (written or oral account or report). Because this linguistic mediation is not always possible in the heat of the moment, it can also be achieved by the roundabout means of a film or the reading of news items or works of fiction. This makes it possible for pupils – when faced with the harmful effects of harassment on the person subjected to it – both to put themselves in the place of someone who suffers harassment and to reflect on the psychological mechanisms at work in the harasser. All this involves putting feelings, opinions, thoughts and experiences into words and is directed towards the aim of understanding and distancing certain types of behaviour.

Institutional mediation has the task of building relationships of trust with the families most likely to stay away from the school and establishing co-operation to help the pupils concerned achieve educational success (regular contact even at the individual level, joint action plan between the family and school for pupils in difficulty, less formal contacts on festive occasions etc.).

4.7. ISCED Level 2 (lower secondary education)

ISCED Level 2[63] (lower secondary education[64]) is conceived here in terms of a social mix of pupils, to the exclusion of any elitist or segregative structures or streaming practices that lead to discrimination or some form of early hierarchical categorisation.

4.7.1. Mobility: towards more subject-specific knowledge and language

As when they enter the previous level, pupils have access to a new institutional environment with a change of teachers, who are both more numerous and more highly specialised, renewal of their network of friends and, above all, different norms and standards. This calls for orientation and

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[63] Depending on the country, this level of education may be general or vocationally oriented.
[64] Pupils aged from 10-13 to 14-16.

mediation skills on the part of the new school and its teachers and abilities on the part of the pupils to adapt to and integrate with the new community.

In psychological terms, this level of schooling represents the stage at which pupils pass from childhood to adolescence, when increasing cognitive and emotional maturity goes hand in hand with an intense search for their own identity, which often involves a distancing from – or even rejection of – reference adults and a tendency to identify closely with peer groups. This stage of cognitive and emotional development, which is often critical and complicated to manage for adults, be they parents or teachers, requires them to demonstrate attentiveness, to listen and to offer support in a discerning but unobtrusive manner. Teacher mediation is required to deal with real situations of interpersonal, intergroup and even intergenerational tension and dissension, providing opportunities to develop relational and conflict-resolution skills.

In addition to this ontological and developmental mobility, other forms of mobility may be experienced in connection with the teaching of *foreign languages*: virtual mobility may be achieved through the use of videoconferencing for class exchanges; the disorienting and unsettling effect of comparisons with other cultures (within the class and/or in connection with the foreign languages studied) may lead to a broadening of horizons; and pupils may be prompted to take a fresh look at their own cultural practices after analysing how young people live in other places (opinion surveys, statistical data etc.).

One specific form of foreign language-driven mobility which may not have been experienced before is that of class exchanges in a foreign country (see Table 9).

Table 9 – Diversification of language learning methods

Experience	language and cultural study visits (preparation, monitoring, individual and collective records, empirical absorption of cultural data) and/or virtual international exchanges
Teacher	Before the visit: - can guide pupils through the use of the ELP so that they learn to self-assess their linguistic and cultural competences and to set themselves realistic targets for their linguistic and cultural development during the future exchange - can show pupils different multimedia methods of recording information and observations prior to the visit (taking notes in a notebook or on a smartphone, taking photos, using a smartphone or other available means to make audio or video recordings) During the visit: - can arrange communication situations for pupils with their hosts and facilitate informal communication situations in everyday life After the visit: - can guide pupils in assessing the linguistic and cultural acquisitions made during the visit
Pupil	*From the ECML project PluriMobil (cf. ECML : http://plurimobil.ecml.at/ et Egli et alii, 2011)* Before the visit: - Assess their language competences and set themselves targets for their future language development - Be aware of their perceptions and of stereotypes, including as regards others and otherness During the visit - Use their language competences in everyday situations and in specific activities - Note down their observations and experiences - Observe, interpret and respect values, ways of behaving and ways of thinking from different cultures After the visit - Assess their progress in language development, intercultural communication, personal development and metacognitive competences

One required form of mobility, cultural in this case, is the ability to move from one school subject to another. If, as suggested here, subjects are regarded as communities of practice in which pupils are expected to take on new identities (as mathematicians, geographers, historians etc.), the move from

one community of practice to another requires schools and the educational professionals working in them to play their mediating role in a subtle and complex manner. What comes into play here is interdisciplinarity, co-operation between teachers on the competences – including discourse competences – cutting across all subjects, and on the strategies – particularly transfer strategies – to be developed in a coordinated manner.

Through the use of the assessment methods specified for ISCED Level 1, any difficulties hindering the mobility of certain (groups of) pupils can be quickly identified and remedied through the provision of appropriate support. This may take the form of more personalised teaching enabling certain groups of pupils to catch up, in-class tutoring for mixed-ability pupils, periods during which classes are rearranged to form temporary sets for special tuition, or the use of volunteers (retired people, university students etc.). Any formal or informal institutional arrangement is important in the case of pupils with difficulties if the school's goal is indeed to provide further tuition and facilitate the learning process for all without creating inequalities. This type of arrangement is particularly important in the case of learning difficulties.

In the absence of such measures, support strategies can be implemented outside school hours on the initiative, and at the expense, of the parents, providing (re)mediation on a fee-paying basis: for example, there is an increasingly organised private tuition market which compensates for the inadequacies of the school system, but exacerbates inequalities. It is for institutional mediation to work in close co-operation with families to resolve the situations of cognitive or relational difficulty (the two things often go together) which pupils may encounter. This solidarity between school and parents can be a decisive factor for success in combating underachievement.

Lastly, school has to prepare pupils for another kind of mobility, of a much more concrete nature, which will have decisive effects in the shorter or longer term on their personal lives and subsequent mobility. When pupils reach the end of this level they often have to choose the path they will follow in the future (although they do not always have a genuine choice). Their choice, which may have to do with how to continue their secondary studies (which subjects to take) or which technical or vocational orientation to opt for, will have a decisive impact on their future. This is the long-term process, begun at the previous levels, whereby pupils become aware of their strengths, talents and aspirations and at the same time achieve a sense of competence, self-esteem and personal security.

However, while at the previous levels this awareness develops in and through everyday school work, at ISCED Level 2 the pupil's choice of direction begins to take the form of a plan whose effectiveness depends on the taking of appropriate steps and initiatives: meetings with school principals and upper secondary students; interviews with workers in various occupations, employees, entrepreneurs, artists, craftsmen or shop owners, or visits to schools. Through their teaching activities, teachers can help each pupil to outline a life plan – for the very short term – which provides them with various openings in the longer term and without leading them into dead ends.

This calls for close co-operation and empathy between pupils, teachers and parents and between the school and families. Through its institutional mediation, school thus provides pupils (and their families) with the necessary information, the indispensable guidance and concrete opportunities so that they can take informed decisions in line with their interests, inclinations and potential. Often pupils' choices are not guided by their abilities and results, but by the socioeconomic status of the parents, whose expectations in relation to their children may vary. It is here that institutional mediation can work towards greater equality of opportunity and equity.

4.7.2. Otherness: diversity of knowledge and of languages

At ISCED Level 2, pupils are faced with the diversity and complexity of school subjects, which become more specialised and demand greater rigour in the use of methods and greater objectivity in the definition of concepts. For some pupils, one of the key forms of otherness concerns the demands arising from the formal use of the language of schooling that is now required of them. Language as a subject is concerned with learning to understand and produce increasingly complex written texts,

developing awareness of literature, and equipping pupils to engage in metalinguistic reflection. This involves a variety of language activities, including linguistic mediation as described in the CEFR (see Table 10).

Table 10 – Experience of mediation

Experience	participating in linguistic mediation activities (producing a written report on an oral debate, summarising in one language an article written in another, speaking on a topic from a few written notes, translating a conversation for an outsider who does not know the speakers' language, etc.); switching from one semiotic mode to another (from text to diagram, etc.);
Teacher	Can represent information visually (with graphic organisers like mind maps, tables, flowcharts, etc.) to make both the key concepts and the relationship between them (e.g. problem-solution, compare-contrast) more accessible. (MD – V17 – 2015)
Pupil	- Can produce a paragraph in clear language explaining in writing the information contained in a graph. - Can express the information contained in a text in the form of a graph. - Can express in the language of schooling the main points of a text read in the first or second foreign language, and vice versa.

Other subjects confront pupils with genres that are increasingly abstract and difficult to understand (both in teacher talk and textbooks) and produce (formal oral or written school work). These genres, which vary from one subject to another, include linguistic formulations and discursive strategies that depend on subject content and the way in which each subject constructs knowledge. The **language of schooling used by subject teachers** assumes a range of mediating functions in the development of pupils' language and subject competences. It may have a *regulating function* in activities which require practical action (gymnastics or drawing), an *auxiliary function* in relation to other semiotic resources (mathematical operations, maps, geometric diagrams), or a more *constitutive function* in the elaboration and gradual complexification of notions and concepts ("reproduction" in science or "conflict" in history).

Moreover, the acquisition of the methods and the use of the instruments and techniques specific to each subject depend on language as a mediation tool as well as on the mediating action of the teacher and peers.

At this level of education, introduction to and **reflection on subject-specific language requirements** are essential. This process of mastering "academic" language – which depends on the mediation of subject teachers – also helps to restore some degree of equality vis-à-vis school knowledge to pupils whose family background did not offer the resources needed for this specialised learning.

A **second foreign language** makes pupils' linguistic repertoires richer and more complex and, by introducing them to another new culture, expands their intercultural competence, adding to the competence developed through their **first foreign language.** The latter can already be used for constructing knowledge in other subjects.

> **Pupil**
> *Relational mediation :* Can recognise verbal and non-verbal communication conventions that are different to his/her own and adjust the way he/she speaks accordingly. (MD – V17 – 2015)
>
> *Cognitive mediation* : When he/she compares his/her history textbook with a history textbook in a foreign language, can recognise that a single historical event may be subject to different, if not opposing interpretations, and – with the aid of his/her teacher and peers – considers the reasons for the differences.

Lastly, it is at this educational level that, given the rich **linguistic repertoire of the class** (first languages, language of schooling, both language as subject and as the language of other subjects, first and second foreign languages), metalinguistic and metacultural reflection can take on greater importance and go more deeply into things (see Table 11).

Table 11 – Metalinguistic and metacultural reflection

Experience	work of the *educazione linguistica* type (an integrated approach to the various language disciplines – language of schooling and others – one of its aims being metalinguistic, meta-communicative reflection) and development of cross-cutting competences
Teacher	- Attitude: has an open, decompartmentalised view of languages and cultures and teaching/learning them. - Can take every opportunity for comparison between the languages spoken by pupils, the languages taught at school and others still, while also using printed or online teaching materials. - Can build on other language teaching to ensure the faster development of competences in the language taught and cross-cutting competences, including transfer competence.
Pupil	- Ability to establish similarities and differences between languages and cultures based on observation, analysis and identification of some of their features. (CARAP S 3.1.1.) - Can recognise the different communicative conventions that are employed in at least one other social group or culture. (CDC – 2015)

As regards **digital literacy**, pupils of this age generally do not perceive the use of technology as a form of otherness. They even make use of the resources available on the Internet for some of their school work. Some adolescents set up informal or "secret" support and collaborative work networks to solve problems and prepare for presentations or tests, frequently having recourse to plagiarism. The work of the school cannot disregard this other, parallel school, these patchwork resources which even adults use: this is now a part of knowledge building which cannot be ignored, although practices of this type may be unevenly distributed sociologically speaking. School can establish mediation between sources of information and knowledge which are not necessarily mutually exclusive, or one "bad" and the other "good", but which require work to be done on the "gaps", the interstitial spaces, and which also call for a whole process of cognitive and linguistic activity to turn a mosaic of inputs into an integrated and coherent whole.

Paradoxically, school can also introduce an element of otherness, a useful distancing in relation to these practices of young people, by developing their critical sense. Analysis of certain messages conveyed by new technologies and systematic comparison with other sources of information (print press, scientific articles, critical essays or literary writings) will help pupils to acquire a critical *habitus* which should render them immune to misinformation, manipulation attempts, propaganda and proselytism. Digital literacy practices at school also provide pupils who lack access to them in their everyday lives with varied and critical examples of possible uses of these inputs.

It is at this ISCED level, too, that systematic work on creating the reading *habitus* should include, in addition to the reading of works of literature, the development of **critical information processing skills in relation to the news**, in particular through comparison of sources. These, moreover, are skills on which it is possible to do cross-disciplinary work as they are also useful in other subjects, such as history and literature.

If some pupils are not given guidance and support in a secure and co-operative climate when confronted with the complexity and variety of new subject-specific knowledge, the risk – already highlighted for ISCED Level 1 – of perceiving the world of school and its culture as something alien and hostile may be increased and manifest itself in the form of unruly behaviour or rejection. This is often a self-defence mechanism in response to the perception of one's own inadequacy. Particular attention should be given to these pupils and appropriate support measures put in place. The first of these is meaningful teaching dispensed in a stimulating climate, where assessment primarily has a formative role. A youngster who feels isolated in his or her difficulties, humiliated by repeated failures and undervalued in his or her identity as a pupil is likely to go completely off the rails. Rebellion against the school which excludes it is often the only way out for a vulnerable identity.

4.7.3. Communities of Practice: towards jointly taking on specific identities

Group social organisation at ISCED Level 2 entails greater autonomy of pupils as individuals and of the working groups they form. The tasks assigned to these groups become more complex and demanding, and may take on the appearance of actual projects giving rise to the creation of tangible products, team research work leading to collaborative problem-solving, or autonomous concept-building sessions where co-learning and tutoring between students constitute forms of relational and cognitive mediation which are no longer the teacher's sole responsibility. This means that the teacher, in addition to teaching and supplying content and methods of work, can take on new roles (providing support, advice, expertise etc.). The teacher's work of mediation can take the form of arranging activities in which the division of roles, the preparation of tools and the clarity of the instructions (including the language dimension) regarding goals and outcomes enable groups to perform a task well designed to develop the intended competences (see Table 12).

This means that, at this level of education, every subject can be conceived as a community of practice in the sense that:

- all learning takes place in a specific context that provides opportunities and imposes constraints by which learning is affected (**situated cognition**),
- knowledge and competences are acquired with the help of resources/aids that may be human (teachers, fellow pupils, working group, experts) or technical, such as dictionaries, maps or data available on the Web (**distributed cognition**)
- all knowledge is built in a more complex and structured manner through sharing (**shared cognition**).

Table 12 – Collective projects and activities

Experience	projects such as class newspapers, books of poems, multimedia projects, involving group work, distribution of roles and responsibilities, negotiation and decision-making
Teacher	- Can take on different roles according to the needs of the participants and requirements of the activity (resource person, mediator, supervisor, etc.) and provide appropriate individualised support. (DM – V17 – 2015) - Can organise a varied and balanced sequence of plenary, group and individual work, ensuring smooth transitions between the phases. (DM – V17 – 2015) - Can monitor individual and group work non-intrusively, intervening skilfully to set a group back on task or to ensure even participation. (DM – V17 – 2015)
Pupil	- Can contribute to collaborative decision-making and problem-solving, expressing and co-developing ideas, explaining details and making suggestions for future action. (DM – V17 –2015) - When working as a member of a group, contributes to the team's goal by helping others with their work when appropriate. (CDC – 2015)

In every community of practice at school, **relational mediation** impacts, from an educational perspective, on everything to do with "coming together as a community", creating a sense of belonging and the motivation to "be with" and to "be part of", with all that entails in terms of awareness through reflexivity.

For teachers, the *educational aspect of relational mediation* also entails:

- making pupils aware that respecting and welcoming others in joint activities depend in the first instance on the type of language used to communicate with them
- making pupils aware of the importance of joint action - the important thing is not the personal success of a few individuals but the success of everyone - and of the role played by language in creating solidarity in the community and in co-operation between its members

- developing the pupil's sense of responsibility and loyalty towards others as a member of the group to which he or she belongs and not only as an individual; observing and reflecting on how this takes place at the level of language
- developing a healthy spirit of collective competition where the individual input contributes to collective success in competitive events (sports championship with other schools; participation in literary, art or music competitions), including reflection on how to demonstrate team spirit in language terms without offending or humiliating one's opponents
- taking as an opportunity for debate and deliberation – with the aim of establishing common rules for living together – any act of violence, whether verbal or physical, and any interpersonal (or intergenerational) conflict, working with reference both to values and to their verbal expression
- being vigilant and acting promptly against harassment (see ISCED Level 1) based on gender, physical appearance, origins (family, social, cultural or ethnic) or presumed sexual orientation; here, mediation involves turning these incidents into learning opportunities through verbalisation and discussion of attitudes, behaviour, opinions, experience and values
- bringing to light the prejudices that affect perceptions of other communities when little is known about their situations, their lifestyles and their history, which entails explanation, putting into perspective and discursive expression; undertaking a critical analysis of public discourse (ordinary language and political discourse in the media), identifying how stigmatisation, racism and intolerance, on the one hand, and welcoming and empathy, on the other, are expressed in language
- creating learning situations that foster "coming together as a community" through:
    - active participation in school life and the life of the class
    - the possibility for pupils to elect a class delegate as a representative on school decision-making bodies
    - encouragement and support for speaking freely, and in a well-argued manner, in deliberative debates.

On the **cognitive side**, relational mediation focuses more on the constitution of the class and the subject as a community of practice, whose aim is not limited to relational aspects but is also concerned with cognitive effectiveness in knowledge-building processes.

The teacher should, for example, aim:

- to organise the class and the activities and experiences specific to each subject in such a way as to facilitate pupils' co-construction of knowledge by giving them more speaking time by means of various alternating communicational formats (individual work, working in pairs, small groups, large groups, etc.)
- to provide pupils with the linguistic means to play a part in class activities: being able to listen to another's opinion, to propose and argue alternative solutions, to make a choice between two alternative views proposed by other members of the group by putting forward relevant arguments; and to use the specialised language of the subject
- to develop a sense of belonging to the school's multiple communities of practice and the ability to switch easily from one to the other and enter new communities of practice, including being able to adapt one's language to that of the new communities.

4.8. ISCED Level 3 (upper secondary education)

While, in most cases, ISCED Level 2 constitutes a basic education which is still common to all learners and, generally, compulsory, **ISCED Level 3** (upper secondary education[65]) involves greater subject specialisation and is now often outside the period of compulsory schooling.

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[65] Pupils aged from 14-16 to 17-18.

The overall aim of this level of education is to complete secondary education and – an aspect which is particularly relevant to our present purposes – prepare pupils either for higher education or for access to employment.

What distinguishes it from the previous level is a greater differentiation of curricula, which offer a much wider range of options and, within them, more varied, specialised and in-depth teaching in specific subjects and domains.

4.8.1. *Mobility: on the verge of adulthood*

ISCED Level 3 may involve:

- general education that specialises in specific areas (science, literature, languages, social sciences, etc.) and prepares pupils for higher education;
- technical or vocational education – short or long course – whose purpose is to train students in specialisations that will enable them to enter employment more or less quickly and directly.

This level of education also includes *second chance programmes* enabling students who dropped out from other types of education to resume their studies: thanks to these schemes, mobility processes which, in the case of some pupils, had come to a temporary halt are set in motion again.

General education offers pupils greater scope for changing direction (hence mobility), both in the short and the longer term. It can easily become elitist, although hierarchies are present within it depending on the type of course. These may change over time in line with changes in attitudes and the situation on the employment market.

Preparation for mobility may also take the form of language courses abroad of varying duration.

Compared with general education, *vocational education* is faced with a twofold challenge:

- to continue pupils' basic education in preparation for their lives as adults and responsible, critically-minded citizens;
- and to provide them at the same time with the specialised training needed for a particular occupation.

Here, more than elsewhere, mediation by teachers plays a crucial role, especially in short vocational education. This mediation will be all the more effective if it makes the same demands on pupils – who, in some countries, are mainly from working-class and immigrant backgrounds – and expects the same positive results as in the more prestigious general education courses. The aim is to open the doors of employment to students while leaving them the option of moving to more general courses or higher education. This absence of barriers facilitates mobility paths for students in vocational education and helps to ensure that this type of education ceases to be a fallback option leading to a dead end.

The alternation between school and the workplace represents a significant mobility experience because it exposes students to different types of educators in situations where the forms of activity and the language conventions are not the same as in school. Mediation between the two areas can be performed by the teacher responsible for work experience (preparation and subsequent feedback) or by the work placement supervisor or other workers at the workplace. The students themselves can also contribute to mediation by writing reports on their work experience.

In both types of education, planning each student's future direction – in more elaborate fashion than at Level 2 – is no doubt the most effective form of mediation that school and teachers can offer. Support for students to enable them to achieve their goals (personal and career) takes the dual form of relational and cognitive mediation, with major implications also for the mediation provided by school. It is desirable to take measures to facilitate this approach. Personal accounts of mobility experiences, meetings with business owners, craftsmen etc., reports on the jobs of the future, information on labour market trends, providing figures: every opportunity should be taken to provide students with food for thought regarding their future choices. In class, a review of experience through discussions with the

teacher and comparison of perceptions between peers will enable each student to pick out the points which seem particularly relevant to him or her.

The linguistic and cultural counterpart to these initiatives in terms of competences is not dissimilar from that relating to school exchanges, for example (see ISCED Level 2) attitudes: open-mindedness, curiosity and empathy towards others, as well as, in terms of language: the ability to listen, interact, ask the relevant questions, receive information, take risks, etc.

Before leaving this level of education (and sometimes also when moving from one sub-level to another), students usually have to take examinations leading to diplomas or certificates on the basis of which they can be admitted to higher education or employment. Given the importance of these final qualifications for the future, *assessment* can become an overriding consideration and distort the learning goals: students may want to "learn" to sit the final exam and teachers may gear their teaching to the sitting of that exam. As a result, teaching-learning may come to resemble "cramming": a veneer of superficially memorised notions and concepts, use of synoptic materials which fail to render the conceptual and discursive complexity of subjects, and strategies geared exclusively to success in an exam.

Mediation provided by teachers should avoid these risks by offering opportunities for practice for the final exam that are an integral part of the teaching-learning process and contribute to it: mock exams can be an opportunity to analyse the different tasks and discourse genres in terms of reception and production and the cognitive strategies to be employed, following a rationale specific to each school subject.

4.8.2. *Otherness: knowledge to be assimilated with a view to the future*

ISCED Level 3 differs from Level 2 in that it continues the work begun by the latter on subject differentiation through increasing specialisation and more rigorous, scientific and systematic exploration both of subject content and of the associated methodologies, techniques and tools. For this reason, all the recommendations previously made for ISCED Level 2 apply also, for all subject areas, to Level 3: what changes – and substantially so – is the degree of complexity of the school tasks and oral and written language required (reception and production), and expectations as to the degree of competence to be attained.

The **language of schooling** also becomes more specialised, moving further and further away from the language of everyday social interaction: the uses made of it are increasingly of the "meta" type (metalinguistic, metadiscursive, metacommunicative etc.) (see Table 13).

Table 13 – Metalinguistic and metacultural reflection

Experience	awareness, partly generated by other disciplines (history, geography, philosophy, law, etc.), of variations in the weight of languages, and of the power relationships which develop between them in communities and, more generally, on the political, economic, cultural and other levels - and also of the factors which determine those relationships
Teacher	Can create teaching situations where pupils are led to think about their perceptions and stereotypes in relation to the languages spoken and studied and their importance in various fields (economic, societal, family, friends, school etc.)
Pupil	- Can reflect critically on the influence of power relations in communication (CDC – 2015) - Can explain how communication can be affected when grammatical rules are not respected (CDC – 2015) - Can explain why people of other cultural affiliations may follow different verbal and non-verbal communicative conventions which are meaningful from their perspective (CDC – 2015)

The **language of schooling as subject** also follows this path of specialisation, although to varying degrees depending on the type of education and/or type of course (social, scientific, technical, vocational, artistic etc.). The teaching of literature, for example, requires pupils not simply to

understand the narrative content of a work of literature and derive pleasure from a "first-degree" reading, but to make a critical assessment of the literary form or relate its content to the period in which it was written or to other art forms, so as to find pleasure in a "second-degree" reading (see Table 14).

Table 14 – Mediation, interpretation and evaluation

Experience	- participation in interpretation activities (commenting on historical, ethical or social aspects of a literary or other text; explaining the implications of a scientific breakthrough; commenting on graphs or tables showing economic trends, etc.); - participation in evaluation activities (giving a reasoned aesthetic opinion on a literary text, critically analysing a TV programme, a press article, a political debate, a work of art), as well as self-evaluation and evaluation by others (of individual or collective school tasks and projects); discussing different approaches to semiotic representation of the same phenomenon
Teacher	Can generate interest in a topic through effective elicitation that allows alternative responses and acknowledges contributions. (MD - V17 – 2015)
Pupil	- Can give a reasoned opinion about a work of literature, showing awareness of the thematic, structural and linguistic features and referring to the opinions and arguments of others. (MD –V17 – 2015) - Can describe a variety of the cultural expressions (literature, music, theatre, film, etc.) which have been produced in another country. (CDC – 2015) - Can reflect critically on the need to access alternative sources of information about history because the contributions of cultural minorities and women are often excluded from standard historical narratives. (CDC – 2015) - Can reflect critically on the processes through which the mass media select, interpret and edit information before transmitting it for public consumption. (CDC – 2015)

Mediation by **subject** teachers and, increasingly, by peers can take a number of different forms:

- mediation between language, a gesture and an object: how to perform a physical exercise, how to hold a tool, how to apply colors on canvas, etc.;
- mediation between language and a sequence of technical operations: (dis)assembly of a device, experiment in the chemistry lab, medication for an injury, use of a software programme, etc.

In both types of education, and in all subjects, a distancing from everyday concepts is also necessary if scientific concepts, however counter-intuitive, are to be fully taken on board. Lastly, a **reflective distancing** enables other aspects of these subjects to be taken into account: how they fit into the history of school subjects, which is constantly changing and will continue to do so in future (*historicity*), their particular mode of knowledge construction (*epistemology*) and instances of practical use of this knowledge in everyday life (*reference social practices*). All subject-specific activity (learning or reflection) in any kind of subject requires, among other things, increasingly refined **discourse competence in reception and production** and **mastery of specific genres** resembling scientific texts in their complexity, substance and degree of abstraction. All school subjects pose similar linguistic challenges, though the precise nature of the challenges varies from subject to subject. If the language is not taught, it is the subject which suffers.

The mediation performed by teachers may take a range of forms: where language is concerned, it may take the form of conceptual and discursive support through the use of reformulations, proceeding from an intermediate form of language so as to gradually achieve, through increasingly precise and abstract formulations, the form of expression that comes closest to scientific criteria. All this is accompanied by **metalinguistic reflection** on the linguistic components of subject-based discourse and how they interlink.

To sum up, cognitive mediation on the part of the teacher is more demanding and sophisticated. It involves dealing with information that is increasingly dense and knowledge that is increasingly abstract and structured, with language(s) that become(s) more and more precise and concise, and with textual genres in which linguistic formulations become more condensed (see Table 15).

Table 15 – Diversification of learning ways

Experience	familiarity with textual genres and communication formats associated with technical operations and with preparing for trades and professions that rely on specific language media (plans, digital simulations, estimates, contracts, etc.); analysis of salient cultural expectations in commercial transactions (status of contracts, etc.).
Teacher	Can facilitate understanding of a complex issue by highlighting and categorising the main points, presenting them in a logically connected pattern and reinforcing the message by repeating the key aspects in different ways. (MD – V17 – 2015)
Pupil	- Can relay in writing the point(s) contained in an article from an academic or professional journal that is significant for a particular issue. (MD – V17 – 2015) - Can gather information effectively using a variety of techniques and sources (CDC – 2015) - Uses appropriate tools and information technologies effectively to discover new information (CDC – 2015) - Chooses proper methods and strategies to accomplish a learning goal (CDC – 2015)

At ISCED Level 3, teaching of the two **foreign languages** studied at the previous level can usually be continued and other foreign languages or classical languages (Latin and Greek) can be offered as options.

In some cases, specialised subjects can also be taught in a foreign language at this level (using CLIL-type methods), which can bring cultural enrichment to the construction of subject-specific knowledge.

In vocational education, foreign languages are quite often neglected and the choices are restricted, although they have an important role to play, particularly with a view to the mobility which may be necessary for job-seeking in an increasingly globalised market. Placements in companies abroad, which involve mediation for which the school is responsible, may serve as foundation courses here.

Informed management of students' plurilingual and pluricultural repertoires becomes crucial at this level. School subjects enrich these repertoires through new discourse genres and new cultures, which also adds substance and variety to the identity-building process.

In addition to what was suggested for Level 2, **digital literacy** may be enhanced – depending on the type of education and course – through practical applications and reflection in connection with future studies or employment: it is its instrumental function – added to its heuristic, informative, communicative, networking and other functions – which is explored, not forgetting, continued from the previous levels, the development of a critical mind and the discerning use of technologies. It can also contribute to the enrichment and enlargement of communities of practice through the emphasis placed on connectedness.

School must allow for the fact that modern technology has led to profound changes in the way pupils build their knowledge. The mediation which school can provide – as already pointed out in connection with ISCED Level 2 – consists in building bridges between these new ways of learning and those which it is its duty to transmit, and achieving harmonious integration of methods contributing to cognitive development which, although distinct in terms of the media used (textbooks, books, websites, web pages and other online resources), have every interest in becoming complementary.

In the case of young people from low-income or immigrant backgrounds, the differentiation of access to general education has already been stressed in connection with ISCED Level 2. However, entry to upper secondary education may bring other problems with it. This level of education still sees too many

cases of underachievement, dropping out, loss of confidence in school and radical rejection by various groups of pupils of some of the things it offers.

Clearly, these failures, which are costly for students, their parents and society, are also due to factors outside the purview of education systems. Yet school is not for all that cleared of all responsibility: ineffectiveness or inadequacy of its teaching, failure to aid and support students in serious difficulty, poor use of the financial resources allocated to education, etc. This institutional responsibility, which can have major social repercussions, also raises ethical issues.

4.8.3. Communities of Practice and Discourse Communities: preparing collectively for life in society

ISCED Level 3 students are at an age – pre-adulthood – when they display behaviour fairly typical of an intermediate situation: generational effects, leading them to waver – or indeed alternate – between rebellion and acceptance of the world of adults; commitment to a cause on the part of some generous-spirited individuals who are impatient to become real players, or, on the contrary, a feeling that all effort is useless and that everything is preordained; a complete lack of interest in politics or, on the contrary, an attitude of protest and a readiness to mobilise alongside student groups or adult organisations.

Peer groups are still very important and can take different forms: long-standing friends, sports team, study circle and, sometimes, an elite core or, in other cases, a small band who reject the prevailing school norms. Depending on the circumstances and the personality of its members, the group may give rise to docile conformity, active and committed participation, critical distancing, quarrels and conflicts, as well as to exclusion and stigmatisation going as far as actual cases of harassment. These groupings may correspond to or partially overlap with connected networks outside school. This may significantly increase the size of the group and give a wider resonance to certain forms of behaviour.

Belonging to a "group", being accepted and esteemed by its members, having one's place in it etc. are very important in the eyes of adolescents, as is the relationship to the other sex: hence the constant concern with self-image. These concerns are often linked with perceptions, stereotypes, clichés and so forth which young people are not always able to deconstruct without adult assistance. Yet learning these things is fundamental to adopting the practices and usages of other communities and miscellaneous groups in which they will come to participate in the course of their lives.

Issues concerning belonging and identity can find an excellent tool for mediation – with the assistance of teachers – in works of literature, both in the language of schooling and in foreign languages: the life and learning trajectories, initiatory journeys and identity-building processes of fictional characters can offer each student an appropriate, albeit roundabout, means of reflecting on his/her life goals and the person he/she wants to become. The desire for independence, often coupled with a feeling of impatience, may be counterbalanced, upon actually leaving the system, by uncertainty about leaving behind the relative yet reassuring sense of "living together" at school for the more worrying prospect of "living separately" in a society in which everyone hopes to find their place.

At the end of secondary education, owing to the increased cognitive and developmental maturity of learners and the complexity of subject content and/or the prevocational components of courses, collaborative work and individual inputs can be brought closer to the mode of functioning characteristic of communities of practice. The three constituent elements of communities of practice are present at this stage, with the implications highlighted at ISCED Level 2: *shared domains,* represented by school subjects or introductory vocational courses; the *community*, represented by the class with its diverse talents and the simultaneous presence of experts (the teacher, but also more experienced students and outside experts) and novices; and *practices*, each subject being in itself a set of subject-specific practices which, in some cases, correspond to reference social practices.

These communities of practice are, at the same time, *discourse communities* in which students are called on to adopt the forms of discourse specific to each subject. The teacher's mediation involves

facilitating the creation of these discourse communities through learning experiences that contribute to this process and enable each individual to develop as a social and epistemic agent, in other words to appropriate each subject culture in its content, methods and tools through his/her own discourse.

Much less than in a perspective of top-down transmission, the teacher's mediation consists in allowing the learner's autonomy to grow and a spirit of co-operation to develop within learning experiences that foster real co-operative activities. The latter are, wherever possible, directly related to actual social practices and meaningful to all pupils (see Table 16).

Table 16 – Joint projects and activities

Experience	prepared and structured or improvised debates on topical issues, followed by retrospective evaluation of the discussion, the arguments used, the level of information required, etc.; experience of, and reflection on, culture-specific modes of discussion and argument
Teacher	- Can guide a sensitive or delicate discussion effectively, identifying nuances and undercurrents. (MD – V17 – 2015) - Can deal tactfully with a disruptive participant, framing any remarks diplomatically in relation to the situation and cultural perceptions in order to detract from the force of the criticism. (MD – V17 – 2015))
Pupil	- Notices how people with other cultural affiliations react in different ways to the same situation. (CDC – 2015) - When he/she feels strongly about an issue, he/she can talk calmly about it without losing control. (CDC – 2015) - Can summarise points of agreement and disagreement during conversations with others. (CDC – 2015) - Can encourage the parties involved in conflicts to actively listen to each other and share their issues and concerns. (CCD – 2015)

Like all communities, communities of practice should not be seen as being free from tensions and conflicts, whether at the relational or cognitive level. Consequently, these are also settings in which mediation in all its forms is needed on the part of all members. In the event of serious incidents and interpersonal or intergroup clashes, students themselves can perform mediation functions, with or without the support of adults (teachers and psychologists). Lastly, far from being unduly optimistic, we must acknowledge that the climate – in many school contexts not geared towards innovation – is often against seeing the class as a fully-fledged community of practice and that the tendency is still towards an academic, top-down and compartmentalised view of the transmission of subject-specific knowledge at the end of secondary education, even regardless of exam pressure; a view far removed from the spirit of communities of practice.

Conclusion

The purpose of this paper is to reposition the CEFR in a wider conceptual framework taking account of the dynamic in which social agents currently pursue their respective life paths. The intention is that this conceptual framework should apply to a diversity of individuals and groups. This accords with the logic of most of the work done recently by the Council of Europe's Language Policy Unit. However, the main focus has been on the school careers of pupils viewed as social agents, with particular attention to young people from disadvantaged or lower socio-economic backgrounds.

Overall approach

The three components around which the whole is structured - otherness, mobility and the group - have been linked together in such a way as to take due account of action, communication and learning, considered, as was already the case in the CEFR, as being indissociable and forming part of the same interpretative model. Mobility – the truly dynamic element in this threefold structure – allows social agents to encounter perceived otherness and to join and participate in multiple communities; networks strengthen their affiliations and facilitate their development.

There is no need to call into question the model proposed by the CEFR since its original coherence is maintained. Communication, action and learning by social agents involve strategic implementation of abilities and competences which mobilise knowledge, skills and know-how and activate attitudes and dispositions in order to perform tasks requiring, among other things, language activities (production, reception, interaction and, as a somewhat separate activity, mediation). These resources and activities are managed by a plurilingual and pluricultural competence which is presented as composite, heterogeneous and subject to change according to social agents' language biographies and the cultural encounters made in the course of their lives.

What is taken up and expanded on here is the "ability to deal with what is new, with otherness" and the notion of mediation. What is added (although it significantly widens the scope of the model) is the emphasis on social agents as members of groups (communities) and the dynamic role played by the notion of mobility.

The notions which have been called upon and, in some cases, had their meanings redefined or extended, are inevitably bound up with ideological constructs of various kinds. The conceptual framework adopted for the purposes of this analysis cannot be presented as "objectively" neutral. It posits a social agent who is ultimately central to the approach, a responsible social agent possessing, inter alia, language and cultural resources and enjoying a greater or lesser margin of initiative, who only learns and progresses through his or her participation in collective entities, his or her interactions with the other members of these communities of practice and his or her ability to discover new cultures. In all these processes, if they are successful, his or her linguistic and other resources expand and become more complex and diversified, and indeed their success depends to a great extent on these changes. And social agents' life paths, with their continuities and breaks in continuity, give rise to various forms of feedback, a reflexivity which is neither a gratuitous exercise nor a determining factor and which not only affects each individual's perceptions and behaviour in some indirect way but also contributes, over the course of successive interactions, to social development.

A general model of this kind makes no claim to originality or to a strictly argued theoretical basis. The conception of the agent and the social dimension it presupposes is compatible with those underlying the principles and values promoted by the Council of Europe, in which the individual, the collective and the institutional each play their part.

Competences

Whatever the environment and life history of the individuals concerned, there are a number of inescapable facts:

- Competences in the language of schooling, also the language of the host country in the case of migrants, obviously need to be developed in all cases: they are essential for effective and lasting integration in the society in question.

- But the operative contexts are always multilingual to various degrees and both the repertoires of social agents and the language practices in which they engage or to which they are exposed comprise dimensions in which linguistic diversity plays a prominent part and requires competences which are not confined to formal mastery of a particular language.

- An analysis of social agents' trajectories in terms of mobility, otherness and community leads us to consider, from different but complementary perspectives, the competences which they need to develop. They are related to the dynamic of diverse histories of individual socialisation, learning in collective contexts, and adjustment and inclusion in new social and cultural spaces.

- The goal, then, is not to define scales of proficiency levels like those of the CEFR. These also allow for the possibility of a learning trajectory, but they do so exclusively from the point of view of communicative and other competences, according to a coherent set of common categories with ascending levels of progression (which can also be used to establish profiles). In many respects, the multidimensional perspective outlined here is more in keeping with the dimensions that have hitherto received less prominence in uses of the CEFR and with some of the uses to which the *European Language Portfolio* has lent itself.

Mediation

Just as it has often been observed that the definition of mediation given in the CEFR is somewhat restrictive and was subsequently little exploited, the way the notion is interpreted in this paper may seem too broad, or even overly loose and erroneous. Defining mediation very generally as the process of reducing the distance between two poles in a state of tension and regarding schooling as a mediation macro-system admittedly constitutes a significant extension in relation to the process of linguistic reformulation described in the CEFR. Similarly, postulating that cognitive mediation and relational mediation closely complement one another and do not simply depend on the initiative of individuals but also on the responsibility of institutions, as regards both education and social inclusion and cohesion, is tantamount to regarding mediation as being of major cross-cutting importance at different levels of the functioning of societies.

This is on the understanding that mediation is not reduced to what it often can be: the search for compromise and consensus on points of agreement, each party having made concessions in relation to its initial position. What is true of some forms of social, diplomatic and commercial mediation is not generally applicable. For example, the purpose of the mediation work that accompanies knowledge building in the school context is clearly not for the learner to acquire knowledge "half-way" between his or her initial spontaneous representations and the knowledge aimed at. Furthermore, mediation may well not contribute towards and result in reducing the distance between the poles in tension, but rather have the effect of clarifying, better explaining and, ultimately, enhancing the divergences and helping both sides to understand them better. It will not, for all that, have been useless. Or, as regards attitudes towards the perceived otherness of a work of art or a cultural practice, the work of mediation may tend not to "tame" and dispel that otherness, but, on the contrary, to intensify its radical, irreducible and intrinsic nature.

The fact remains, however, that in all cases mediation takes the form of an activity through and on language and linguistic diversity. To mediate is, inter alia, to reformulate, to transcode, to alter

linguistically and/or semiotically by rephrasing in the same language, by alternating languages, by switching from oral to written expression or vice versa, by changing genres, by combining text and other modes of representation, or by relying on the resources – both human and technical – present in the immediate environment. Mediation uses all available means and this is its attraction for language learning and the development of a range of discourse competences. Varied as they may be, the focus and processes of all mediation are based on work of review, adjustment, approximation and "variation on a theme" which mobilises and tests language resources and also contributes to the production of new ones through interaction.

This language activity of mediation, in its transversal uses and its links with mobility, otherness and groups, is fully relevant to the democratic exercise of living and working together in society. In modern democracies, political participation presupposes a capacity for verbal mediation. And for societies as complex as those of the present day (inter alia because of their multicultural makeup, the impact of new information and communication technologies and the emergence of new forms of literacy), cultural and linguistic diversity is no longer a matter of separate compartments. It is operationalised, and becomes more complex, through movement, contact and intermingling which make it all the more necessary to have multiple channels of mediation making use of language variation to ensure that democratic expression is possible and that it benefits from this.

Values

Promoting values and defending principles such as those to which the Council of Europe subscribes (human rights, rule of law, democratic citizenship, respect for the dignity of others) is by no means a purely idealistic pursuit. Europe has given and still gives the world too many examples of intolerance towards that which is different and those who are different, has closed the door too many times on people from elsewhere and has seen too much intergroup conflict for it to be believed that otherness, mobility and community would somehow be self-evident in the best of all possible continents.

On such issues as children's rights, violence against women, the fight against corruption, the situation of Roma communities etc., recommendations, charters and other standard-setting texts have been drawn up and activities, practical instruments and examples of good practice have been made available to the member states. In this connection, the Language Policy Unit has been particularly productive in its area of expertise and responsibility. It is significant that it forms part of the Education Department, in the Directorate of Democratic Citizenship and Participation.

The CEFR has as its subtitle *Learning, teaching and assessment* and was designed primarily with foreign languages in mind. Since then, the *Guide for the development of language education policies in Europe* (subtitle: *From linguistic diversity to plurilingual education*) and the *Guide for the development and implementation of curricula for plurilingual and intercultural education* have, along with other contributions to the "Languages in education, languages for education" project, set thinking on language policies and language learning and use in the context of an overall educational strategy. This educational strategy may be implemented in different, more or less ambitious ways depending on the context, but the choices and approaches are inspired by the same principles and values in all cases.

The present document is obviously situated in this overall perspective. It does not reproduce the findings of previous studies, but everything that it proposes, based on certain lines of inquiry suggested by the CEFR (particularly as regards the relationship to others and the activity of mediation), is informed by the goals of quality education for all, social inclusion and cohesion, and responsible participation and democratic citizenship.

It is for this reason, too, that particular attention is paid to the linguistic factors conditioning educational success and to the obstacles likely to be encountered by children and young people whose language repertoires are at variance with the modes of expression prevailing, and expected, at school, which become progressively more complex as the different subjects are studied. Quality education for all also depends on measures to ensure equity.

Coming together as a society

Throughout this document, the focus has been on the dynamics of individual social agents, their membership of groups, their mobility between those groups, and the intra-, inter- and altercultural dimensions of their pluricultural experience. A plurality of players interacting with one another, a plurality of communities in contact with one another or not, intersecting with one another or not, forming complex combinations and frequently in tension with one another… How, then, do we establish and maintain social bonds, guarantee inclusion and cohesion and, in short, come together as a society?

In the course of this paper we have referred to the well-known distinction drawn by Tönnies between community and society, and we pointed out that this distinction has been taken up, debated and challenged by many authors – sociologists, philosophers etc. Obviously, there is no question here of being drawn into this debate, except to mention the basic distinction made here, which does not establish a radical opposition between the two notions but gives society a more contractual and institutional dimension and sees the community as being centred more clearly on a common interest or shared goals. The community is posited as a community of practice and society as a society of principle.

Whatever the values specific to each individual's community of belonging, coming together as a society in democracies of individuals enjoying equal rights means recognising that, in a multicommunity collective of equals, living and working together for the common good means, at the very least, sharing and respecting certain common rules. This applies to citizens, but also to those who are not yet, or aspire to become, citizens. It is relevant to the education of young people and to how foreigners are received. This depends on the exercise of authority delegated to government through elections, but it is also, and primarily, the concern of every responsible social agent.

Before taking on the meaning of "knowing how to live together", the notion of *civilitas* referred to an "organised community". Today as in the past, living together in the community and maintaining civility have to do with otherness, mobility and social groups. But the current complexity also stems from the fact that, in present-day Europe, civic involvement is set in the context of embedded social structures – municipality, region, country, Union etc. - where each citizen can make his or her voice heard by electing representatives. Within its sphere of competence, each institutional level has to manage tensions and conflicts related to otherness, mobility and communities. The application of standard-setting texts is not enough. More often than not, therefore, mediation work is required, within and between levels, not without recourse to linguistic plurality. For the individual social agent, civic engagement and the exercise of citizenship are sometimes governed by different motivations and loyalties depending on the proximity of the spaces in which he or she implements them and his or her movements between those spaces. Even on the level of the individual, achieving cohesion is no easy matter. Which is why it is important that the necessary mediation should not only refer to values but also comply with them. This is also a matter for education.

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