



Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research



Language Education Policy Profile

NORWAY

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Executive Summary

This *Language Education Policy Profile* is the final stage of a three phase analysis of language education policy in Norway. It is focused primarily on compulsory education in Norway and language education policy for learners and teachers in schools. It deals with higher education only insofar as this is related to teacher education.

In the first and second stages of the process, a group of experts appointed by the Council of Europe discussed with representatives of the Norwegian education system and of civil society their views on language education. This was located in the context of planned changes in the education system in general and in language education in particular. This resulted in an Experts' Report which served as input to this final *Profile* produced co-operatively by the experts and the Norwegian authorities.

This *Profile* explains Council of Europe and Norwegian policies on language education, analyses the current situation, and discusses some directions for future developments.

The main principle of Council of Europe policy is to promote plurilingualism in Europe and it is particularly striking that plurilingualism already exists in Norway, without this being recognised. It is hoped therefore that this Profile will raise awareness of this, stimulate debate about it, and promote further language education policies which build on the plurilingualism of Norwegians.

The Council of Europe perspective

The value of a review informed by the Experts' Report is to bring to existing planning and innovation a Council of Europe perspective. This can be summarised as follows:

- that all language education must be analysed holistically, to include mother tongue/first language, minority languages (both well-established and recent) and foreign languages; and that the aims of education should include the promotion of the plurilingualism of the individual
- that language education policy should promote the inclusion of all linguistic and cultural groups in a society, and that language education policy is thus a part of social policy, with a national dimension with respect to inclusion and with an international dimension with respect to interaction with other societies and their members.

Analysis of the current situation

Against this background of emphasis on holistic policies, the analysis of the current situation identifies the following factors as significant:

- there exists in Norway a rich potential for the development of policies which promote plurilingualism in individuals because, although they are largely not aware of it and value it little, Norwegians are plurilingual already

- despite this pluralism, many Norwegians think of language learning only in terms of the mastery of English, which has a dominant position in reflections on language learning in civil society; English is seen as a necessary basic skill for communication
- none the less, the acquisition of English is not due entirely to teaching in schools and in fact in some cases there are some doubts about the quality of English teaching and lack of coherence regarding progression in learning content
- because of the dominance of English, the teaching and learning of other foreign languages is problematic; the problem is recognised and considered important. It is noted that there is currently a view that some languages are ‘difficult’ and ‘theoretical’ but that experience from other countries and the views of the Expert Group suggest that any language can be taught in a ‘practical’ way. These issues are addressed by the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research in a white paper submitted to Parliament in April 2004
- the presence of increasing numbers of speakers of other languages than those indigenous to Norway raises new issues: there is further potential for plurilingualism but this is not fully supported, even though there are significant opportunities to gain qualifications in these new languages for those pupils for whom they are second/heritage languages
- the need to develop the potential among these new plurilingual minorities is recognised, and plans are being made to support in particular the acquisition of Norwegian for all age groups as the key to their participation in Norwegian society through “Equal Education in Practice”
- the plurilingual potential of all Norwegian pupils can be developed through more attention to relationships among languages and to curriculum development which builds on these relationships; it is not necessary to learn and teach all languages in the same way or to the same level of competence or with the same purposes, and it is possible to plan language curricula which reflect this
- the relationship of language education and education for citizenship is implicitly recognised in policy and curriculum documents but is still to be realised in practice; the ultimate aim is to promote active citizenship in an international and intercultural context
- appropriate teacher education is a crucial pre-condition for developing the plurilingual potential, and innovations in curricula for teacher education are necessary to ensure quality in initial and in-service education, embracing such matters as methods of teaching emphasising practical language use, study abroad as part of teacher education, the multilingualism of Norwegian society, and new approaches to teaching which recognise the relationships among languages
- the significance of the principal in Norwegian schools as an instigator of change and innovation is very clear, and principals need support and training on language learning issues if they are to facilitate new language education policy.

Possible future directions

In the light of this analysis, this *Profile* discusses possible future directions in the following terms:

- given the existing potential, a vision of Norway as a society of plurilingual individuals with different degrees and kinds of competence in several languages is entirely realisable; this would be particularly well promoted by a national Action Plan for language education which could bring together proposals and insights from the white paper *Culture for Learning*, this *Profile* and the European Union's Action Plan *Promoting Language Learning and Linguistic Diversity*
- there are many approaches to curriculum design in these circumstances, for example combining study of languages and other subjects in project work, or using English as a medium of instruction in other subjects (CLIL), or encouraging all learners to choose the non-traditional languages spoken by the new minorities and not just members of the new minorities themselves
- coherence in the curriculum is crucial, both horizontally and vertically; horizontal coherence involves for example noting and profiting from relationships among languages with respect to teaching methods; vertical coherence refers to the need to plan the individual's learning of languages over time, so that the integrated process of the curriculum leads to a coherent range of competences for the individual in several languages
- ultimately, each learner acquires different competences in different languages and the individuality of this needs to be recognised through appropriate assessment processes and approaches to recording learners' achievements
- all these matters of curriculum design, assessment and recording of achievement can be facilitated by reference to the tools and documents of the Council of Europe, such as the *Common European Framework* and *the Portfolio*
- finally, medium and long term changes in initial and in-service teacher education can be planned in several respects: teachers need opportunities to constantly improve their linguistic and cultural competence; some teachers of languages need expertise in other subjects to allow them to use English (and other languages) as a medium of instruction; teachers need to be introduced to a pedagogy which takes full account of the relationships among languages and the nature of plurilingualism as an educational aim; teacher educators need to focus their research and development activity on new approaches to teaching languages
- again, the tools and documents of the Council of Europe provide a useful source of ideas in teacher education and need wider distribution in the Norwegian education system.

1. Introduction

1.1. Language education as social policy

Language teaching and learning is not merely an educational matter. The view that language learning is for an educated, “cultured” elite, a means to access to the important literature, philosophy and art of civilised nations is no longer adequate, if it ever was. Language learning and plurilingualism is a condition *sine qua non* for successful interaction with people of other cultural and linguistic groups within and beyond the boundaries of a society, but this does not exclude language study as a key to significant thought in other languages. The two purposes are part of a whole, and intercultural understanding involves both everyday interaction and knowledge of the traditions and thought which underpin the ways in which people think and act.

A second issue has become more important as societies have lost any cultural and linguistic homogeneity they ever had, a homogeneity which was seldom truth, often myth. The recognition that all linguistic and cultural groups in a society must be included, and not dominated as minorities by a majority, presupposes interaction among all members of society, whatever their language. Language education policy is therefore social policy. This has been recognised in Norway with respect both to linguistic groups long-established and to those of comparatively recent presence in Norwegian society. There is a concern to take into consideration the presence of new groups and the implications are recognised and gradually being implemented in curriculum development, in teacher education and in schools. The implications for long-established groups are already visible in the current curricula in the form of specific arrangements, for example for the Sami and Kven-Finnish. These are therefore part of the social policy significance of language education within Norwegian society.

When social, economic and political interactions with linguistic groups beyond a society’s boundaries are taken into consideration, language education policy becomes part of the discussion of “national interest” and can be referred to in terms of “national language capacity”. A similar question is the relationship between language education and education for the kind of democratic citizenship which is oriented beyond the national boundaries. No contemporary society can ignore this and many Norwegians are aware of these matters.

It is in the light of these and similar views about the significance of language education policy that the Norwegian authorities invited the Council of Europe to participate in a review of language education, with particular reference to compulsory education, and to help with the production of this *Profile* as part of the discussion of language education and educational reform in general.

1.2. The origins, context and purpose of the *Profile*

The Language Policy Division of the Council of Europe offers to Member states assistance in carrying out analyses of their language education policies. According to the *Guidelines and Procedures*^[1], “the aim is to offer member States the opportunity to undertake a ‘self-evaluation’ of their policy in a spirit of dialogue with Council of Europe experts, and with a view to focusing on possible future policy developments within the country. [...] This does not mean ‘external evaluation’. It is a process of reflection by the authorities and members of civil society, and the Council of Europe experts have the function of acting as catalysts in this process”.

This activity is known as the *Language Education Policy Profile*, and the process leads to an agreed report, the Profile, on the current position and possible future developments in language education of all kinds. The profile is produced jointly by the Experts and the Ministry of Education and tries to represent the views of all stakeholders in Norwegian society, those in the education system and others in civil society. The impetus for the profile came from discussions about language teaching in Norway and in particular the question as to whether there should be more emphasis on foreign languages other than English in education in general and in schools in particular.

The position of the Council of Europe is that analysis and evaluation of language education cannot be compartmentalised, and that language teaching and learning in a country needs to be understood holistically, to include teaching of the national language/mother tongue, of regional and minority languages, of the languages of recent immigrant groups, of foreign and second languages. This profile therefore deals with language education in general although it naturally reflects the concern with foreign language education.

It presents an analysis and evaluation of the issues of the present and considers some options for the future. It is written both for Norwegian readers, offering them the opportunity to see the situation from a number of perspectives from within and outside Norwegian society. It is also intended for readers from other countries in Europe and beyond who are interested in learning about Norway and the ways in which complex language education issues are developing in the Norwegian education system.

The process of the Profile consists of three principal phases:

- the production of a ‘Country Report’ describing the current position and raising issues which are under discussion or review; this report is presented by the authorities of the country in question
- the production of an ‘Experts’ Report’ which takes into account the ‘Country Report’ and discussions and observations during a week’s visit to the country by a small number of experts nominated by the Council of Europe from other Member states^[2]
- the production of a ‘Language Education Policy Profile’ developed from the Experts’ Report and taking account of comments and feedback from those invited to a ‘roundtable’ discussion of the Experts’ Report; this Profile is a report which is agreed

in its final form by the experts and the country authorities, and published by the Council of Europe and the country in question.

In the production of the *Profile* attention is paid to both the priorities of the country in question and the policies and views of desirable practice presented in documents of the Council of Europe in particular in terms of plurilingualism.

1.3. Council of Europe policies

The language education policy of the Council of Europe is founded on the key concept of the plurilingualism of the individual. This needs to be distinguished from the multilingualism of geographical regions.

According to Council of Europe principles

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

Europe as a geographic area is multilingual, as are most member States. The Council of Europe has developed an international consensus on principles to guide the development of language education policies which promotes plurilingualism for the individual as a principal aim of all language education policy. This position is formulated in a number of documents listed in Appendix 1.

This perspective places not languages but those who speak them at the centre of language policies. The emphasis is upon valuing and developing the ability of all individuals to learn and use several languages, to broaden this competence through appropriate teaching and through plurilingual education, the purpose of which is the creation of respect and understanding of the languages and language varieties of others as a basis for democratic citizenship.

Plurilingualism is defined in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages^{[31](#)} in the following way:

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

Thus plurilingualism refers to the full linguistic repertoire of the individual, including their ‘mother tongue’ or ‘first language’, and in this document we are concerned with all language education in Norway, including education in Norwegian and in regional and minority languages as well as those languages which are labelled as ‘foreign’ languages.

The Council of Europe position, contained in the Recommendations of the Committee of Ministers and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and in normative instruments such as the *Common European Framework*, is presented in detail in the *Guide for the Development of Language Education Policies in Europe*¹⁴¹. In this latter document it is made clear that plurilingualism is also a fundamental aspect of policies of social inclusion and education for democratic citizenship:

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

The development of plurilingualism is not simply a functional necessity: it is also an essential component of democratic behaviour. Recognition of the diversity of speakers’ plurilingual repertoires should lead to linguistic tolerance and thus to respect for linguistic differences: respect for the linguistic rights of individuals and groups in their relations with the state and linguistic majorities, respect for freedom of expression, respect for linguistic minorities, respect for the least commonly spoken and taught national languages, respect for the diversity of languages for inter-regional and international communication. Language education policies are intimately connected with education in the values of democratic citizenship because their purposes are complementary: language teaching, the ideal locus for intercultural contact, is a sector in which education for democratic life in its intercultural dimensions can be included in education systems. (*Guide for Language Education Policies in Europe* (Main Version 2.3).

It should be noted that while the development of plurilingualism in education systems is a generally accepted aim of language education, its implementation is only just beginning in most education contexts. Implementation of policies for the development of plurilingualism can be approached in different ways, and it is not necessarily a matter of “all or nothing”. Measures may be more or less demanding, e.g. ministerial regulations

concerning curriculum, or new forms of organisation, which may require special financial arrangements, or political decisions, implying extensive discussion at all levels.

The responses to the Country Profile in any particular country can thus be expected to vary according to their circumstances, history and priorities^[5].

1.4. Scope of this Profile

The invitation to develop a Country Profile for Norway was extended by the Norwegian authorities in the context of an imminent reform in education and in the light of discussions taking place in Norway about the possibility of including a compulsory second foreign language in the curriculum of obligatory education. The focus of this Profile is therefore above all on obligatory education, and on other parts of the education system only insofar as the issues are connected with language education as part of obligatory schooling. The *Profile* does not therefore claim to be an exhaustive discussion of all language education issues in Norway and the Norwegian education system.

2. A description of the current situation and education priorities

In October 2001 a commission on ‘Quality in compulsory education’ (*Utvalget for kvalitet in grunntdannineng*) also known as the ‘Quality Commission’ (*Kvalitetsutvalget*) was established to consider options for further reforms of the education system, the last reform having been introduced in 1997. The Quality Commission’s report was published in June 2003.

The issues addressed by the Quality Commission reflect the general concerns of Norwegians about the education system, some of which are related to Language Education. Among other things, the Commission states that:

- Norwegian students thrive at school and have good democratic knowledge, but do not always have opportunity to show this in school
- Norway’s results in national and international evaluations of basic skills such as reading and arithmetic are too weak
- Teachers’ competence is weak in important areas. Many teachers have weak specialisation in core subjects and the evaluation of the Reform 97 showed that many teachers do not have mastery of the change in methods which the reform presupposed.

The Quality Commission recommends *inter alia* that there shall be more time devoted to mathematics, that minority language children should be given more help with reading and writing, and that the second foreign language should be obligatory in the last three years of compulsory education i.e. Grades 8-10. (*I første rekke*. Summary of the Quality Commission’s report).

The question of the second foreign language is related to these general concerns and specific recommendations, which are part of a discussion of the role of education in modern societies found in many countries in the early years of the 21st century.

Seen from an external perspective, some issues are particularly striking in education in Norway^[6] and are widely recognised in Norwegian society as in need of consideration when reforms are planned:

- The geography of Norway is an important factor in all discussion of education since the scattered population in many areas leads to there being small schools in which pupils are often taught in small mixed-age classes.
- The tradition of generalist teachers is very strong in Norway and teachers in lower secondary are not required to be specialists in a specific subject, and yet it can be argued that language teaching needs specialist teachers to ensure quality, as has been seen in other countries when the introduction of languages has been implemented in lower secondary or primary schooling.
- There are, in addition to the Quality Commission and related issues, other reforms in progress, in adult education - the Competence Reform - and in higher education - the Quality Reform; this too shows that Norwegian education is responding to changes in modern society in parallel with similar responses in other countries.
- The language situation is complex, and in particular there are two varieties of Norwegian, *nynorsk* and *bokmål* both of which pupils have to learn (with some exceptions which will be specified later). Norwegian is described as a subject which is crucial to identity; this has become an increasingly important element as the focus on identity/cultural belonging has become a major part of the teaching of Norwegian as 'education' (*dannelse*).
- With respect to linguistic minorities of recent migration, there has been a shift from a policy where pupils had the right to language education in their own language to one where they have such a right only if they have too little competence in Norwegian and only until they have sufficient competence for them to have their education entirely in Norwegian.
- English is dominant in foreign language education, which is not surprising, and is both an educational subject and a skill. The Quality Commission however places great emphasis on the notion of competence and refers to 'skills in English' as part of basic competence, and insist that this basic competence, including English, is 'the most important instrument in the acquisition of new competence and the formation of one's own identity', which suggests that English has a special role in education not often allocated to a foreign language. This perception is echoed by the report 'Grunnskoleprosjektet' where similar views are expressed by adult learners.
- At school level, Norway has a rather traditional foreign language teaching profile, when the dominance of English is put to one side. The teaching of second foreign languages is limited almost entirely to German, French and Spanish, since the curriculum states that schools are obliged to offer German or French, and may also offer other languages (such as Spanish)^[7]. These are then often taught in traditional ways which do not easily appeal to academically weaker pupils. There is currently

little opportunity learning other languages such as Eastern European and Asian languages. The situation might be characterised as conservative.

The need for changes in language education is documented in recent surveys and recognised by educationists and other stakeholders. Issues for discussion in this context include the following:

- that in compulsory education, a substantial number of teachers of English are not formally qualified in terms of higher education in English as a subject or in the methodology of teaching English; although as a recent survey^[8] among 8 European countries shows that this is not unusual since only 51% of teachers of English in the 10th grade have either a university (31%) or college (20%) education, it is a matter for concern in Norway as elsewhere
- that standards in academic English in higher education are not as high as might be expected after many years of English lessons and that standards in English of future generalist/*allmen* teachers (many of whom will teach English) are not enhanced in higher education as they usually choose not to continue with English
- that the Council of Europe's focus on plurilingualism might be met by considering the possibility that some of the time on English might be better spent on enhancing plurilingualism without detriment to current levels of achievement
- that the lack of qualification of many teachers of English is mirrored by a similar lack of specialist knowledge and skills among some teachers of other languages
- that many German and French teachers do not consider their subject suitable for all pupils, and that approximately one quarter of pupils who begin a second foreign language at 8th Grade quit before the end of 10th Grade, which means that only about 55% of all students have completed three years of a second foreign language by the end of compulsory schooling.
- that many teachers of the second foreign language are very much bound to their textbooks and are traditional in their methods, and there is little contact or continuity between lower secondary and upper secondary teachers and teaching.
- that increasing numbers of students in higher education wish to spend part of the study period abroad, which will be encouraged by the Bologna process and was noted by the Minister of Education in a speech in Brussels in November 2002 as an important priority for Norway.

3 An analysis of the current situation in language education

The analysis presented here reflects the positions and opinions of different stakeholders in Norwegian society, and it is the purpose of this Profile to identify the ways in which different groups of people need to be represented in the changes in language education which will take place in the coming years.

The analysis is also influenced by the Council of Europe's policies as presented above, and as introduced into the debate by the Expert group.

3.1. Existing and potential plurilingualism

Norway is a multilingual country, a country in which many languages are spoken, and Norwegians are plurilingual people, people who speak and / or understand several languages. This fact strikes outsiders immediately. It is not just a question of the well-known presence of Sami and other indigenous groups, nor the oft-cited proficiency of Norwegians in English. There are other long-established languages and many newly-arrived languages present in Norwegian society, and Norwegians have plurilingual competence much beyond the ability to speak English.

Thus, by the end of ten years of compulsory education, all young people have at least:

- an ability to read and write in two varieties of Norwegian, Nynorsk and Bokmål
- an ability to use a spoken variety of Norwegian and understand other people speaking their own varieties
- productive and receptive competence in written and spoken English
- receptive competence in spoken and written forms of Swedish and Danish

and some have in addition one or more of the following:

- competence in at least one variety of Sami or Kven/Finnish
- competence in one of the many recently arrived languages, often from another continent and language family
- competence in a second foreign language, e.g. French or German or Spanish.

Much of this linguistic wealth is taken for granted and underestimated. It is perhaps not even noticed by many young people who may for example complain about their lack of a full mastery of their second foreign language learnt at school rather than celebrate their plurilingualism.

Norwegian society itself is liberal in its attitudes to languages. The promotion of Sami languages, of Kven/Finnish, of Romanes and Romani is strong. The support for Sign Language is notable with respect to the right to a Norwegian Sign Language syllabus. The right to formal recognition of competence in their first language for young people from new minorities through an examination is important for the status of the languages and their significance for the individual^[9].

The issue of the second foreign language is considered important by Norwegian authorities. It is evident also in the recommendation of the Quality Commission of June 2003, and in the recommendations of *Utdanningsforbundet* (the major teachers' union) in its paper *Behov for å styrke opplæringen in fremmedspråk*. There is thus among many but not all educationists agreement that a second foreign language should be obligatory and gain more importance.

In a white paper presented to Parliament 2 April 2004 (St.meld. nr. 30 2003-2004, "Kultur for læring"), *Culture for learning*, the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research proposes that a second foreign should be made compulsory in lower secondary education. This is a strong indicator of Norway's commitment to involvement in European initiatives.

Student mobility in higher education, a significant element of such involvement, needs a firm foundation in language learning beyond English if students are to benefit from opportunities to study in other European countries, and not be limited to living in a restricted group of English-speaking international students who have little or no interaction with local people.

It is however crucial to the development of plurilingualism from this rich potential that there be a strong framework and strong supporting conditions for language learning, above all in the form of teacher education. This must be supplemented by support from civil society, from parents, from employers, and by the creation of an understanding for and positive perceptions of language learning and plurilingualism in Norwegian society in general.

3.2. Issues under discussion

3.2.1. English

We begin with English because of its dominance. The issues which arise in the teaching of other languages have to be seen in this context. Furthermore, there are issues being discussed concerning the teaching of English itself.

Specific position of English

English needs to be differentiated from other Foreign Languages. English has been a compulsory subject for over four decades, and was introduced from the 1st grade in 1997. It is therefore not in competition with other foreign languages (except, maybe, in the 8th grade when additional English is offered as an alternative option to others such as the Second Foreign Language or Norwegian or a project development). In this way, the Norwegian situation corresponds with one of the points about English made in the Council of Europe's *Guide for the development of language education policies in Europe* where it suggested that the provision of English as a compulsory subject in addition to other foreign languages is an alternative to the competition of English with other Foreign Languages, which almost inevitably leaves English dominant.

English as a 'Second Language'

Describing English as a 'second language' is way of referring to the phenomenon that English has a major role in Norwegian society. For English is considered by all as of evident necessity, an attitude which then logically influences young people who would not question its importance, in opposition to other languages. This is also evident in the National Curriculum which states that "it is natural for Norwegian pupils to learn English as their first foreign language". This illustrates the predominance of this language up to a point where some Norwegians fear that English might take over from the national language. For example, some textbook publications and material for higher education are being published directly in English, partly for practical reasons and partly for reasons of prestige.

In the National Curriculum, English is presented as a subject in which pupils' general education (*dannelse*) is furthered, but at the same time there is much evidence that it is mainly perceived as a basic skill, for example by the Quality Commission as pointed out earlier. The two are not mutually exclusive of course but the skill element appears to be increasingly dominant. Being a compulsory subject from the primary school, teachers need to teach English just as they need to teach history or mathematics. However, English is often taught by teachers who have poor competence in language didactics and / or in the language itself. They often rely on the knowledge they acquired during their own school time. The quality of such teaching influences both the motivation and the level of pupils.

Nonetheless, because of the strong presence of English in everyday life in Norway, through the media in general (TV- films in original version, music, publicity etc.) and the influence of American culture, the language is 'taught "for free"'. Thus the learning of English expands naturally outside the classroom and provides the opportunity to practice one's knowledge (at least receptive competence) and even if some lack of competence is considered to exist among the teaching profession, this can be compensated in part by the permanent presence of English in society.

Ceiling effect

Students learn English throughout the curriculum, including a 'grunnkurs' (foundation course) in upper secondary education and vocational classes. However, as far as the curriculum is concerned, some educationists argue that the successive reforms have not built up a sufficiently coherent progressive learning content from the 1st Grade throughout all levels so as to include all aspects of a language (including culture, literature etc.) and avoid repetitions in annual programmes. It is argued that this is a result of reforms starting in curricula for upper secondary education and then working down through the system.

Some people even believe that a 'ceiling effect', where students do not progress after a certain stage of development, cannot be avoided in the present system, and there is some suggestion that students' competence in academic English in Higher Education is poor. This can be related to the argument that one ought to distinguish between fluency and apparent easy use of a language on the one hand, and the thorough understanding necessary for academic work on the other. Students may have very high conversational fluency which is in fact misleading and is not congruent with their academic proficiency, and yet because of their apparent mastery they are not helped and stimulated to develop their academic proficiency.

A report on English in eight European countries (see note 7 above) complements this picture by a comparative analysis of the proficiency of Norwegian learners of English in the 10th Grade. The following points are noteworthy:

- Norwegian learners are relatively good in oral comprehension and in reading but there is a significant spread of proficiency among Norwegian learners

- there is a similar phenomenon in writing, i.e. high relative proficiency but a significant spread; these two points together suggest that in any classroom there will be a range of proficiency among the learners at any given time
- learners assess their own language proficiency well
- learners consider that they have acquired about half of what they know in English from school, with input from the media being the other significant source
- learners have very positive attitudes to English, which they acquire primarily to communicate abroad, understand films etc., and make better use of computers.

Scale of provision of English teaching

We noted earlier that whenever education is discussed in Norway, certain factors, including particularly the geography of the country have to be borne in mind. With respect to the teaching of English, teaching conditions and hence quality are highly dependent on the size of the school and especially its geographical location. While lower secondary and intermediate schools in Oslo are able to provide quality teaching by using specialised and skilled teachers, in smaller schools teachers are expected to teach all subjects without specific training. In areas where the population is thinly spread, several age levels co-exist in the same class for all subjects, which is a major challenge for teachers of languages because language learning involves progression, constructing new knowledge and skills on the basis of existing knowledge and skills.

In this respect, ICT offers a possible way forward in finding a solution. The same point is true of other languages but is more significant for English as it is a compulsory subject throughout the curriculum. In the white paper “Culture for Learning” (St.meld. nr. 30 2003-2004) the Ministry of Education and Research suggests that the basic skills of reading, writing, speaking, mathematics and ICT should be integrated across the curriculum. Within a program for digital competence launched by the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research (*Program for digital kompetanse 2004-2008*) work is in progress on developing and making available teaching resources for both primary, secondary and tertiary levels of education.

3.2.2. *The Second Foreign Language*

The position of English in the curriculum is, as we have seen, particularly strong, and by comparison the second foreign language appears weak. There are several factors involved here.

The position of the Second Foreign Language in the Curriculum.

There is wide agreement among all stakeholders, in civil society and in the education system, that the position of the second foreign language as a ‘compulsory additional subject’ which competes with, for example, project work is problematic and particularly striking for external observers. Even if students opt for a Second Foreign Language they may choose not to be assessed and therefore decide at a later stage, when preparing for examinations crucial to their advance into upper secondary education, that they should

make little effort or even drop out of a course, especially since a second foreign language is not required for entry into upper secondary. Students may also feel that their teachers may not be well enough qualified, having insufficient competence in the language themselves and /or teaching it in ways which contrast negatively with teaching methods they remember from the early stages of English.

However, while the importance of a Second Foreign Language is generally acknowledged, there are some people who say that it is not the most significant issue for the economy for example. Employers and parents thinking about economic and employment opportunities may take the view that English seems to be sufficient. On the other hand, there is a liberal attitude to support the learning of a Second Foreign Language, and this utilitarian view is contested by others who say that the learning of other languages is important for business and other purposes, and indeed that a knowledge of other cultures through language learning is also crucial^[10]. There are indications here therefore that opinions are in flux as the focus of the Norwegian economy changes from the anglophone world to other parts of Europe.

In the white paper *Culture for Learning* (St.meld. nr. 3 2003-2004 “Kultur for læring”) the Ministry of Education and Research proposes that a Second Foreign Language should be made obligatory in lower secondary education, that it should be assessed and be a required subject for entry into upper secondary education.

Generalist and specialist teachers

The variety in Norwegian schools, from small schools receiving students of all ages in rural areas to large schools in urban areas dealing with a more limited age range, is one of the underlying reasons for the inevitability of unqualified teachers being obliged to teach languages. Generalist teachers with multiple competencies are a necessary part of Norwegian education and often thought to be fundamental to the nature of the ‘enhetskole’ (approximately: comprehensive school). On the other hand, the approaches taken in other countries and other traditions of education are based on the belief that specialist teachers have an important role in languages (and other subjects) at both beginner and advanced levels. This means there is in Norway as elsewhere a tension between generalist and specialist teacher education which will be addressed below.

On the other hand, there are teachers who have an academic education in their foreign language(s) but not necessarily a training in teaching methodology. They are often in a position where they have to use methods of analysing the grammatical structure of the language, and doing translation, because they do not have the methodological or oral competence to use the same methods as used in English. Sometimes the same teacher will use quite different methods in English and in, for example, German, if they feel insecure about their skills and rely on textbooks and older approaches to pedagogy .

The age factor

A second foreign language is hitherto usually offered to learners in Year 8 and there is much debate about this among educationists and language specialists. To begin learning a language at age 14 is difficult, especially when the first foreign language has been introduced very early at age 6. Students feel inhibitions, are frustrated by the limitations of beginner language, and do not apply themselves to developing a cumulative knowledge of a language. They may also feel frustration at the difference between their competence in English and in the Second Foreign Language at an age - approximately 14-16 - when they wish to talk about significant issues in their lives, and in their own and other societies.

The Quality Commission in its report pointed this out and emphasised that the second foreign language is introduced already in the Primary Stage ('barnetrinnet') in other countries. It acknowledged however the difficulties with respect to the qualifications of teachers and the selection of languages to be offered mentioned earlier.

The Ministry of Education and Research is now encouraging schools to start teaching the Second Foreign Language in the Primary Stage in its white paper "Culture for Learning" (St.meld. nr. 3 2003-2004 *Kultur for læring*). Based on the experience gathered from these schools, the Ministry will in a longer perspective consider introducing the Second Foreign Language as compulsory in primary school.

Languages offered and their social representations

As pointed out earlier, the range of languages currently offered is rather narrow, and typically German, French and a very small amount of Spanish are studied by students as foreign languages. German dominates in the offers made by schools. Other languages such as Urdu, Arabic, Tamil, are studied as second/heritage languages. When students choose a language, the representations or images they hold are influential both in the choices made and in the underlying motivation[11]. Students seem to believe that 'German is a difficult language', that Spanish is 'useful for holidays' and that 'French is easy because it does not have much grammar'. They also say that English is learnt 'for free' because it is so widely present in the media, particularly television, that they acquire this fluency outside school. It is doubtless true that anglophone programmes dominate and perhaps cannot be avoided, but there are opportunities to watch and hear in other languages if students were to make a deliberate effort.

Another kind of representation is held by some members of society who say that German should continue to be the main Second Foreign Language because of the importance of trade with Germany, Germany's historical links with Norway - and therefore its importance in the self-understanding of Norwegians - and because of Germany's significance in the European Union.

There is also a mode of talking about and representing languages and language learning which is particularly striking for the external observer. There is a tradition of thinking in

Norwegian society which classifies subjects as intrinsically ‘theoretical’ or ‘practical’. Even though any subject can be taught with a theoretical or practical/applied emphasis, and aims and methods in teaching may be theoretical or practical not the subjects themselves, many Norwegians speak about second foreign languages as ‘theoretical’ and difficult and therefore not appropriate for some learners. Yet language teaching in many countries has in the last few decades changed its aims and methods to a focus on practical language use for communication purposes, and this can be the approach taken in any language, including second foreign languages. However, such aims and methods require a higher level of competence in teachers and the lack of this may lead to aims and methods which can be called ‘theoretical’. This is a matter of teacher education, not of the nature of specific languages.

The current remedy

Most of these weaknesses are widely recognised by members of civil society and educationists. The remedy currently suggested, for example in the report of the Quality Commission and in a paper prepared by *Utdanningsforbundet*, is to make the Second Foreign Language obligatory. The simplest solution is to use the current position in the curriculum, i.e. as a subject from Grade 8. Other options, such as the introduction of the second foreign language earlier in the curriculum, are however not excluded, as we shall see in the next chapter of this Profile.

Moreover, in *Culture for Learning* (St.meld. nr 30 (2003-2004) “Kultur for læring”) recognizes the need for a broader scope of language options, and proposes that schools be obliged to offer either German, French, Spanish or Russian, and in addition other languages including non-European languages if they have the resources to do so.

Furthermore, the issue of theory vs. practice is addressed in *Culture for Learning* where the Ministry of Education and Research underlines the fact that a compulsory Second.

Foreign Language should be a practical subject and that comprehensive teacher training and the development of suitable teaching materials will be necessary to realize this aim.

3.2.3. *New minorities*

Norway has attracted labour-force and asylum seekers from a number of European countries and other continents since World War II.

According to the latest statistics, 155 different languages are spoken as first languages by students who attend comprehensive education in Norway. The languages indigenous to Norway, the two varieties of Norwegian (*nynorsk* and *bokmål*), various Sami languages, Kven/Finnish, Roma and Romani are obviously included, but the most frequently used mother tongues of immigrants such as Urdu, Vietnamese, and Albanian attract attention, too.

Children representing new linguistic minorities make up 31% of the whole school-population in Oslo, the proportion decreasing the further north one goes. In Tromsø for example only 2% of the schoolchildren come from families of immigrants.

Until some years ago, it was the policy that all students with a different first language or even bilingual pupils, had a right to instruction in their mother tongue(s). Now, instruction in a first language other than Norwegian is offered to pupils who have too little competence in Norwegian to attend regular classes. The aim is to integrate pupils little by little, following their increasing command of Norwegian. This transitional education in the mother tongue, mainly at primary level, is intended to help survive the period of learning Norwegian as a Second Language, but stops when teachers feel the student has learnt Norwegian to a level enabling them to carry on further studies conducted exclusively in Norwegian.

There has been some concern expressed in civil society as to the efficacy of this system where it is possible that students of this kind may not become competent either in their mother tongue, or in Norwegian when the decision is made to stop mother tongue education and continue their studies in Norwegian. Students of immigrant minority origin may thus end up with poor performance and records at school, which influence their future career. Especially boys of minority origin are believed to be the losers in this situation. Some communities take their own measures to provide educational support, while others cannot organise themselves in this respect and may need more help from Norwegian society.

As for the opportunity to study their own languages, at lower-secondary level, students may choose their first language as a specialisation (“compulsory additional subject”). Whether this is offered as an option depends, however, on each school. In reality, this option will depend on the number of pupils with the same first language. Pupils who are not offered this possibility at the lower-secondary level can document their competence in their first language by taking an examination at the end of the tenth grade. According to the latest statistics, Arabic, Albanian, Bosnian, Persian, Russian, Spanish, Somali, Tamil, Turkish, Urdu and Vietnamese have been the most frequently chosen languages for examination.

On the other hand, since mother tongue education is not always available within the education system, the preparation for the examinations at the end of lower secondary or in upper secondary education is a matter for the individual families or communities concerned. Some minority communities, for example the Tamil, make considerable efforts to provide mother tongue education and cater for the continuation of native tradition.

New minorities face further difficulties regarding the perception of the communicative value of their competence in Norwegian. Though an examination in Norwegian as a Second Language (NSL) is meant to be equally valued as an examination in the two variants of Norwegian, employers tend to discriminate against those who hold a certificate in NSL. It is acknowledged by some representatives of civil society that this

may lead to a higher rate of unemployment and social exclusion, and thus the perspectives of youth of immigrant minority origin may be limited.

It is felt by some minority parents and their representatives that teachers, too, do not always relate well to these immigrant communities. Parents of children of minority origin are sometimes thought to be not interested in the education and the development of their children. In fact, there is much evidence among those who work closely with immigrants, that immigrant families are very concerned to get good education for their children.

There is therefore much to be done, and being done, in the field of multicultural education. This includes changes both in the curricula of teacher education at university colleges and universities, irrespective of geographic location or student teachers' main focus.

Furthermore, communities of new immigrant minorities have not been able to be represented by a significant number of young people training to be teachers in Norway yet. Thus the educational staff at schools have not become as plurilingual and pluricultural as the student-communities themselves. Universities and university colleges are very much aware of this situation and are changing their curricula to meet the new situation.

The most significant factor in all this is the *Strategic Plan "Equal Education in Practice" 2004-09* (Strategiplan "Likeverdige utdanning i praksis" 2004-2009) issued by the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research. Among the aims of the plan are improving general language skills by for example making the provision for mother tongue education more flexible, by bringing more teachers from the minorities into the school system, by providing tools for mapping pupils' language skills etc. There is an opportunity in the latter case for use of the *European Language Portfolio*.

3.2.4. Relations among languages

Links in language learning

One of the options put forward in the current curriculum for compulsory education is to introduce the learning of a foreign language as a development from mother tongue education, or with respect to the second foreign language as a development from the abilities acquired in English. This is represented in the following extracts from *The Curriculum for the 10-year compulsory school in Norway* (p. 237):

"First language and foreign language teaching are thus based on shared view of language..."

"the syllabus in English is based on language-learning foundations laid when pupils learn their first language, on experience pupils have already gained through contact with other languages and cultures, both at school and elsewhere, and on text competence which pupils have acquired through learning their first language"

“By learning English early, pupils build up a good foundation on which to base the learning of more foreign languages”.

This perspective on language learning underlines the importance of a general language education and establishes an explicit relationship between the teaching and learning of the different languages – mother tongue Norwegian, first foreign language and second foreign language. Where pupils are speakers of Sami or other regional or minority languages the notion of establishing relationships among languages is all the more possible.

The point here is not just to emphasise the cumulative effect of language learning but to suggest that the discovery and acquisition of a new language can be supported by and develop from the language competences a learner already has. This in turn introduces a dynamic vision of the curriculum where the usual separations of subjects are removed, a vision which encompasses the need to establish transversal links and not simply juxtaposition of subjects. It reflects too the fact that a second or third language is never learnt from point zero despite what many current methods have long implied. To create contacts among languages taught in the same curriculum without mixing them produces some economy in the language curriculum and takes into consideration the fact that it is the same person who is learning different languages and learning to manipulate the cognitive and communicative resources languages make available to them.

The wealth of the Norwegian linguistic experience

In this respect, as noted earlier, the Norwegian education system is linguistically rich and includes pupils who, either through schooling or by other means, have a significant experience of the diversity of languages and varieties of languages, and of the relationships of distance or proximity among languages which make them easy or difficult to learn.

Whether a speaker of Norwegian or Sami as mother tongue or not, Norwegian children have an early experience of the variation in languages around them:

- the distinction between *nynorsk* and *bokmål*;
- the existence of dialectal variations on these norms;
- the recognition of several varieties of Sami;
- intercomprehension of differing degrees between Norwegian and other Scandinavian languages;
- contacts between Norwegian and English, and multiple contacts between Norwegian and minority and regional languages either long-established or recent;
- similarities between Norwegian and German, between French and Spanish and even the relationships between French and English in certain aspects of the lexicon.

Learners are aware of at least some of these relations, as their teachers notice.

The potential for realising educational aims

There is thus a strong potential for the realisation of the educational aims quoted above, from at least four points of view.

- a) This plurilingual experience stimulates spontaneously and even in a non-explicit manner a form of reflection about languages, about their characteristics, their codes, their importance in the environment, their statuses relative to each other in society. However, these empirical insights remain latent and can even create or reinforce stereotype images of languages. It is thus important that this rich experience be used as a means of making insights explicit, clear and objective, if it is accepted that the development of a metalinguistic and sociolinguistic awareness is a significant contribution to the cognitive development and socialisation of children and young people.
- b) This same plurilingual experience is such that it favours the enrichment and complexification of the communicative abilities of learners, even without their knowing. Their repertoire increases and diversifies, in receptive and productive dimensions in written and / or oral modes. They have better opportunities of access to the world of information and communication, greater independence from one dominant language in the acquisition of knowledge, and a greater awareness and more refined mastery of the resources of their first language, of its specificities, strengths and weaknesses in comparison to other languages.
- c) Plurilingual experience seen as a gradual construction of diversified abilities outside as well as within schooling, is based on different kinds and degrees of language learning. The strategies used to acquire the written norms of *nynorsk* and *bokmål* are not the same as those used to understand Danish radio programmes or to learn the grammar rules of English, or to engage in a role play in French. Reflective work on these different ways of acting in different linguistic environments and with different linguistic purposes is one of the ways in which one learns to learn a language and understand a culture.
- d) Last but not least, it is through this plural experience of languages that a personality, an identity, and a sense of belonging are formed, which are all the stronger for being asserted in relation to other modes of understanding than those within the family. This is related also to issues of cultural awareness presented below.

Thus it is evident how much the plurilingual experience young people receive from the regional, national and international environment on the one hand, and the contribution of schooling on the other, together create a potential which is fundamental to the whole curricular project and to its declared educational aims.

Recognising the potential

It is of course possible in any society simply to note the wealth of empirical exposure and a more ‘theoretical’ experience of the plurality of languages, of their statuses and the ways they function and the different ways in which they can be learnt. If no effort is made, such wealth can remain unnoticed, unused, creating stereotypes and even provoking or reinforcing exclusion.

On the other hand, the education system can play a major role to ensure that this plurality of languages is fully taken into account as a collection of resources which are to be distinguished from each other but also seen in relation to each other. The current curriculum thus presents a dynamic vision of languages and language education, but this substantial potential is not fully recognised. There exists a gap between the principles generally stated in the national curriculum and the concrete proposals as they are presented in the different subject syllabi in the same document, and in the reality of teaching practice in schools. The separation of disciplines is still present as an inheritance from the past as opposed to the benefits which could be gained from transversal cooperation and planning – whether it is a question of the development of cognitive tools, or the abilities to communicate, or learning strategies, or the development of identity and citizenship.

In order to realise the vision which is inherent in the curriculum document and therefore in the education system as a whole, the education system and those who work in it would need to review the influences from the past and look to new modes of cooperation.

This would not be an entirely new development as there is potential in current arrangements in the following ways:

- teachers in the primary stage are on the whole multi-disciplinary and those in lower secondary are usually at least bi-disciplinary, teaching two subjects
- importance is afforded at all levels of compulsory schooling to pluridisciplinary projects integrated into the normal course of study
- there is already an emphasis on the development of transversal competences related to learning to learn
- and there are the relationships among the different languages which the Norwegian curriculum states in its general principles as pointed out above.

As will be indicated in Chapter 4, innovative curricular models at national, regional or local levels could draw much more educational benefit from the potential described here.

3.2.5. Coherence, quality and assessment

Coherence in the curriculum refers to a principled organisation of general aims, specific objectives, contents, methods and assessment, both for a subject area and between different subject areas. It can be seen horizontally, as transversal coherence at a certain level of studies, or vertically, in relation to the succession of levels.

In the area of languages, coherence does not necessarily imply identity of objectives, of methods, of types of content for all languages at all levels. Differentiation, in the form of a well-founded complementarity of aims, methods and contents, can equally well be part of a coherent global vision. If, for instance, part of the total language curriculum aims to familiarise learners with strategies of written comprehension, this objective does not have to be focussed on systematically for all the languages studied, since skills specifically for this purpose in one language can be recalled, adjusted and put to use for other languages.

Conversely, in another language, other abilities can be the particular focus in the teaching process with a view to more general use, provided there are adequate strategies for transfer included in the objectives. Differentiation, complementarity, transversality may then, within a coherent curricular framework, increase the cost-effectiveness of the total time allocated to languages.

Similarly, coherence does not always entail linear continuity in the study of one particular language. On the condition that full account is taken of what has previously been acquired, there can be a shift in content and approach at a given moment. For example, there might be a shift from one type of communicative teaching, where the objectives and the methods involve stress face to face interaction, to a phase centred on reading the press and understanding the media in general, or to a period where the language will be used to construct knowledge in other areas (bilingual education/Content and Language Integrated Learning).

Such apparent discontinuity may be part of a coherent approach to curriculum planning, perhaps within a curriculum design which allows languages to be timetabled in 'blocks' which allow flexibility in delivery.. It can stimulate and reactivate learning and also allow differentiation in the choices and the course of language studies offered to students. This might, as a side-effect, sustain learner motivation and counteract or prevent the so called "ceiling effect".

The Quality Commission produced an analysis of the concept of quality in terms of three concepts: quality of results, of process and structure. The Quality Commission also proposed that there should be a national system of testing in Norwegian, mathematics and English. National testing systems have advantages of allowing comparability of outcomes in different schools and regions. If they are combined with information about the levels attained by students at the point of entry to a school (often influenced by home background) then it is possible to identify the 'added value' a school has given to students by comparing input and output rather than comparing schools with different starting points only on the output scores. This allows a more subtle discrimination of the effects of schools, and the Quality Commission also notes the significance of home background.

Such a national system of testing for grade 4, 7, 10 and the first year of upper secondary will gradually be introduced for Norwegian (reading and writing), mathematics and English from 2004. The English tests are based on the *Common European Framework* and feedback to students will be standard based according to the levels of the Framework.

However, national tests can also create a homogeneity and a ‘teaching to the test’ which is much debated in countries where such systems exist. This may have major impact on the teaching of English and may, for example, require clarification of the relationship between teaching English as a basic competence and English as a ‘dannelsesfag’ (educational subject). In current examinations in English at the end of lower secondary, the function as ‘dannelsesfag’ is clear and it is to be hoped that this will not be lost in future developments.

3.2.6. Education for citizenship in a multilingual and multicultural society

As pointed out in the introductory chapter of this *Profile*, Council of Europe policies provide for a holistic vision of language education, social inclusion policy and education for democratic citizenship. The Norwegian situation allows this to be taken seriously.

That Norway has long been a multilingual and multicultural society with established groups of different cultural identities is widely recognised. The existence of a curriculum adapted to the Sami and the presence of the teaching of languages, such as Kvenn/Finnish, other than the two varieties of Norwegian, are some of the indicators of this. That there are more demands from these and other long-established groups is also recognised. The particular attention paid to Norwegian Sign Language with its own chapter in the national curriculum is a further characteristic of the Norwegian situation which would be envied by Sign Language users in other societies.

The situation with respect to new minorities and their languages is less satisfactory in the view of their representatives. One view among such representatives groups is that the situation has worsened with respect to the commitment within the education system to the maintenance of the language of such groups, an issue already mentioned above. It is also argued that the distinction between examinations in Norwegian as a Second Language for speakers of Sami and other regional languages on the one hand and examinations in Norwegian as a Second Language for members of new minorities on the other hand is iniquitous, and possibly leads to discrimination on the labour market.

A further factor in the view of some Norwegians is that the focus of Norwegian interests, political and economic, may be changing rapidly from the anglophone world to the world of continental Europe. Norwegian participation in European activities is increasing and is an explicit policy. It is clear too from earlier sections of this *Profile*, that the strengthening of Norwegian identity is seen as a significant purpose in education. Even though there is no contradiction in principle between national identity and European identity, this may nonetheless be experienced as a tension.

Overt reference to ‘educating for citizenship’ which is increasingly common in many European countries, is however not frequent among educationists in Norway. This may be because education for citizenship is fundamental to education in Norway and therefore taken for granted - and perhaps because the concept ‘citizen’ and ‘citizenship’ as understood in some other education systems and in other languages is not readily translated into Norwegian.

On the one hand, the Quality Commission noted that, although young Norwegians have a strong sense of democracy, they are not sufficiently encouraged in lower secondary to develop this in practice. On the other hand, as the CIVIC project shows, in upper secondary there is much positive evidence of this taking place^[12]. Furthermore, the *Core Curriculum* (p. 26) contains a clear and positive statement of philosophy which includes the following:

The school system embraces many pupils from groups which in our country constitute minority cultures and languages. Education must therefore convey knowledge about other cultures and take advantage of the potential for enrichment that minority groups and Norwegians with another cultural heritage represent (...) Education should provide training in cooperation between persons of different capacities and groups with diverse cultures. But it must also expose the conflicts that can arise in encounters between different cultures. Intellectual freedom implies not only allowance for other points of view, but also courage to take a stand, confidence to stand alone, and the strength of character to think and act according to one's own convictions.

Although the phrase 'intercultural citizenship' or 'education for democratic citizenship' (in Norwegian the concept 'demokratioppl ring' has been coined since the word citizenship is difficult to translate) beyond the national level is not used, this quotation can be understood as a definition of intercultural citizenship and the ability to empathise and interact with people of other cultures. It could be the basis for developing a view of language education which not only provides the practical means of communication with people of other languages and cultures but also the incentive to do so.

Turning to the language syllabus for compulsory education, this emphasises the fact that foreign language skills are essential for contact and interaction with other peoples, in a global as well as in a European perspective. By learning foreign languages pupils have the opportunity to become acquainted with other cultures, and thus become more tolerant and have greater respect for others.

The structure of the subject in all language syllabuses comprises four main areas:

1. Encountering of spoken and written language
2. Using the language
3. Knowledge of the language and its cultural context
4. Knowledge of one's own language learning

The focus on each of the 4 main areas varies according to the stages the pupils are in, with a focus on area 1 in primary stage and a gradual development of the other areas.

As the English syllabus puts it, knowledge of the (foreign) language and its cultural context "is an area in which the need to understand and to express themselves in the foreign language will lead the pupils to extend their knowledge of the language as a structure, as an expression of culture and as communication". For every grade the syllabus indicates themes that lead to cultural knowledge and understanding:

- learning about the way of life in the respective foreign country, by working on themes like “Family and friends”, “Everyday life”, “talking about forms of politeness” (English syllabus for primary education),
- maintaining contact with people from other countries, by working on themes like traditions, customs, leisure, hobbies, but also history and geography, prominent persons, music, films and graphic arts (taken from the English syllabus but also present in the French, German, Finnish syllabus for secondary education).

As English is a compulsory subject at all levels, the methods mentioned in the national curriculum in order to get the pupils acquainted with the culture of the English speaking countries are very diverse and meet the principles stated in the introduction that, during the language learning, pupils shall be given the opportunity to play with and explore English and have fun learning it (especially in the primary and intermediate stage). For the second languages, the syllabus is designed for grades 8 and above. It stresses the need to focus on both practical and theoretical approaches, and puts explicitly the fact that emphasis must be put on creative work, in which drama and music have a natural place. Nevertheless, the main elements in second language syllabuses seem to be more theoretical than for English.

In summary, the potential relationships among language teaching, education for democratic citizenship and intercultural competence, is expressed in documents. This needs to be developed in more explicit and conscious ways.

3.2.7. Teacher education

Teacher education (both pre-service and in-service) is a major issue for understanding the language situation in Norway and for finding solutions to issues which are currently under discussion. As with other matters the specific geographic conditions of Norway, the scattered population and the large number of small schools are crucial factors which create a need for a general, not subject oriented, education for teachers. However, this is problematic as all teachers are expected to teach English (and possibly other languages) and do not necessarily have specific training. There are two different ways to qualify as a foreign language teacher:

- to prepare as a ‘generalist’ teacher in a university college;
- to study the subject at university, thus becoming a ‘specialist’ teacher.

However, English is only an optional subject in generalist teacher training for compulsory education and other foreign languages are not subject to the framework for a general teaching certificate in Norway. As a consequence, a large number of teachers of English lack formal tertiary education: 67% in grades 1-4, 49% in grades 5-7 and 20% in grades 8-10. The youngest teachers are the least qualified, as fewer and fewer students in the recent years have actually chosen English as a one of their options: 67% of the teachers under the age of 34 and 39% of the teachers between 35 and 44 are formally unqualified^[13].

In part this is a result of the fact that some future teachers, having studied English for a long time in their primary and secondary education, see no interest in further continuing the study of the subject during their university years. Yet, while it is obvious that English is a language widely known in Norway at the basic level of communication, it is not sure that the 'academic' level needed in order to teach it as a foreign language is reached by all teachers and even less that language teaching methodology has been acquired.

The provision of language education is thus seen by many as being insufficient, not ensuring the required language competencies of the teachers. This has in the view of some linguists an effect on the teaching methods in schools. The difference in teaching methods used in English classes, on the one hand, and in French or German classes, on the other hand, is often noted by teachers, pupils and parents, and is in part a consequence of not mastering the language. Teachers who have insufficient mastery orient their teaching towards the study of grammar, translations and, sometimes, 'learning by heart', making their subject 'difficult', 'theoretical', 'academic', with little communicative approach and with little 'appeal' for the students. There is on the other hand no lack of suggestions in the profession for improving the situation, for example:

- increase of the number of 'language' hours in teacher education;
- a part of the language teacher education to take place abroad (in a country where the respective language is spoken as a native language);
- a policy of 'language education' for teachers should be developed (e.g. having an initial training in 'teaching languages' in general and, then, specializing in a specific language).

Taking into account the recruitment and quality issues, the Norwegian authorities recognise that in-service teacher training is very important. It is not however compulsory nor is it a condition for professional promotion. This leaves the matter of professional improvement in the hands of teachers themselves and/or their schools although in-service training in selected subjects may be encouraged by national initiatives.

Again the geographical factor cannot be ignored and education authorities have difficulties in organizing teacher training in a large country, with scattered schools. In order to diminish the costs and to reach a large number of teachers, Open and Distance Learning (ODL) has been used for in-service teacher training. This is a new initiative but there is cautious optimism, despite initial doubts, that distance learning complemented by face-to-face tutoring and intensive courses can lead to both oral and written language improvement for teachers.

Mother tongue teaching for new minorities presents specific issues for teacher education. As mentioned in an earlier section, teaching of a first language other than Norwegian only has to be offered to pupils who have too little competence in Norwegian in order to attend regular classes. At lower secondary level, pupils may, theoretically, choose their first language as a 'compulsory additional subject'. Whether this option is really offered by the school, depends on the number of pupils with the same first language and on the availability of a teacher.

The recruitment of a larger number of teachers coming from the minorities could solve the problems of teaching the language of a minority as the first language and teaching Norwegian as a second language. Some Teacher Colleges have special programmes to receive as students members of minority communities, and further developments in this respect are taking place. The *Strategic Plan "Equal Education in Practice" 2004-09* recommends measures and introduces grants to increase recruitment of bilingual teachers.

It is also clear for most people in the education system that all teachers should be given some focused introduction to the issues they and their society face with respect to new minorities. This is the case in courses in regions where teachers are likely to have direct experience of 'multicultural education'. It is equally necessary in other parts of Norway, since it is not the presence of new minorities in a particular area which is the issue but the fact that the whole of Norwegian society needs to recognise this new dimension to its multicultural character.

3.2.8. Potential for innovation in schools

Proposals for innovation in language education such as those made by the Quality Commission and the white paper *Culture for Learning* with respect to the introduction of a second foreign language in the early years of schooling are facilitated by the decentralisation of responsibility for implementation of the curriculum.

School principals have opportunity, with the support of the relevant authorities, to introduce change or experimentation. The introduction of school budgets with a margin of flexibility allows principals to provide financial encouragement to teachers who wish to take extra responsibilities to promote innovation.

It is widely recognised in education theory and practice that the school principal is crucial in the implementation and maintenance of innovation. This is a view which is shared by the Quality Commission who say that 'many (...) school leaders do not have sufficient competence in relation to what is demanded of leadership in a modern knowledge enterprise' (Kvalitetsutvalget, *Faktablad* 2003), and imply that principals need appropriate training in education leadership and management. This is also taken up in the white paper *Culture for Learning* where high priority is given to plans for in-service development for school administrators and headteachers.

Innovation in language education needs the support of principals and training which is be offered to them might well include a deepening of their understanding of the nature of language and language learning, of the relationships among languages and the nature of plurilingualism, which is a concept which is not widely understood. It is principals who have the potential to develop the approaches to integration and links across languages in the curriculum described in an earlier section.

4. Possible future directions

4.1. Introduction

Norwegian government will continue to propose specific policy changes and plans for their implementation. The purpose of this chapter is not to replace this function but to take a broad and long term perspective on the factors which will influence policy making and the success of implementations, and to do so from a national viewpoint complemented by the policies and proposals of the Council of Europe.

In this chapter, we shall present some possible directions for future developments in language education which arise from the analysis undertaken in the previous chapter. This chapter thus focuses on several questions which can only be pursued over a longer period and with partnership among all stakeholders, in government, in civil society and among those professionally engaged in education and language education in particular.

4.2 Norway as a society of plurilingual people

The vision of language education as represented in policies and instruments of the Council of Europe is one where language education is a coherent whole and is clearly related to education for democratic citizenship, as a particular manifestation of social policy. Plurilingualism for the individual and a society of plurilingual people are aims which cannot be met by the current vision of the teaching of languages present in Norway and by reliance on English as an international language. This is apparent to Norwegian authorities but not always to representatives of industry and parents or even teachers. There is a need to create a public debate on this, and this *Profile* should be an important stimulus for the debate on innovatory perspectives.

The vision of a society of plurilingual people is scarcely yet realised in any Council of Europe country. However, as pointed out earlier, Norway has a rich potential which needs to be developed in realistic ways and proposals formulated as medium or long term goals. For example, in the Council of Europe's *Guide for the Development of Language Education Policies in Europe* there are suggestions which require radical re-consideration of current curricula in the long term, as well as specific proposals which can be implemented more quickly. It would be important to ensure that a public debate is structured so that long term visions are not dismissed as unrealistic and medium term changes are presented in ways which can be implemented. Our suggestions here attempt to take this into consideration.

Innovation is, however, difficult to sustain without coordination and there is room for consideration of creating a means of maintaining an overview and impetus in language education. One approach taken elsewhere, for example, is to formulate a 'national strategy' for language education. This could include a consultative body created at national or regional level, and for example a national resource centre. The human resources for these or other approaches to making language and language education a

visible feature of public concern and debate might be found in universities, teacher associations and in civil society.

4.3. Coherence in national education policy for all languages

4.3.1. National and local initiatives

The modes of planning experimentation and general implementation of new models of language education can be both national and local. The very wide range of conditions in which schooling takes place in Norway requires local planning. The geographical factor discussed earlier cannot be ignored, although it is perhaps difficult for people outside Norway to realise its full implications. The size of schools, the composition of the staff are important factors which are largely a consequence of the geographical factor. Equally important is the flexibility allowed to principals to introduce innovation. Some suggestions to be found in the *Guide for the Development of Language Education Policies in Europe* or presented here will be more appropriate than others, depending on local conditions.

There is a complex relationship between national capacity in languages and the specificity of local concerns with language and identity. All future developments must take into consideration the significance of regional languages, new minority languages, and the role of the two varieties of Norwegian in matters of cultural identity, but it is also evident that economic needs for languages for commerce vary according to local and regional circumstances.

Local and regional initiatives in language education planning can be prepared with the help of the tools available for carrying out language audits in a locality, whether large or small to describe existing plurilingualism. Similarly there are tools for investigating the needs and wants of individuals and/or institutions and businesses in civil society. These are described in the Council of Europe's *Guide for the Development of Language Education Policies in Europe*, and the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* and the *European Language Portfolio* are key documents in language planning in all of these contexts.

Such tools and approaches are an important part of medium and long term planning which takes the specific conditions of varied educational environments into account. This can be the basis for more rigorous experimentation in curricular models for plurilingualism adapted to empirical knowledge, whether at the level of the individual school responding to its locality, or at regional or national level.

4.3.2. Maximising the existing potential

That young Norwegians emerge from a curriculum which allows and encourages them to become plurilingual has been noted earlier. That curriculum already has a potential for developments which will extend their plurilingualism and also make them more aware

and proud of it. The following list of factors and characteristics summarises the points where the potential can be taken further:

- the change of status of the second foreign language to obligatory is a widely recognised option, recommended by the Quality Commission and proposed by the Ministry of Education (St.meld. nr. 30 2003-2004); it introduces a perspective on languages and cultures which could radically reinforce the significance of language education as intercultural education and take learners beyond the limited focus on the anglophone world
- curriculum design which allows greater flexibility in planning language education, for example by ‘blocking’ periods in the timetable: introduction of short courses with an emphasis on specific topics/areas of experience, and/or on some skills more than others
- project work allows cross-curricular and interdisciplinary projects in which foreign language and culture study can be combined with study of languages present in Norway, and/or language study is combined with history or geography, for example
- the existing plurilingualism of young Norwegians is rich ground for work within and beyond language education on “awareness of language and culture” i.e. study which raises to learners’ consciousness their existing intuitive knowledge, and with it their self-esteem
- the strength of competence in English allows for the study of English to be combined with other subjects: first, through bilingual education where English is the medium of instruction (also known as Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) which is being strongly developed in several European countries; second, through using the experience of learning English as a springboard for the learning of other languages (related to “awareness of language” and the concept of “learning to learn” languages); teachers of English thus have a crucial role to play not only in teaching the language itself but in promoting language learning and plurilingualism more generally
- the strong presence of new minority languages in some areas could allow students of the majority to learn languages other than European, and thereby contribute to the development of national capacity.

There already exists a professional literature and experience in many countries on the institutional and curricular organisation of these medium term proposals. Again the Council of Europe’s *Guide for the Development of Language Education Policies in Europe* (Chap. 5 and 6) and supporting booklets provide a source of information on these matters presented in a form which is accessible for policy makers – whether at national, regional or local levels – and also a technical guide for those responsible for implementation of policy.

4.3.3. Transversal organisation and flexibility

The Norwegian curriculum allows teachers the option for a mixture of thematic/project work and subjects, and this can be further developed in languages in particular where hitherto there has been limited interest. This also permits flexibility in small schools where pupils of different ages/grades are taught together.

Language syllabi, however, are presented as parallel documents and instead of this emphasis on individual languages, a greater coherence could be pursued through a ‘global language education policy and practice’ based on a vision of education for plurilingualism. This might involve a total of hours allocated to all language learning within which pupils would develop their plurilingualism, as suggested for instance in the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*. In this way there is one curriculum for languages, with inner differentiation, rather than juxtaposed curricula for different languages.

This can be seen, first, in a transversal dimension. Currently, for Grades 8-10, the allocation is: Norwegian 532, English 342, Compulsory additional subjects (where a second foreign language can be chosen) 304. If a second foreign language were to become obligatory on this basis, there would still be less time for developing the language than there is for teaching English, where a possible “ceiling effect” as described in Chap 3, suggests that this is above all a maintenance of competence rather than a further development proportional to the time spent.

Were English time and second foreign language time to be combined (with or without further merging with Norwegian language time), schools, teachers and pupils could decide which language should be given most time at any given point, depending on the competences and purposes learners and teachers wish to pursue.

Another option is to combine English and other subjects by allocating some English hours for using English as a medium of instruction (bilingual education/Content and Language Integrated Learning). This might be done in social studies, and would provide an opportunity to explore the relationship between language learning and education for democratic citizenship.

The allocation of a total amount of time for language education, ‘blocking’, could also allow the introduction of minority and regional languages. It is not necessary for pupils to pursue full mastery of a language for it to be worthwhile. An introduction to the language and culture of speakers of Urdu, for example, provides an insight into languages and language learning, an appreciation of the lives of one of the new minorities and, for some pupils, a desire to pursue the study of the language in depth by extra-school means.

The *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* provides a means of planning in a coherent and rational way the purposes and aims which students might set themselves in consultation with their teachers, thus also providing practical opportunities for autonomous learning and self-direction of learning purpose as is generally encouraged in the Norwegian education system. The *European Language Portfolio* in turn provides the means for learners to record the different kinds and stages of language learning in which they are engaged and helps them to see the coherence for them as plurilingual individuals.

The limited choice of languages currently available as second foreign languages has been highlighted as a problem by many, including the Quality Commission. The vicious circle

of lack of qualified teachers leading to a lack of opportunities to learn other languages could be broken by flexibility in a holistic language education curriculum. School principals could then draw upon expertise in their locality for introductory courses integrated into a wider curriculum, without worrying that a school has to provide opportunity to master a language in ways comparable to a native speaker.

4.3.4. Vertical coherence: continuity and complementarity

There is already considerable flexibility in the curriculum. This allows, for example, pupils who wish to study Sami or Finnish as a second language to be excused from study of the secondary form of Norwegian, to concentrate on either Bokmål or Nynorsk. Although this is a response to the demand for regional languages, it is still based on the organisation of language studies as separate and unconnected subjects. Transversal flexibility can overcome this and break through barriers but needs to be complemented by vertical coherence throughout schooling, including upper secondary.

A language curriculum might begin with the development of literacy and oracy in the languages of the environment and lead towards an understanding and awareness of languages and language learning processes. Out of this there would develop a plan for pursuit of some competences in some languages to levels specified for the individual student in terms of the levels of the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*, and recorded in their *European Language Portfolio*.

There already exists a similar phenomenon in the model of Scandinavian languages implicit in the current curriculum: partial (receptive) competences are expected in Swedish and Danish, whereas partial productive competence is expected in one variety of Norwegian with full competence in the other (*mutatis mutandis* for Sami or Kven/Finnish). This model could be extended to include other Germanic languages (particularly German) and Romance or Slavic languages. It must be acknowledged that a model of plurilingual education such as this raises fears that learners will not “master” any language adequately and such fears have to be met in part by appropriate assessment, to which we turn below.

Teaching methods for such a model will differ according to the purposes and competences designated as the goals. For example, a model might require all learners to acquire a minimum level in all competences in English as an international language for instrumental purposes, but then allow pupils to choose, or not, to pursue their study of English as an education (*dannelsesfag*). The methods and materials for each of these two modes will differ. Similarly teaching of Norwegian to pupils whose home linguistic identity is not Norwegian differs in methodology from Norwegian for the majority. The *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* contains proposals for various scenarios that suggest possible ways of combining continuity and coherence.

The ways in which transversal and vertical coherence and flexibility can be realised include the concept of the modular curriculum, where different languages can be offered for different objectives and levels, in different competences and at different stages of the

learners' passage through the curriculum of compulsory and upper secondary education – and beyond. From this point of view, language learning is understood as an integrated process, as indicated earlier, where the whole of the time allocated to language learning of all kinds can be used in different ways at different stages in schooling, sometimes giving more emphasis to the first language/mother tongue, sometimes more to the second foreign language and so on.

A modular approach to curriculum design allows flexibility but also ensures that each module is completed, assessed and achieves defined and valid objectives. The *Guide for the Development of Language Education Policies in Europe* (Chaps 5 and 6) and accompanying publications also provide an analysis of the ways in which curricula can be organised to promote plurilingualism, where a modular approach is set alongside other general principles.

Such models and methods, though not without connection to the current curriculum, are a matter for medium term planning and subject to local conditions. They are also conditional on the emergence of languages teachers with the qualifications and qualities which such flexibility demands an issue to which we shall return below.

4.3.5. Assessment and valorisation

The valorisation of achievement in restricted objectives is important, so that a profile of competence in a number of languages for different purposes and at different levels is acknowledged as valuable by parents, employers and other members of civil society.

A model for plurilingualism such as suggested above is in effect a significant move to individualisation of the curriculum: each pupil within certain constraints can determine their own language trajectory, based on their awareness of linguistic and cultural diversity in their immediate environment and beyond. It is crucial that this be complemented by an adequate system of assessment, certification and valorisation, and the *European Language Portfolio* provides the necessary framework (Portfolio assessment is recommended too in more general terms by the Quality Commission).

The recognition of partial competences has an immediate relevance for the Second Foreign Language where it is evident that learners may respond more to, and teachers feel more at ease with, emphasis on some competences more than others. The identification of levels within different competences carried out in the *Common European Framework* (CEF) is reflected in the *European Language Portfolio* (ELP) which could be introduced immediately. The ELP would also stimulate learners to recognise immediately the wealth of their present plurilingualism which is not fully acknowledged and increase their self-esteem.

A similar point can be made with respect to the competences members of minorities have in a range of languages, and the strategic plan *Equal education in practice* includes plans for the 'mapping' of reading skills in mother tongues other than Norwegian and Sami. Furthermore the programme called *Make room for reading* suggests that tests in several

languages should be compiled to map reading skills. There may be opportunity for relating this work to the ELP.

Also of immediate concern is the introduction of national tests in English. These are related to the CEF and will be complemented by the introduction of the ELP which is likely to give a fuller account of learners' competences. The Council of Europe is currently developing a manual and supporting materials to help in the calibration of tests and examinations against levels of competence defined in the CEF.

4.4. Teacher education

4.4.1. Supply and quality of languages teachers

Teacher education is the crucial factor in curriculum development. Long term planning for education for plurilingualism can only be successful if teachers of languages are themselves plurilingual, aware of their plurilingualism and its educational and practical value, and have professional competences to develop plurilingualism in their learners.

In medium term planning for changes such as the introduction of an obligatory second foreign language, the supply of appropriately qualified teachers is a fundamental condition of success too. The current difficulties of second language learning will not be resolved by making it an obligatory subject, unless at the same time attention is paid to teachers' linguistic competence and their knowledge and skill in appropriate methodologies. This applies to both initial and in-service teacher education, as is pointed out in the white paper *Culture for Learning*, where there is reference to the importance of education for teachers particularly in priority subjects which include English and second foreign language.

Current difficulties in supply of languages teachers are in part a function of the tension between teacher education for generalists and for specialists, discussed in Chapter 3. Suggestions for change involve greater emphasis on specialisation but need to recognise the practical demands for generalists in small schools, as well as the philosophical argument. Nonetheless the current difficulties are widely recognised:

- that there is insufficient interest in English among student teachers;
- that there are not enough opportunities for the study of other languages; this is of significance in the question of national capacity;
- that among serving teachers, there is insufficient capacity to meet the needs if a second foreign language is made obligatory;
- that native speakers of new minority languages are particularly under-represented among student teachers (part of a more general need to have more minority language teachers in schools teaching all subjects).

With respect to this last point, the strategic plan *Equal education in practice* makes provision for the development of programmes to enable minority language persons

working as teachers without having formal qualifications to gain such qualifications through short courses or more comprehensive education.

4.4.2. Measures to improve linguistic and cultural competence

It is widely agreed among educationists and other stakeholders that language teachers need more opportunity for development of other competences and that the quantity of hours allocated for this in teacher education needs to be increased. In some other countries future language teachers spend at least a term and preferably a year of study abroad, in order to develop both linguistic and (inter)cultural competence and awareness, and this might be considered in Norway. There are however time and financial implications of this for students which need discussion.

The need to up-date one's linguistic and cultural competence is also significant for qualified teachers during their career. European Union programmes might play an important role in this as suggested in the EU action plan *Promoting Language Learning and Linguistic Diversity: An Action Plan 2004-2006*, and there is perhaps a need to find ways of encouraging teachers during their career to take up these opportunities more frequently.

On the other hand, some language teachers are needed who combine language study with the study of other subjects so that they can be involved in bilingual education/Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)^[14]. It is possible to envisage a model of teacher education which includes the study of another subject during study abroad, with due formal recognition and therefore no additional time requirement. Other language teachers specialising in plurilingual education would need to study two or more languages and appropriate courses on language education and linguistics. Furthermore, teachers of language need to be introduced to the role their subject can and should play in education for citizenship, as suggested earlier, and this needs to be an integral part of teacher education too.

There is therefore a need to integrate medium and long term planning for schools with medium and long term planning for teacher education.

4.4.3. Pedagogy

If there were a decision to introduce an obligatory second foreign language in compulsory education, then medium term planning would need to focus above all on in-service courses. The needs of the education system could not be met simply from graduates of initial teacher education. The White paper *Culture for learning* proposes that a second foreign language should be obligatory and seen as a language for practical use, recognising that there is a need to raise teachers' awareness of this approach and the need to develop their pedagogic competence in order to put it into operation.

Longer term planning in teacher education for education for plurilingualism would focus on initial teacher education. It would include at least the following:

- the acquisition by teachers of English (whether specialists or generalists) of a pedagogy which presents the learning of English as a step towards plurilingualism as well as competence in an international means of communication for its own sake;
- training in methods for teachers of all languages which help learners to develop their plurilingual competence in an integrated and holistic way, using languages for learning other subjects, for acquiring cultural understanding as well as for communication;
- work which helps language teachers to understand and practice the relationship of language learning to the development of intercultural competence, i.e. the ability to interpret and act in relationships among different cultural groups and their beliefs, values and behaviours; in parallel and in part integrated with this, teachers would need an understanding of the role of language learning in citizenship in democratic societies.

There is an opportunity in this respect for lecturers in teacher education institutions to focus their research and publication activity more upon development and implementation of new pedagogies and didactical approaches to language teaching.

The implications for teacher education of a longer term vision of education for plurilingualism would need to be integrated into all planning in a locality or region, part of the responsibility of those developing and implementing local, regional or national policy. As pointed out earlier, the geographic factor needs to be considered and might lead to radically different models of education for plurilingualism according to local circumstances.

4.4.4. In-service education

Patterns of teacher education and career development mean that innovation and change is dependent at least as much on in-service as on initial education. Innovation stimulated by new entrants to the profession alone are unlikely to be successful. Successful change requires leadership from those who have moral and/or political authority, i.e. often those in mid-career or older. On the other hand, the felt need for in-service education is not always present in later stages of a career, and interest for in-service education in Norway has declined in recent years, and incentives may be necessary.

With a view to the possible introduction of an obligatory second foreign language, in-service education is particularly important in the medium term and should have at least the following characteristics:

- opportunities for further development of cultural and linguistic competence;
- further experimentation with use of the internet both for English, as is already underway, and other languages;
- the introduction of incentives for participation in in-service education (in some countries this is obligatory, in others it leads to extra financial reward);
- increased participation in EU programmes; this in itself can stimulate an interest in plurilingual and intercultural competence and education;

- increased bilateral cooperation with target language countries to enable teachers to experience other education systems and develop their pedagogical as well as linguistic/cultural competence;
- increased participation in the work of the European Centre for Modern Languages in Graz;
- increased use of instruments developed by the Council of Europe (the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*, the *European Language Portfolio*, the *Guide for the Development of Language Education Policies in Europe* and accompanying publications)
- more funding for training in the use of ICT in language teaching, not least because this is an attractive element for learners in schools.

In these and similar measures, the responsibilities for continuity and coherence are shared by national, regional and local bodies. On the one hand this ensures appropriate response to the variety of conditions in Norway and on the other it requires considerable co-ordination of planning and implementation, and it is in this respect that an overall *Action plan for language education*, mentioned earlier, would be particularly effective.

Appendix 1: Documents formulating the position of the Council of Europe on language education policy

Conventions:

- European Cultural Convention (19 December 1954)
- European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, treaty open for signature on 5 November 1992 [www.coe.int - (Legal Affairs / Local and Regional Democracy - Link: http://www.coe.int//Regional_or_Minority_languages)]
- Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, treaty open for signature on 1 February 1995 www.coe.int/minorities (Texts). Link: www.coe.int/Minorities/Framework_Convention/FCNM and Explanatory Report]

Policy recommendations:

- Resolution (69) 2 elaborated at the conclusion of the CDCC ‘Major Project’ established following upon the Conference of European Ministers of Education (Hamburg 1961)
- Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe (www.coe.int/cm)
- Recommendation R (82)18 based on the results of the CDCC Project N° 4 (‘Modern Languages 1971-1981’)
- Recommendation R (98) 6 based on the results of the CDCC Project ‘Language Learning for European Citizenship’ (1989 – 1996) - *Languages* [www.coe.int (Committee of Ministers / Advanced Search / Rec (98)6) - Link: cm.coe.int/rec/1998/98r6]
- Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (assembly.coe.int/ Link: assembly.coe.int/AdoptedText/EREC1383]
- Recommendation 1383 (1998) on Linguistic Diversification and (CM(99)97)
- Recommendation 1539 (2001) on the European Year of Languages 2001
- Recommendation 1598 (2003) on the protection of sign languages in the member states of the Council of Europe

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

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

Appendix 2: Council of Europe instruments

- 1. *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages : Learning, Teaching, Assessment (CEF)***
- 2. *European Language Portfolio (ELP)***
- 3. *Guide for the development of language education policies in Europe***

1. Common European Framework of Reference for Languages : Learning, Teaching, Assessment (CEF) www.coe.int/portfolio [documentation]

Developed through a process of scientific research and wide consultation, this document provides a practical tool for setting clear standards to be attained at successive stages of learning and for evaluating outcomes in an internationally comparable manner. The CEF provides a basis for the mutual recognition of language qualifications, thus facilitating educational and occupational mobility. It is increasingly used in the reform of national curricula and by international consortia for the comparison of language certificates. The CEF is a document which describes in a comprehensive manner

- the competences necessary for communication
- the related knowledge and skills
- the situations and domains of communication

The CEF facilitates a clear definition of teaching and learning objectives and methods. It provides the necessary tools for assessment of proficiency.

The CEF is of particular interest to course designers, textbook writers, testers, teachers and teacher trainers - in fact to all who are directly involved in language teaching and testing.

It is the result of extensive research and ongoing work on communicative objectives, as exemplified by the popular ‘Threshold level’ concept .

The success of this standard-setting document has led to its widespread use at all levels and its translation into eighteen languages: Basque, Catalan, Czech, English, Finnish, French, Galician, Georgian, German, Hungarian, Italian, Japanese, Moldovan, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Serbian and Spanish (see website).

Guides and Case Studies are available on the Council of Europe website.

English version: *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment*, 2001 - Cambridge University Press - ISBN: Hardback 0521803136 Paperback: 0521005310.

2. **European Language Portfolio (ELP)** www.coe.int/portfolio

The *European Language Portfolio* was developed and piloted by the Language Policy Division of the Council of Europe, Strasbourg, from 1998 until 2000. It was launched on a pan-European level during the European Year of Languages as a tool to support the development of plurilingualism and pluriculturalism.

The ELP is a document in which those who are learning or have learned a language - whether at school or outside school - can record and reflect on their language learning and cultural experiences.

The ELP contains three parts:

- a **Language Passport** which its owner regularly updates. A grid is provided where his/her language competences can be described according to common criteria accepted throughout Europe and which can serve as a complement to customary certificates.
- a detailed **Language Biography** describing the owner's experiences in each language and designed to guide the learner in planning and assessing progress.
- a **Dossier** where examples of personal work can be kept to illustrate one's language competences.

Aims

The ELP seeks to promote the aims of the Council of Europe. These include the development of democratic citizenship in Europe through

1. the deepening of mutual understanding and tolerance among citizens in Europe;
2. the protection and promotion of linguistic and cultural diversity;
3. the promotion of lifelong language and intercultural learning for plurilingualism through the development of learner responsibility and learner autonomy;
4. the clear and transparent description of competences and qualifications to facilitate coherence in language provision and mobility in Europe.

Principles

- All competence is valued, regardless whether gained inside or outside of formal education.
- The *European Language Portfolio* is the property of the learner.
- It is linked to the *Common European Framework of reference for Languages*.

A set of common *Principles and Guidelines* have been agreed for all Portfolios (see web site).

Accreditation of ELP models : see detailed information on the website.

3. **Guide for the development of language education policies in Europe (Draft 1)** **www.coe.int/lang - Policy development activities**

The aim of the *Guide* is to offer an analytical instrument which can serve as a reference document for the formulation or reorganisation of language teaching in member States. Its purpose is to provide a response to the need to formulate language policies to promote plurilingualism and diversification in a planned manner so that decisions are coherently linked. It deals, for example, with the specification of guiding principles and aims, analysis of the particular situation and resources, expectations, needs, implementation and evaluation. Accordingly, the *Guide* does not promote any particular language education policy but attempts to identify the challenges and possible responses in the light of common principles.

To this end the Guide is organised in three parts:

- a) analysis of current language education policies in Europe (common characteristics of member states policies and presentation of Council of Europe principles)
- b) information required for the formulation of language education policies (methodologies for policy design, aspects/factors to be taken into account in decision making)
- c) implementation of language education policies (guiding principles and policy options for deciders in providing diversification in choice of languages learned and in promoting the development of plurilingual competence; inventory of technical means and description of each 'solution' with indicators of cost, lead in time, means, teacher training implications, administration etc.)

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

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

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

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

The *Guide* has been elaborated in draft form and a consultation process is being undertaken.

The two versions of the Guide as well as the Reference studies are available on the web site .

Appendix 3: Council of Europe Expert Group

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NOTES

- [1] Document DGIV/EDU/LANG (2002) 1 Rev. 3
- [2] Membership of the Expert Group: Michael Byram (Rapporteur) United Kingdom; Daniel Coste, France; Liliana Preoteasa, Romania; Zoltan Poór, Hungary; Heike Speitz, Norway; Philia Thalgot, Council of Europe.
- [3] *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment*, Cambridge University Press. Also online on <http://culture.coe.int/portfolio> (Documentation) -
- [4] Published in 2002 by the Language Policy Division, Council of Europe ; rev. 2003. Available online www.coe.int/lang
- [5] For an overview of language education in Norway and the Norwegian education system, see the *Country Report: Norway*,
- [6] For details see *Country Report: Norway*
- [7] Recent figures from Bonnet (see note 7) give the following information about language choice among a survey group of pupils in 10th Grade: 62% have chosen a second foreign language; 42% of these have chosen German, 17% French, 0.2% Norwegian as a second language, and 2.7% another foreign language.
- [8] Bonnet, G. (ed.) 2003, *The assessment of pupils' skills in English in eight European countries*.
- [9] Appendix 4 of the Country Report provides an overview of registrations for language examinations from which it can be seen, for example, that Urdu has the most substantial number, and in which it is possible to see a very impressive range of languages available.
- [10] This kind of view is to be found for example in the report *Ute i verden med bare engelsk? Eller trenger vi flere fremmedspråk? – Tysk som eksempel* by Godrun Gaarder published by Europa-programmet and in the investigation by Heike Speitz and Beate Lindemann “*Jeg valgte tysk fordi hele familien min ville det, men jeg angrer.*” *Status for 2. fremmedspråk i norsk ungdomsskole*, Telemark Educational Research.
- [11] see *Guide for the Development of Language Education Policies in Europe* section 3.1.1
- [12] See also a draft of a report on Education for Democratic Citizenship in the ‘Northern Europe Region’ by Rolf Mikkelsen which demonstrates the range of practices in Norway (and other countries) in support of this view
- [13] See *Country Report: Norway* p.22.
- [14] An alternative approach to CLIL taken in some countries is to improve the language competence of teachers of other subjects. This would involve changes in teacher education for other subjects which go beyond the scope of this Profile but could be considered in other places.