The educational inclusion of Romani children: a policy experimentation
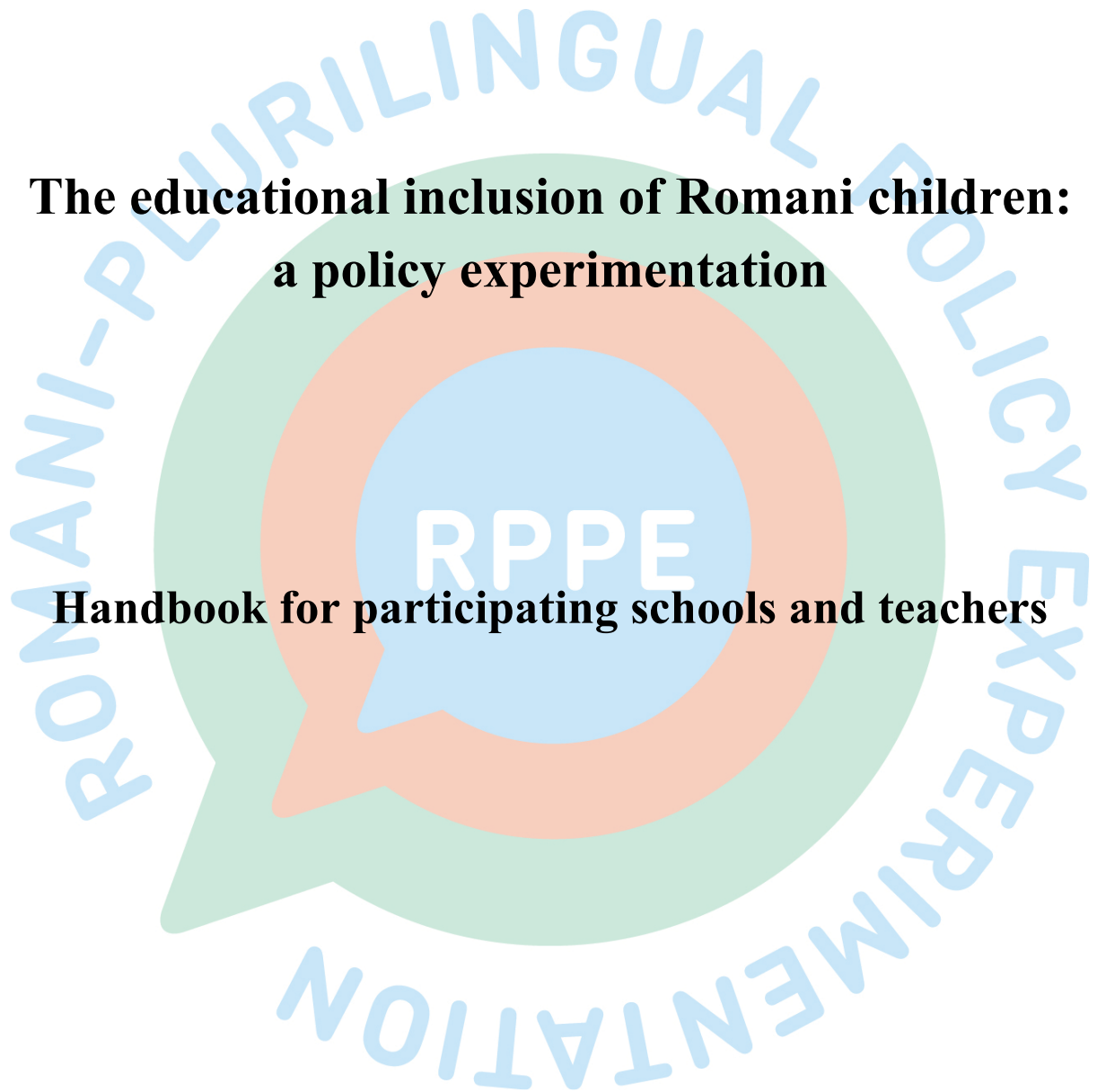
Handbook for participating schools and teachers

RPPE

ROMANI–PLURILINGUAL POLICY EXPERIMENTATION

1 Why a policy experimentation?

Despite the Council of Europe's decades-long engagement with Romani issues, the educational inclusion of Romani children and adolescents continues to present major challenges to member states. Successive recommendations from the Committee of Ministers are clear about the political principles and social values that should shape policy, and they are equally clear about the outcomes that policy implementation should achieve. They do not, however, concern themselves with those aspects of policy that shape classroom practice.

In 2018–2019 a Council of Europe expert group[1] set out to fill this gap, proposing new ways of managing the educational inclusion of Romani children and adolescents in schools and classrooms. The group's proposals, which have implications for the educational inclusion of other linguistic and cultural minorities, are based on two principles that are fundamental to the Council of Europe's work in language education:

  i. language learners are also language users, social agents with a personal agenda to fulfil;
  ii. language education should take account of all the languages and cultures present in a particular educational context and help learners to develop integrated plurilingual repertoires and intercultural awareness.

The policy document argues that the educational inclusion of Romani children and adolescents should be guided by five principles:

Principle 1 – The educational inclusion of Romani children and adolescents is a fundamental human right that should be given priority by Council of Europe member states.

Principle 2 – The educational inclusion of Romani children and adolescents should also benefit non-Romani students.

Principle 3 – The highly variable linguistic profiles of Romani communities mean that education systems need to develop flexible approaches to the inclusion of Romani children and adolescents and the teaching of Romani language, culture and history.

Principle 4 – Flexibility is more likely to be achieved when the primary focus is on learners and learning rather than on teachers and teaching.

Principle 5 – Flexibility is also more likely to be achieved when language education focuses on the development of plurilingual repertoires.

The purpose of the policy experimentation is to test these principles by applying them to school policy and classroom practice in a small number of primary schools in a small number of Council of Europe member states.

The *impact* of the policy experimentation will be:

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[1] The members of the expert group were: David Little, coordinator of the ECML's QualiRom Training & Consultancy; Dieter Halwachs, member of COMEX of ECRML; Ján Hero, vice chair of CAHROM; Helena Sadílková, head of Romani Studies Seminar, Charles University Prague; Diana Sima, educational advisor and teacher of Romani; Zuzana Bodnárová, Romani Project, University of Graz.

the more effective inclusion of primary-age Romani pupils in participating schools;

significant innovation in the teaching of Romani language, history and culture to Romani and non-Romani pupils;

the building of school networks in and between participating countries in order to provide a basis for further development.

More generally the experimentation will contribute to our understanding of ways in which the Council of Europe's concept of plurilingual and intercultural education can be translated into classroom practice that secures the educational inclusion of pupils from linguistic minorities.

The *outcomes* of the policy experimentation will be:

for participating Romani pupils, an experience of inclusive education in which the Romani language plays a central;

for participating non-Romani pupils, an experience of Romani language, history and culture;

continuing professional development of participating teachers;

on the part of all participants in the policy experimentation, an understanding of the practice of plurilingual education and the contribution it makes to inclusion and social cohesion;

new ways of including the Romani language in the daily discourse of school, inside and outside the classroom.

The *outputs* of the policy experimentation will be

learning activities and teaching materials based on the *Curriculum Framework for Romani* and the European Language Portfolios;

proposals to revise and/or extend the *Curriculum Framework for Romani*, to revise/adapt the Romani European Language Portfolios, and to revise/extend the QualiRom teaching materials;

regular reports that describe, analyse and interpret classroom activities and learning achievement following the principles of Exploratory Practice (see Chapter 2 for further explanation);

an evaluation of the successes and failures of the policy experimentation in terms of the five principles set out above and elaborated in Chapter 2 of this handbook;

a final report that is presented in the form of a manual of good practice for wider dissemination.

The *activities* of the policy experimentation will be

induction workshops/activities for participating schools;

preparatory workshops for participating teachers;

pedagogical experimentation in participating classrooms;

the collection, analysis and interpretation of data collected according to the principles of Exploratory Practice;

evaluation of the policy experimentation by the steering group from the perspective of

the five principles set out above;

regular events to inform the larger school community, parents, education officials and other stakeholders about the policy experimentation and its progress and to secure their buy-in;

in each year of the policy experimentation, at least one national workshop that brings together teachers in participating schools to exchange and evaluate their experience;

at the end of the policy experimentation, an intergovernmental conference to publicise and disseminate the results.

This handbook

explains how the policy experimentation will be managed (Chapter 2);

explores the pedagogical implications of the five principles (Chapter 3);

considers the implications of the five principles for school policy and mainstream classroom practice (Chapter 4);

describes some activities that support foreign language learning at primary level and encourage the inclusion of linguistic diversity in the mainstream classroom (Chapter 5);

explains how the *Curriculum Framework for Romani* and the European Language Portfolios can support the teaching and learning of Romani and the inclusion of Romani pupils in the mainstream classroom (Chapter 6).

Many of the activities proposed in the handbook may already be part of classroom practice in participating schools, and it is hoped that teachers will contribute further activities of their own.

Questions for participating schools and teachers:

What aspects of the inclusion of Romani pupils in your school are especially successful?

What aspects of the inclusion of Romani pupils in your school need further work?

How can you best work together to ensure that you develop a common understanding of the requirements, goals and methods of the policy experimentation?

2 How will the policy experimentation be organised?

2.1 Steering group

The policy experimentation will be managed by a steering group nominated by the Council of Europe:

> David Little, coordinator of the ECML's QualiRom Training & Consultancy;
> Dieter Halwachs, member of COMEX of ECRML (substitute: Zuzana Bodnárová, Romani Project, University of Graz);
> Ján Hero, vice chair of CAHROM; national coordinator for Slovakia;
> Helena Sadílková, head of Romani Studies Seminar, Charles University Prague;
> Diana Sima, educational advisor and teacher of Romani;
> Sabina Zorčič, national coordinator for Slovenia;
> National coordinator for Greece (to be nominated)
> Council of Europe secretariat

The working language of the steering group will be English; seminars in participating countries will be conducted in the national language, which means that translation and interpretation will be needed.

The steering group will

> contribute to the induction of participating schools and teachers, either online or in person;
> contribute to the ongoing support provided for participating schools and teachers;
> receive regular reports from national coordinators;
> prepare annual reports on the progress of the policy experimentation;
> evaluate the policy experimentation from the perspective of the five principles summarised in Chapter 1 and elaborated in Chapter 3.

2.2 Ministries of Education in participating countries

The Ministries of Education in participating countries will

> select 2–4 primary schools to participate in the policy experimentation;
> appoint a national coordinator for the policy experimentation;
> provide the national coordinator with support (remuneration and expenses) as agreed with the Council of Europe;
> provide for regular exchange of information on the progress of the policy experimentation between the ministry and the national coordinator;
> fund at least one meeting each year of all teachers/teaching assistants participating in the policy experimentation (travelling and accommodation expenses if relevant).

2.3 National coordinators

National coordinators will

be language education professionals with relevant classroom experience;

have experience of working with Romani communities;

support participating schools and teachers via regular school visits and workshops;

in close cooperation with participating schools, organise events to inform parents, other stakeholders and the wider community about the policy experimentation and to secure their active support;

regularly collect data (examples of classroom projects, pupils' work, etc.) from participating schools and classrooms;

regularly report to the steering group on the progress of the policy experimentation in their country.

2.4 Participating schools

Selected by the Ministry of Education in consultation with the Council of Europe, participating schools will include among their pupil cohort Romani children from one or more of the following:

communities that no longer speak Romani;

communities in which older members still use Romani on a daily basis, whereas children and adolescents hear and understand Romani but do not speak it regularly in their daily lives;

communities that have retained a variety of Romani as their domestic and community language.

Participating schools will

provide all reasonable support for the policy experimentation and participating teachers/teaching assistants;

nominate a member of staff responsible for coordinating the policy experimentation in the school;

ensure that the whole school is aware of the policy experimentation and its goals, for example by displaying posters and examples of pupils' work throughout the school;

create opportunities for non-Romani pupils to develop an awareness of Romani language, culture and history;

make all education stakeholders and the wider community aware of the policy experimentation and secure their buy-in by involving them in its activities as appropriate;

secure parental consent to the anonymous use of their children's work in reports on the policy experimentation.

2.5 Participating teachers/teaching assistants

The teachers/teaching assistants who participate in the policy experimentation will perform one or both of the following functions:

teach Romani in different settings;

teach or provide support for Romani pupils in mainstream classes.

With support from the steering group and national coordinator, participating teachers/teaching assistants will seek to implement in their teaching the principles set out in Chapter 3 of this handbook, which means

involving their pupils in modes of classroom interaction that are designed to encourage initiative and the exercise of agency;

adopting approaches to classroom management that enable them to collect data of various kinds without taking on an additional burden (see section 2.6).

2.6 Reporting

The purpose of the policy experimentation is to understand what is involved in implementing the principles elaborated in Chapter 3. Principles 4 and 5 emphasise the agency of learners as well as teachers; accordingly, pupils will be partners in the exploration and evaluation of innovative procedures. This means that the search for understanding will be a fully integrated part of classroom practice rather than an additional duty imposed on participating teachers. The policy experimentation will follow the approach to participatory research known as Exploratory Practice, whose guiding principles have been summarised as follows: "Learners are both unique individuals and social beings who are capable of taking learning seriously, of taking independent decisions, and of developing as practitioners of learning."[2]

In Exploratory Practice, teachers and learners work together to understand the activities they are engaged in, following their own agendas. Their first priority is not to bring about change but to use pedagogical practices as investigative tools, so that working for understanding is part of teaching and learning, not something extra. In this way, Exploratory Practice does not lead to "burn out" but is indefinitely sustainable in its contribution to teaching and learning and to individual and collective personal development.[3]

Questions for participating schools and teachers:
This chapter has defined the roles of participating schools and teachers
– What dimensions of those roles accord with the school's current policy and practice?
– What dimensions are likely to be challenging?

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[2] D. Allwright & J. Hanks, *The Developing Language Learner: An Introduction to Exploratory Practice*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009, p. 15.

[3] This paragraph is adapted from D. Allwright, "Exploratory Practice: Rethinking practitioner research in language teaching", *Language Teaching Research* 7.2, 2003, pp. 127–8.

3 Implications of the five principles for school policy and classroom practice

3.1 Principle 1: The educational inclusion of Romani children and adolescents is a fundamental human right that should be given priority by Council of Europe member states

The right to education asserted in the European Convention on Human Rights has been reinforced by two recommendations from the Committee of Ministers that focus respectively on the promotion of plurilingualism and the provision of quality education.[4] From a human rights perspective, there are two reasons why the Romani language should play a central role in the education of Romani children and adolescents:

i. a policy of inclusion implies recognition of distinctive Romani identities, and those are partly shaped by the Romani language, either currently or historically;

ii. when it is the home language of Romani pupils, Romani is their primary cognitive tool and the default medium of their discursive thinking. To forbid the use of home languages at school is educationally counter-productive because it impairs cognition; arguably, it also infringes a fundamental human right. The learning of curriculum content can be supported and strengthened if teachers make space for home languages in their classroom. This is discussed further in section 3.5 below.

> Questions for participating schools and teachers:
>> How does your school make clear to teachers and other staff members, pupils, parents and the wider community that it is committed to a policy of inclusion?
>> How does your school demonstrate to the wider public that it promotes democracy, respect for human rights and social justice?
>> What role does the Romani language currently play in the educational experience of your Romani pupils?

3.2 Principle 2 – The educational inclusion of Romani children and adolescents should also benefit non-Romani students

Educational inclusion is a prerequisite for social inclusion, which in turn is a prerequisite for integration, defined by the Council of Europe as a two-way process.[5] Integration, according to this definition, should impact on majority as well as minority communities. It is thus essential to find ways of ensuring that the inclusion of Romani language, culture and history in programmes of schooling extends the linguistic, cultural and historical knowledge and awareness

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[4] Recommendation CM/Rec(2008)7, on the use of the Council of Europe's Common European Frameworok of Reference for Languages (CEFR) and the promotion of plurilingualism (https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectID=09000016805d2fb1); Recommendation CM/Rec(2012)13, on ensuring quality education (https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectId=09000016805c94fb).

[5] See, for example, the White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue, *Living Together as Equals in Dignity*, Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2008, https://www.coe.int/t/dg4/intercultural/source/white%20paper_final_revised_en.pdf.

of non-Romani pupils. If this does not happen, the teaching of Romani language, history and culture becomes an instrument of segregation and exclusion rather than integration and inclusion.

In some contexts, it may be possible for non-Romani pupils to learn the Romani language together with their Romani peers. When Romani pupils are partly or fully proficient in the language, they should be able to support the language learning efforts of their non-Romani peers. The goal of such arrangements should be inclusion through awareness-raising and mutual respect rather than the development of high levels of communicative proficiency.

The inclusion of Romani children and adolescents should not, however, be seen simply as a matter of providing classes in Romani language, history and culture to which non-Romani pupils also have access. A policy of educational inclusion implies openness to diversity of ethnicity, culture and language; classrooms should be secure and supportive spaces where all learners can discover and express their identities. This is the essence of plurilingual and intercultural education. As already noted in section 3.1, Romani children and adolescents whose home language is a variety of Romani should have opportunities to use that language to support their learning in all areas of the curriculum. This requires understanding and commitment on the part of teachers, but it is not necessary for them to be proficient in Romani or to be supported by a Romani teacher or teaching assistant. It is important to point out that the inclusion of Romani and other minority languages in the discourse of lessons that are not primarily focused on language learning gives pupils from the majority community an experience of multilingualism that is unlikely to be available to them in any other way (see also section 3.5 below).

Questions for participating schools and teachers:
> In how many ways can non-Romani pupils benefit from the presence of Romani pupils in their classroom?
> How can your school give non-Romani pupils an experience of Romani language, history and culture?
> In what ways can teachers in mainstream classrooms help Romani pupils whose home language is Romani to use that language to support their learning of curriculum content mediated in the language of schooling?

3.3 Principle 3 – The highly variable linguistic profiles of Romani communities mean that education systems need to develop flexible approaches to the inclusion of Romani children and adolescents and the teaching of Romani language, culture and history

Linguistically, Romani communities fall into three broad categories:
> those that no longer speak Romani;
> those in which older members of the community still use Romani on a daily basis, whereas children and adolescents hear and understand Romani but do not speak it regularly in their daily lives;

those that have retained a variety of Romani as their domestic and community language.

Accordingly, some Romani pupils will be beginners in the language, others will be able to understand the spoken language but lack productive skills, and others again will have a variety of Romani as their home language. Romani pupils in a given school may come from different communities that are associated with different varieties of the language. Even if they all come from the same community, more than one of the categories may be represented.

Whatever their relation to the Romani language, Romani children and adolescents fall into three broad categories as regards the language of schooling:

those for whom the language of schooling presents no major difficulties;

those who speak a non-standard variety of the dominant language and thus need help to become proficient in the (standard) language of schooling;

those who lack proficiency in the language of schooling, perhaps as a result of recent migration.

These considerations mean that education systems must find ways of responding to one or more of the nine possible linguistic profiles shown in Table 3.1. This potential diversity implies a need for flexibility in education systems, schools and classrooms. According to Principles 4 and 5, flexibility is easier to achieve (i) when the primary focus is on learners and learning rather than teachers and teaching and (ii) when language education seeks to develop learners' plurilingual repertoires rather than treating languages in isolation from one another. These considerations bring us to the core issues of curriculum, learning and teaching.

Table 3.1: Nine possible linguistic profiles of Romani pupils/students

Language of schooling / Romani	No difficulties	Help needed	No proficiency
No knowledge			
Some knowledge			
Home language			

Use Table 1 to estimate the degree of diversity in your school/classroom and the number of pupils who have difficulty with the language of schooling. Then answer these questions:

Does your school/classroom include other minority languages in addition to Romani?

How do you support Romani and other minority-language pupils who (i) need help with the language of schooling or (ii) have no proficiency in the language of schooling?

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How flexible can your school be as regards the composition of classes, timetable, deployment of Romani assistants, etc.?

3.4 Principle 4 – Flexibility is more likely to be achieved when the primary focus is on learners and learning rather than on teachers and teaching

This section is concerned with the first of the two pillars of the Council of Europe's language education policy, its *concept of the language learner as a language user who is an autonomous social agent with a personal agenda to fulfil*. This concept is fundamental to the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEFR) and the European Language Portfolio. Together with the *Curriculum Framework for Romani*, these instruments are discussed further in Chapter 6. Here we focus on the CEFR's description of language learning in terms of language use and explain why *mediation* is an apt metaphor for the activity of language teaching.

3.4.1 Language learning as language use

The CEFR summarises its action-oriented approach to the description of language use as follows (the words and phrases printed in italics refer to the principal components of the CEFR's descriptive scheme):

Language use, embracing language learning, comprises the actions performed by persons who as individuals and as social agents develop a range of *competences*, both *general* and in particular *communicative language competences*. They draw on the competences at their disposal in various *contexts* under various *conditions* and under various *constraints* to engage in *language activities* involving *language processes* to produce and/or receive *texts* in relation to *themes* in specific *domains*, activating those *strategies* which seem most appropriate for carrying out the *tasks* to be accomplished. The monitoring of these actions by the participants leads to the reinforcement or modification of their competences.[6]

These three sentences may be interpreted as follows:

By defining language users and language learners as "individuals and social agents", the CEFR establishes three fundamental principles: (i) it is primarily concerned not with language but with the communicative needs of the *individual*, which are subject to infinite variation; (ii) language use always has a purpose – an *agent* is someone who makes things happen as a result of his or her actions; and (iii) a *social* agent acts with other people, so language use frequently entails negotiation and collaboration.

When we use language, we draw on our competences (a combination of knowledge, skills and characteristics) to perform actions. Because we do this as social agents who have tasks to accomplish, language use requires us to take initiatives; as social agents, we are *autonomous* language users.

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[6] CEFR, p.9.

Language learning is a variety of language use in the sense that proficiency develops from sustained interaction between our gradually developing competences and the communicative tasks that require us to use the target language. As social agents we need to be autonomous language *users*. Given that language learning is a variety of language use, we shall more easily become autonomous language *users* if we are autonomous language *learners*.

Language use, and therefore also language learning, occurs in domains (of which the CEFR identifies four: personal, public, occupational and educational); it is shaped in part by the conditions and constraints characteristic of particular contexts. Our developing proficiency as language user–learners includes a growing capacity to understand and cope with the conditions and constraints that impact on language use in different contexts and domains.

We perform the actions that comprise language use by engaging in language activities – listening and speaking, reading and writing, interacting and mediating in speech and in writing. The meaning of language activities is expressed in their thematic content.

When we engage in language activities, we necessarily activate language processes and deploy strategies. Language processes and strategies are partly unconscious and involuntary, partly conscious and intentional.

By monitoring our language use, we reinforce, modify and extend our competences. According to the CEFR, monitoring is the strategic component that "deals with updating of mental activities and competences in the course of communication";[7] in this sense it operates mostly below the threshold of conscious awareness. But monitoring is also the intentional, metacognitive process by which we exercise strategic control over the language learning process.[8]

We can sum up this interpretation of the CEFR's action-oriented approach in two propositions: (i) if learners are to develop a proficiency that allows them to act as social agents, the target language should be the principal medium of their learning; and (ii) in formal educational contexts their learning should be organised in ways that encourage them to exercise their agency (i.e. act autonomously) and develop the metacognitive and metalinguistic skills of monitoring.

Questions for participating schools and teachers:
How would you summarise the view of language learning that underlies your official curricula? Is it easy to reconcile with the view expressed in the CEFR?

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[7] CEFR, p.92.

[8] D. Little, "Strategic competence considered in relation to strategic control of the language learning process", in H. Holec, D. Little & R. Richterich, *Strategies in Language Learning and Use. Studies towards a Common European Framework of Reference for Language Learning and Teaching*, Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 1996, pp.9–37.

To what extent does your education system recognise that pupils are social agents with their own agenda to fulfil? How is that agenda taken into account?

What forms of assessment are used in your education system (official exams) and school (teacher assessment/school exams)? In what ways do they support the idea that language learning is a form of language use?

3.4.2 Language teaching as mediation

The CEFR's description of the language learning process implies that teachers should engage their learners in target language use from the very beginning, and that in doing so, they should help them to find ways of exercising their agency (making choices and acting on them). Perhaps the best word for describing this view of the teacher's role is "mediator". The CEFR does not provide illustrative scales for mediation, about which it says relatively little. But by basing its descriptive scheme not on four skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) but on four modes of language use (reception, production, interaction and mediation), the CEFR acknowledges the symbiotic relation between individual and social dimensions of language use and language learning. This symbiosis justifies the greatly enhanced role assigned to mediation in the *CEFR Companion Volume* (CEFR CV),[9] which contains the following illustrative scales:

Mediation activities
- Mediating communication
  - Facilitating pluricultural space
  - Acting as an intermediary in informal situations
  - Facilitating communication in delicate situations and disagreements
- Mediating concepts
  - Collaborating in a group
      Facilitating collaborative interaction with peers
      Collaborating to construct meaning
  - Leading group work
      Managing interaction
      Encouraging conceptual talk
- Mediating a text
  - Relaying specific information in speech/in writing
  - Explaining data (e.g. in graphs, diagrams, charts etc.) in speech/in writing
  - Processing text in speech/in writing
  - Translating a written text in speech/in writing
  - Note-taking (lectures, seminars, meetings etc.)
  - Expressing a personal response to creative texts (including literature)
  - Analysis and criticism of creative texts (including literature)

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[9] *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume* (CEFR CV). Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2020. https://rm.coe.int/common-european-framework-of-reference-for-languages-learning-teaching/16809ea0d4.

Mediation strategies
- Strategies to explain a new concept
  - Linking to previous knowledge
  - Adapting language
  - Breaking down complicated information
- Strategies to simplify a text
  - Amplifying a dense text
  - Streamlining a text

All of these mediation activities and strategies have a place in classrooms that aim to support the language learning process as defined by the CEFR. To read through the descriptors in these scales is to remind oneself of the range of actions teachers need to perform and the strategies they need to draw on in order to engage their learners in target language use and help them to exercise their agency. At the same time, the descriptors at the lower proficiency levels refer to mediation skills that learners need to develop in order to exercise their social agency in the (language) classroom. For example, the scale for FACILITATING COLLABORATIVE INTERACTION WITH PEERS includes this descriptor at level C1: "Can show sensitivity to different perspectives within a group, acknowledging contributions and formulating any reservations, disagreements or criticisms in such a way as to avoid or minimise any offence".[10] This is what one expects the teacher to do when organising, monitoring and evaluating group work. At level A1 the same scale offers this descriptor: "Can invite others' contributions to very simple tasks using short, simple phrases prepared in advance. Can indicate that they understand and ask whether others understand".[11] This is the kind of behaviour learners need to display if group work carried out in the target language is to produce worthwhile learning. Similar examples occur in all the mediation scales.

Download the CEFR *Companion Volume*, read through the illustrative scales for mediation and answer these questions:

How many descriptors in these scales apply to your approach to (i) teaching in general and (ii) language teaching in particular?

How many descriptors at the lower proficiency levels capture the classroom interaction in which your pupils are engaged (i) in all their lessons and (ii) in language lessons?

3.5 Principle 5 – Flexibility is also more likely to be achieved when language education focuses on the development of plurilingual repertoires and intercultural learning

3.5.1 Plurilingualism and plurilingual and intercultural education

The second pillar of the Council of Europe's language education policy is the concept of *plurilingual and intercultural education*. The CEFR distinguishes between multilingualism as the

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[10] CEFR CV, p. 225.
[11] CEFR CV, p. 226.

presence of two or more languages in a community and plurilingualism as the individual's capacity to communicate in two or more languages. It also distinguishes between individual multilingualism and plurilingualism, defining individual multilingualism as the knowledge of a number of languages taught, learned and used in isolation from one another (the tradition in most education systems), and plurilingualism as "a communicative competence to which all knowledge and experience of language contributes and in which languages interrelate and interact".[12]

In accordance with this definition, the Council of Europe's concept of plurilingual and intercultural education[13] entails that all the languages present in a given school should contribute to the educational experience of all learners: the language of schooling, which in most countries is also taught as a subject in its own right; modern foreign and classical curriculum languages; and minority languages of all kinds, whether or not they are taught at school. In every lesson, whatever subject is being taught and whatever language is the medium of classroom communication, the plurilingual approach entails that classroom discourse is organised in such a way that all other languages available to the pupils can contribute to their understanding and processing of curriculum content and thus support their learning. This brings cultural as well as linguistic enrichment to the educational process. To date, the concept of plurilingual and intercultural education has not been widely taken up, but it is especially relevant to the educational inclusion of children and adolescents from linguistic minorities, including Roma who speak a variety of Romani at home and/or are not able to communicate fluently in the language of schooling. In particular, the concept of plurilingual and intercultural education suggests a way of including minority languages in the life of the classroom without formally teaching them, as the following example from Ireland shows.

Questions for schools and teachers:

Do your official curricula embody the principles of plurilingual education as summarised in this section?

In what ways could those principles support the educational inclusion of children and adolescents whose home language is not a variety of the language of schooling?

In what ways are the home languages of your pupils present in the life of the school and in the classroom?

3.5.2 *Plurilingual education at primary school: a practical example*

In recent decades Ireland has experienced unprecedented levels of immigration, which means that the education system has faced the challenge of integrating children and adolescents whose

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[12] CEFR, p.4.

[13] For further discussion of the concept, see D. Coste, M. Cavalli, A. Crisan & P.-H. van de Ven, "Plurilingual education as a right, Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2009; available at: https://rm.coe.int/plurilingual-and-inter-cultural-education-as-a-right-this-text-has-been/16805a219d; and M. Cavalli, D. Coste, A. Crisan & P.-H. van de Ven, "Plurilingual education as a project", Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2009; available at: https://rm.coe.int/plurilingual-and-intercultural-education-as-a-project-this-text-has-be/16805a219f.

home language is neither English nor Irish. A girls' primary school in one of Dublin's western suburbs faces an especially acute version of the challenge: some 80 per cent of its 300+ pupils come from immigrant families; most of them have little English when they start school at the age of four and a half; and between them they have more than 50 home languages. Clearly, this level of diversity makes it impossible to offer each immigrant pupil instruction in her home language. The school nevertheless decided that it must find a role for home languages in the life of the school, inside the classroom as well as outside. After all, each pupil's home language is central to her sense of identity, and it is her default inner voice and her primary cognitive tool. To ask her to leave it outside the school gate would be to disrespect her and to constrain her learning.

The solution the school found was simple: to encourage pupils from immigrant families to use their home language for whatever purposes seemed to them appropriate. By doing this, the school also enriched the intercultural dimension of all pupils' learning. In Junior Infants, four- and five-year-old immigrant pupils learn to count, add and play action games in English, Irish (the obligatory second language of the curriculum) and their home languages. From the same early age, they are invited to tell the rest of the class how they perform simple everyday tasks and express key curriculum concepts in their home language. Sometimes they have to ask their parents for the words they need – days of the week, perhaps, or months of the year. As pupils move up the school, they are repeatedly invited to make linguistic comparisons between English, Irish and their home language. In this way their home language is always activated in their minds and their identity is fully implicated in the educational process; at the same time, the use of home languages enriches the educational experience of the other pupils. With support from their parents, moreover, immigrant pupils transfer their gradually developing literacy skills from English and Irish to their home language, producing parallel texts in English, Irish and their home language. This provides indigenous Irish students with a strong motivation to think of Irish as their "home language" even though they have no contact with it outside school.

The results of this approach are very positive. Immigrant and indigenous Irish pupils alike develop high levels of age-appropriate plurilingual literacy, an unusually sophisticated degree of language awareness, an unusual enthusiasm for speaking and writing Irish, and from an early age, the capacity to undertake ambitious autonomous learning projects with a linguistic focus. For example, a class of seven-year-olds decided to translate the chorus of the song "It's a Small World" into all the languages present in the class and used their time in the school yard to teach one another all the versions; after a week they were able to sing the chorus in eleven languages. A twelve-year-old pupil taught herself Spanish using two textbooks she found in the school library and various internet resources; when the principal retired, the pupil wrote her a letter of good wishes that was half in Spanish and half in English. The school has no access to special resources; its pupils nevertheless perform above the national average in the standardised tests of maths and English that they take annually from First Class (6+ years old) to Sixth Class (11+

years old).[14]

The way in which this version of plurilingual education is implemented recalls the approach to language learning and teaching described in sections 3.4.1 and 3.4.2. The school treats each of its pupils as a social agent whose capacity for action depends on the language proficiency she brings with her – a capacity that is gradually expanded by the additional languages she learns at school. As is usual in Irish primary classrooms, exposition is embedded in exploratory talk that seeks to maximise comprehension and learning by linking new material to what pupils already know. Because teachers include immigrant pupils' home languages in the discourse of the classroom, those pupils have an additional motivation to exercise their agency: only they have access to their own language and the linguistic and cultural insights they have acquired, and this gives them the confidence to take more discourse initiatives than might otherwise be the case.

This version of plurilingual and intercultural education has two obvious lessons for those responsible for the educational inclusion of Romani children and adolescents: (i) the inclusion of all available languages in every lesson ensures the inclusion of the speakers of those languages; and (ii) it gives speakers of the dominant language an unparalleled education in multilingualism.

> The Irish primary school's distinctive approach to language education evolved as the school sought to answer the question: How can we include pupils whose home language is not the language of schooling and whose cultural background may be very different from that of indigenous Irish pupils?
>
>> What lessons might this approach to language education have for the educational inclusion of Romani children and adolescents in your context?
>
>> What lessons can be learned from the Irish example by schools that want to include awareness of Romani language, culture and history in the educational experience of all pupils?

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[14] For a detailed study of this approach to plurilingual education, see D. Little and D. Kirwan, *Engaging with Linguistic Diversity: A Study of Educational Inclusion in an Irish Primary School*, London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2019 (paperback edition 2021).

4 Including Romani pupils in mainstream classes

The policy experimentation will support the inclusion of Romani and other minority-language pupils by implementing context-sensitive versions of the Council of Europe's plurilingual approach, taking account of all languages present in the participating schools: the language(s) of schooling, curriculum languages, and the home languages of students from minority communities, including Romani. In this chapter we present four pedagogical principles that define the plurilingual approach, review language development in the pre-school years and the linguistic demands of primary schooling, consider the role played by home languages in pupils' learning, briefly refer to the supports that schools should provide for their teachers, and conclude by emphasising the importance of documenting teaching and learning. The key message of the chapter is that inclusive plurilingual education must seek to embed learning in the experience, knowledge and skills that pupils have acquired outside school; this includes home languages that are not a variety of the language of schooling.

4.1 Implementing the plurilingual approach: four pedagogical principles

As we saw in section 3.5.1, the Council of Europe's *plurilingual approach* seeks to develop "a communicative competence to which all knowledge and experience of language contributes and in which languages interrelate and interact".[15] If this goal is to be achieved, each language taught at school must be a fully integrated part of each pupil's communicative experience *from the very beginning*. As the CEFR acknowledges, the plurilingual approach entails a significant modification of the aim of language education; instead of teaching languages in isolation from one another, it seeks "to develop a linguistic repertory in which all linguistic abilities have a place".[16]

The pedagogical implications of the plurilingual approach can be summarized in four principles:

1. *Teaching and learning should be grounded in language use that is spontaneous and authentic*: spontaneous in the sense that it arises naturally from the minute-to-minute activities of the classroom; authentic in the sense that it takes account of pupils' concerns both in the immediate context of learning and in their lives more generally. An integrated plurilingual repertoire helps to shape and define the individual's identity, so teaching and learning should also be organized in ways that engage learners' existing identities in the fullest possible way.
2. *Teaching and learning should draw on all the linguistic resources available to learners*: their proficiency in other languages and their explicit and intuitive knowledge of linguistic structures and the pragmatic and sociolinguistic conventions of language use.

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[15] CEFR, p. 4.
[16] CEFR, p. 5.

3. *Teaching and learning should acknowledge that languages are discrete*. Although a plurilingual repertoire makes it possible to switch between languages in order to facilitate communication, the CEFR describes proficiency in relation to particular languages. In other words, it respects the fact that languages are separable in the mind[17] and separate from one another in many contexts of use. The goal of a plurilingual approach to language education should be to enable learners to achieve the highest possible level of literate proficiency in each of the languages in their repertoire.

4. *Teaching should help learners to develop language learning skills that they can deploy in later life. These include skills of self-management and the ability to reflect on the process of language learning and evaluate its outcomes*. Plurilingual repertoires are necessarily provisional: at any time in life, a change in our circumstances may require us to learn a new language; it may also mean that we have less reason to use one or more of the languages in our repertoire. We return to the issue of self-management at various points in what follows.

Before we begin to explore how these principles shape classroom practice, we must say a little about children's language development in the pre-school years and the linguistic demands of primary schooling.

Questions for participating schools and teachers:
> To what extent is your teaching, including your language teaching, grounded in language use that is spontaneous and authentic in the senses defined above?
> Does your teaching draw on all the linguistic resources available to your pupils?
> How do you develop your pupils' ability to manage and reflect on their learning?

4.2 Language development in the pre-school years

Children's acquisition of the language of the home in early childhood is closely bound up with their cognitive development, primary socialisation and enculturation. As they learn to speak, they learn to think; by speaking they also assert membership of the family into which they have been born; and family membership introduces them to the routines, attitudes and beliefs that define family culture. From birth, children are proactive in developing relationships and engaging with their immediate environment; by nature, they are autonomous agents, eager to take initiatives both in conversation and in their exploration of the physical world. At the same time, of course, they depend on parents, siblings and other caregivers to engage with them in the dialogue that gradually provides them with knowledge and the language with which to talk about it.

When children from the majority community start school, they have passed through closely similar processes of linguistic, cognitive and social development. But those processes have

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[17] See, for example, D. Singleton, "A critical reaction from second language research", in V. Cook & Li Wei (eds), *The Cambridge Handbook of Linguistic Multi-competence*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 502–520.

been fed by a potentially infinite diversity of experience as a result of differences in domestic routine, family structure and dynamic, the stories they are familiar with, the television programmes they watch, the apps they play with on their parents' phones, the toys they have acquired, the wider family and social networks their parents have introduced them to, the places they have been to on holiday … the list is endless. This diversity of experience is reflected in the diversity of their interests, which in turn is reflected in the diversity of the words they know. Pre-school children also differ in their communication skills, depending on the frequency and style of conversation they have experienced inside and outside the home. As any primary teacher knows, this means that when they start school pupils are dizzyingly diverse linguistically, socially and culturally, even if they all speak (versions of) the same language at home. Children from Romani and other minority-language families bring additional diversity to this mix.

> Questions for participating schools and teachers:
>> At what points in the school day do your pupils have an opportunity to talk about their life outside school?
>> How aware are you of the diversity of your pupils' out-of-school interests? Make a list.
>> In what ways do the out-of-school interests of Romani pupils differ from those of other pupils? To what extent do their lives reflect Romani culture as it is described in the *Curriculum Framework for Romani* (Chapter 6)?

4.3 The linguistic demands of primary schooling

The knowledge that pupils bring with them to primary school has been called their "action knowledge" because it is the "inner map of reality" on which their actions are based.[18] The *educational challenge* is to find ways of presenting and processing "school knowledge" (curriculum content) in ways that are accessible to pupils from the perspective of their action knowledge; and the *educational goal* is to help them to absorb school knowledge into an everexpanding and increasingly sophisticated store of action knowledge. It is generally agreed that the most reliable means of achieving this goal is classroom communication that allows pupils to take initiatives and encourages them to think aloud – communication, in other words, that is dialogic and exploratory. This coincides with the first of the pedagogical principles that underpin the plurilingual approach: *Teaching and learning should be grounded in language use that is spontaneous and authentic* (section 4.1 above).

The process of teaching and learning at primary school is many times more complex than a brief summary can easily convey, and it is made more complex still by the need to develop pupils' literacy skills. To begin with, this is a matter of teaching them how to represent the spoken word in writing, but from a relatively early stage learning to read and write also means learning to communicate in ways that differ significantly from the oral communication that has

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[18] D. Barnes, *From Communication to Curriculum*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976, p. 80.

shaped pupils' lives so far. Oral communication is context-dependent: the comprehension and production of meaning are supported by paralinguistic cues (intonation, gesture, eye contact, feedback, etc.) and by features of the physical situation (persons and objects in focus, the sunshine that is pleasantly warm or uncomfortably hot, the rain that is making you wet, etc.). Communication of this kind is a precondition for child language acquisition and the so-called naturalistic acquisition of second and foreign languages; children develop conversational language as they acquire their action knowledge. Academic language, on the other hand, tends to be context-reduced: cues to meaning are provided entirely by the spoken or written text we are seeking to understand or produce. No child has academic language as his or her home language; it develops with the acquisition of school knowledge.

It is important to make four things clear regarding the distinction between conversational and academic language. First, from a cognitive point of view the distinction is not absolute and boundaries are often blurred. For example, chat among friends is cognitively undemanding, but if in the course of such chat you try to persuade others of your point of view, the task may quickly become cognitively challenging. Conversely, classroom talk routinely includes passages of conversational as well as academic language; only thus, after all, is it possible to bring pupils' action knowledge into fruitful engagement with school knowledge. Secondly, although academic language develops with the acquisition of literacy, some writing tasks use conversational language (e.g., e-mail, text-messaging), while academic language includes much of the spoken communication that occurs in classrooms and other academic contexts. Thirdly, academic language occurs in *all* contexts of formal learning: children in kindergarten encounter it in a primitive form as soon as the focus shifts from "here and now" to "there and then". And fourthly, academic language is by no means confined to formal educational environments; it also has value and validity in a multitude of contexts outside the classroom or lecture hall. In other words, mastery of academic language is an overarching educational goal.

> Questions for participating schools and teachers:
>> In what ways do your lessons take account of your pupils' action knowledge? Think back over the last full day you taught in school and make a list.
>> Still with your last full day of teaching in mind, list as many examples as you can remember of language that was academic in the sense we have defined

4.4 The role of home languages in pupils' learning

The conversion of school knowledge into action knowledge requires pupils from the dominant language community gradually to extend their linguistic repertoire in their first language, adding literacy skills, acquiring the words and phrases that embody key curriculum concepts, and in due course mastering the registers and genres characteristic of the different curriculum subjects. The task facing children from minority-language families, including Roma who speak a variety of Romani at home, is altogether more challenging: because they have not acquired

their action knowledge in a version of the language of schooling, there is no easy way of promoting a fruitful interaction between school knowledge and their action knowledge.

It is often assumed that children from minority-language families will progress most rapidly if they try to forget their home language and concentrate all their energies on mastering the language of schooling. This leads some schools to forbid the use of minority languages anywhere on their premises. Such a policy is cruel because, as we pointed out in section 3.5.2, the language first acquired in early childhood is central to pupils' identity; to require them to abandon their identity at the school gate is hardly to provide them with the secure and nurturing environment that is a precondition for inclusive education. To forbid the use of home languages is also foolish. The language that has shaped pupils' identity and action knowledge is necessarily the default medium of their discursive thinking and is thus their primary cognitive tool; instead of blocking it, we must find ways of helping pupils to use it to support their learning. Finally, the policy of forbidding the use of minority languages in school is doomed to failure, because it is impossible to suppress those languages in the never-ending but unspoken stream of pupils' consciousness.

A truly inclusive school must find ways of exploiting the action knowledge of *all* pupils. With this goal in mind, the Irish primary school we described in section 3.5.2 adopted the policy of encouraging pupils from immigrant families to use their home languages for whatever purposes seemed to them appropriate, inside as well as outside the classroom. This prepared the way for implementing the second of the pedagogical principles that underpin the plurilingual approach: *Teaching and learning should draw on all the linguistic resources available to learners* (section 4.1 above). In the early stages, learning to count and matching colours and shapes are treated as multilingual activities – they are carried out in English, Irish and immigrant pupils' home languages. In this way, home language proficiency contributes to the learning both of curriculum content and of English as the principal language of schooling.

Teachers in the Irish school routinely ask pupils from immigrant families to tell the rest of the class how they express key words and concepts in their home language, and from an early age they encourage pupils to make comparisons between the various languages present in the class, including English and Irish. This helps all pupils to develop an unusually high level of language awareness; it also encourages discussion of the why and how of learning in general and language learning in particular, in accordance with the fourth of the principles that underpin the plurilingual approach: *Teaching should help learners to develop … skills of self-management and the ability to reflect on the process of (language) learning and evaluate its outcomes* (section 4.1 above).

Questions for participating schools and teachers:
> If you already include Romani and other minority languages in your lessons, what do you say to teachers who worry that they don't know those languages?
> If you don't already include Romani and other minority languages in your lessons, what obstacles would you have to overcome before doing so?

4.5 What supports should the school provide?

This chapter has focused on issues that impact on the inclusion of Romani pupils in the mainstream classroom. The policy experimentation, however, is a matter not just for the individual teacher but for the school as a whole. Participating schools should develop a *language policy that reflects the goals of the policy experimentation and the principles on which it is based*. Shared with pupils and parents and regularly reviewed and updated, the policy document should include:

> a mission statement that acknowledges the central role played by language in education, accords equal status to all languages present in the school, and emphasises the importance of helping pupils to develop integrated plurilingual repertoires;
>
> a statement of guiding pedagogical principles similar to those set out in section 4.1 and a summary of their practical implications;
>
> a commitment to regular review and (if necessary) revision in the light of experience and in order to accommodate changes in the linguistic and cultural profile of the pupil cohort.

All languages present in the school should be seen on the walls of classrooms and corridors and heard in readings, recitations and performances of various kinds. It is important that the principal and *all* staff members, including non-teaching staff, show an interest in pupils' efforts and achievements: regular affirmation is empowering and motivating. Initiatives that involve the whole school community are likely to have a greater impact than those undertaken by individual teachers without support.

> Questions for participating schools and teachers:
>> If your school already has a language policy document, in what ways (if any) will it need to be revised to take account of the policy experimentation?
>>
>> If your school does not have a language policy document, what should it contain in addition to the three features specified above?

4.6 Documentation

We recommend that each teacher participating in the policy experimentation should maintain an archive of particularly interesting pupil work – stories and poems, projects of all kinds, portfolios, vocabulary notebooks, personal dictionaries, etc. Such archives can be drawn on for displays and exhibitions and used at staff meetings to inform discussion of school language policy and its implementation. They can also be used to inform and illustrate reports on the progress of the policy experimentation. There are various ways of organising a class archive – teachers will have their own preferences – but the approach the policy experimentation has adopted to reporting (see section 2.6 above) implies that pupils should be involved in the construction and maintenance of the archive, especially in senior classes.

Individual learning also benefits from documentation: there is a sense in which whatever pupils write *is* their learning. The European Language Portfolio can be used to document Romani

pupils' learning of Romani; it can also be adapted to support foreign language learning in the mainstream classroom.

Teachers will also find it useful to keep a record of classroom exchanges and pupil contributions of special interest as well as words and phrases that they learn in Romani and other home languages.

> Questions for participating schools and teachers:
>
> In what ways do you currently document your pupils' learning? What role do the pupils themselves play?
>
> How would you go about setting up an archive for your classroom so that you can report on the progress of the policy experimentation?

5 A plurilingual approach to language teaching at primary school

Chapter 4 was concerned with the inclusion of Romani pupils in the mainstream classroom with reference to the role played by language and pupils' action knowledge in classroom learning. Our discussion mentioned some of the ways in which teachers can include Romani and other home languages in classroom communication across the curriculum. This chapter focuses on foreign language teaching at primary level from the perspective of the plurilingual approach; again we suggest ways in which Romani and other minority languages can be included in the teaching/learning process. For simplicity's sake we assume that English is the foreign language that pupils are learning, but the activities we propose apply to any foreign language. Many of the activities allow the teacher to invite contributions in Romani and other minority languages; some of them can be used in the teaching of other curriculum subjects and without reference to English.

5.1 Pedagogical orientation

Current theories of second language acquisition differ in their understanding of the cognitive mechanisms that produce proficiency, but they agree that those mechanisms are driven by spontaneous and authentic language use.[19] They agree, in other words, that it is impossible to *teach* languages in the traditional sense; the best we can do is create the conditions that enable pupils to *learn* their target language by attempting to *use* it. So our first priority must always be to involve pupils in spontaneous communication. This means providing them with the words and phrases that enable them to participate, supporting their efforts to speak (and in due course write), and ensuring that classroom talk is dialogic and exploratory (cf. section 4.3 above), so that pupils' use of the target language is not confined to answering the teacher's questions.

The plurilingual approach entails that each language we learn is an integral part of our communicative repertoire *from the beginning*. This has an important consequence for the way in which foreign languages are taught at primary school. Instead of confining them to language lessons, we should use them sparingly across the curriculum, so that they begin to "infect" pupils' curriculum learning. Accordingly, language lessons should be partly devoted to teaching the words and phrases that pupils need in order to understand small amounts of curriculum content in the foreign language. The remainder of this chapter explains how this approach works in practice. All the activities we describe have been successfully used in the Irish primary school whose version of the plurilingual approach was summarised in section 3.5.2.[20]

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

[20] The activities have been adapted from D. Little and D. Kirwan, *Language and Languages in the Primary School*, Dublin: Post-Primary Languages Ireland, 2021; available at https://ppli.ie/teaching-and-learning/supporting-

Questions for participating schools and teachers:

In what ways does your approach to teaching a foreign language coincide with the approach described here? Make a list of the main features of your approach.

If you do not already do so, how easy would it be to include small amounts of the foreign language in lessons that are not primarily concerned with language learning? You may find it useful to return to this question after you have read the rest of the chapter.

5.2 Using familiar routines and topics to support language learning

5.2.1 Greetings

One of the easiest and most natural ways of introducing English into everyday communication is by using it to exchange greetings. This can be extended to all the languages of the classroom by asking if anyone knows a different way of saying *Hello*. The question can be put in context for very young children by asking them to think about what their parents say when they come to collect them from school. In schools with a variety of home languages, pupils soon learn that while one child says *Dobri den*, another says *Salut*, a third says *Ciao*, and so on. Encourage pupils to tell their parents the different ways in which their classmates greet one another so that parents understand that all languages present in the class are acknowledged and valued. By learning how to exchange greetings in multiple languages, your pupils also learn that there are many different ways of performing simple communicative acts. To begin with, some pupils from Romani and other minority-language communities may feel self-conscious when encouraged to speak their home language or volunteer information about it. Their reticence should be handled sensitively.

5.2.2 Counting and addition

Early in their primary schooling pupils learn to count from 1 to 10 in the language of schooling. They also learn to identify the various numerals involved and put them in the correct order. When pupils can confidently count from 1 to 5 in the language of schooling, they can be taught how to do so in English, and pupils from Romani and other minority-language communities can teach the class how to count from 1 to 5 in their home language. Repeating the task in different languages reinforces basic curriculum learning. It also presents early opportunities to identify cross-linguistic similarities, e.g., *a dó, deux, duo*, and *trois, three, a trí*. The same approach can be adopted when teaching addition. Teachers should not be surprised or worried if pupils mix languages when they perform simple additions; experience suggests that this is a short-lived phenomenon.

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multilingual-classrooms/?gresource=ppli-primary-guidelines/. A detailed account of the school's approach is provided by D. Little and D. Kirwan, *Engaging with Linguistic Diversity: A Study of Educational Inclusion in an Irish Primary School*, London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2019.

5.2.3 Colours

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

5.2.4 Days of the week

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

5.2.5 Food

Snack and lunch breaks provide daily opportunities to discuss food. They are also an ideal time to discuss likes and dislikes in English, e.g., *Do you like _____? I like / I don't like _____*, and to compare the words for various items of food in different languages. When pupils are drawn into this kind of interaction, they very often begin to initiate such conversations among themselves. More formal discussion of food can be reinforced using pictures with labels in the language of schooling, English and home languages. The teacher writes the words for different types of food on the whiteboard. Pupils are asked to choose the foods they like, draw them and write the appropriate names beside them. Pupils then ask their parents to add the appropriate words in their home language (it doesn't matter if spellings are approximate). It is important that work of this kind is always read aloud to the rest of the class: by "publishing" it in this way the teacher signals the equal importance of all languages, acknowledges pupils' linguistic identities, and reinforces their interest in languages and their motivation to learn.

5.2.6 Music

Music provides numerous opportunities for pupils to practise their English and learn fragments of minority-language pupils' home languages. Using topics with which the children are familiar, simple tunes can be used to incorporate all the languages of the classroom. Starting with English, continuing with home languages and finishing with the language of schooling,

children can repeat the same phrase in different languages all through the song. Simply by imitating their classmates, all pupils in the class can learn to sing in everyone's language.

5.2.7 Events in the environment

An important task for primary teachers is to develop observational skills that contribute to all aspects of pupils' development, education and language learning. Both in the classroom and in the immediate environment, teachers can use pupils' observational capacity to support language learning; using English as the language of communication in these situations encourages pupils to associate the language with interesting events. For example, on a walk around the school neighbourhood, the teacher stops and signals to everyone to be very quiet and listen to and/or look at the object of her attention. *Listen! Did you hear that?* or *Look at that! What is it?* Using body language to indicate what she is listening to or looking at, the teacher waits for a response from the children, who use whatever language they know to answer the question. Their answers are confirmed by the teacher in English: *It's a bird. It's singing.* Back in the classroom this event can be used to reinforce pupils' learning. The teacher asks: *What did you hear? What did you see?* With her help the children answer: *I heard ... I saw ....* Phrases like these can be repeated until they are fully embedded in each child's linguistic repertoire and can be used as the basis for further language development. Encouraging children to draw a picture of the bird and telling the class: *It's a bird,* helps to further boost their learning. Over the course of a week or longer, pupils can make similar drawings of different animals or objects of interest and label them in the language of schooling, English and home languages. Stapled together, the drawings make a book. Children can then use their books to help them remember the English they have learnt.

5.2.8 Games

English and minority-language pupils' home languages can be used to perform action games like "Hand to hand", "Toe to toe" and "Head, shoulders, knees and toes". English can also be used to play other familiar games. Bingo is one possibility; another is a guessing game in which one pupil hides an object behind her back and the pupil who correctly guesses what the object is takes the next turn. Almost without effort pupils learn the language specific to each game – for the guessing game, *What am I hiding? It's ....*

5.2.9 Telling the time

When pupils learn to tell the time in the language of schooling, they should also do so in English. Pupils from Romani and other minority-language communities can teach the rest of the class how to tell the time in their home language.

5.3 Including English and home languages in the delivery of curriculum content

5.3.1 English

The use of English for classroom management and to reinforce the communication of curriculum content ensures that the language is not confined to pupils' English lessons but becomes a part of their everyday reality. This effect is strengthened by spending a few minutes each day getting pupils to share their news in English – perhaps something they heard or saw on the way to school (*I saw… / I heard … there was an accident on the road / It's my birthday* / etc.) or some other event that has made an impression on them. Language that has personal relevance is easy to retain. Allow pupils to use words in the language of schooling to fill gaps in their knowledge but write the missing English words on the board. Correct grammar and pronunciation, but without comment. Pupils should always write new words and phrases in their copybooks; in junior classes they may draw matching pictures. Alternatively, they can write the words and phrases on slips of paper that are kept in a box and referred to when needed. By second or third grade it should be possible to introduce individual lessons and topics in English, using the whiteboard to model correct language use. The English that pupils write in their copy books can then be translated into the language of schooling and/or their home language for homework.

5.3.2 Romani and other home languages

By encouraging minority-language pupils to volunteer words and phrases in their home language, the teacher ensures that those languages are always activated to support pupils' learning. The pupils know that the teacher and their classmates do not know their home language, which means that they can contribute information that would otherwise not be available to the class. This is empowering and fosters self-esteem. The teacher may tell the class that a small orange is called a *mandarin* and ask minority-language pupils what it is called in their language. Always accept whatever they offer even when you have no way of knowing whether it is right or wrong: experience suggests that in the great majority of cases it will be right. Contributions from minority-language pupils are almost guaranteed to produce interesting insights. For example, *cold* is *fuar* in Irish; in Romanian it is *frieg*, which sounds a bit like *fridge*, which is *cold*.

5.3.3 A plurilingual approach to classroom discussion

Make the translation of key words and phrases into English and minority-language pupils' home languages a regular feature of classroom interaction. Write the translations on the board

and have pupils write them in their copybooks. If minority-language pupils do not know how to spell the words and phrases they offer, get them to ask their parents to write them down so that they can share them with the class the next day. The following activities have been used successfully at various grade levels:

Writing a text in two or more languages.

Writing a text in one language and summarising it in another.

Providing a list of key vocabulary for a text written in a language of the pupil's choice.

Writing a factual text using a sequence of different languages.

Writing a dialogue between two or more characters, each of whom speaks a different language.

Clothes and weather: the teacher elicits from the class a list of the clothes worn in different countries and in different seasons, using the language of schooling, English and all the languages of the classroom.

On any topic the teacher can ask questions in English that pupils answer in the language of schooling and/or their home language. Answers given in home languages are translated into the language of schooling for the benefit of classmates.

Discussion of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child leads pupils to consider how they could make newcomers feel welcome in their class. This prompts them to make a multilingual poster to advertise the school's language policy and show newcomers that all languages are "at home" in their classroom.

A lesson on clothes draws on all languages present in the class. Pupils compile a multilingual list of items of clothing and footwear, looking for similarities and differences in pronunciation and spelling. Cultural differences are also explored. The results of this work are captured on posters that can be used as a point of reference in future work.

In a lesson on food, pupils discuss the ingredients required for making a particular dish, e.g. pasta, before making the dish and tasting it. Pupils then make a multilingual table listing the ingredients and summarising the steps in cooking the dish in the language of schooling, English, and all the other languages present in the class.[21]

A question for participating schools and teachers:
How many of the activities described in this section are part of your own teaching repertoire?

5.4 Producing parallel texts in two or more languages

The development of fully integrated plurilingual repertoires entails that learners develop literacy skills in each of their languages. It is widely assumed that this means teaching them to read and write in each language separately, which is impossible when multiple home languages are

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[21] Many more examples are given in D. Little & D. Kirwan, *Engaging with Linguistic Diversity: A Study of Educational Inclusion in an Irish Primary School*, London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2019.

present in the class. However, it is possible for skills in one language to be transferred to another language provided there is adequate exposure to that language and sufficient motivation on the learner's part. With help from their parents and older brothers and sisters, minority-language pupils can transfer their emerging literacy skills in the language of schooling and English to their home languages. They learn to do this by producing parallel texts in the language of schooling, English and their home language – parallel in the sense that the texts are as far as possible identical in structure and content.

5.4.1 First steps

When pupils are first learning to write, the teacher can produce simple worksheets for them to complete in the language of schooling, English and (in the case of minority-language pupils) their home language. The worksheet might focus on different kinds of fruit or different items of clothing, or it might provide basic information about the pupil – name, age, class, name of school, where they live, which languages their speak, likes and dislikes. In the very early stages, minority-language pupils will certainly need help with their home language. A parent or older sibling may write words for the pupil to copy or dictate the spelling. When parents' proficiency in the language of schooling is less well developed than that of their child, they can nevertheless help if the child provides an oral translation of words and phrases he or she needs to write.

5.4.2 Producing longer texts

In first and second grade, as pupils gradually develop the ability to write longer texts, the production of parallel texts can start with English rather than the language of schooling. For example, English versions of stories pupils are already familiar with can be written collaboratively by the whole class, or pupils can invent stories based on events they themselves have experienced, like having a fall and injuring themselves. The teacher scaffolds their contributions to the story, which she writes on the whiteboard as it takes shape, correcting pupils' errors without comment. The pupils write the story in their copybooks and for homework rewrite it in the language of schooling and/or their home language. If the original story were written in the language of schooling it would be beyond most pupils at this level to produce an English version, whereas producing a translation into the language of schooling reinforces their learning of English.

Pupils can write and illustrate small dual-language books about themselves and their family, the school and its garden, their favourite animal, hobbies, weather and so on. Two sheets of A4 folded twice, cut and stapled make a book of sixteen pages. Such books can be read aloud to the rest of the class and displayed at events in the school, when video recordings of pupils reading their work may also be shown.

5.4.3 Using poetry to support plurilingual literacy

English and home languages should be included in the discussion of poems. For example, when introducing a Christmas story make sure that pupils know what Christmas is in English and ask

language-minority pupils how they say "Happy Christmas" in their home language. The class can then make a poster that combines these greetings with festive images (some minority-language pupils will know how to write the greetings in their home language, others will need to ask their parents). A poster can also be made with the various names for Santa Claus and pronunciations can be compared.

5.4.4 A class diary

One way of giving the whole class ownership of texts in two or more languages is to keep a class diary in a hardback A4 notebook. Each day a different pupil takes the diary home. Excused other homework, the pupil writes on a topic of her choice in the language of schooling and English/home language – what she ate for dinner, how she spent the evening, whether or not her family had visitors, and so on. The next morning, she reads what she has written in the diary to her classmates. Keeping a class diary in this way has proved to be among pupils' favourite activities, and it engages parents in their children's learning.

5.4.5 Texts in three languages

Sooner or later minority-language pupils may begin to produce parallel texts in the language of schooling, English and their home language. At this stage it is a good idea to encourage pupils not always to begin with the same language so that they learn how to move freely among the languages in their repertoire. In third and fourth grade, many pupils will be able to produce parallel texts that run to several pages.

Not to be outdone by their minority-language peers, some pupils from the majority community may produce text in the language of schooling, English and a language that is not taught at school – an older sibling may be learning French at secondary school or a neighbour may be a native speaker of Italian. It is important to recognise that with appropriate help pupils can produce well-formed text in a language of which they know little besides the text they have written. Even if they have no further contact with the language, performing such a task is a worthwhile learning experience, to be set beside the learning of fragments of minority-language pupils' home languages when playing in the school yard.

5.4.6 Preparing to write in two or three languages

Pupils should be encouraged to collect information on the topic or person they want to write about and to compile their own word lists in the language of schooling, English and their home language. If this becomes a normal part of the way they work, they will gradually accumulate a personal multilingual dictionary that reflects their language development as well as their interests. Especially in the senior grades, some pupils may become interested in a language that is far from their experience and certainly not taught at school, using the internet to add to their multilingual word lists. Especially when it is pursued autonomously, interest in a language far removed from the pupil's experience may not seem to lead anywhere, but it is evidence of the

pupil's reflective engagement with language and certainly coincides with the purposes of the plurilingual approach.

5.4.7 Functional writing

Writing that describes familiar procedures, like how to make a sandwich or how to bake a cake, gives further scope for plurilingual work. For example, an English lesson may focus on the successive steps in making a sandwich, captured by the teacher on the whiteboard and written by the pupils in their copybooks. The pupils then translate the English text into the language of schooling for homework. In a multilingual classroom, minority-language pupils are also encouraged to translate the English text into their home language. The next day, pupils read their work aloud to their classmates. Like all other multilingual activities, functional writing presents opportunities to develop pupils' language awareness. For example, whatever the content of the sandwich, the word for *bread* is sure to be used at least once, in the same part of the procedure. Asking pupils to identify the word for bread when the steps are being read aloud in a minority-language pupil's home language is a good way of fostering their listening skills and encouraging them to find connections between words and phrases in different languages.

5.4.8 Creative writing

Already in third and fourth grade, pupils should be encouraged to write for their own enjoyment. They may

decide to translate the words of a Christmas carol or poem into their home language or write a new Christmas poem in the language of schooling and English;

write stories in which the characters speak different languages;

make a picture dictionary of words and phrases associated with Christmas in the language of schooling, English and their home language;

write a story about how a pupil who spoke only the language of schooling might feel if he found himself in a country where no one knew that language;

write a dialogue in English about buying something in a shop;

write about a visit to the park in English;

write a diary in English.

In fifth and sixth grade creative writing in multiple languages undergoes further development. The increasing sophistication of pupils' language skills is reflected in their interest in writing; the expressive quality of that writing; the length of the stories they write; their choice of language(s) in which to write; the way in which all their linguistic knowledge is brought to bear on their writing. The texts they write are informed by all aspects of the curriculum and by the innovative ways in which, with support from their teachers, they present those topics, for example:

A description of the weather from the four points of the compass of whatever country is in focus can be written in all the languages the pupils know – *In the north it is cold* can

be written in the language of schooling, English, home languages and any other languages the pupils know; similarly for south, east and west.

Descriptions of pupils' homes or their ideal house can be written in as many languages as possible.

Pupils can keep a diary of Christmas and other celebrations in multiple languages and can design multilingual greetings cards for their teacher and peers.

Multilingual posters can be created on various topics: healthy eating, exercise, anti-smoking, climate change, etc.

Pupils can work collaboratively to produce versions of folktales from their various communities in two or more languages.

5.4.9 Mixing languages in one text

Pupils enjoy using all the languages in their repertoire in a single text, for example, a report on some experience they have in common. The rule is that each sentence must be written in a different language from the sentence that immediately precedes it.

> A task and two questions for participating teachers:
> Review the activities described in this section from the perspective of the pupils you currently teach.
> How many of the activities would it be possible to include in your teaching?
> With your own teaching style in mind, how many other activities can you think of that you could easily implement to develop your pupils' plurilingual repertoires?

5.5 Language awareness

The inclusion of English and home languages in classroom communication inevitably develops pupils' language awareness. It is a good idea to consolidate what they learn incidentally by regularly spending a few minutes focusing on language as such. Pupils can compare the position of verbs and adjectives in the various languages they know; they can explore the relation between orthography and pronunciation and the impact of diacritics on pronunciation and meaning; and they can consider how closely two or more of the languages present in the class are related to one another. Speakers of closely related languages can demonstrate intercomprehension by creating a role play in which they each speak their own language. Senior pupils can carry out a survey of their classmates to discover, for example, in which languages present in the class the adjective comes before the noun and in which languages it comes after.

It is also a good idea to have regular discussions about language learning. Which languages in their developing plurilingual repertoire do pupils find easiest to understand, speak, read and write? What helps them to learn a language – to understand what people say to them, to speak, to read, to write? Give senior pupils a short newspaper report in a language they don't know but on a topic they are already familiar with, e.g. a sporting event. Read the report aloud and write key words and phrases on the board. Discovering that they can work out the meaning of

these words and phrases and thus understand the general gist of the report provides a boost to pupils' confidence in their linguistic ability; it also invites further discussion of what is involved in learning a new language.

Teachers cannot be expected to know the home languages of minority-language pupils. But by encouraging the use of those languages they provide themselves with daily opportunities to learn, and by presenting themselves as learners they create possibilities for co-learning that can be inspirational for pupils' education.

> A task and two questions for participating teachers:
> With the pupils you currently teach in mind, review the awareness-raising activities described in this section.
> How many of these activities could your pupils readily engage in?
> Taking account of the number of languages present in your class, how many other awareness-raising activities can you think of?

5.6 Consolidating plurilingual learning

When a plurilingual approach to language education is implemented across the school, teachers will think of many different ways of consolidating language learning. Here are just three examples; teachers will think of many other possibilities.

5.6.1 Inter-class interaction

Minority-language pupils from senior classes (from fourth grade upwards) can visit junior grades and interact with pupils in English and their home languages. Senior pupils can also teach juniors songs in their home language. These activities benefit senior pupils as well as juniors because they acknowledge and affirm their linguistic identity and promote self-esteem.

5.6.2 Senior pupils read stories to juniors

In fifth and sixth grade pupils may regard fairy tales as suitable for much younger children. However, having pupils at this level read English versions of stories like *Little Red Riding Hood* and *Goldilocks and the Three Bears* to junior grades is a good way of boosting the language skills of all involved. Similarly, minority-language pupils in fifth and sixth grade can read stories in their home language to junior pupils who have the same home language; and they can repeat the exercise for their classmates, who can try to identify and understand key words and phrases.

5.6.3 Autonomous language learning

One way of encouraging autonomous learning is to introduce a Language Box to which pupils voluntarily contribute texts of various kinds: favourite recipes written in various languages, free writing in languages of their choice, personal profiles, etc. This provides an opportunity

for pupils to write in languages they know while providing support for pupils who are learning a language already spoken by one or more of their classmates.

In addition:

Pupils from a variety of language backgrounds may choose to learn the home language of a friend (often a reciprocal arrangement).

Individual pupils use a variety of methods to teach themselves new languages – CDs, course books, language quizzes, language videos, keeping language notebooks, etc.

Two or more pupils form a language learning partnership.

A task for participating teachers:

Taking account of the distinctive culture of your school, try to think of at least three other ways in which plurilingual learning – and the inclusion of Romani pupils – could be consolidated across the school

6 Teaching Romani for educational inclusion

This chapter introduces the supports that the Council of Europe has developed for the teaching and learning of Romani – the *Curriculum Framework for Romani* (CFR), the Romani versions of the European Language Portfolio (ELP), and the QualiRom teaching materials – and explains how they should be used in the policy experimentation. The chapter should be read by all participating teachers because the CFR and ELP contain a wealth of information about Romani culture that is relevant to the inclusion of Romani pupils in mainstream classes.

6.1 *Curriculum Framework for Romani*

Section 3.4 introduced the first of the two pillars of the Council of Europe's language education policy, the concept of *the language learner as a language user who is an autonomous social agent with a personal agenda to fulfil*. This concept underpins the CEFR's description of language learning as language use and its implication that spontaneous language use should play a central role in language learning.

The CEFR identifies four modes of language use and defines six levels of communicative proficiency. The modes of language use are reception (listening and reading), production (speaking and writing), interaction (spoken and written), and mediation (spoken and written). The six proficiency levels are arranged in three bands: A1 and A2 ("basic user"), B1 and B2 ("independent user"), and C1 and C2 ("proficient user"). The CEFR's description of proficiency has two dimensions: the language activities that user–learners may need to perform and the communicative language competences on which successful performance depends. For both dimensions the CEFR provides illustrative scales ranging from A1 to C2 and consisting of "can do" descriptors; this feature explicitly associates language proficiency with individual agency (the user–learner's capacity for *action*). The scales for language activities are summarised in the so-called self-assessment grid, reproduced in Appendix 1. (Note that the self-assessment grid makes no distinction between written interaction and written production; also that scales for mediation were first introduced in the CEFR *Companion Volume*.)[22]

It is sometimes assumed that the CEFR's six proficiency levels form a linear scale with six equal intervals. This is, however, wrong. If we want to represent the levels and their relation to one another diagrammatically, we should do so as in Figure 6.1, which tells us three things. First, each level above A1 incorporates the level(s) below it. As learners progress from one level to the next they engage with more complex tasks and extend their language competences; they still need to perform the tasks specified for the lower level(s), but now they can perform them with greater flexibility and elaboration thanks to their increased linguistic resources. Secondly, as we move up the scale the levels become progressively more substantial, and thus require more learning time. Thirdly, proficiency development has a horizontal as well as a

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[22] The distinction between written interaction and written production is restored in the CEFR *Companion Volume* (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2020, pp.177–179), which also includes a large number of scales for mediation. The *Companion Volume* is available from the Council of Europe's website: https://rm.coe.int/cefr-companion-volume-with-new-descriptors-2018/1680787989.

vertical dimension; that is, the growth of proficiency is a matter not only of learning more language but of mastering an increasingly broad range of tasks and behaviours. It is important to note that, especially at levels B2, C1 and C2, proficiency is defined in relation to the performance of particular tasks in a specific domain of language use, often linked to academic or professional experience and expertise.
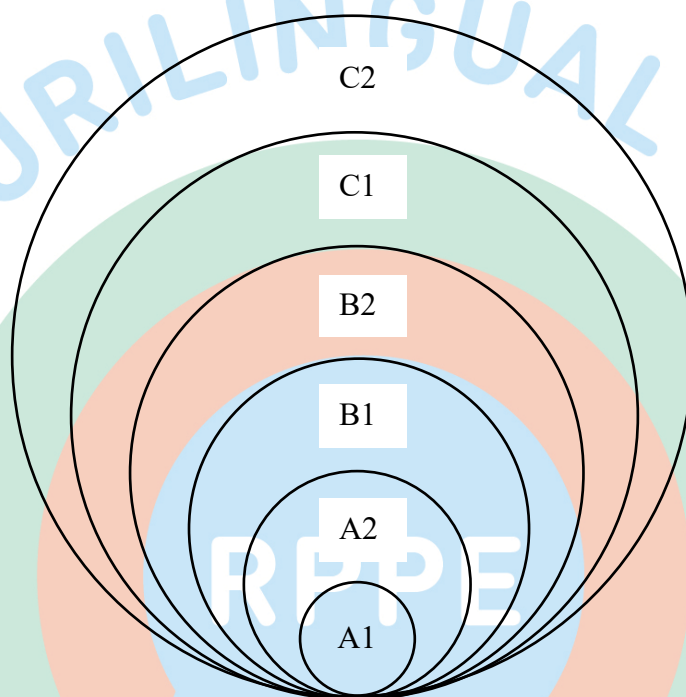

Figure 6.1 The six proficiency levels of the CEFR in relation to one another

The Council of Europe's *Curriculum Framework for Romani* (CFR) was developed in consultation with a group of Romani experts, launched at a seminar in Strasbourg in 2007, and published in a slightly revised version in 2008.[23] The CEFR provides "a common basis for the elaboration of language syllabuses, curriculum guidelines, examinations, textbooks etc. across Europe";[24] although the CFR is a much simpler document than the CEFR, it is designed to fulfil the same functions for Romani. Because the language activities at level B2 coincide with the tasks that most European education systems require students to perform in the school-leaving exams they take in the language of schooling, the CFR is based on the first four proficiency levels of the CEFR. Also, it defines proficiency only in relation to communicative language activities, using grids modelled on the CEFR's self-assessment grid and related to eleven themes: *Myself and my family*; *The house/caravan and its activities*; *My community*; *Roma crafts and occupations*; *Festivals and celebrations*; *At school*; *Travel and transport*; *Food and clothes*; *Time, seasons and weather*; *Nature and animals*; *Hobbies and the arts*. Most of the

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[23] The CFR is available from the Council of Europe's website in seven languages (English, Romani, Czech, German, Lovari, North Central Romani, Serbian): https://www.coe.int/en/web/language-policy/romani.
[24] CEFR, p.1.

grids divide descriptors into two groups: those that refer to communication in general, including classroom communication, and those that refer to language use in Romani communities (the latter descriptors are shaded). By way of illustration, Appendix 2 brings together descriptors for spoken interaction from the CEFR's self-assessment grid and the CFR theme *Myself and my family*.

When we bring the CEFR's view of language learning and its implications for language teaching (section 3.4) to bear on the CFR, we immediately encounter a paradox: the language activities described by the CFR mostly focus on communication outside the classroom, in Romani communities and beyond, whereas in Chapters 4 and 5 of this handbook we have emphasised language use inside the classroom. But this paradox is not difficult to resolve. The content of the language activities undertaken in the classroom is supplied by Romani customs, culture and history and should be explicitly linked to the life of the Romani community of which the learners are members; in this sense the Romani classroom should be an extension of the Romani community.

Questions for participating schools and teachers:

If you already have an official curriculum for Romani, is it possible to use the CFR to express the communicative goals of the curriculum in "can do" terms?

The CFR is designed to support the learning of Romani by the three categories of Romani learner defined in section 3.3. How could you use it to design learning activities in which students proficient in Romani could work with students who are less proficient or beginners?

6.2 European Language Portfolio

The Council of Europe conceived the European Language Portfolio (ELP)[25] as a companion piece to the CEFR. Its purpose is (i) to help learners to manage and document their language learning, (ii) to foster intercultural awareness, and (iii) to support the development of plurilingual repertoires. The ELP has three obligatory components: a language passport that contains a regularly updated summary of the owner's experience of language learning and language use; a language biography that provides a reflective accompaniment to learning; and a dossier where the owner collects samples of his/her work.[26] Because the Council of Europe is concerned to promote individual agency and learner autonomy, effective use of the ELP depends on regular goal-setting and self-assessment. For this purpose, ELPs contain checklists of "I can" descriptors organised according to the proficiency levels and language activities of the CEFR.

In 2008, the Council of Europe published two versions of the ELP to support the teaching and learning of Romani, one for learners aged 6–11 and the other for learners aged 11–16; it also

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[25] The Council of Europe maintains an extensive ELP website: https://www.coe.int/en/web/portfolio.
[26] ELP Principles and Guidelines, available from: https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=09000016804586ba.

published a *Teacher's Handbook*.[27] The checklists of "I can" descriptors in these ELPs are based on the CFR's eleven themes and descriptors. Table 6.1 shows the descriptors for writing in the CEFR's self-assessment grid and the CFR grid for *Myself and my family*; Table 6.2 shows the checklist descriptors in the ELP for learners aged 6–11.

Table 6.1 Descriptors for writing, A1–B2, CEFR self-assessment grid and CFR grid for *Myself and my family* (general descriptors)

	CEFR self-assessment grid	**CFR grid for *Myself and my family* (general descriptors)**
B2	I can write clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects related to my interests. I can write an essay or report, passing on information or giving reasons in support of or against a particular point of view. I can write letters highlighting the personal significance of events and experiences.	Can write clear and detailed text (accounts, letters, e-mail etc.) on subjects related to his/her daily life, school life, interests or hobbies, experiences, etc.
B1	I can write simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. I can write personal letters describing experiences and impressions.	Can write simple connected text comparing his/her life now and in the past (e.g., before attending school, in another place). Can write simple connected text about personal likes and dislikes, hobbies, interests, etc.
A2	I can write short, simple notes and messages. I can write a very simple personal letter, for example thanking someone for something.	Can write short simple texts describing his/her family, daily routines, etc. Can write short simple texts describing personal interests, likes and dislikes (food, TV programmes, etc.) Can write short simple age-appropriate descriptions of important events or personal experiences (a new baby in the family, travelling, celebrating, helping parent etc.)
A1	I can write a short, simple postcard, for example sending holiday greetings. I can fill in forms with personal details, for example entering my name, nationality and address on a hotel registration form	Can copy or write his/her name, address, name of school. Can copy words about him/herself from the board (e.g., my name is … , I live in …)

Table 6.2 ELP for learners aged 6–11, checklist descriptors for writing on the theme *Myself and my family*

B2	I can write a letter or e-mail which describes and explains my experiences or interests in some detail. I can write about a topic related to my life or my interests. I can express and explain my opinion of particular situations or events.
B1	I can write about the differences between life now and in the past. I can write a letter or e-mail describing an event in my family. I can compare my life now with my life when I was younger. I can write about how I feel.
A2	I can write about what I do every day and the things I enjoy.

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[27] Also available from the Council of Europe's website in seven languages: https://www.coe.int/en/web/language-policy/romani.

	I can write about something I did or saw.
A1	I can write my name, address and the name of my school.
	I can write the name of the place where I live.

> Questions for participating schools and teachers:
>
> How you could use Romani pupils' ELPs to inform their peers about Romani language, culture and history?
>
> Do you already use a portfolio to support foreign language learning in your school? If yes, how easy would it be to combine it with the Romani ELP? If no, why not extend the Romani ELP to include English or whatever foreign language you teach?

6.3 QualiRom teaching/learning materials

From 2011 to 2013 the QualiRom project, funded by the European Union and hosted by the European Centre for Modern Languages (ECML), developed and piloted teaching/learning materials based on the CFR in six Romani varieties/dialect clusters: Arlije, East Slovak, Finnish, Gurbet, Lovara and Kalderaš.[28] Most of the materials are for levels A1 and A2; all of them can be adapted to meet the needs of a specific context.

6.4 Using the *Curriculum Framework for Romani* and the ELP

As noted above, the CFR was designed to meet the needs of Romani pupils whatever their relation to the language:

> When pupils come from Romani communities that no longer use the language, the CFR can be used to construct a programme that starts at level A1 and progresses as far as the time available allows. The QualiRom materials are especially useful for pupils in this category.
>
> When pupils hear and understand Romani when it is spoken by older family members but don't themselves speak the language, the challenge is to develop their productive and interactive skills, including writing, on the basis of their listening skills. The CFR's descriptors for listening can be used as a key reference point around which a programme for developing other language skills can be built. The pupils themselves can help their teacher to identify the most relevant themes with which to begin.
>
> When pupils speak Romani at home, the task is to develop their literacy skills, if possible in conjunction with the development of literacy skills in the language of schooling (section 5.4 above). The acquisition of literacy in Romani includes the acquisition of academic language, again in parallel with the language of schooling.

The ELP should be used in every Romani lesson. Over time each pupil's ELP becomes a

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[28] Available at http://qualirom.uni-graz.at.

substantial record of their learning and a reflection of their emerging linguistic identity. From the beginning teachers should link the checklist descriptors to learning activities and thus identify learning targets against which they can in due course help their learners to assess themselves. The ELP already contains a number of pages that pupils can use to document their learning of Romani (and any foreign language they are learning); teachers and the pupils themselves can design additional pages as the need for them arises. The *Teacher's Handbook* provides a page-by-page guide to using the ELP as a primary teaching and learning resource.

Besides supporting the teaching and learning of Romani, the CFR and the ELP provide non-Roma with important insights into Romani customs and culture. It is thus essential that all participating teachers, whether or not they teach Romani, familiarize themselves with the CFR and the Romani ELP. One effective way of doing this is to use the CFR to explore the content of the ELP and vice versa.

Bearing in mind the CEFR's emphasis of the autonomy of the individual language user–learner, we recommend that learners make their own learning materials and share them with the rest of the class. Beginners can make *word cards,* small pieces of paper or card with a Romani word on one side and a drawing or equivalent word in the language of schooling on the other. The idea is that each pupil creates a set of about twenty word cards that reflect their interests and thus part of their identity. The word cards are placed in an envelope bearing the name of the pupil who made them and kept in a box available to the rest of the class. Learners can play with another learner's word cards as a solo activity. Alternatively, two or more learners can choose an envelope from the box; one of them holds up each card in turn, so that the other learner(s) can see the picture or translation on the back; calling out the correct Romani word wins the card. Beginners can be taught the Romani phrases they need to play games of this kind. After playing with word cards, pupils should make a note of words that are new to them in their ELP.

After word cards pupils can make and play with *dominoes*. Each domino should have a drawing or picture on one half and a word or phrase in Romani that corresponds to the picture on another domino; pupils who are no longer beginners can write longer texts. Like word cards, each set of dominoes is kept in an envelope bearing the name of the pupil who made it and the envelopes are kept in a box that is available to the rest of the class.

After dominoes pupils can make *picture lotto*. To make a game of picture lotto for four players you need four pieces of A4 card and 24 small pictures cut from magazines, catalogues, etc. A ruler and pencil are used to divide each card into 12 squares. Six pictures are stuck on the squares in the upper half of each card and a description of each picture is written in Romani in the corresponding square in the lower half of the card, as in Figure 6.2. The cards are then cut in half and the four lotto boards with pictures are put on one side. The half cards with words etc. are cut up to make a pack of 24 lotto cards.

Picture 1	Picture 2	Picture 3
Picture 4	Picture 5	Picture 6
Text 1	Text 2	Text 3
Text 4	Text 5	Text 6

Figure 6.2 How to make picture lotto

In parallel with making their own learning materials, pupils should create texts of all kinds that realise the communication potential captured in the CFR[29] – labels for drawings and models, simple illustrated stories, mini-dramas that they write collaboratively, audio and video recordings, etc. It is important that from the very beginning pupils write texts that are relevant to themselves. A good starting point is a text *About myself*. The teacher provides the class with a text frame in Romani, equivalent to "My name is … I am … years old. My mum's name is … and my dad's name is … I have … brothers/sisters … My hobbies are …" etc. Pupils call out the words and phrases they need in Romani in order to fill the text frame. The teacher writes these on the board and the pupils copy them into their ELP. They can then write the text for homework. Using this text as a model, pupils then progress to activities like *picture + text*: they find a picture of someone they are interested in, stick it in their ELP and write a short text about the person in question.

As learning progresses, each learner's ELP gradually expands as a documentary record of their learning and a means of mediating between the classroom and the Romani community, its history and culture. The emphasis that the ELP places on goal setting and self-assessment promotes habits of reflection that enable even very young learners to become researchers of the target language and of their own learning.[30]

Traditionally, we think of language learning as a matter of acquiring knowledge that we can describe declaratively and use procedurally. This is certainly part of all successful language learning, but the CEFR's vision encourages us to adopt an altogether broader view. Successful learners of Romani acquire new behaviour potential and new cultural capital, and they do so

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[29] A detailed explanation of how to organise the language classroom in this way is provided by D. Little, L. Dam & L. Legenhausen, *Language Learner Autonomy: Theory, Practice and Research*, Bristol: Multilingual Matters, 2017.

[30] The Council of Europe's extensive ELP website contains a wealth of guidance and practical examples from which teachers of Romani can draw inspiration: https://www.coe.int/en/web/portfolio.

as members of a community whose membership embraces both the classroom and the world outside. A 2012 recommendation from the Committee of Ministers argues that quality education "promotes democracy, respect for human rights and social justice in a learning environment which recognises everyone's learning and social needs".[31] When learning and teaching are organised in the way we have described, pupils experience these principles at first hand and in microcosm.

> It is fundamental to the Council of Europe's concept of plurilingual and intercultural education that the inclusion of Romani pupils should also benefit non-Romani pupils.
>
> If Romani pupils make their own learning materials in the way described in this section, they can use them to teach their non-Romani peers some words and phrases in Romani.
>
> Romani pupils can use the texts they produce to introduce aspects of Romani culture to their non-Romani peers.

Appendix 1: CEFR self-assessment grid

		A1	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2
U N D E R S T A N D I N G	**Listening**	I can understand familiar words and very basic phrases concerning myself, my family and immediate concrete surroundings when people speak slowly and clearly.	I can understand phrases and the highest frequency vocabulary related to areas of most immediate personal relevance (e.g., very basic personal and family information, shopping, local area, employment). I can catch the main point in short, clear, simple messages and announcements.	I can understand the main points of clear standard speech on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. I can understand the main point of many radio or TV programmes on current affairs or topics of personal or professional interest when the delivery is relatively slow and clear.	I can understand extended speech and lectures and follow even complex lines of argument provided the topic is reasonably familiar. I can understand most TV news and current affairs programmes. I can understand the majority of films in standard dialect.	I can understand extended speech even when it is not clearly structured and when relationships are only implied and not signalled explicitly. I can understand television programmes and films without too much effort.	I have no difficulty in understanding any kind of spoken language, whether live or broadcast, even when delivered at fast native speed, provided I have some time to get familiar with the accent.
	Reading	I can understand familiar names, words and very simple sentences, for example on notices and posters or in catalogues.	I can read very short, simple texts. I can find specific, predictable information in simple everyday material such as advertisements, prospectuses, menus and timetables and I can understand short simple personal letters.	I can understand texts that consist mainly of high frequency everyday or job-related language. I can understand the description of events, feelings and wishes in personal letters.	I can read articles and reports concerned with contemporary problems in which the writers adopt particular attitudes or viewpoints. I can understand contemporary literary prose.	I can understand long and complex factual and literary texts, appreciating distinctions of style. I can understand specialised articles and longer technical instructions, even when they do not relate to my field.	I can read with ease virtually all forms of the written language, including abstract, structurally or linguistically complex texts such as manuals, specialised articles and literary works.
S P E A K I N G	**Spoken Interaction**	I can interact in a simple way provided the other person is prepared to repeat or rephrase things at a slower rate of speech and help me formulate what I'm trying to say. I can ask and answer simple questions in areas of immediate need or on very familiar topics.	I can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar topics and activities. I can handle very short social exchanges, even though I can't usually understand enough to keep the conversation going myself.	I can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. I can enter unprepared into conversation on topics that are familiar, of personal interest or pertinent to everyday life (e.g., family, hobbies, work, travel and current events).	I can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible. I can take an active part in discussion in familiar contexts, accounting for and sustaining my views.	I can express myself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. I can use language flexibly and effectively for social and professional purposes. I can formulate ideas and opinions with precision and relate my contribution skilfully to those of other speakers.	I can take part effortlessly in any conversation or discussion and have a good familiarity with idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms. I can express myself fluently and convey finer shades of meaning precisely. If I do have a problem I can backtrack and restructure around the difficulty so smoothly that other people are hardly aware of it.
	Spoken Production	I can use simple phrases and sentences to describe where I live and people I know.	I can use a series of phrases and sentences to describe in simple terms my family and other people, living conditions, my educational background and my present or most recent job.	I can connect phrases in a simple way in order to describe experiences and events, my dreams, hopes and ambitions. I can briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans. I can narrate a story or relate the plot of a book or film and describe my reactions.	I can present clear, detailed descriptions on a wide range of subjects related to my field of interest. I can explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.	I can present clear, detailed descriptions of complex subjects integrating sub-themes, developing particular points and rounding off with an appropriate conclusion.	I can present a clear, smoothly-flowing description or argument in a style appropriate to the context and with an effective logical structure which helps the recipient to notice and remember significant points.
W R I T I N G	**Writing**	I can write a short, simple postcard, for example sending holiday greetings. I can fill in forms with personal details, for example entering my name, nationality and address on a hotel registration form.	I can write short, simple notes and messages. I can write a very simple personal letter, for example thanking someone for something.	I can write simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. I can write personal letters describing experiences and impressions.	I can write clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects related to my interests. I can write an essay or report, passing on information or giving reasons in support of or against a particular point of view. I can write letters highlighting the personal significance of events and experiences.	I can express myself in clear, well-structured text, expressing points of view at some length. I can write about complex subjects in a letter, an essay or a report, underlining what I consider to be the salient issues. I can select a style appropriate to the reader in mind.	I can write clear, smoothly-flowing text in an appropriate style. I can write complex letters, reports or articles which present a case with an effective logical structure which helps the recipient to notice and remember significant points. I can write summaries and reviews of professional or literary works.

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Appendix 2: Descriptors for spoken interaction from the CEFR's self-assessment grid and the CFR

	A1	A2	B1	B2
CEFR self-assessment grid	I can interact in a simple way provided the other person is prepared to repeat or rephrase things at a slower rate of speech and help me formulate what I'm trying to say. I can ask and answer simple questions in areas of immediate need or on very familiar topics.	I can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar topics and activities. I can handle very short social exchanges, even though I can't usually understand enough to keep the conversation going myself.	I can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. I can enter unprepared into conversation on topics that are familiar, of personal interest or pertinent to everyday life (e.g., family, hobbies, work, travel and current events).	I can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible. I can take an active part in discussion in familiar contexts, accounting for and sustaining my views.
CFR – Myself and my family	Can respond nonverbally (e.g., with a nod or shake of the head) or with single-word or very brief answers to basic questions about his/her likes or dislikes (e.g., Do you like … ?). Can greet the teacher, other adults and pupils in an appropriate way and say goodbye. Can indicate immediate personal needs (e.g., to go to the toilet).	Can reply with confidence to familiar questions about his/her name, age, number of brothers and sisters, etc. Can initiate conversation on a familiar topic (e.g., what he/she did at the weekend).	Can tell the teacher about what he/she did at home/on holiday/at the weekend etc. Can ask for clarification when necessary.	Can express worries or concerns to the teacher, another adult or some other responsible person. Can understand and participate fully in conversations about everyday life, family activities, interests, current issues, expressing clearly his/her own views and opinions.
	Can answer basic questions about his/her group, family name, age, and family members when supported by prompts. Can greet and say goodbye and say thank you to other Roma children and adults using appropriate forms of salutation.	Can reply with confidence to family or community members when asked familiar questions about his/her name, age, number of brothers and sisters, names of family members etc. Can use greetings naturally and appropriately.	Can ask and respond to questions on a wide range of familiar topics (family, home, parents' activities, interests, etc.). Can tell parents or other family members about what he/she did in school. Can talk about what he/she has learnt from parents and other older family members,	Can give parents a detailed account of what has taken place in school and describe his/her successes and achievements. In interaction with native speakers, can ask and answer questions spontaneously and fluently.