

The linguistic and educational integration of children and adolescents from migrant backgrounds

CONCEPT PAPER

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1. Language diagnostics in multilingual settings with respect to continuous assessment procedures as accompaniment of learning and teaching – *Drorit Lengyel*
2. Languages of schooling: focusing on vulnerable learners - *Eike Thürmann, Helmut Vollmer and Irene Pieper*
3. Migrant pupils and formal mastery of the language of schooling: variations and representations – *Marie-Madeleine Bertucci*
4. Capitalising on, activating and developing plurilingual and pluricultural repertoires for better school integration – *Véronique Castellotti and Danièle Moore*
5. Professional development for staff working in multilingual schools – *Jim Anderson, Christine Hélot, Joanna McPake and Vicky Obied*
6. Co-operation, management and networking: effective ways to promote the linguistic and educational integration of children and adolescents from migrant backgrounds - *Christiane Bainski, Tanja Kaseric, Ute Michel, Joanna McPake and Amy Thompson*

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Table of contents

Introduction	5
1 Council of Europe policy relating to children and adolescents from migrant backgrounds	6
1.1. General policy orientation.....	6
1.2. The White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue and the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI)	7
1.3. Plurilingual and intercultural education.....	8
2 Providing for the linguistic integration and education of children and adolescents from migrant backgrounds	11
2.1 A note on terminology	11
2.2 Recognising linguistic and cultural diversity	11
2.3 Acknowledging cultural and linguistic diversity in the political, social and cultural arenas	13
2.4 Managing linguistic diversity at school	15
2.4.1 <i>Migrant languages</i>	15
2.4.2 <i>Developing migrants' proficiency in the language of schooling</i>	18
3 Two Council of Europe tools	21
3.1 <i>The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages</i>	22
3.2 The European Language Portfolio	22
3.3 Example 1 – teaching English as a second language in Irish primary schools	24
3.4 Example 2 – supporting the teaching and learning of Romani.....	26
3.5 Some other frameworks	28
4 Some studies and resources that support the integration of children and adolescents from migrant backgrounds within the perspective of plurilingual and intercultural education	30
4.1 Studies and resources.....	30
4.2 Language Education Policy Profile.....	32

Introduction

The Council of Europe's primary aim is to create a common democratic and legal area throughout the continent, ensuring respect for its fundamental values: human rights, democracy and the rule of law. All the organisation's actions are shaped by these values and by an enduring concern with social inclusion, social cohesion and respect for diversity.

The Third Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe's then 46 member states took place in Warsaw in May 2005. In the Summit Declaration Europe's leaders committed themselves to ensuring that cultural diversity becomes a source of mutual enrichment, to protecting the rights of national minorities, and to securing the free movement of persons. The Declaration includes the following paragraph:

We are determined to build cohesive societies by ensuring fair access to social rights, fighting exclusion and protecting vulnerable social groups. ... We are resolved to strengthen the cohesion of our societies in its social, educational, health and cultural dimensions.

From the perspective of social inclusion and social cohesion, the integration and education of children and adolescents from migrant backgrounds is one of the most urgent challenges facing Council of Europe member states. The challenge takes more than one form. Migrant children and adolescents who are already of school-going age when they arrive in the host country, are likely to be beginners in the language of schooling; whereas those who were born in the host country or arrived before starting school may be conversationally fluent in the language of schooling but find it difficult to access the academic language that is a precondition for educational success. Member states also face the challenge of maintaining and developing the first language proficiency of migrant children and adolescents, including the acquisition of literacy.

The Language Policy Division's project *Languages in Education/Languages for Education* (LE)¹ believes that these challenges are transversal. Any adequate attempt to respond to them must take account of the full range of curricula and all varieties of linguistic competence and communication that those curricula require pupils to master. The present document aims to provide a point of entry to the project and its tools from the perspective of the needs of children and adolescents from migrant backgrounds. Chapter 1 summarises the Council of Europe's general policy regarding the linguistic integration of migrants, sketches the main arguments of the White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue, *Living together as equals in dignity* (2008),² and introduces the concept of plurilingual and intercultural education, which is fundamental to the LE project. Within this multidimensional framework, Chapter 2 seeks to identify the policy and implementation challenges that confront member states. Chapter 3 explains how the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* and the European Language Portfolio have been adapted to support the language learning of migrant children and adolescents who are beginners in the language of schooling and the development of curricula and learning materials for Romani. It also draws attention to the existence of other curriculum and assessment frameworks designed for use in this domain. Finally, Chapter 4 briefly introduces the different dimensions of educational and linguistic integration addressed by the studies and resources that complement this document.

¹ Available at <http://www.coe.int/lang>

² Available at <http://www.coe.int/dialogue>

1 Council of Europe policy relating to children and adolescents from migrant backgrounds

1.1. General policy orientation

The Council of Europe's commitment to human rights, democracy and the rule of law generates concern for social inclusion and social cohesion, which depend on access and participation, both of which in turn depend on effective communication. Hence the Council of Europe's emphasis on the responsibility of member states to provide appropriate language education for migrants. Article 19 of the European Social Charter (revised, 1996) refers to the signatories' undertaking

- 11 *to promote and facilitate the teaching of the national language of the receiving state or, if there are several, one of these languages, to migrant workers and members of their families;*
- 12 *to promote and facilitate, as far as practicable, the teaching of the migrant worker's mother tongue to the children of the migrant worker.*

According to the Explanatory Report on the Social Charter, these two paragraphs were added to the 1996 version because they were considered important “*for the protection of migrant workers' health and safety at work and for the guarantee of their rights in other respects relating to work, as well as in facilitating their integration and that of their families*” (§ 11) and because of “*the importance for the children of migrant workers of maintaining their cultural and linguistic heritage, inter alia, in order to provide them with a possibility of reintegration if and when the migrant worker returns home*” (§ 12).

This broad human rights perspective has been reiterated in a succession of recommendations and resolutions from the Committee of Ministers and the Parliamentary Assembly.³ For example, Recommendation 1740 (2006) of the Parliamentary Assembly, on the place of the mother tongue in school education, states:

4. *It would be desirable to encourage, as far as possible, young Europeans to learn their mother tongue (or main language) when this is not an official language of their country.*
5. *At the same time, every young European has the duty to learn an official language of the country of which he or she is a citizen.*

These responsibilities are clearly set out in the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (1992; article 8.1) and the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (1995; article 14.2), both of which state that the teaching of regional or minority languages should be without prejudice to the teaching of the official language(s) of the state. Recommendation CM/Rec(2008)4 of the Committee of Ministers is specifically concerned with the social, employment and other disadvantages that accrue to migrant children and adolescents who do not develop adequate proficiency in a/the language of the host society. It invites the governments of member states to

... introduce into their policy and practice measures to improve the integration of newly-arrived children of migrants into the educational system, provide children of migrants with adequate language skills at a preschool level, prepare children of migrants and of immigrant background approaching school-leaving age for a successful transition from school to the labour market, and overcome the difficulties faced by these children living in segregated areas and disadvantaged areas.

³ For an overview see [Extracts from Council of Europe Conventions and Recommendations / Resolutions](http://www.coe.int/lang) (www.coe.int/lang → Resources → Recommendations and Resolutions)

1.2. The White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue and the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI)

The Council of Europe's policy on the linguistic integration and education of children and adolescents from migrant backgrounds reflects the organisation's view that integration is a two-way process. The same view underpins the White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue (2008), which defines social cohesion as "*the capacity of a society to ensure the welfare of all its members, minimising disparities and avoiding polarisation*", and integration as "*a two-sided process and as the capacity of people to live together with full respect for the dignity of each individual, the common good, pluralism and diversity, non-violence and solidarity, as well as their ability to participate in social, cultural, economic and political life*".⁴ The White Paper recognises the need for "*a pro-active, structured and widely shared effort in managing cultural diversity*",⁵ and proposes intercultural dialogue as "*a major tool to achieve this aim*".⁶

The White Paper defines intercultural dialogue as "*a process that comprises an open and respectful exchange of views between individuals and groups with different ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic backgrounds and heritage, on the basis of mutual understanding and respect*".⁷ Intercultural dialogue is seen as, inter alia, a means of promoting "*personal growth and transformation*";⁸ from the perspective of the individual it is "*important in managing multiple cultural affiliations in a multicultural environment*" and "*a mechanism to constantly achieve a new identity balance, responding to new openings and experiences and adding new layers to identity without relinquishing one's roots*".⁹

The White Paper has transversal implications for school education, in particular the development of an intercultural dimension across the curriculum, but especially in "*history, language education and the teaching of religious and convictional facts*".¹⁰ It provides a larger policy framework for the elaboration of approaches to language education that promote a positive attitude to linguistic diversity and support the development of pupils' linguistic repertoires and their capacity to interact with people from other languages and cultures. The 2008 report of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance reaffirms the Council of Europe's view that "*successful integration is a two-way process, a process of mutual recognition, which bears no relation to assimilation*".¹¹ The report notes that "*the tone of the political debate has not only hardened considerably, but also tends to stigmatise entire communities, including nationals of immigrant backgrounds*";¹² and it expresses concern that "*the debate and measures around integration in many countries in Europe have continued to focus almost exclusively on actual or perceived 'deficiencies' among the minority population and ignore both the economic, social and cultural contributions made by minority groups and the lack of effort made by the majority population to integrate them*".¹³ (pp.11–12).

⁴ White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue, *Living together as equals in dignity*, 1.4, p.10.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 2.1, p.12.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 2.1, p.12.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 3.1, p.16.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 3.1, p.16.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 3.2, p.17.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 4.3.2, p.29.

¹¹ Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2009, p.12.

¹² *Ibid.*, p.10

¹³ *Ibid.*, p.12.

Key reference documents:

White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue, *Living together as equals in dignity*, Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2008.

[Annual Report](http://www.coe.int/ECRI) on ECRI's Activities, Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2009. Available online at www.coe.int/ECRI

European Social Charter. Available online at www.coe.int/socialcharter

1.3. Plurilingual and intercultural education

The Language Policy Division launched the project *Languages in Education/Languages for Education* (LE) as part of the follow-up to the [Third Summit](#) of Heads of State and Government (Warsaw, May 2005). The project supports social cohesion and intercultural dialogue by promoting plurilingual and intercultural education, which is based on the recognition that all languages and cultures present in the school have an active role to play in providing a quality education for all learners. Particularly concerned to foster the development of effective skills and competences in the language(s) of schooling, it is thus committed to addressing the needs of those for whom the language of schooling poses problems or is not the language they use at home.

The Council of Europe distinguishes between *plurilingual individuals*, who are capable of communicating in two or more languages, at whatever level of proficiency, and *multilingual regions or societies*, where two or more language varieties are in use. This distinction is important because plurilingual individuals may live in overwhelmingly monolingual societies, and multilingual societies may be made up of mostly monolingual individuals. According to the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*, language education should aim to provide learners with plurilingual and intercultural competence, understood as “*the ability to use languages for the purposes of communication and to take part in intercultural interaction, where a person, viewed as a social agent has proficiency, of varying degrees, in several languages and experience of several cultures*”.¹⁴ This view is developed as follows in the Council of Europe's guide to the development of language education policies:

*The ability to use different languages, whatever degree of competence they have in each of them, is common to all speakers. And it is the responsibility of education systems to make all Europeans aware of the nature of this ability, which is developed to a greater or lesser extent according to individuals and contexts, to highlight its value, and to develop it in early years of schooling and throughout life. Plurilingualism forms the basis of communication in Europe, but above all, of positive acceptance, a prerequisite for maintaining linguistic diversity. The experience of plurilingualism also provides all European citizens with one of the most immediate opportunities in which to actually experience Europe in all its diversity. Policies which are not limited to managing language diversity but which adopt plurilingualism as a goal may also provide a more concrete basis for democratic citizenship in Europe: it is not so much mastery of a particular language or languages which characterises European citizens (and the citizens of many other political and cultural entities) as a plurilingual, pluricultural competence which ensures communication, and above all, results in respect for each language.*¹⁵

¹⁴ *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*, p.168 (<http://www.coe.int/lang>)

¹⁵ *From Linguistic Diversity to Plurilingual Education: Guide for the development of language education policies in Europe* (2007), p.10; available at <http://www.coe.int/lang> → Policy instruments → Policy guide and studies.

This argument assumes that everyone has the potential to be plurilingual because plurilingual competence is a consequence of our inbuilt language capacity. Education, whatever form it takes, should seek to ensure the harmonious development of the individual's plurilingual competence in the same way as it seeks to promote the development of his or her physical, cognitive, vocational and creative abilities. The argument also assumes that an individual's plurilingual repertoire comprises various languages (learnt in childhood or at a later stage, naturalistically, through tuition or through self-directed study) in which he or she has acquired various skills (listening, reading, conversation, etc.) at different levels of proficiency. The languages in the repertoire may be used for different purposes: communicating within the family, socialising with neighbours, working, expressing membership of a group, and so on.

According to this argument, the development of plurilingual and intercultural competence within a multilingual and multicultural educational framework is one of the foundations of democratic coexistence. It plays an essential role in the management of diversity, allows every citizen in Europe to participate effectively in the national and transnational public arena, and prevents the serious economic losses represented by the disappearance of competence in languages whose transmission the authorities have been unable to support effectively (this is especially a danger for the languages of communities recently settled in Europe). Language education policy has to strike a democratic balance between the plurilingual repertoires of indigenous minorities and immigrant groups on the one hand and "official" languages and their use on the other.

"Plurilingual and intercultural education as a right", one of the foundation documents of the LE project, locates plurilingual and intercultural education within a rationale concerning the right to education, so that language education "*becomes that element of the process of education which puts languages in the service of a quality education and in relationship with the general aims of the school and the rights of learners*".¹⁶ The document insists on the central role that language plays in the process of education: "*Language is a tool for acquiring knowledge, one aspect of the development of the person, as both individual and social actor, a means of and factor in understanding and making sense of reality, and a vehicle for imaginative creativity*".¹⁷ It goes on to point out that

in a language rights perspective, all the languages and language varieties in a school have to be taken into account. These include:

- *each pupil's own, evolving language repertoire,*
- *the official main language, as both a subject in its own right and the language of instruction for other subjects,*
- *minority, regional and immigrant languages, as parts of certain pupils' (sometimes unacknowledged) repertoires and/or parts of the school syllabus, as either subjects taught or indeed languages of instruction for other subjects,*
- *foreign languages, as subjects taught and/or medium for certain other forms of instruction (and even as part of the main repertoire of some of the pupils in the school); classical languages as subjects taught.*¹⁸

The document identifies five "*linguistic spaces*", or domains of language use, that are in contact and intersect with one another in the school: "*the linguistic repertoire of the learner, the language of schooling as a school subject, the language of schooling as a vehicle for access to other school subjects, other languages (taught and/or acknowledged as present in*

¹⁶ D. Coste, M. Cavalli, A. Crişan & P.-H. van de Ven, "[Plurilingual and intercultural education as a right](#)", Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2009, p.3

¹⁷ Ibid., p.5.

¹⁸ Ibid., p.5.

the school), *social uses of language outside school*".¹⁹ From the perspective of the individual's right to language education, the first of these spaces is the most important: "*The major purpose, especially if the curriculum is defined as the experiential learning trajectory that the individual follows, is to ensure that the repertoire of the learners is extended – in the framework of general educational purposes – to a growing mastery of discourses, genres and texts which are present in the other defined spaces.*"²⁰ This implies that it will be necessary to adopt "*specific measures focused on particular groups of pupils, particularly migrant children and young persons and pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds*",²¹ especially as regards developing their proficiency in the language of schooling in order that they have full and equal access to all curriculum subjects. At the same time, in keeping with the principle that integration is a two-way process, general language rights include "*acknowledgement of, due regard for and recognition of pupils' pre-school and out-of-school language repertoires*".²²

A companion document, "Plurilingual and intercultural education as a project", points out that because linguistic plurality and diversity are part of everyday reality, "*plurilingual and intercultural education is not a 'revolution'. It takes into account above all what already exists ...*".²³ Thus it is not to be thought of either as something that should be the preserve of a privileged elite or as a new approach to the teaching of languages. Its distinctive character derives from the following considerations:

- *all languages are ... valued regardless of their status in the eyes of society (official, minority, regional languages, languages of migration etc.) and teaching status (first language, second languages, languages of origin, modern foreign languages, classical languages);*
- *the various languages forming part of learners' personal repertoires but not included in the languages of schooling are of special importance; they are languages which the school can develop through varied, plural and partial approaches, thus reinforcing learners' identity, and giving them equal opportunities for school success.*²⁴

The need for plurilingual and intercultural education arises from the linguistic rights of the individual, but also from the value attached to linguistic diversity and thus to multilingualism as one of the positive characteristics of European societies.

Key reference documents:

[Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment](#), Strasbourg: Council of Europe / Cambridge University Press, 2001.

J.-C. Beacco, M. Byram, [From linguistic diversity to plurilingual education: Guide for the development of language education policies in Europe](#), Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2007.

J.-C. Beacco, "[The platform of resources and references for plurilingual and intercultural education in relation to 'vulnerable' groups](#)", Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2009.

M. Byram, "[Multicultural societies, pluricultural people and the project of intercultural education](#)", Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2009.

D. Coste, M. Cavalli, A. Crişan & P.-H. van de Ven, "[Plurilingual and intercultural education as a right](#)", Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2009

D. Coste, M. Cavalli, A. Crişan & P.-H. van de Ven, "[Plurilingual and intercultural education as a project](#)", Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2009.

¹⁹ Ibid., p.7.

²⁰ Ibid., p.7.

²¹ Ibid., p.8. See also J.-C. Beacco, "[The platform of resources and references for plurilingual and intercultural education in relation to 'vulnerable' groups](#)", Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2009 (www.coe.int/lang).

²² Ibid., p.8.

²³ M. Cavalli, D. Coste, A. Crişan and P.-H. van de Ven, "[Plurilingual and intercultural education as a project](#)", p.7.

²⁴ Ibid., p.13.

2 Providing for the linguistic integration and education of children and adolescents from migrant backgrounds

2.1 A note on terminology

How should we refer to the language(s) that children and adolescents from migrant backgrounds bring with them to school? Traditional terms may be misleading and in some cases prejudicial. For example, “mother tongue” appears to reflect Western child-rearing practices: the child acquires the language of his or her mother because she is the primary care-giver. But such practices never applied in many non-European cultures, and they have long been subject to almost infinite variation across Europe. In any case, “mother tongue” is sometimes understood to refer to the language spoken by one’s mother, whether or not it is also one’s own dominant language. “First language” is problematic partly because children may acquire more than one language early in life, and partly because one’s dominant language at the age of ten or fifteen is not necessarily the first language one learnt. Other terms tend to be bound to a specific set of social and/or cultural considerations. For example, in the United Kingdom a “community language” is the language spoken by an immigrant community, and a “community school” has the function (among other things) of developing proficiency in a community language – connotations that are unlikely to survive when these terms are translated into other languages. In Belgium, for instance, “community” refers to a political region defined by language. A second example from the United Kingdom is “additional language”, the term used to refer to English when it is not the dominant language of migrant children and adolescents but nevertheless the language through which they receive their education. However, for those unfamiliar with UK usage, “additional” may seem to understate the very great challenge that such learners face in mastering the language of schooling.²⁵ In this paper the term “home language(s)” is used to refer to the language(s) spoken at home by children and adolescents from migrant backgrounds. The term is used without prejudice to the fact that in many cases the language of schooling may be adopted as a language of at least some home communication by at least some family members.

2.2 Recognising linguistic and cultural diversity

When developing policies to promote the linguistic and educational integration of children and adolescents from migrant backgrounds, whether they are new arrivals or settled and resident, it is necessary to take account of the multiplicity of their linguistic, cultural and educational experience. This multiplicity is matched by the plurality of European societies themselves as reflected in the diversity of languages and types of communication, communities and social groups, religious and educational cultures, and identities:

These different types of plurality do not simply exist side by side. They impinge on one another in complex and often conflictual ways. They are neither transient nor circumstantial, but deeply entrenched in most European countries precisely because of migration movements, the existence of regional and ethnic minorities and – whatever its democratic virtues and beneficial effects – the advent of mass education and scientific and technological progress.²⁶

²⁵ The VALEUR project (2004–2007) of the European Centre for Modern Languages uses “additional” in a quite different sense, to refer to “all languages in use in a society, *apart from the official, national or dominant language(s)*” (*Valuing All Languages in Europe*, Graz: European Centre for Modern Languages, 2007, p.1, emphasis added; available at <http://www.ecml.at/mtp2/publications/Valeur-report-E.pdf> [accessed 5 July 2010]). English as the language of schooling in the United Kingdom is excluded from this definition.

²⁶ D. Coste (ed.), M. Cavalli, A. Crişan & P.-H. van de Ven, “[A European reference document for languages of education?](#)”, Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2007.

Multiple pluralities have made multilingual school populations part of commonplace reality across Europe,²⁷ and they give rise to complexities of language repertoire and language use that are sometimes overlooked. Consider the following example from Germany:

In this school, nearly 50% of the children have a monolingual background and a German passport; they come from families with long ancestral lines in Germany. The other half represents more than 15 nationalities with about 20 different home languages. Some of the children speak more than two languages, for instance because their parents have different language backgrounds.

For all the children in this school, plurilingualism forms an integral and important part of their daily experience. The German language plays the role of lingua franca for everybody in the school and is undoubtedly the language which is most frequently used. Nevertheless it is anything but the only language present. Alongside German, it has become commonplace for the children to use several other languages actively: some children count in Turkish during games, others give greetings or thanks in Italian, others know Portuguese tongue-twisters or Polish “selecting rhymes”, and one swears fluently in many languages. The diversity of languages and cultural experiences is an important aspect of their daily life for all children in that school, no matter whether they themselves are mono- or plurilingual. Independent of whether or not the school pays attention to it, diversity of languages and cultural backgrounds is a common element in the socialisation of all its children. This applies not only to our case-study school or other more exceptional schools, but for all societies which include immigrants and other minorities, and that means in fact, for all European societies.²⁸

As this example implies, the out-of-school linguistic situation of children/adolescents from migrant backgrounds is infinitely variable, which means that the way in which they use their home language is also subject to infinite variation.²⁹ At one extreme, an immigrant family may live linguistically and culturally apart, remote from other members of their original speech community. In such circumstances use of the home language will necessarily be limited to the private sphere, and the children will acquire literacy in their home language only as a result of parental initiative. At the other extreme, an immigrant family may live in close proximity to many other families from the same country, as part of a cohesive linguistic, cultural, economic and religious community. Local shops may reinforce the culture of origin by supplying traditional food and clothes, and the language and culture of origin may be preserved, even reinforced, by cultural and/or religious organisations, which may help the children of the community to acquire literacy in their home language but also support their literacy development in the language of schooling. Satellite television, the internet, other mass media and affordable air travel may further strengthen linguistic and cultural links with the country of origin. Every imaginable variation exists between these two extremes.

The fact that children and adolescents from migrant backgrounds speak another language outside school should not be assumed to imply that they reject the language of the school or have a negative attitude to education and integration. At the same time their out-of-school linguistic situation inevitably affects their encounter with the language of schooling. If their family lives in linguistic and cultural isolation, their need to learn the language of schooling will be more than an educational matter and strong parental support may help to motivate

²⁷ For an overview, see *Valuing all languages in Europe*, available in English and French versions at <http://www.ecml.at/mtp2/publications/Valeur-report-E.pdf>.

²⁸ I. Gogolin, *Linguistic diversity and new minorities in Europe*, Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2002, pp.8–9.

²⁹ See, for example, the papers that address this theme in I. Gogolin & U. Neumann (eds), *Streitfall Zweisprachigkeit / The bilingualism controversy*, Wiesbaden: Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2009. This infinite variety easily escapes the surveys on which much of the debate about the benefits and disadvantages of bilingualism in education is founded.

their learning. If, on the other hand, they are part of a settled and cohesive community, the language of schooling may play a relatively minor role in their life outside school. In some cases their efforts to learn may be impeded by cultural barriers, or the barriers that are created by the experience of social, religious or racial prejudice. Account must also be taken of the linguistic repertoires and cultural capital of their parents and the extent to which they use the language of the host community in their daily lives – in dealing with officialdom, in the workplace, in shops and other public places, etc. Perhaps the parents are themselves attending a language course to assist their integration. In the case of children who were born in the host country it is necessary to ask how much exposure they had to the language of schooling before starting school. In the case of children/adolescents who were not born in the host country different questions arise: Did they attend school in their country of origin? If so, was the curriculum similar to or significantly different from the curriculum in the host country? Did they develop any proficiency in their new language of schooling in their country of origin? Was it, for example, included in their school curriculum as a foreign language? Was their educational experience disrupted, perhaps by civil unrest, and if it was, has the disruption affected their attitude to schooling? Again, the possible permutations are infinite.

The development of policies for the linguistic and educational integration of children and adolescents from migrant backgrounds must also recognize that use of their home language is one of their basic human rights, and how they use the language is a matter of choice that will be determined by a number of factors, for example:

- the extent to which their home language is used by those with whom they share their daily life, inside and outside the family;
- their desire (conscious or unconscious) to (i) identify more or less strongly with the host society, and (ii) maintain or abandon the connection with their language and culture of origin;
- the degree and types of mastery of their home language that they developed in their country of origin, especially as regards forms of written discourse;
- the extent to which they have access to social and cultural activities mediated through their home language;
- whether or not their home language is part of the host country's education system, as a medium of bilingual education, a school subject, or an optional extra;
- whether or not their home language and its associated culture are promoted and taught by establishments legally attached to the country of origin or by cultural associations;
- whether or not they have easy access to their home language and its associated culture via satellite television and the internet;
- the extent to which they are inclined to reinvent their plurilingual identity at different stages of their lives.

Key reference documents:

J.-C. Beacco, *The role of languages in policies for the integration of adult migrants*, Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2008.

I. Gogolin, *Linguistic diversity and new minorities in Europe*, Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2002.

2.3 Acknowledging cultural and linguistic diversity in the political, social and cultural arenas

Policies to promote the linguistic and educational integration of children/adolescents from migrant backgrounds are most likely to succeed when they are developed as part of an overall integration policy that respects Council of Europe values. For however effective

specific educational measures may be in their immediate context, their impact is likely to be short-lived unless they are designed and implemented with explicit reference to the larger political, social and cultural framework. The White Paper for Intercultural Dialogue identifies the elements of that framework as: human rights, democracy and the rule of law; equal dignity and mutual respect; gender equality; combating the barriers that prevent intercultural dialogue; and the religious dimension. The White Paper also proposes five policy approaches: providing for democratic governance of cultural diversity; promoting democratic citizenship and participation; learning and teaching intercultural competence; creating spaces for intercultural dialogue; and engaging in intercultural dialogue in international relations. Each of these approaches has direct relevance for schooling. The first two refer to its political and social context, the third to the importance of developing inclusive curricula, the fourth reminds us that the school itself should be a site of intercultural dialogue, and the fifth refers to the benefits that accrue from international links and student exchanges.

The educational systems of different countries manage their links with society in different ways. In Germany the model program FÖRMIG (Förderung von Kindern und Jugendlichen mit Migrationshintergrund/Support for immigrant minority children and adolescents), in which ten federal states participated between 2004 and 2009, implemented a network of “developmental partnerships” comprising a “basic unit” (for example, local schools, a municipal day care centre, a parents’ initiative, and the town administration) and “strategic partners” (for example, the public library, the local education authority, the educational psychology service, a centre for early child development, and a medical association).³⁰

However educational systems and individual schools choose to articulate their relationship with society at large, they need to take specific measures to ensure that they provide an inclusive environment for all pupils. Their policy documents can challenge deficit models of bilingual development by emphasising the cognitive, intercultural and emotional importance of helping migrant children and adolescents to acquire literacy skills in their home language(s), which in any case will support their acquisition of literacy in the language of schooling.³¹ Displays in corridors and open spaces can be used to acknowledge and validate all the languages, cultures and ethnicities present in the school. The development of skills in home languages can be recognised and supported either by providing appropriate instruction in the mainstream school or by establishing partnerships with educational initiatives outside the mainstream. In different curriculum subjects opportunities can be created for pupils to share their languages and cultures so that they become a resource for learning and for the development of intercultural understanding. Schools can also seek to communicate with and involve parents from bilingual families. In some countries toolkits have been developed to help schools respond to the challenge of diversity.³²

Key reference document:

[White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue](#): “Living together as equals in diversity”, Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2008. (www.coe.int/dialogue)

³⁰ See <http://www.blk-foermig.uni-hamburg.de/> (accessed 5 July 2010).

³¹ See section 2.4.1 below.

³² For example, in 2007 agencies in Belfast and Dublin collaborated to produce *Together towards inclusion: toolkit for diversity in the primary school*, which was distributed to all primary schools on both sides of the border. The toolkit is available at <http://www.ncca.ie/iilt> (accessed 5 July 2010). The Council of Europe has published *Compass. A Manual on Human Rights Education with Young People*, which contains a wealth of practical classroom activities relevant to the management of diversity (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2002; available online at <http://www.eyeb.coe.int/compass/en/contents.html>).

2.4 Managing linguistic diversity at school

2.4.1 Migrant languages

As noted in 1.1 above, Article 19 of the European Social Charter (revised 1996), which is concerned with the right of migrant workers and their families to protection and assistance, assigns to signatories the responsibility “to promote and facilitate, as far as practicable, the teaching of the migrant worker's mother tongue to the children of the migrant worker”. In a closely similar vein, Recommendation 1740 (2006) of the Parliamentary Assembly opens with the following statement:

In the Parliamentary Assembly's view, considerations of various kinds influence the place of the mother tongue in schools. There is the question of rights, both the right to education and the right to a cultural identity; there is the preservation of linguistic heritage, at both European and world levels; there is the promotion of dialogue and exchange through linguistic diversity; and there are pedagogical factors, to say nothing of the political use which is often made of the issue.

Paragraph 23 of the explanatory note accompanying the draft recommendation acknowledges that “It is certainly not possible to guarantee that all children, in all countries, are literate in their mother tongue, but it seems desirable that teaching in mother tongue should be provided when justified by a sufficient number of children”.³³ No doubt intentionally vague, the last phrase of this sentence is open to a variety of interpretations, some of them very restrictive.

Teaching children and adolescents from migrant backgrounds literacy in their home language within the educational system has usually entailed one or another form of bilingual schooling. The so-called “interdependence hypothesis” was formulated in opposition to those who embraced the view that time spent teaching literacy skills in a “minority” language would be better spent improving literacy skills in the “major” language. The hypothesis proposes that

*To the extent that instruction in Lx is effective in promoting proficiency in Lx, transfer of this proficiency to Ly will occur provided there is adequate exposure to Ly (either in school or environment) and adequate motivation to learn Ly.*³⁴

For example:

*[In] a Spanish-English bilingual program in the United States, Spanish instruction that develops Spanish reading and writing skills is not just developing Spanish skills, it is also developing a deeper conceptual and linguistic proficiency that is strongly related to the development of literacy in the majority language (English). In other words, although the surface aspects (e.g. pronunciation, fluency, etc.) of different languages are clearly separate, there is an underlying conceptual proficiency or knowledge base that is common across languages. This common underlying proficiency makes possible the transfer of concepts, literacy skills, and learning strategies from one language to another.*³⁵

³³ Parliamentary Assembly, Doc. 10837, p.6.

³⁴ J. Cummins, “The role of primary language development in promoting educational success for language minority students”, in California State Department of Education (ed.), *Schooling and language minority students: a theoretical framework*, Los Angeles: California State University, Evaluation, Dissemination and Assessment Center, 1981, p.29.

³⁵ J. Cummins, “Total immersion or bilingual education? Findings of international research on promoting immigrant children's achievement in the primary school”, in J. Ramseger & M. Wagener (eds),

The interdependence hypothesis thus claims that time spent developing literacy skills in a “minority” language does not undermine or detract from the development of the same skills in a “majority” language. Or, to approach the matter from a different angle, whatever benefits accrue from education in a “minority” language need not be bought at the cost of underachievement in the “majority” language. By now there is a large body of empirical research that supports the interdependence hypothesis.³⁶

More research is needed in order to identify clearly the reasons why bilingual programmes achieve their goals, some of which may be related to the fact that such programmes provide an enriched learning environment. But it is already clear that the more languages the individual can speak, the better: research into the advantages of bilingualism shows that access to literacy in two languages benefits cognitive development.³⁷ Thus the home language skills of children and adolescents from migrant backgrounds should be fostered by whatever means are practically available, partly as a matter of human rights and partly in order to increase society’s linguistic and cultural capital. The development of literacy skills is especially important since it is a prerequisite for extensive mastery of any language and the possibility of using that language in professional life. Bearing in mind the interdependence principle, it also makes sense to encourage use of home languages to understand and internalize key concepts that underlie the different curriculum subjects. In addition, use of the home language at school affirms the migrant pupil’s identity and helps to counteract any tendency to stigmatise him or her for membership of a group that is perceived as being linguistically inferior.³⁸

Traditionally, the extent to which migrants’ home languages play a role in their education has depended on three factors: the concentration of speakers of particular languages in particular schools, the availability of qualified teachers who are proficient speakers of those languages, and the general readiness of the educational system to accommodate initiatives designed to exploit and further develop migrant pupils’ home language skills. In some countries immigrant communities are concentrated in particular areas and have a major impact on the ethnic, social and linguistic composition of school populations. In such circumstances it is in principle possible to design and implement bilingual programmes, delivering part of the

Chancenungleichheit in der Grundschule, Jahrbuch Grundschulforschung, Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2008, p.52.

³⁶ For reviews see, for example, F. Genesee, K. Lindholm-Leary, W. M. Saunders & D.Christian (eds), *Educating English Language Learners: a synthesis of research evidence*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006 and D. August & T. Shanahan (eds). *Developing literacy in second-language learning. Report of the National Literacy Panel on language-minority children and youth*, Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2006. A Belgian project in progress (2008–2012) is teaching Turkish children to read and write first in Turkish and then in Dutch. Teachers have reported that some learners begin to transfer their reading skills from Turkish to Dutch before reading and writing in Dutch have been formally introduced (“Multilingual education: the use of minority languages in classrooms in primary education”, funded by the city council of Gent; principal investigators: Piet Van Avermaet, Stef Slembrouck and Machteld Verhelst).

³⁷ See, for example, M. Allen, “Reading achievement of students in French immersion programs”, *Educational Quarterly Review*, 9.4 (2004), pp.25–30; E. Bialystok, *Bilingualism in development: language, literacy, and cognition*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001; E. Bialystok, G. Luk & E. Kwan, “Bilingualism, biliteracy and learning to read. Interactions among languages and writing systems”, *Scientific Studies of Reading*, 9.1 (2005), pp.43–61.

³⁸ In a comprehensive research review, Schofield & Bangs conclude that “the threat of being judged and found wanting based on negative stereotypes related to one’s social category membership, can serious undercut the achievement of immigrant and minority students”; J. W. Schofield & R. Bangs, “Conclusions and further perspectives”, in J. W. Schofield (ed.), *Migration background, minority-group membership and academic achievement. Research evidence from social, educational and developmental psychology*, AKI Research Review 5, Berlin: Social Science Research Center, 2006, p.93.

curriculum in the home language and part in a/the language of the host country. The effective delivery of such programmes is likely to depend on recruiting and training teachers from the migrant communities in question.³⁹ An alternative approach involves using teaching assistants from migrant communities in order to exploit pupils' home language skills in group work that is embedded in classes conducted in the main language of schooling.⁴⁰ Arrangements of this kind cannot be put in place when immigrant communities are dispersed or schools are educating children/adolescents from a large number of different language backgrounds. But in these circumstances schools need to find ways of responding to multilingualism that go far beyond putting a few posters on the classroom wall.⁴¹ Increasingly, the internet is used to provide information, teaching and learning materials, and supports of various kinds and to facilitate networking.⁴² The importance of the internet as an educational resource will grow as educational systems become more intent on developing learners' multi-modal literacies, which will achieve full effectiveness only when they embrace learners' plurilingual repertoires. It is also possible, and in keeping with the principles of plurilingual and intercultural education, to encourage migrant pupils and students to use their home language when performing collaborative tasks, even when the teacher does not know that language. A Belgian project is currently training primary teachers to support "functional plurilingual learning" that makes use of pupils' plurilingual repertoires in this way. Interim findings show significant changes in teachers' attitudes; interestingly, their observations imply that they are beginning to think about their pupils' development in ways that coincide with the interdependence hypothesis.⁴³ The LE project's "Guide for the development and implementation of curricula for plurilingual and intercultural education"⁴⁴ includes discussion of this approach, which has the advantage of being infinitely flexible and relatively inexpensive to implement. Finally, it is worth noting that the rapidly expanding provision of content-and-language-integrated learning programmes (in which curriculum content is taught through a language other than the principal language of schooling) offers possibilities of linguistic enrichment from which children and adolescents from migrant backgrounds should be encouraged to benefit.⁴⁵

³⁹ There are other reasons for recruiting teachers from immigrant backgrounds. Because they are "familiar with the experiences, culture and language of immigrant students [they] can serve as role models and enhance the self-confidence and motivation of immigrant students". They can also play an important role in school-home liaison. See *Closing the gap for immigrant students*, Paris: OECD, 2010, p.58.

⁴⁰ See, for example, J. Bourne & J. McPake, *Partnership teaching: co-operative teaching strategies for language support in multi-lingual classrooms*, London: HMSO, 1991.

⁴¹ For an overview of organizational and pedagogical approaches to bilingual education, see e.g. C. Baker, *Foundations of bilingual education and bilingualism*, second edition, Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 1996; O. García, *Bilingual education in the 21st century: a global perspective*, Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009; O. García, T. Skutnabb-Kangas & M. E.R. Torres-Guzmán (eds), *Imagining multilingual schools: languages in education and globalization*, Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 2006.

⁴² See, for example, the Swedish website *Tema Modersmål*, which provides support for the teaching of 36 immigrant languages (<http://modersmal.skolverket.se>), and the website of the UK project *Our Languages* (<http://www.ourlanguages.org.uk>), concerned with developing links between mainstream and complementary schools (which teach community languages that are often not taught in the mainstream).

⁴³ "Multilingual education: the use of minority languages in classrooms in primary education" (2008–2012), funded by the city council of Gent; principal investigators: Piet Van Avermaet, Stef Slembrouck and Machteld Verhelst.

⁴⁴ Council of Europe, 2010 (soon available on www.coe.int/lang)

⁴⁵ Research in Canada has shown (i) that students from migrant backgrounds can apply strategies acquired in learning English to the learning of French and (ii) that their learning of French can enhance their learning of English. See C. Mady, *Opening the doors to official language learning for allophones*, Ottawa: Canadian Parents for French, 2008.

Key reference documents:

- D. August & T. Shanahan (eds). *Developing literacy in second-language learning. Report of the National Literacy Panel on language-minority children and youth*, Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2006.
- J. Cummins, "Total immersion or bilingual education? Findings of international research on promoting immigrant children's achievement in the primary school", in J. Ramseger & M. Wagener (eds), *Chancenungleichheit in der Grundschule, Jahrbuch Grundschulforschung*, Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2008, pp.45–55.
- European Commission, Green Paper – "Migration and mobility: challenges and opportunities for EU education systems", Brussels: Commission of the European Communities, 2008
- O. García, *Bilingual education in the 21st century: a global perspective*, Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009.
- F. Genesee, K. Lindholm-Leary, W. M. Saunders & D.Christian (eds), *Educating English language learners: a synthesis of research evidence*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.
- OECD, *Where immigrant students succeed – a comparative review of performance and engagement in PISA 2003*, Paris: OECD, 2006.
- Guide for the development and implementation of curricula for plurilingual and intercultural education*, Council of Europe, 2010 (www.coe.int/lang)

2.4.2 Developing migrants' proficiency in the language of schooling

The OECD report *Where immigrant students succeed* concluded that although immigrant pupils "are motivated learners and have positive attitudes towards school ... [they] often perform at levels significantly lower than their native peers".⁴⁶ By no means all the difficulties that pupils and students from migrant backgrounds experience at school are caused by language. Those who move from one country to another during their school careers are likely to suffer serious disruption, and newly arrived immigrants often have to contend with poverty and other forms of social disadvantage. When poor performance at school is language-related, the research tradition that elaborated the interdependence hypothesis attributes it above all to the difficulty that migrant learners have in mastering academic language⁴⁷ – the terminology and forms of discourse characteristic of different curriculum subjects.⁴⁸ This difficulty is often shared by autochthonous learners from socially and economically disadvantaged backgrounds. Research has drawn a clear distinction between conversational and academic language.⁴⁹ Conversational language, typical of informal communication in the world outside the classroom, is context-embedded: comprehension and production of

⁴⁶ *Where immigrant students succeed – a comparative review of performance and engagement in PISA 2003*, Paris: OECD, 2006, p.8.

⁴⁷ In German the term "Bildungssprache" refers both to academic language and to academic discourse; see I. Gogolin, "Zweisprachigkeit und die Entwicklung 'bildungssprachlicher' Fähigkeiten", in I. Gogolin & U. Neumann (eds), *Streitfall Zweisprachigkeit/The bilingualism controversy*, Wiesbaden: VS-Verlag, 2009.

⁴⁸ See I. Pieper (ed.) "Text, literature and 'Bildung'", Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2007; J.-C. Beacco (ed.), "[A descriptive framework for communicative/linguistic competences involved in the teaching and learning of history](#)", Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2007; H. Vollmer, "Language(s) in other subjects", Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2009.

⁴⁹ In the English-speaking world discussion has often distinguished between "basic interpersonal communication skills" ("BICS") and "cognitive-academic language proficiency" ("CALP"), terms that were first introduced by J. Cummins as early as 1979 ("Cognitive/academic language proficiency, linguistic interdependence, the optimum age question and some other matters", *Working Papers on Bilingualism*, 19, pp.197–205). In 1991 Cummins introduced the terms "conversational and academic language proficiency" ("Conversational and Academic Language Proficiency", *AILA Review*, 8 (1991), pp.75–89).

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, 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. The language used to mediate curriculum content in classrooms and other academic contexts, on the other hand, tends to be context-reduced: cues to meaning are primarily linguistic, contained in the spoken or written text we seek to understand or produce. According to the White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue, there is a need for “*an education system which generates capacities for critical thinking and innovation*”.⁵⁰ Such a system should be designed to give all pupils access to academic language, on which critical thinking and innovation depend.

It is important to make five 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, social 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 demanding. Conversely, classroom talk often includes passages of conversational as well as academic language. Secondly, the distinction does not refer to speaking on the one hand and writing on the other: some writing tasks use conversational language (e.g., e-mail, text-messaging), while academic language is a characteristic of much of the spoken communication that occurs in classrooms and other academic contexts. Thirdly, while children whose home language is also the language of the school usually develop their capacity for academic language out of their capacity for informal conversation, this does not necessarily apply to children and adolescents from migrant backgrounds. Indeed, the concept of plurilingual education rests partly on the fact that they may develop proficiency in both modes of communication simultaneously as they transfer concepts, literacy skills and learning strategies from their home language. Fourthly, academic language occurs in *all* contexts of formal learning: children in kindergarten encounter it as soon as the focus of teaching shifts from “here and now” to “there and then”. Fifthly, academic language is by no means confined to formal educational environments; it also has value and validity in the world outside the classroom or lecture room.⁵¹

The OECD report *Where immigrant students succeed* found that “*policies to help immigrant students attain proficiency in the language of instruction have common characteristics but vary in terms of explicit curricula and focus*”⁵² A recent example of a fully elaborated curriculum is the [Framework of Reference for Early Second Language Acquisition](#) developed by the Nederlandse Taalunie for pre-school education. It specifies objectives at three levels – macro (domains of language use: school, out of school, and media), meso (situations of language use and the communicative tasks they entail), and micro (linguistic elements required for communication: phonology, vocabulary, morphology and syntax, pragmatics and

⁵⁰ White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue, Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2008, section 4.1.1, p.24.

⁵¹ I.Gogolin, “Zweisprachigkeit und die Entwicklung ‘bildungssprachlicher’ Fähigkeiten”, in I. Gogolin & U. Neumann (eds), *Streitfall Zweisprachigkeit/The bilingualism controversy*, Wiesbaden: VS-Verlag, 2009. See also H. Vollmer, “[Language\(s\) in other subjects](#)”, Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2009; H. Vollmer, E. Thürmann, C. Arnold, M. Hammann & U. Ohm, “Elements of a framework for describing the language of schooling in subject-specific contexts: a German perspective”, Strasbourg: Council of Europe (publication to appear in 2011); H.Vollmer & E. Thürmann, “Zur Sprachlichkeit des Fachlernens: Modellierung eines Referenzrahmens für Deutsch als Zweitsprache”, in B. Ahrenholz (ed.), *Fachunterricht und Deutsch als Zweitsprache*, Tübingen: Narr, 2010, pp.107–132.

⁵² *Where immigrant students succeed – a comparative review of performance and engagement in PISA 2003*, Paris: OECD, 2006, p.10.

sociolinguistics).⁵³ A curriculum-within-the-curriculum that adapts the approach of the Council of Europe's *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* is presented in Chapter 3.

There are at least three ways of organising language-of-schooling support for children and adolescents from migrant backgrounds: complete withdrawal from the mainstream, partial withdrawal from the mainstream, and immersion in the mainstream with systematic language support. The first of these organisational modes is followed in Norway, where the relevant Education Act states that “*Pupils in primary and lower secondary school whose mother tongue is other than Norwegian or Sámi are entitled to special training in Norwegian until they are proficient enough in Norwegian to follow the regular school teaching*”.⁵⁴ The second organisational mode has been adopted in Ireland, where English language support is delivered in special lessons (usually one each day in primary schools; often less frequent in post-primary schools). The third organisational mode, immersion in the mainstream, is the most widespread in OECD countries, though systematic language support is not always provided.⁵⁵ It is clearly possible to combine the three modes in many different ways, but whatever structure is adopted, two things seem to be beyond dispute. First, there is general agreement on the importance of early intervention;⁵⁶ and secondly, pupils' capacity for academic language can be developed only as a product of their engagement with the different curriculum subjects.⁵⁷ In other words, the linguistic and educational integration of children/adolescents from migrant backgrounds ultimately depends on how effectively language is brought into focus in the different curriculum subjects. This in turn depends on the language-across-the-curriculum perspective that is one of the central concerns of the Council of Europe's Plurilingual and Intercultural Education project.⁵⁸

⁵³ The Framework is available in English and French on the Council of Europe website, <http://www.coe.int/lang>, (*Platform of resources and references for plurilingual and intercultural education*) under LANGUAGE(S) OF SCHOOLING → DESCRIPTORS (CONTRIBUTIONS FROM MEMBER STATES).

⁵⁴ [Curriculum for Basic Norwegian for Language Minorities](#), p.1.

⁵⁵ *Where immigrant students succeed – a comparative review of performance and engagement in PISA 2003*, Paris: OECD, 2006, p.10. One potential disadvantage of this third organizational mode is that it may fail to maintain a fully integrated professional focus on the teaching and learning of the language of schooling as a second language; see C. Leung, “Mainstreaming: language policies and pedagogies in two contexts”, in I. Gogolin & U. Neumann (eds), *Streitfall Zweisprachigkeit/The bilingualism controversy*, Wiesbaden: Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2009, pp.215–231.

⁵⁶ See, e.g., “Migration & mobility: challenges and opportunities for EU education systems”, Green Paper, Brussels: Commission of the European Communities, 2008, pp.10–11.

⁵⁷ The Trinity Immigration Initiative's English Language Support Programme (Trinity College Dublin; <http://www.elsp.ie>) has developed a substantial collection of English language learning materials based on computational analysis of post-primary textbooks. Designed to unlock the registers of different curriculum subjects, the materials can be used to develop proficiency in English as a second language in both language support and mainstream subject classes. Interestingly, some schools have begun to use the materials with autochthonous students from disadvantaged backgrounds: as a wealth of international research confirms, they too find it difficult to master academic language (this point is also made in *Closing the gap for immigrant students*, Paris: OECD, 2010, p.7).

⁵⁸ See, for example, H. J. Vollmer, “Language across the curriculum”, Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2006; M. Byram (ed.), C. Barré de Miniac, M. Hamman, J. Smidt, “Language across the curriculum in primary education. Three case studies and implications for a European ‘Framework’”, Strasbourg : Council of Europe, 2007 ; J.-C. Beacco (ed.), M. Sachse & A.Thorbjørnsen, with a contribution by W. Wiater, “A descriptive framework for communicative/linguistic competences involved in the teaching and learning of history”, Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2007; H. J. Vollmer (ed.), “Language and communication in the teaching and learning of science in secondary schools”, Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2007.

Key reference documents:

J. Cummins, *Negotiating identities: education for empowerment in a diverse society*, second edition, Los Angeles: California Association for Bilingual Education, 2001.

F. Genesee, K. Lindholm-Leary, W. M. Saunders & D. Christian (eds), *Educating English Language Learners: a synthesis of research evidence*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

OECD, *Where immigrant students succeed – a comparative review of performance and engagement in PISA 2003*, Paris: OECD, 2006.

OECD, *Closing the gap for immigrant students: policies, practice and performance*, Paris: OECD, 2010.

M. Verhelst (ed.), K. Van den Branden, D. Van den Nulft & M. Verhallen, *Framework of reference for early second language acquisition*, Nederlandse Taalunie, 2009: available at <http://www.coe.int/lang>, under LANGUAGE(S) OF SCHOOLING

3 Two Council of Europe tools

The Language Policy Division's project Languages in Education/Languages for Education is concerned with all the languages that are present in particular educational contexts: the language of schooling; regional, minority and migrant languages; modern and classical foreign languages. Some children and adolescents from migrant backgrounds come to school with conversational proficiency in the language of schooling. According to the research findings cited in 2.3.2 they are nevertheless likely to need extra time and support in order to achieve proficiency in academic language. As already noted, this is a challenge that they share with native speaker pupils, especially those from socially and economically disadvantaged backgrounds. Essentially, the task facing them is to master a number of academic sub-varieties of a language that they can already use for spontaneous, conversational communication.

Children and adolescents from migrant backgrounds who come to school with little or no conversational proficiency in the language of schooling are in a very different situation, for they encounter the language of schooling as beginners. This does not mean that their engagement with the curriculum must be postponed until they have developed some specified level of proficiency. But to assign them to mainstream classes and assume that immersion alone will make them fluent in the language of schooling flies in the face of all available research evidence; at least in the short term they need special attention.⁵⁹ Developed by the Council of Europe to support the teaching and learning of second and foreign languages, the [Common European Framework of Reference for Languages](#) (CEFR) and the European Language Portfolio (ELP) have been adapted to give focus and shape to such special attention, as the example in 3.3 shows. They have also been used to support the development of curricula and learning materials for Romani (3.4).

⁵⁹ Consider the following observation on the situation of English as an additional language (EAL) in English schools: "Mainstreaming ... has in effect meant treating EAL as nothing much more than a 'temporary' communication problem for learners of EAL that time, exposure and perhaps a little teacher support would help overcome"; C. Leung, "Mainstreaming: language policies and pedagogies in two contexts", in I. Gogolin & U. Neumann (eds), *Streitfall Zweisprachigkeit/The bilingualism controversy*, Wiesbaden: Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2009, p.226.

3.1 The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages

The CEFR provides us with a means of describing language learning outcomes in terms of language use. It has three principal dimensions: language activities, the contexts in which they occur, and the competences on which effective communication depends. The CEFR divides language activities into four kinds – reception (listening and reading), production (spoken and written), interaction (spoken and written), and mediation (translating and interpreting); identifies four domains of language use – public, personal, educational, and professional; and distinguishes between general and communicative language competences. For reception, production, interaction, and some competences the CEFR defines six common reference levels (A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, C2), using “can do” descriptors to indicate the learner-user’s proficiency at each level. These common levels are intended to provide a basis for comparing second/foreign language curricula, textbooks, courses and exams. Together with the rest of the CEFR’s descriptive apparatus, they can also be used to assist in the design of second and foreign language curricula, teaching programmes, learning materials, and assessment instruments.

The CEFR’s common reference levels were defined using the judgements of foreign language teachers drawn from four educational sectors: lower secondary, upper secondary, vocational, and adult. This helps to explain why at the lower levels (A1 and A2) descriptors correspond closely to the typical content of foreign language textbooks: learners begin by using very simple linguistic resources to satisfy basic personal and social needs, then progress to the mastery of predictable transactional and interactional routines. Although the CEFR does not explicitly address the challenge of academic language, the more advanced levels (B2–C2) are defined in terms that imply advanced levels of educational achievement and/or professional involvement. In general, the levels describe the kind of behavioural repertoire that learner-users need as temporary visitors to a foreign country rather than as long-term residents. The CEFR does not take account of the sociolinguistic, socio-structural and socio-historical dynamics of multilingualism, the plurilingual repertoires of migrants, or the individual’s need for a variety of repertoires in polycentric contexts. All of these considerations must be borne in mind when drawing on the CEFR to address the linguistic needs of migrant children and adolescents who are beginners in the language of schooling.

Key reference documents:

[Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Teaching, learning, assessment](#), Council of Europe / Cambridge University Press, 2001.

[Recommendation CM/Rec \(2008\)7](#) of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the use of the Council of Europe’s Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) and the promotion of plurilingualism, Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2008

3.2 The European Language Portfolio

The European Language Portfolio (ELP; <http://www.coe.int/portfolio>) was conceived as a companion piece to the CEFR, a means of mediating its communicative, “action-oriented” approach to learners. It is a personal document comprising three obligatory components:

- a *language passport* that captures the owner’s linguistic identity, summarises his/her language learning and intercultural experience, and records his/her self-assessment of second/foreign language proficiency;
- a *language biography* that provides a reflective accompaniment to the ongoing processes of learning and using second languages and engaging with the cultures associated with them;

- a *dossier*, where the owner keeps work in progress and concrete evidence of L2 proficiency and intercultural experience.

The ELP is explicitly related to the CEFR via the proficiency levels. In the language biography, checklists of “I can” descriptors arranged by language activity and level are used to identify learning targets, select learning activities and materials, monitor learning progress, and evaluate learning outcomes. In other words, the checklists support the language learner-user in self-management and formative self-assessment. Here, for example, is the checklist for B1 spoken interaction from the Swiss ELP for learners aged 15 years and over:⁶⁰

- *I can start, maintain and close simple face-to-face conversation on topics that are familiar or of personal interest*
- *I can maintain a conversation or discussion but may sometimes be difficult to follow when trying to say exactly what I would like to do*
- *I can deal with most situations likely to arise when making travel arrangements through an agent or when actually travelling*
- *I can ask for and follow detailed directions*
- *I can express and respond to feelings such as surprise, happiness, sadness, interest and indifference*
- *I can give or seek personal views and opinions in an informal discussion with friends*
- *I can agree and disagree politely*

In the language passport the ELP user periodically summarises his or her L2 proficiency against the so-called self-assessment grid (summary descriptors of proficiency at the six levels for listening, reading, spoken interaction, spoken production and writing)⁶¹ in an act of summative self-assessment. The self-assessment grid defines B1 spoken interaction as follows: “*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).*”

Like the CEFR, the ELP is rooted in the Council of Europe’s commitment to learner autonomy. It reflects the organisation’s concern with (among other things) the development of the language learner and the development of his or her capacity for independent language learning; it is (among other things) the property of the learner; and it supports reflective learning in which self-assessment plays a central role.⁶² In principle the ELP can support the development and exercise of learner autonomy in three ways. First, when “I can” checklists reflect the demands of the curriculum, they help learners (and teachers) to plan, monitor and evaluate learning over an academic year, a term, a month or a week. Secondly, the language biography is explicitly designed to associate goal setting and self-assessment with reflection on learning styles and strategies, the cultural dimension of language learning and language use, and the learner’s developing plurilingual repertoire. Thirdly, when the ELP is presented (at least partly) in the learners’ target language, it can help to promote the use of the target language as medium of learning and reflection. All of these features support pedagogical approaches calculated to promote identity building in multilingual and multicultural environments⁶³ and the development of reflective self-awareness that plays a central role in education for democratic citizenship.⁶⁴

⁶⁰ *European Language Portfolio*, Swiss model for adolescents and adults, Bern: Berner Lehrmittel- und Medienverlag, 2000.

⁶¹ See CEFR, pp.26–27.

⁶² See *European Language Portfolio: key reference documents*, Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2006.

⁶³ Cf. White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue, p.17.

Key reference documents:

[Resolution on the European Language Portfolio](#), Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2000.

[European Language Portfolio: key reference documents](#), Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2006.

D. Little (ed.), [The European Language Portfolio in use: nine examples](#), Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2003.

R. Schärer, [Final Report on the ELP Pilot Project \(1998–2000\)](#), Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2000.

R. Schärer, [Consolidated Report on the ELP Project \(2001–2004\)](#), Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2004.

M. Stoicheva, G. Hughes & H. Speitz, [The European Language Portfolio: an impact study](#), Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2009.

3.3 Example 1 – teaching English as a second language in Irish primary schools

From the mid 1990s schools in Ireland began to receive large numbers of pupils whose home language was neither English nor Irish. In 1999 the Department of Education and Science (DES) determined that such pupils should be assigned to a mainstream class appropriate to their age but provided with two years of English language support delivered on a withdrawal basis. In practice “withdrawal” amounts to a maximum of one special English language class each day in primary schools and several classes a week in post-primary schools. This policy recognizes the importance of involving newcomer pupils in mainstream curriculum learning from the outset; but it also acknowledges their need for English language support until they have achieved a level of proficiency that allows them to participate freely in classroom interaction. In 2000 the DES gave Integrate Ireland Language and Training (IILT)⁶⁵ the task of devising English language curricula (to be known as English Language Proficiency Benchmarks), developing learning materials, and mediating curricula and materials to teachers via an ongoing programme of in-service seminars. Similar but separate programmes were implemented for the primary and post-primary sectors; for the sake of brevity this summary focuses exclusively on the primary sector.⁶⁶

English language support classes are intended to provide newcomer pupils with sharply focused instruction that facilitates their involvement in mainstream curriculum learning. The classes give teachers an opportunity to focus on language issues that are irrelevant to pupils already conversationally fluent in the language of schooling, to provide additional explanation and reinforcement, and to engage newcomer pupils in more sustained interaction than is typically possible in a mainstream class of perhaps 30 pupils. The theme and focus of English language classes are largely determined by what is going on in the mainstream classroom. Thus it was necessary for the English Language Proficiency Benchmarks to be fully and explicitly rooted in the national primary curriculum. The DES also wanted them to

⁶⁴ For a discussion of portfolio approaches to learning and assessment within the broader agenda of the LE project, see D. Little & M. Fleming, *Languages in Education/Languages for Education: a role for portfolio approaches?*, Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2010.

⁶⁵ A not-for-profit campus company of Trinity College Dublin, Integrate Ireland Language and Training was funded by the Department of Education and Science from 1999 to 2008.

⁶⁶ The curricula, teaching/learning materials and various other supports developed for primary and post-primary sectors are available at <http://www.ncca.ie/iilt>.

reflect the gradually expanding communicative capacity of newcomer pupils, from the beginning to the point at which they could participate fully in classroom communication.

In order to achieve the first of these goals, IILT made a close study of the multi-volume primary curriculum and worked with two teacher focus groups to identify recurrent curriculum themes that gradually coalesce into the subjects of the senior primary and post-primary curricula. The thirteen themes identified were: MYSELF; OUR SCHOOL; FOOD AND CLOTHES; COLOURS, SHAPES AND OPPOSITES; PEOPLE WHO HELP US; WEATHER; TRANSPORT AND TRAVEL; SEASONS, HOLIDAYS AND FESTIVALS; THE LOCAL AND WIDER COMMUNITY; TIME; PEOPLE AND PLACES IN OTHER AREAS; ANIMALS AND PLANTS; CARING FOR MY LOCALITY. In order to achieve the second goal, IILT decided to adapt the first three levels of the CEFR. “Can do” descriptors for the different communicative activities in the CEFR’s self-assessment grid and illustrative scales were compared with the results of observations carried out in a number of primary classrooms. Then a summary of the proficiency targets for the three levels was written for the activities of LISTENING, READING, SPOKEN INTERACTION, SPOKEN PRODUCTION, and WRITING. This yielded the so-called “global benchmarks of communicative proficiency”, presented in the form of a grid (five activities at three levels). The CEFR’s competence scales for vocabulary, grammar, phonology and orthography provided the basis for a second grid that in very simple terms plots the growth of those four dimensions of underlying linguistic competence. Finally, the global benchmarks were rewritten in terms of each of the recurrent curriculum themes to produce thirteen further thematically oriented grids (“units of work”).

The principal implementation tool for the benchmarks is a version of the European Language Portfolio, at the centre of which are thirteen checklists of “I can” descriptors derived from the benchmarks, one for each recurrent curriculum theme. Altogether the checklists comprise almost two hundred tasks, all of them related to curriculum learning and spread across the three proficiency levels of the benchmarks: a developing communicative repertoire that gives newcomer pupils steadily increasing access to what is going on in their mainstream classroom. All validated ELPs must allow their users to capture their plurilingual profile by recording all the languages they know, whether they have learnt them at school or elsewhere. The Irish ELP for primary newcomers is no exception. The language passport and the language biography contain pages on which pupils record the various languages they know and the different contexts in which they use them. Teachers are encouraged to use these parts of the ELP to valorise pupils’ home and other languages, and where possible, parents are encouraged to translate the main headings in the language passport into their home language.

Teachers were quick to accept the Benchmarks and the ELP. The former reflected their experience of learner progression in the language support classroom and helped them to plan their classes and monitor their pupils’ progress; while the latter provided a ready means not only of mediating the ESL curriculum to pupils but also of making them aware of their progress. In addition, the ELP quickly became an important source of information for mainstream class teachers, school principals, parents and inspectors.⁶⁷ In due course IILT developed simple communicative tests based on the benchmarks, which were piloted in schools, revised following analysis of test performances, and circulated to schools by the DES in 2008.⁶⁸

⁶⁷ In each of the last two years of its existence IILT sold 5,000 copies of its ELP to primary schools, which implies that more than 80% of the children receiving English language support were using it.

⁶⁸ For further information, see D. Little & B. Lazenby Simpson, “Using the CEF to develop an ESL curriculum for newcomer pupils in Irish primary schools”, in K. Morrow (ed.), *Insights from the Common European Framework*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004, pp.91–108; D. Little, “The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages and the European Language Portfolio: involving learners and their judgements in the assessment

Research in progress has used the benchmarks to frame an analysis of the English language development of eighteen newcomer pupils receiving language support during the school year 2007–2008.⁶⁹ Each pupil progressed strictly according to the benchmarks levels; in other words, none of them produced an utterance appropriate to level A2 without first producing utterances at level A1, and none produced an utterance at level B1 without first producing utterances at level A2. By the end of their first year of English language support most pupils were on their way to achieving A2, and B1 proficiency was achieved (at least by the pupils in this study) towards the end of their second year of support. This developmental trajectory was matched by a steady growth in linguistic competence, measured by mastery of nouns, verbs, pronouns, articles, prepositions, and auxiliaries, and the development of structural complexity, negative and question forms, and clause linkage.

Key reference documents:

English Language Proficiency Benchmarks for non-English-speaking pupils at primary level, Version 2.0, Dublin: Integrate Ireland Language and Training, 2003. Available at <http://www.ncca.ie/iilt>; accessed 5 July 2010.

European Language Portfolio – model for use in primary education with a specific target group: immigrants learning the language of the host country (Accreditation no. 11.2001, rev. 2004), Dublin: Integrate Ireland Language and Training, 2004. Available at <http://www.ncca.ie/iilt>; accessed 5 July 2010.

3.4 Example 2 – supporting the teaching and learning of Romani

The Curriculum Framework for Romani (CFR)⁷⁰ was developed by the Language Policy Division as part of the Council of Europe’s comprehensive approach to Roma and Traveller issues. Work on the CFR was informed by the various documents available on the *Roma and Travellers* section of the Council of Europe’s website⁷¹ and by a group of Roma/Romani experts.

The CFR draws on the descriptive categories and first four proficiency levels of the CEFR (A1–B2). It is organised according to themes, situations and contexts relevant to Roma society and culture: MYSELF AND MY FAMILY; THE HOUSE/CARAVAN AND ITS ACTIVITIES; MY COMMUNITY; AT SCHOOL; FOOD AND CLOTHES; FESTIVALS AND CELEBRATIONS; TRAVEL AND

process”, *Language Testing* 22 (2005), pp.321–336; D. Little & B. Lazenby Simpson, “Teaching immigrants the language of the host community: two object lessons in the need for continuous policy development”, in J. C. Alderson (ed.), *The Politics of Language Education: Individuals and Institutions*, Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 2009, pp.104–124.

⁶⁹ The research is being carried out by Bronagh Čatibušić in the Centre for Language and Communication Studies, Trinity College Dublin. During the school year 2007–2008, 154 English language lessons (approximately 80 hours) were audio-recorded in three primary schools and samples of pupils’ written work were collected. The subsequent analysis focused on 18 pupils from 10 different national backgrounds (mostly East European and Asian), who spoke at least 10 different languages from a range of language families (e.g., Slavic, Romance, Sino-Tibetan). The pupils were between 4 and 10 years old (the majority were under 8); some were in their first and some in their second year of English language support. The findings reported here emerge from a mixed methods analysis of 7,455 speaking turns, each of which was coded according to (i) its benchmark level and topic, (ii) interactional criteria drawn from Conversation Analysis, and (iii) the linguistic features commonly focused on in second language acquisition research.

⁷⁰ Available at http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/minorities_romani2008_EN.asp? (www.coe.int/lang Section Minorities and Migrants)

⁷¹ www.coe.int/romatravellers

TRANSPORT; TIME, SEASONS, WEATHER; NATURE AND ANIMALS; ROMA CRAFTS AND PROFESSIONS; HOBBIES AND THE ARTS.

Romanipe, the distinctive Roma ethos, is clearly more than a theme. It is relevant to all other themes and essential to learning and understanding the code for living that is expressed in part through the Romani language. Thus the descriptors for *Romanipe* provide a central reference point for curriculum designers, materials developers and teachers. They are intended to ensure that learning Romani includes learning the code for living and to remind/inform professionals who are distanced from the code or who are not Roma themselves.

The CFR is intended to provide a common basis for developing syllabuses and curriculum guidelines, textbooks and other learning materials, and examinations in school systems across Europe. It takes account of the needs of three age groups: 3–6 years, 7–10 years, 11–14 years; and three distinct sociolinguistic situations: the teaching of Romani to children who do not hear or speak Romani at home, to children who are not fluent in Romani, though their parents, grandparents and other members of the community speak the language in their presence, and to children who are fluent in Romani but who need to develop their skill in using the language as an instrument of formal learning (Romani as language of schooling). The CFR also takes account of a significant difference between the learning of Romani by Roma children and the learning of foreign languages in general education. In the latter case a new language draws the learner into a new culture, whereas the teaching of Romani aims to give learners *linguistic* access to a culture that is already familiar to them and in this way to deepen their sense of Roma identity and their involvement in the culture.

A curriculum for Romani based on the CFR should develop learners' awareness of the broader Romani-speaking community (in other countries, areas, etc.); promote respect for the historical and cultural aspects of the Roma way of life (*Romanipe* in particular); engage parents, other family members and the larger community as much as possible; use and strengthen the strong oral tradition of the Roma people; build connections between past and present and inspire interest and pride in the Roma heritage; encourage learners to use technology in the course of their learning (audio and video recording, IT, internet, e-mail, etc.); use interesting and authentic learning activities to support engagement with the skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing; show clearly the relationship between learning the language and using it in daily life.

The grid for each theme in the CFR (five activities, four levels) is followed by a checklist of "I can" descriptors that imply possible classroom activities and can be used to record progress in learning. The checklists played a central role in the design of the two generic ELPs that the Language Policy Division has developed to support the teaching/learning of Romani, one for learners aged 6–11 and the other for learners aged 11–16. Both models prompt learners to record and think about their plurilingual and pluricultural identity and to reflect specifically on their linguistic and cultural identity as Roma. Both models also support the development of intercultural awareness, the setting of learning targets and the self-assessment of learning outcomes. There are many interconnections between the different themes of the CFR, so it is unlikely that a cycle of learning will focus on just one checklist. For example, if pupils have worked on a project entitled "An important festival or celebration in my family or community", they may be able to record learning achievement on five checklists: MYSELF AND MY FAMILY, FESTIVALS AND CELEBRATIONS, MY COMMUNITY, FOOD AND CLOTHES, THE HOUSE/CARAVAN AND ITS ACTIVITIES.

Both ELPs for learners of Romani are designed to help users think about themselves as members of a community, as learners in general and language learners in particular, as young people with future potential, as participants in a history and culture that reach far back

into the past, and as carriers of that history and culture into the future. In other words, they are designed to promote explicit identity building⁷² and to raise learners' self-esteem.

Since it was first launched in June 2007 the CFR has been piloted in two countries. In the Czech Republic it has been used to shape the design of learning materials and activities for learners at secondary and university levels; in Sweden it has been translated into Swedish, mediated to teachers via several conferences, and used to develop teaching materials. A two-year project entitled "Enhancing Romani language education in schools in Europe" was launched in the autumn of 2009 as a support activity of the European Centre for Modern Languages. The aims of the project are to pilot the CFR and the two ELPs in five countries (Austria, Czech Republic, Finland, Serbia, Slovak Republic), to develop a set of teacher-training modules, and to adapt existing and develop new teaching materials to support use of the ELPs.

Key reference documents (also available [online \(www.coe.int/lang](http://www.coe.int/lang) → *Minorities and Migrants* → *Romani* → *Seminar 2008*):

Curriculum Framework for Romani, available in Romani and English, Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2007.

Learning the Romani language – my European Language Portfolio, for learners aged 6–11, Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2008.

European Language Portfolio – learning the Romani language, for learners aged 11–16, Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2008.

3.5 Some other frameworks

As noted above, the CEFR was not developed with the language learning needs of migrant children and adolescents in mind, and any attempt to adapt it to this sphere must take this into account. It has often been observed that children and adolescents from migrant backgrounds rapidly acquire basic communication skills in the language of the host community but typically take much longer to master academic language. Thus although the CEFR levels seem to yield a useful instrument for monitoring the development of learners' communicative skills as participants in classroom discourse (as in the Irish example cited in 3.3 above), attempts to apply the levels to learners' overall language development runs the risk of concealing or distorting the growth of their capacity for informal communication. Another limitation of the CEFR, also acknowledged above, is that it defines a learning trajectory from the ability to perform simple communicative tasks and routines to advanced levels of proficiency whose definition implicates educational and/or professional use of the target language. This is an accurate reflection of progression in foreign language learning in formal educational contexts, but its unidimensionality means that it does not capture the complex interplay between the development of language proficiency and literacy skills that characterises mastery of the language of schooling. Several countries have developed curriculum and/or assessment frameworks that focus explicitly on the needs of learners for whom the language of schooling is not, at any rate to begin with, a language of communication in the home.

In Australia the state of Victoria has developed Essential Learning Standards⁷³ that define the competences to be achieved in the course of compulsory education. It has also developed an English as a Second Language (ESL) Companion⁷⁴ that focuses on the needs of learners for whom English is not a home language. The government of Queensland has

⁷² See the White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue, p.17 (www.coe.int/dialogue)

⁷³ Available at <http://vels.vcaa.vic.edu.au/overview/index.html> (accessed 5 July 2010).

⁷⁴ Available at <http://vels.vcaa.vic.edu.au/support/esl/esl.html> (accessed 5 July 2010).

developed bandscales for reading, writing, speaking and listening to guide the integration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander learners.⁷⁵ In the United States TESOL (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages) has published *ESL Standards for Pre-K-12*,⁷⁶ which enlarges on a previously published set of standards. And in the United Kingdom NALDIC (the National Association for Language Development in the Curriculum) has developed descriptors for use in the formative assessment of primary pupils from migrant backgrounds.⁷⁷ All of these instruments use competence descriptors that have much in common with the descriptors of the CEFR, but they mostly lack an equivalent to the CEFR's scales of language competence.

In Canada the Ontario Ministry of Education is currently developing Steps to English Proficiency (STEP), a tool for monitoring and assessing pupils for whom English is not a home language. The tool has four dimensions: (i) it addresses oral language use, reading, and writing; (ii) for each of these activities it distinguishes several focuses (for oral language use, LISTENING AND RESPONDING, SPEAKING, REFLECTION; for reading, MEANING, FLUENCY, FORM AND STYLE, REFLECTION; and for writing, DEVELOPING AND ORGANISING, FORM AND STYLE, VOCABULARY, GRAMMAR & CONVENTIONS, REVISING, REFLECTION); (iii) for each focus it defines six steps in the development of proficiency; and (iv) for each step it provides descriptors appropriate to four grade clusters (1–3, 4–6, 7–8, 9–12). The descriptors are based on teachers' observations and student performances, capture distinct performance levels, are linked to a grade-specific curriculum, and are designed to serve a diagnostic purpose. STEP's multidimensionality means that some teachers have found it cumbersome to use. The proposed solution to this problem is to develop an interactive online version of the tool, which would have the added advantage of capturing data that could be linked with other assessment data.⁷⁸ The pedagogical challenge posed by STEP is to find an effective way of mediating its multidimensionality to learners. The European Language Portfolio's effectiveness as a learning tool in this domain suggests one possible path of development.⁷⁹

⁷⁵ Available at <http://education.qld.gov.au/students/evaluation/monitoring/bandscales/writing/index.html> (accessed 5 July 2010).

⁷⁶ Alexandria, VA: TESOL, 2006.

⁷⁷ Available at <http://www.naldic.org.uk/docs/research/assessment.cfm> (accessed 5 July 2010).

⁷⁸ This description of STEP is based on information provided by Jim Cummins.

⁷⁹ *Languages in Education/Languages for Education: a role for portfolio approaches?*

4 Some studies and resources that support the integration of children and adolescents from migrant backgrounds within the perspective of plurilingual and intercultural education

4.1 Studies and resources

So far this text has been concerned with the linguistic and educational integration of migrant children and adolescents largely from their perspective. It has summarised the Council of Europe's human rights approach to integration; discussed the great variety of linguistic situations in which children and adolescents from migrant backgrounds find themselves; reviewed some of the key issues concerning the educational role of their home language and the development of their proficiency in the language of schooling; and shown how two Council of Europe tools, the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages and the European Language Portfolio, have been used to support this latter process. However, measures to support the integration of migrant pupils are unlikely to succeed on a large scale and in the long term unless they are part of a language education policy that respects the reciprocity of the integration process and is explicitly associated with non-educational aspects of integration policy.

According to the Council of Europe, social cohesion is identifiable according to four criteria:

- equitable access to available resources;
- the respect and dignity that stem from recognition by others;
- personal and collective autonomy;
- responsible participation and the ability to organise in defence of one's interests.⁸⁰

These criteria apply not only to disadvantaged and vulnerable groups but to *all* members of society; and each of them implicates language, whether as medium of communication or badge of identity. The Languages in Education/Languages for Education (LE) project takes the goal of social cohesion as its starting point, arguing that all children and adolescents have a right to quality education as a precondition for social cohesion but also for the promotion of democratic citizenship and the enjoyment of other human rights.⁸¹ Because language plays a central role in all teaching and learning, the project emphasizes its ubiquity and the need to develop a holistic approach that seeks to bring all languages present in a particular educational context into interaction with one another: the languages that pupils bring with them as part of their identity; the language(s) through which curriculum subjects are taught and learnt; and the languages that are included in the curriculum as subjects in their own right (which usually includes the language(s) of schooling as well as modern foreign and classical languages).

As the White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue implies, the concepts that underpin integration as a reciprocal process have consequences for individuals at a succession of institutional and community levels: pupils and teachers at the level of the classroom; pupils and their parents, teaching and non-teaching staff, principals and other managers at the level of the school; staff of all kinds in local institutions and community organizations that interact with the school; staff of all kinds in institutions and organizations that interact with the school and local community at regional and national levels. The Language Policy Division has developed a series of studies and resources that seek to take account of these dimensions and levels,

⁸⁰ *Concerted development of social cohesion indicators – methodological guide*, Strasbourg : Council of Europe, 2005.

⁸¹ See D. Coste, M. Cavalli, A. Crişan & P.-H. van de Ven, "Plurilingual and intercultural education as a right", Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2009 (www.coe.int/lang) → Platform of resources and references for plurilingual and intercultural education → Box 'The learner and the languages present in school'

with a particular focus on plurilingual and intercultural education. In the first instance the series addresses six themes, as follows:

Diagnostics – In order to ensure that appropriate measures are taken in respect of pupils from migrant backgrounds it is necessary to diagnose their proficiency in the language(s) of schooling and any other language(s) that they will be required to learn at school, as well as in their home language(s). Such diagnosis is essential when pupils first enter the school and at points of transition from one stage of education to the next. It may also be appropriate at other times (for example, at the end of each school year), when the school authorities need to assess the progress migrant pupils have made in order to determine what supports they need in future. Their progress in languages that are subjects in the school curriculum can be measured by whatever assessment procedures are applied to pupils who are native speakers of the language of schooling; but it will be necessary to take special steps to diagnose their progress in the language of schooling. The study by Drorit Lengyel summarises the principles that underlie diagnostics in language education, describes some of the available approaches, and explains how they can be implemented. Some of the tools described can be used to explore pupils' competence in their home language(s).

Language of schooling – Chapter 2 briefly discussed the distinction between conversational and academic language, pointing out that in order to achieve educational success pupils from migrant backgrounds must be more than conversationally fluent in the language of schooling: they must also master the varieties of academic language that constitute the fabric of the different curriculum subjects. All pupils face this challenge, whatever their linguistic background. However, research has established that pupils from socially and economically disadvantaged backgrounds tend to find the challenge particularly difficult to overcome. Because knowledge is virtually inseparable from the language that embodies it, the LE project takes the view that all teachers must be language teachers in the sense that they are sensitive to the language of their subject(s) and help their learners to master it. The study by Irene Pieper, Eike Thürmann and Helmut Vollmer elaborates on this theme, extending the argument of Chapter 2 and suggesting some of the ways in which schools, teachers and learners can meet the challenges of language across the curriculum.

Realising and exploiting plurilingual repertoires – The Council of Europe views the plurilingualism of individuals and the multilingualism of societies as positive assets. In principle plurilingualism is available to everyone because it arises from the human capacity for language. Thus the LE project believes that it is the responsibility of educational systems to help pupils realise their plurilingual potential along with their other potentials. The language, ethnicity and culture that children and adolescents from migrant backgrounds bring to school are assets that must be exploited first for their own benefit as individuals and then for the benefit of the larger school community. The study by Véronique Castellotti and Danièle Moore focuses on ways of recognising, developing and exploiting migrant pupils' plurilingual repertoires and provides links to resources developed in a number of countries and languages.

Migrant varieties of the language of schooling – When migrant children and adolescents arrive in their host country knowing nothing of the language of schooling, they must simultaneously master conversational and academic varieties of the language. Second and third-generation migrants typically face a different challenge. They may be conversationally fluent in the language of schooling, but their mastery of literacy in the standard language can easily be impeded by the presence of deviant forms in their idiolect. Marie-Madeleine Bertucci's study illuminates this problem with reference to the written French produced by such learners. The study has far-reaching implications for French as language of schooling and challenges linguists to carry out similar studies for other languages.

Professional development – If all children and adolescents of school-going age have a right to quality education, teachers, principals and other school staff have a right to quality formation. Systems of pre- and in-service teacher education need to equip teachers to cope with multilingual/multicultural classrooms and become efficient agents for developing the language of schooling; and systems of continuing professional development for principals and other school staff need to provide information that helps these actors to perform their roles in an appropriately supportive way. James Anderson, Christine Hélot, Vicky Obied and Joanna McPake provide a comprehensive overview of available resources.

Cooperation, management and networking – Successful linguistic and educational integration depends on cooperation between pupils, their parents, teachers and other school staff; on effective leadership and efficient management within the school; and on the establishment of effective links with the community to which the school belongs. The text prepared by Christiane Bainski, Tanja Kaseric, Ute Michel, Joanna McPake and Amy Thompson is concerned with the structures and procedures that shape cooperation, management and networking designed to promote the linguistic and educational integration of children and adolescents from migrant backgrounds. It provides an overview of these dimensions and a large number of links to online resources.

4.2 Language Education Policy Profile

In addition to the present concept paper and the accompanying studies and resources, the Council of Europe offers a service known as the Language Education Policy Profile. This gives member states (or regions or cities in member states) an opportunity to undertake a self-evaluation of their language education policy in dialogue with Council of Europe experts with a view to focusing on possible future developments. The linguistic and educational integration of children and adolescents from migrant backgrounds can be addressed as part of a [Language Education Policy Profile](#); alternatively it can be the profile's sole concern.⁸²

⁸² For further information go to www.coe.int/lang → Language Education Policy Profiles

