



Why? module course syllabus

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Introduction

Plurilingual approaches in higher education have emerged as a challenge to deal with the pressing need created by a sort of “push-me-pull-you¹” between multilingual realities of our globalized world and the imposition and valorisation of lingua franca, de facto English. Plurilingualism viewed as a *savoir-être* comprehends the ability to communicate effectively across multiple languages and varieties as well as cultural and scientific contexts. Plurilingual approaches have extensive implications on students’ ethic, cognitive and professional development, pedagogical practices and society as a whole. The following pages present the reasons why these approaches are needed and emphasize the relevance of this paradigm shift in higher education.



1 Push-me-pull-you (Pushmi-Pullyu) is an animal with two heads, one of each at the opposite ends of its body of *The Story of Doctor Dolittle*, by Hugh John Lofting (1920).



Part 1

The urgent need for plurilingual approaches in higher education





Plurilingual approaches, European values, and European policy

(K. Peeters)

The recognition of the extant linguistic and cultural diversity in higher education and in societies throughout Europe is at large intimately related to the core values of the European Union, which are summarized in the European Union's motto "United in diversity" and which were laid out in the Lisbon Treaty and the EU Charter of fundamental rights. Since the beginning of what would become the EU, European policy has aimed at the promotion of peace, human dignity and human rights, well-being, social inclusion, democratic participation and social justice. Multilingualism, comprising the 24 official EU languages as well as minority and migrant languages present in the EU, has been recognized as a key instrument to achieve these goals. Language diversity is one of the founding principles of the European Union, already enshrined in the European Economic Community's very first regulation (regulation n° 1, October 1958).

European policy, and in particular European language policy, is aimed at valuing linguistic and cultural diversity and inclusion. Since decades, the Council of Europe considers using one's own language as a fundamental democratic right, instrumental to human rights such as non-discrimination, access to justice, freedom of expression, and the right to partake in public affairs and services (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2005). In recent years, new policy documents have stressed the need for comprehensive, inclusive educational approaches and materials, in line with the Barcelona objective that brings the EU to encourage all of its citizens to have functional command of at least two languages in addition to their mother tongue. The *Guide for the development and implementation of curricula for plurilingual and intercultural education* (Beacco et al, 2016), was followed by the *CEFR Companion volume* (Council of Europe, 2020), which updates and extends the CEFR 2001 edition by including descriptors of plurilingual and pluricultural competence (pp. 123 ff.) and mediation, among others. Plurilingual competence now is "at the heart of the vision of a European Education Area" (Council of the EU, 2019). The EU recognizes that plurilingual competence is a key competence for lifelong learning (Council of the EU, 2018). It also recognizes that being plurilingual comes with a number of advantages: it enhances international mobility and facilitates individual's adaptation to an increasingly international internal market; it strengthens European identity; it provides a better understanding of other cultures thus contributing to the development of active citizenship, social cohesion, democratic participation and personal fulfilment. In addition, the creation of European alliances of universities has resulted in multilingual and multicultural learning spaces in which multilingual language policies are currently being put into place.

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Plurilingual approaches, societal impact and engagement

(K. Peeters)

One of the key missions of higher education institutions across Europe, next to teaching and research, is service to society. Universities are funded with public money; therefore, they have the civic mission of contributing to the societies that finance them, including their economies, cultures, social debates and social justice. According to UNESCO, HE's civic mission includes reaching out to vulnerable groups, providing flexible learning pathways, promoting an open science approach, and offering learning opportunities for the next generation of citizens in increasingly multicultural societies.

All of these aspects related to universities civic engagement are at odds with the monolingual English language bias that has pervaded the creation and circulation of scientific knowledge and – in some countries more than in others – HE teaching, especially at the master's level. The evaluation of research, and in particular the evaluation of research impact generally rests on bibliographical metrics, that is, indexing, impact factors and citations recorded in large research databases such as Web of Science, or Scopus. These provide the basis for global university rankings yet are structurally biased against non-English language research. Over 90% of all publications indexed in Scopus and Web of Science are in English (Vera-Baceta et al, 2019),



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whereas less than 60% of the 51,000 researchers in the humanities and social sciences examined by Kulczycki et al. (2020) have published in English, and only 30% have published only in English. The English-only internationalisation of research is by no means innocent: it is a hegemonic language practice which results in researchers favouring research topics that are publishable in English and are internationally rather than nationally, regionally, or locally oriented. As such, the current bibliometric standards stand in the way of universities' civic mission.

In recent years, the insight that science cannot have local impact when national and regional languages are ignored, resulted in the ambition to measure and valorise research outputs in terms other than citations. In 2015, Hicks et al called for high-quality publications in languages other than English to protect and promote regionally and nationally engaged research. In 2018, Sivertsen advocated for what he termed "balanced multilingualism" in science, considering "all the communication purposes in all different areas of research, and all the languages needed to fulfil these purposes", including scientific communication in local languages needed for engagement with stakeholders and the public. Finally, the 2019 Helsinki Initiative on Multilingualism in Scholarly Communication (helsinki-initiative.org) called upon policymakers, universities and research funders to support the dissemination of research results for the benefit of society, to protect national infrastructures for publishing locally relevant research, and to promote language diversity in research evaluation and funding. Societal impact and engagement in national societies is impossible without knowledge creation and circulation in national and regional languages (Conceição & Zanola, 2020). To create multilingual, multicultural teaching and learning spaces (IntlUni, 2015) is what allows HE to maximize the benefits of multilingualism on knowledge transfer and creation, on internationalisation, and on diversity and inclusion, rather than fall into the trap of a single and seemingly unproblematic lingua academica.

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Plurilingual approaches and learner engagement: inclusion and motivation

(K. Peeters)

As is the case with teachers in primary and secondary education, teachers in higher (tertiary) education (HE) are encouraged to create inclusive and motivating learning environments to promote learner engagement and success. By embracing diversity and nurturing learner motivation, HE teachers can actively focus on developing student engagement techniques to increase learner engagement (e.g., Barkley & Major, 2020, 2022; Harrington, 2021; Harrington et al., 2021). In so doing, teachers can create positive and rewarding learning experiences for a diverse population of students. Nurturing the development of both inclusion and motivation creates an extremely powerful synergy, which can enhance student engagement and success in HE. In addition, it can benefit learners outside of educational settings.

Plurilingual education is recognised for providing several benefits that improve inclusion in education. These benefits are supported by academic research (Piccardo, Germain-Rutherford & Lawrence, 2022; Galante, 2022), which shows that plurilingual education can benefit learners, educators and society as a whole. Three important benefits are:

1. Reducing linguistic and cultural barriers: Plurilingual education values and promotes the use of multiple languages, breaking down linguistic and cultural barriers that can hinder learner participation and engagement in the classroom. For instance, García and Wei (2014) suggest that plurilingual education can help to build bridges between students from diverse linguistic backgrounds, promoting inclusion. Furthermore, Cummins (2000) notes that when students' first languages (L1s) are valued and used in the classroom, it can enhance their self-esteem and promote their sense of belonging.
2. Enhancing social cohesion: Plurilingual education can create a sense of social cohesion (community) and belonging among learners from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds, promoting inclusion. Studies show that plurilingual education can promote intercultural understanding and reduce prejudice, which, in turn, can enhance social cohesion both inside and outside of the classroom (e.g., Alred et al., 2002; Alves & Mendes, 2006). For example, Byram (2008) argues that plurilingual education can foster critical intercultural competence, enabling learners to engage positively with people from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds.
3. Promoting equity: Plurilingual education acknowledges and values the linguistic diversity of learners, promoting inclusion and equity. Research shows that plurilingual education can help to reduce linguistic and cultural biases in the education system, ensuring that all learners have access to equitable educational opportunities. For example, Skutnabb-Kangas, Phillipson, Mohanty, & Panda (2009) argue that plurilingual education can help to empower marginalized communities and reduce the marginalization of students who speak non-dominant languages.

In addition to promoting inclusion, plurilingual approaches to (language) education have been shown to increase learner motivation by engaging learners in dynamic and culturally rich learning environments (Piccardo, Lawrence, Germain-Rutherford & Galante, 2022). When learners feel



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that their linguistic and cultural identities are valued in the classroom, they are more likely to engage with materials used inside and outside of classrooms (e.g., coursebooks) and feel motivated to learn. Plurilingual education also provides learners with opportunities to use and develop their existing language skills, which can be a powerful motivator for learning in general and learning other languages in particular. Learners who are motivated to learn are more likely to be successful in their academic pursuits. Three motivation-related benefits of plurilingual education are:

1. **Enhancing learner engagement:** Plurilingual education can increase learner motivation by promoting active and participatory learning experiences. By actively integrating learners' diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds into the learning process, plurilingual approaches create inclusive and engaging classroom environments. A plurilingual approach can create a sense of ownership and investment in the learning process, leading, in turn, to increased motivation and engagement. Also, Dewaele and MacIntyre (2014) suggest that plurilingual education can help learners to develop positive attitudes towards learning new languages, which can enhance their motivation to learn.
2. **Fostering learner autonomy:** Plurilingual education can increase learner motivation by fostering learner autonomy. By valuing and incorporating learners' existing linguistic repertoires, plurilingual approaches can help learners to develop a sense of ownership and control over their learning processes. Subsequently, this can increase their motivation to learn and their willingness to take responsibility for their learning (e.g., Kramsch, 2014). Furthermore, studies show that plurilingual education can promote a (translingual) growth mindset (see Andrews et al., 2018; Dweck, 2006), which emphasizes the development of skills and abilities through effort and practice (Dörnyei, 2009). In turn, this can lead to increased motivation and perseverance.
3. **Providing real-world language use:** Plurilingual education can increase learner motivation by providing opportunities for learners to use their language skills in real-world settings. By emphasizing language use/communication rather than simply language knowledge, action-oriented plurilingual approaches can provide learners with senses of purpose and relevance in their (language) learning (Piccardo & North, 2019). This can increase learner motivation to learn and learner willingness to take risks and experiment with their (language) skills (Beacco et al., 2016). Furthermore, studies show that plurilingual education can promote intercultural communicative competence, which involves the ability to understand and communicate effectively 'in the real world' with people from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds (Alred et al., 2002). This can increase learner motivation by providing learners with the knowledge, insights and skills required to communicate and engage with people from different cultures.

In conclusion, plurilingual approaches to HE can improve both learner inclusion and motivation. By acknowledging and valuing learners' linguistic diversity, these plurilingual approaches can create more inclusive learning environments that recognise and respect various languages, cultures and identities represented in (language) classrooms. By encouraging students to develop their own plurilingual skills, HE teachers can increase learner motivation and engagement and provide learners with valuable skills that will benefit them in a globalised world. Implementing plurilingual approaches to HE has the potential to improve individual learning outcomes and to contribute to a more inclusive and equitable society.





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Plurilingual approaches and internationalisation: inclusion and mobility

(N. Costa, P. De Sousa, and M. C. Conceição)

Today, in a progressively mobile, interdependent world, the internationalisation of higher education institutions (HEI) is not only desirable but also unavoidable. HEIs and the individuals they are comprised of are enriched through collaboration, and the sharing of knowledge and experiences. HE must understand the glocal needs of all those who are involved on a micro and macro level, including corporations, academia, and individuals. There is an increasing interest in mobility whether of students or staff, and a demand for a plurilingual academia that is culturally aware of the surrounding society. For instance, data from University of Algarve (UAlg) indicate that a surplus of 1700 students applied for outgoing mobility between the academic years of 2018 – 2019 and 2023-2024, a significant increase when compared to previous years. Moreover, during the academic year of 2021 – 2022, UAlg received over 350 applications for incoming student mobility. Such numbers are indicative of an academic world that is no longer static and restricted to one campus.

Due to this pressing reality, international mobility in HE and its intended inclusion of an increasingly diverse, glocal academia, requires a plurilingual language policy that allows for the full participation of all ongoing academic and/or social activities within HEIs. In other words, in contexts of mobility, face-to-face or virtual, all languages need to be respected and seen as possible contributors to further development. The linguistic backgrounds that the participants arrive with need to be utilized as teaching and learning tools according to the reality of the context. Such tools - which should be used to further the growth of participants in and outside of academia - would allow the enrichment of multilingual spaces unaffected by linguistic segregation and elitism. Although English has undeniably become the lingua franca, it is neither the only suitable language in HEIs nor indispensable. Subsequently, HE ought to cultivate a realistic awareness of the intrinsic and extrinsic value of all existing languages. In sum, the existing linguistic repertoires at HEIs should be seen as enablers of language competence for staff (teaching and non-teaching) and students. Accordingly, HE should aspire to promote an adequate preparation of individuals and professionals who are apt to participate in the internationalization of campi.

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Plurilingual approaches and lifelong learning

(J. Fituła, A. Murkowska, J. Romaniuk, & M. Wojakowska)

The multicultural and multilingual population of Europe is the result of a recent evolutionary process whereby the enlargement of the European Union has contributed to a dramatic increase in migratory flows and has brought such new challenges as the need to prepare the new generations for work abroad and mobility within the continent. While the abolition of border controls in the European Union has facilitated migratory movements, crossing linguistic borders remains a greater challenge, which creates an urgent need to introduce new approaches to education.

In consequence of the enormous changes in the linguistic landscape of the Union (with more and more official EU languages and increasing number of languages spoken in Europe), from 2004 onwards, Multilingualism, which is understood as ‘the ability of societies, institutions, groups and individuals to engage with the more than one language with their day-to- day life,’ has been part of the EU policy, legislation, and practices (FINAL REPORT: 7).

Raising awareness and enhancing motivation (both eliciting and sustaining) are being developed as strategies to promote ‘communication in foreign languages’, a desirable skill for all European citizens (European Commission 2005:3) and one of the key recommended competences for lifelong learning.

In particular, it has been recommended to

- enhance motivation to learn languages beyond school level education (adding extracurricular school activities) and including university education and adult learners;
- appreciate the value of non-formal learning to make learning languages more relevant to citizens’ needs;
- diversify language learning;
- ensure teachers trained for multilingual classrooms (Civil Society Platform on Multilingualism, 2011, 44)

Contemporary Europe’s linguistic and cultural diversity has led to rethinking of language education pedagogy and its reform in spite of its monolingual and monocultural tradition.

This is also going on in Higher Education Institutions, an important educational stage in lifelong learning languages, where we have to do with a growing understanding that plurilingual



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approach to education leads to the development of multilingualism, which is the best way to achieve academic, professional, and social success.

The recent Council of Europe document recommending plurilingualism and pluriculturalism, a Recommendation to Member States adopted on 2 February 2022 by the Committee of the Foreign Ministers of the Council of Europe, calls on institutions responsible for education and training to “focus on pedagogies that promote inclusive plurilingual and intercultural education” which will enable to implement these across the curricula (CM/Rec, 2022).

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Part 2

The advantages of plurilingual learning





Plurilingualism and its socio-economic benefits

(K. Peeters)

Adopting plurilingual approaches to education in general and language education in particular has become an increasingly important and interesting topic in higher education (HE) (see, for example, Lantz-Deaton & Golubeva, 2020). This topic has been investigated from various perspectives and, in this section, we will be investigating three socio-economic benefits of adopting plurilingual approaches to (language) education.

1. **Enhanced employability and job-market competitiveness:** In today's increasingly globalised economy and job market, awareness of, proficiency in, and sensitivity to multiple languages and cultures is a valuable skill, which can enhance employability and competitiveness. According to the European Commission (2008), "[l]inguistic and intercultural skills increase the chances of obtaining a better job. In particular, command of several foreign languages gives a competitive advantage: companies are increasingly looking for skills in a number of languages to conduct business in the EU and abroad" (p. 3). Plurilingualism equips learners with a range of skills that are highly valued by employers in today's globalised job market. For example, research has shown that plurilingual individuals have higher levels of (inter)cultural competence, intercultural communication skills and communication adaptability/accommodation skills (Cenoz & Gorter, 2011). These skills are essential for success in diverse workplaces and national/international contexts, where employees are expected to interact with people from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. A plurilingual approach to higher education enables learners to develop awareness of, proficiency in and sensitivity to multiple languages and cultures with a hands-on approach (see also Improved Intercultural Competence). In turn, this can enhance their ability to communicate effectively in diverse settings and to bridge linguistic and cultural barriers, making them more interesting and more competitive future employees.
2. **Improved intercultural competence:** A plurilingual approach to higher education can also improve intercultural (communicative) competence, which can be defined as the ability to understand, appreciate and mediate cultural differences and to interact effectively with people from diverse cultural backgrounds. Intercultural competence is a valuable skill in today's globalised society (e.g., Byram, 2012) and is often integrated in curriculum and materials development in (higher) education (e.g., Byram & Masuhara, 2013). In today's globalised world, learners are more likely to encounter people from different cultural backgrounds in both personal and professional settings, during their studies and after graduation (for an overview, see Lantz-Deaton & Golubeva, 2020). A plurilingual approach to higher education enables students to develop the required awareness of and sensitivity to various cultures and cultural perspectives. In turn, this can contribute to a more tolerant and cohesive society. While improved intercultural competence can lead to learners individually valuing diversity, it is also crucial in the workplace, where employees can use it to navigate intercultural communication situations for themselves and their employers.
3. **Increased internationalization of higher education:** Adopting a plurilingual approach to higher education can also increase the internationalization of higher education, which is the



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focus of much research (e.g., Deardorff, 2006; Deardorff et al., 2012). Globalisation of the economy and the increased mobility of people and ideas have led to a growing demand for people with international experience and increased intercultural/cross-cultural competence. Plurilingual education provides opportunities for students to develop these competencies by exposing them to diverse linguistic and cultural perspectives. In turn, this prepares them to work and collaborate effectively in a globalised world. Learning in a plurilingual environment exposes students to diverse ways of thinking and encourages them to reflect on their own assumptions and biases. This process of reflection and self-awareness enhances their ability to work with people from different linguistic/cultural backgrounds, which is a crucial skill in the global job market (Byram, 2008).

In conclusion, adopting plurilingual approaches in higher education has various social and economic benefits which are often intertwined. These benefits highlight the importance of promoting plurilingualism in higher-education curriculum design and in materials development, both for the personal growth of learners and their success in the global job market.

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Plurilingualism and its health benefits

(M. C. Conceição, P. De Sousa, and N. Cousa)

Research on the impact of bilingualism/plurilingualism and health, specifically its implication in cognitive activity (Adesope et al., 2010, Bak & Mehmedbegovic-Smith, 2022; Riehl, 2022) shows that speaking/understanding more than one language can be associated with several benefits (Yeung & St John, 2016). Plurilingual speakers show enhanced cognitive control, are better in tasks involving conflict resolution (Costa et al., 2009) and in multitasking. Alladi et al. (2013) found a delay at the time of diagnosis or at the onset of clinically significant symptoms, between 4.5 years and 7 years; thus, plurilingualism could be considered a contributing factor of the cognitive reserve and as a consequence a probable protection factor to prevent or slow the onset of some diseases and their subsequent progression. Cederbaum and Karpinska (2019), highlighting the positive impact on cognitive abilities, suggest that lifelong language learning and use can contribute to maintaining cognitive health in older age.

The mental processes involved in language learning and use exercise and stimulate the brain, leading to cognitive improvements (Grant, Dennis, & Li, 2014), and enhance memory capabilities. As speaking various languages expands individual's networking skills, it allows better social inclusion (Sorace and Antoniou, 2017) which has impact in well-being and self-esteem.

Being plurilingual offers a range of health benefits, including improved cognitive skills, enhanced memory, increased networking abilities, and potentially faster stroke recovery.

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Plurilingualism and its didactic benefits: cognition, motivation, well-being and self-esteem, learning efficiency

(M. Wojakowska)

Plurilingualism is defined as the ability to use more than one language in social communication, regardless of how well they have been mastered. This set of skills constitutes the complex yet unique competence useful for a range of purposes, and with different levels of mastery. It is a practical manifestation of the linguistic capacity of all humans that can be invested successfully in several languages. "Our plurilingual repertoire is therefore made up of various languages we have absorbed in various ways and in which we have acquired different skills to different levels" (Beacco, 2005, 19).

Plurilingual learning strategies should be introduced as early as at the pre-school age, and they should continue to be encouraged throughout the person's life. The integration of pluralistic approaches in the teaching-and-learning process enriches the experience of education with regard to knowledge, skills, and attitudes. The most essential advantages of plurilingual didactics are²:

- the competence³ in engaging in linguistic and cultural communication in a context of otherness,
- the competence in resolving conflicts, overcoming obstacles, clarifying misunderstandings,
- the negotiation competence, which is the basis for initiating contact and building relationships in a context of otherness,
- the mediation competence, which is the basis for building relationships between languages, between cultures and between people,
- the adaptability competence - the competence to benefit from one's own intercultural/interlinguistic experiences whether they are positive, problematic or even definitely negative,
- the competence to apply more systematic and controlled approaches to learning in the context of otherness, whether in an educational institution or in another context, in groups or individually,
- the competence to decenter - an essential feature of the aims of pluralistic approaches, involving a change of perspective and a relative view of things,
- the competence in understanding unfamiliar linguistic and/or cultural features and to refuse to accept failures (communicative or related to learning) by using all available resources, especially those based on intercomprehension;

² Based on FREPA (2007, 21-23)

³ Many selected competences are not necessarily specific to pluralistic approaches and can be perfectly well developed outside the field of language learning





- the distancing competence - looking critically at situations, maintaining control, and avoiding becoming fully immersed in the immediate interaction or learning activity,
- the competence to critically analyze a situation or activity in which one is involved – related to the so-called critical awareness,
- the competence to recognize the other and otherness,
- the competence to build and extend a plural linguistic and cultural repertoire - learning to perceive and activate bilingual or plurilingual communication in relevant situations, to foster a deeper knowledge of students' learning styles and to develop motivation for the study of languages and curriculum subjects.

In summary, plurilingual people tend to use more acute communicative sensitivity, creativity and meta-linguistic awareness (Piccardo, 2017). Crucially, pluralistic approaches constitute a paradigm shift in education that leads not only to the development of individual learners, but also to the recognition of low prestige languages and cultures. This leads to increased tolerance, openness and understanding towards members of other cultures. Pluralistic education is therefore a necessary step to achieve a broader understanding between European citizens.

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Plurilingualism and knowledge circulation

(M. C. Conceição, P. De Sousa, & N. Costa)

The higher education area (HEA) is becoming increasingly diverse, multilingual and multicultural, among others, because of the massive expansion and diversification of student and staff populations due to mobility and internationalisation. Considering HEA a multilingual and multicultural teaching and learning space (MMTLS), all the activities and all the strategies must be conceived for diversity but respecting the need of inclusion.

Multilingualism designation has to be seen as an hyperonym for the range of languages and cultures in praesentia and in absentia in the MMTLS. By diversity we mean the huge multiplicity of languages, cultures and knowledge backgrounds of students and staff (teaching and non-teaching staff) and the subsequent variety of governance and service structures to be organized in order to respond to the needs.





The main challenge is then to build and to disseminate knowledge (respecting heritage knowledge of each participant in the MMLTS, and producing innovative knowledge) with societal impact, considering three levels, meso, micro and macro. Inclusion is a sine qua non condition.

In MMLTS, inclusion is the promotion of the access to all (including marginalised and minority groups) to promote equity and social justice, as democratic principles, but without compromising academic relevance and higher education expected results.

Multilingualism is a trade-off between diversity and inclusion. On the one hand, diversity must be taken into account in all linguistic and communicative strategies and policies and, on the other hand, there will not be social cohesion and fair personnel development and societal impact without inclusive intention. Too much diversity without inclusion result in babel chaos, too much inclusion without diversity would result in newspeak (in Orwellian words).

Multilingualism, diversity, and inclusion will benefit from a clear strategy to encourage diversity respecting fairness and equity by the promotion of an intercultural competence and having permanently in mind that knowledge about cultures and languages (multilingual competence) has a primordial role in shaping interactions and in building the above-referred trade-off that will allow science evolution.

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Part 3

The challenges of plurilingual teaching





Monolingual language representations and beliefs

(N. Mačianskienė)

The language policy of a country or institution represents the prevailing ideology or a set of political beliefs that characterize it. In the 21st century we live in a globalized – multilingual and multicultural – world. This world shows as its peculiarity a huge linguistic and cultural diversity that continues to increase due to economic, professional and recreational mobility, growing information communication needs, and technological advancement, which all allow and call for multiple language acquisition and development. However, despite all this, the ideology of monolingualism is still deeply entrenched in many areas of life.

As defined by Fuller (2018), “monolingual ideologies are systematically-held sets of beliefs that assign great value to the dominant language in a given society while attributing little or no merit to other languages” (p. 122). It may sound paradoxical, but this ideology is prevalent in many multi-ethnic societies in the Global North who are dominated by a single language and characterized by pervasive monolingual ideologies (Fuller, 2018). The language ideologies can be of two kinds there, i.e. *dominant language ideology* (e.g., usually English-only) as opposed to linguistic diversity and *standard state language ideology* (language purity and standardisation at the expense of acceptance of dialects, accents and other linguistic variations). Both these types of ideologies do not only refer to the use of language in all spheres of life; they are examples of power relations between different social and linguistic groups in the country. Consequently, the monolingual ideology exerts a negative impact upon the existence, development and maintenance of heritage languages, as it eliminates the “true reality of language use as ‘mobile’, demonstrating a lack of respect for the cultural wealth of multilingual individuals” (Salas et al., 2021), and, therefore, has far reaching implications on equality, social cohesion, social justice, and other important issues for democratic world.

The idea that a language represents a nation that speaks only that language – the so-called *one-nation-one-language ideology* – emerged in the Early Modern Era as a nation-state concept, non-existent in Medieval Europe and having “little meaning in most European countries before 1900” (Blackledge, 2009, 29). Although most people are multilingual around the world, monolingual ideologies are still ubiquitous – they are seen in social media representations, in the political domain, in the academic discourse, where other languages except for the dominating one are kept out.

When it comes to language representation in the education context, the ideology of monolingualism manifests itself in the very understanding of how languages are taught, acquired and used. Monolingual language representation or “the notion that communication only happens through and by one language at a time” (Perez-Quinmones & Salas, 2021, 67) is pervasive and has been present as an active determinant in many countries at macro, meso and micro levels, contrary to everyday linguistic practices, where “monolingual communication is the special exception to bilingual interactions” (et al, 68) and contrary to research studies on plurilingual language acquisition (Conteh & Meier, 2014; Cook, 1992; May, 2014). Therefore, the use of the learner’s first language (L1) is usually excluded from foreign language classes and native-like





command of the target language is aimed at. English as a medium of instruction and introduction of CLIL in European classrooms in the last two decades have even intensified a monolingual teaching of languages with the focus of English as the target language (Cenoz & Gorter, 2013).

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Resistance to change and the resilience of monolingual ways

(L. Abraitienė)

Resistance to change is a common human tendency that hinders progress and innovation. It is particularly evident in the context of language learning, where monolingualism still prevails in many societies, despite the growing need for plurilingual approaches.

Monolingual ways refer to the practice of speaking, writing, and reading in a single language, often the dominant one, in a given community. This approach has been deeply ingrained in many cultures, leading to resistance to change and a lack of appreciation for linguistic diversity. However, research has shown that being plurilingual can have numerous benefits for individuals, from cognitive development to enhanced cultural understanding and job opportunities.

However, there are also valid reasons why monolingualism can be seen as a form of resilience. This is the case for instance with minority languages or communities. For one, it provides a sense of stability and continuity in communication, particularly in more traditional or isolated communities. Additionally, monolingualism can help maintain linguistic diversity, as different communities may protect and use their languages to preserve their unique cultural identity. Finally, monolingualism can also be seen as a form of resistance against the dominant culture or





language (see Oxford, 2016; Yun, Hiver, & Al-Hoorie, 2018), particularly in cases where the dominant language has been imposed through colonialism or other forms of oppression.

Of course, it is essential to note that there are also drawbacks to monolingualism. One of the most obvious is that it can limit communication and interaction with individuals from different linguistic backgrounds. It can be particularly problematic in settings where cross-cultural communication is essential, such as in international business or diplomacy. Additionally, monolingualism can contribute to the marginalization of individuals or groups who do not speak the dominant language, which can, in turn, perpetuate inequality and social exclusion (see Coleman & Hagell, 2007; Masten, 2001).

The answer to the question of why some people resist the adoption of plurilingual approaches can be variegated. One reason is that change can be difficult, and learning a new language or adapting to a new way of communicating can be daunting. Additionally, there may be cultural or ideological reasons why some individuals or groups resist the adoption of plurilingualism. For instance, in some societies, there is a strong attachment to the dominant language as a symbol of national identity. In such cases, adopting plurilingual approaches may be seen as a threat to the established order and may be resisted accordingly.

The ideology of monolingualism, as highlighted in the research of Perez-Quinones and Salas (2021), can drive individuals to interact solely in their native language, leading to the exclusion and marginalization of non-native speakers. It reinforces the idea that being monolingual is the norm and that other languages and cultures are not welcomed, or even inferior. This creates a vicious cycle that perpetuates the status quo and limits opportunities for growth and learning.

On the other hand, plurilingual approaches recognize and celebrate linguistic diversity, promoting the acquisition of multiple languages and fostering intercultural communication. The Impact of Multilingualism on Global Education and Language Learning, a report by King (2017) in Cambridge English Perspectives, highlights the importance of plurilingualism in today's globalized world, where individuals and communities are increasingly interconnected.

However, despite the benefits of plurilingualism, many people still resist change and cling to monolingual ways. This can be due to various factors, such as cultural identity, lack of access to language learning resources, and fear of the unknown. Overcoming this resistance requires a shift in mindset from viewing linguistic diversity as a threat to recognizing it as an asset.

In conclusion, while monolingualism may be deeply entrenched in many societies, it is vital to recognize the benefits of plurilingualism and to work towards promoting linguistic diversity and intercultural understanding. This requires overcoming resistance to change and embracing new ways of thinking and communicating.

One potential solution is to focus on promoting plurilingualism as a complement to, rather than a replacement for, monolingualism. It can involve encouraging individuals to learn additional languages while still maintaining their existing linguistic practices. It can also involve promoting bilingual or multilingual education programs that allow individuals to develop proficiency in multiple languages without sacrificing their primary language or cultural identity.

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Educational policies at the macro-, meso- micro- and nano-levels

(M. Wojakowska)

Promoting plurilingualism has become a cornerstone of the European Union's education policy. The most important documents on this topic on supra and macro levels are:

- The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages [CEFR] (2001) and its updated and extended edition CEFR Companion Volume (2020) – a document which provides a transparent, coherent, and comprehensive basis for the development of language syllabi and curriculum guidelines, the design of teaching and learning materials as well as the assessment of foreign language proficiency,
- A Framework of Reference for Pluralistic Approaches to Languages and Cultures: Competences and resources [FREPA] (2007) – a tool which complements the CEFR in the area of plurilingual and intercultural competences, proposing a list of sub-competences (descriptors) divided into three categories: Knowledge, Skills and Know-how. It also describes the current state of development of plurilingual and intercultural education in Europe,
- White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue (2008) - “Living Together as Equals in Dignity” - the Council of Europe's recommendation to review pedagogical strategies for all languages taught in the education systems to promote intercultural dialogue.

Moreover, to promote the practice of mutual respect, the EU encourages the teaching and learning of foreign languages and the mobility of all citizens through special action programmes:

- Erasmus+: Promoting language learning and linguistic diversity is one of the specific objectives of the programme, which also funds many projects to support the teaching and



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learning of sign languages and to promote the awareness of linguistic diversity and the protection of minority languages.

- European Day of Languages – an initiative comprising a diverse range of events aimed to promote language learning across Europe, and to raise awareness among the public about the many languages spoken in Europe.
- European Language Label - a European Commission's award established to encourage new initiatives in language teaching and learning, reward new language teaching methods and raise the awareness of regional and minority languages.

Culture and languages are among the core tasks of UNESCO, which has published many documents, instruments, and programmes on this subject in the last 60 years. These include:

- International Decade of Indigenous Languages - aiming to ensure the right of indigenous peoples to preserve, revitalize and promote their languages and to take linguistic diversity into account,
- International Mother Language Day – with the goal of preserving linguistic diversity and promoting mother-tongue, multilingual education.

All projects, programmes, actions, conferences, and presentations serve the purpose of raising the awareness of social diversity and promoting plurilingualism. In each member country, offices at the level of ministries of education and culture implement elements of the European education policy. New syllabi and textbooks are developed every year. To ensure overall coherence, syllabi and curricula are created with the aim to cover different aspects of schooling: general objectives, specific aims/competences, the teaching content, approaches and activities, materials and resources, the role of teachers, collaboration, and assessment. Relevant decisions are made at many different levels, thus, the social context and status of the languages concerned need to be analysed carefully on an individual basis (Council of Europe 2016).

At the level of individual educational institutions (*meso* and *micro* level), teachers are encouraged to participate in exchanges between countries, work with teachers from overseas, participate in dissemination and training events organized by the Council of Europe (www.coe.int/lang-CEFR), competitions organized by the European Union (i.e., European Language Label) and to work with the European Language Portfolio (ELP), which supports the development of learner autonomy (nano level), plurilingualism, and intercultural awareness.

However, even in the countries that have substantial experience with linguistically diverse classrooms, attitudes are slow to change, as governments are reluctant to acknowledge that curricula need to be adapted.





Plurilingual teaching on different levels of the education system:

- **International (SUPRA)** - international reference instruments
- **National System (MACRO)** - study plan, syllabus, strategic specific aims, common core, training standards
- **School, institution (MESO)** - adjustment of the school curriculum or study plan to match the specific profile of a school
- **Class, group, teacher (MICRO)** - textbook used, resources
- **Individual (Nano)** - individual experience of learning, lifelong (autonomous) personal development

Based on Beacco and Byram (2016).

Beacco, J.C., & Byram, M. (2016). *Guide for the development and implementation of curricula for plurilingual and intercultural education*. Council of Europe.

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Individual challenges: knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values

(D. Pundziuvienė, V. Misevičiūtė)

One of the biggest individual challenges of plurilingual teaching might be the fact that usually each learner comes to the classroom not only with a different level of proficiency in the target language, but also with a different plurilingual repertoire. It can be difficult for students to integrate their knowledge of each language into a cohesive whole as it requires a certain understanding of how the languages are connected and how they can be used together effectively. Assessing the individual needs of each learner and tailoring their teaching to suit the needs of the class as a whole is perhaps the teacher's individual challenge. In relation to that, Galante (2020) presents her research examining the implementation of plurilingual pedagogies, in particular translanguaging, in an English language program, which reveals that the students' entire linguistic repertoire is used only in theory as they mainly rely on their L1 (Galante, 2020). Furthermore, it is important to notice that, in order to help students and teachers deal with their



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individual challenges, the national educational system should support and promote plurilingual teaching at schools and universities. According to Herzog-Punzenberger et al. (2017) “The challenge at hand is therefore to offer a multilingual schooling system that supports the inclusion of all pupils in which they can develop their full potential linguistically, cognitively and emotionally” (p. 8).

Plurilingual teaching can present a number of challenges for learners in terms of the following:

KNOWLEDGE

Vocabulary: When multiple languages are used, learners may struggle to retain vocabulary in each language, particularly if the languages are quite different. They may find it difficult to switch between languages and may mix up words or meanings.

Grammar and register: Different languages have different grammar rules, which can be confusing for learners. They may start confusing sentence structures, word order, register, verb tenses, and other grammatical concepts in multiple languages.

Cultural differences: Language and culture are closely linked, and learners may struggle to understand cultural nuances in the languages used during the teaching process. This can be particularly challenging if the learner is not familiar with the culture associated with a particular language used.

Intercultural communication: Different countries have different communicative rules both verbal and non-verbal. Communicating across many intercultural rules may confuse the learners, as some concepts are complete opposites. Knowing the differences may be even harder to deal with than not knowing what to do.

SKILLS

Integration of languages: It can be difficult for students to integrate their knowledge of each language into a cohesive whole. This requires understanding of how the languages are connected and how they can be used together effectively.

Language confusion: Plurilingual teaching can sometimes cause learners to confuse similar words or structures across languages. For example, a learner might mix up words or syntax from several different languages while speaking or writing.

Cognitive skills: Plurilingual teaching can be more mentally demanding for a learner, as it requires students to switch between different language systems. This can be especially challenging for learners with poor translanguageing skills.

Cognitive processing: Culturally different cognitive results in output are expected in plurilingual concepts. It may be confusing to understand what teachers demand and accept because there are different ways of constructing knowledge and arriving to cognitively acceptable outputs.

ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Time and effort: Plurilingual teaching can be time-consuming for both the teacher and the learner, requiring a significant amount of extra time and effort.

Attitude: The tolerance of difference is often a concept that seems manageable in theory; however, in practice it may be difficult for learners to understand *one's own position* and





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overcome differences that are unexpected or go against societal/cultural beliefs. Acknowledging and overcoming discomfort takes time and affects one's attitudes.

Values: In plurilingual teaching it may become unclear what is appropriate and good output. This may lead to many confusions to learners.

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Part 4 Attitudes and values





Open, inclusive, intercultural teaching

(K. Peeters)

Creating multilingual, multicultural teaching and learning spaces (IntlUni, 2015) in HE is key if we want our universities to be truly diverse and inclusive, and truly international while also fostering local and regional engagement and impact. Universities' primary mission is to prepare the next generations of citizens for a successful professional and personal life in our multicultural societies. This cannot be done without nurturing key (European) values, such as diversity, inclusion, and democratic participation in society, and key competences such as plurilingual competence (Council of the EU, 2018, 2019). Open, inclusive, intercultural teaching therefore implies the inclusion of all people present in the increasingly international classroom, and the inclusion of all languages relevant to the didactic aims and learning outcomes of our university curricula and individual courses.

Openness to other languages and cultures present in the classroom arguably is the main value that supports any attempt at integrating plurilingual approaches in language teaching and learning considered as a team effort (see, for instance, Luring *et al.*, 2021 on the positive effect of linguistic and cultural openness on international research teams' performance). Openness in intercultural teaching involves questioning some of our most common practices and our own values and biases; therefore, an open and culturally sensitive attitude towards linguistic and cultural diversity, implies Listening, Effectively communicating, Avoiding ambiguity, Respecting differences, and No judgment (L-E-A-R-N, Rubicondo, 2021, p. 38). Openness is key as it counterbalances the risk of well-intentioned yet harmful ways of stereotyping 'others' (Page, 2021). As stated in the CEFR Companion volume (2020, pp. 123-128), intercultural teaching as a culturally sensitive practice implies educational values related to plurilingual learning and teaching that facilitate the creation of a pluricultural learning space which is open to different sociocultural and sociolinguistic practices, beliefs, conventions, and perspectives. This implies that teachers acknowledge potential intercultural issues, foster key intercultural attitudes, such as respect, openness and curiosity, reserving judgment and dispelling mistaken preconceived notions about other cultures (Byram, 2009; Awad *et al.*, 2023), and value equality and social justice, cultural diversity, human dignity and human rights.

Open, inclusive, intercultural teaching reflects the attitudes and values displayed by teachers, passing these on to their students, who learn to recognise communication conventions and their effect on discourse processes, to explain their interpretation of culturally specific opinions, practices, beliefs and values, to point out similarities and differences to their own and other cultures, and to enquire with empathy into another person's perspective and ways of thinking and feeling. Open, inclusive, intercultural teaching creates a positive and supportive atmosphere, welcoming people, demonstrating interest and respect, and inquiring on sociocultural and sociolinguistic practices and beliefs. For useful examples and basic rules of how the teacher can be a facilitator of interactive, intercultural competence, see Rubicondo (2019, pp. 28-41). Intercultural teaching fosters important soft skills, such as teamwork, conflict-solving abilities, collaborative meaning-making, and encouraging peer evaluation. In addition, in the multilingual, multicultural teaching and learning space, students learn together with their teacher in a safe



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and encouraging environment, feel more motivated and are less inhibited to use a foreign language.

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Ecological approach to language teaching, linguistically sensitive teaching

(N. Mačianskienė & V. Bijeikienė)

The ecology of language was first conceptualised by American linguist Einar Haugen in the early 1970s as “the study of interactions between any given language and its environment” (Haugen, 1972, 325), adopting the term from the biology field. By *environment* Haugen meant the *society* which uses language as its code; he considered that language exists only in our minds and functions when we interact with others in a social and natural environment, providing a “holistic, multi-faceted and dynamic perspective” (Eliasson, 2015, 78). Nowadays the concept of ecology





has acquired broader perspectives due to migration, pollution, and other global issues that societies face. The concept of language has changed likewise, embracing broader, deeper and more various society and language change related issues: dominance of some languages over others, marginalisation, endangerment, linguistic human rights, language death, revitalisation and reinvigoration of languages, etc.

The ecological approach to language teaching is based on Haugen's perspective to languages, considering language as a complex and dynamic system and language learning as an active participatory process, influenced by learner's personal, cultural and social environment, acting autonomously, employing their learning strategies. Therefore, the responsibility of teachers is to provide opportunities for students to explore the language, discover it through various activities and tasks. Rhalmi (2010) provides the following principles of the ecological approach to language teaching:

- Recognising learners' diversity and their environments;
- Adapting teaching to learners' needs and preferences;
- Ensuring learners' interaction in real-life meaningful activities with each other;
- Recognising that learners' fluency will emerge if they are given opportunities to explore and discover languages through various activities and tasks.

Therefore, to ensure these principles in practice, ecological language teaching should be *contextualised*, i.e. based on learner experiences and supported by the use of various authentic materials; it should also be *personalized* - learners should be given chances to choose topics, tasks, etc., and *autonomous* - learners should control their learning, have opportunities to reflect and self-evaluate, and use various learning strategies; thus, learners should be empowered to acquire and use the language in real life situations.

It is possible to conclude that the ecological approach to language learning and teaching is a holistic approach that values, respects, provides, supports and creates opportunities to engage and develop all learners, irrespective of how culturally and linguistically diverse they are, in other words, it should be linguistically responsive or sensitive language learning and teaching. The CEFR Companion Volume explicitly promotes the action-oriented approach (2020, p. 29) which fully implements the principles of ecological language teaching as demonstrated by Piccardo & North (2019).

The concept of linguistically sensitive teaching has been thoroughly examined and broadly promoted by the European action research project "Linguistically Sensitive Teaching in All Classrooms (LISTiac)". The definition of LST offered by the project partnership relies on the conceptualisation of plurilingual competence in CEFR Companion Volume (2020). Namely, LST is seen as the teacher's ability to utilise and encourage the use of pupils' plurilingual competence in the whole school, where plurilingual competence refers to "the ability to call flexibly upon an inter-related, uneven, plurilinguistic repertoire" (CEFR Companion Volume, 2020, p. 28). LST draws on a two-directional understanding of plurilingual education proposed by ECML as education *for* plurilingualism and education *through* plurilingualism so that the diversity of languages and cultures in the classroom becomes both an *aim of* and a *resource for* educational practice (<https://www.ecml.at/>).





The demand for LST is generally explained by the principle that “all students in the EU need teachers who are linguistically sensitive and responsive” (<https://listiac.org/>). In a time of growing multilingualism and multiculturalism of learning spaces in all stages and cycles of education, it is believed that “linguistic sensitivity is a prerequisite for such essential concepts as trust and positive social relationships in education” (Bergroth & Haagensen, 2020). Moreover, LST is closely related with linguistic inclusion. According to Ituiño Aguirre et.al., LST refers to the act of treating the languages of the pupils in an inclusive and therefore sensitive way in all teaching practices (2021). Thus, LST largely overlaps with what is called “linguistically responsive teaching” (Lucas et. al., 2008) and “teaching through a multilingual lens” (Cummins & Persad, 2014; Mačanskienė & Bijeikienė, 2021).

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Team teaching: teachers and learners as partners

(M. Wojakowska)

Increasing migration of the population and plurilingualism in European countries have had an impact on the importance of languages in schools and, consequently, on the teaching of all languages and subjects. It is vital not to forget the role of the teacher in developing plurilingual and intercultural competences. Teachers not only help learners develop functional competences,



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they need to be able to interact with people belonging to other social groups in a national and regional context who speak the same or another language, but they also help to shape learners, both as individuals and as active members of their community.

Teachers are key to the implementation and success of any curriculum. Revising curricula, changing learning objectives, and creating teaching materials are important parts of any curriculum reform, but, ultimately, it is the teachers who are responsible for selecting and fostering learning experiences and implementing activities that are meaningful to learners and enable them to achieve the goals identified for them.

The main purpose of including plurilingual and intercultural education in the curriculum may be to invigorate teaching. The focus may be on subject teaching and lifelong learning or on the way subjects are taught. Crucially, the goal of plurilingual education is to help students to become autonomous, independent learners. To achieve this objective, we need to shift the focus from teaching to enabling effective learning and promote the concepts of ownership and reflection on learning. A student-centered approach to teaching produces active learners who acquire the skills of problem solving, independent thinking, and autonomous learning.

However, as plurilingualism is seen as a positive resource in itself, teachers and learners do not seem to know how to use it. According to a study conducted in November 2009 by the European Centre for Modern Languages within the project MARILLE, nearly all teachers (90%) have only a vague idea about the management of linguistic and cultural diversity in the classroom (Boeckmann et al., 2011). At the same time, 93% agree that teaching practice in most language classrooms should promote plurilingualism, with the same responses coming from learners. This indicates that changes in all areas of education are needed in order to promote plurilingualism: in the development of curricula and teaching materials, as well as in teacher training, school organization, and, finally, in practical teaching.⁴

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⁴ Various online resources can be used to foster pluralistic concepts in teaching. Most of these resources are easily accessible to teachers (see <https://carap.ecml.at/Materials/tabid/2313/language/fr-FR/Default.aspx>). Other resources for curriculum reform are also easily accessible to teachers and other stakeholders (see <https://tools.ecml.at/matrix/> within the project CEFR QualiMatrix of the ECML).





Plurilingualism as added value for teaching, research, and engagement with society

(M.Wojakowska)

To promote plurilingualism and allow all learners to develop their full range of languages, it is vital that all learners be educated on how to be part of an increasingly multilingual society. They need to feel safe and secure in their plurilingualism, which is influenced by the views of the general society. If all learners start to enjoy and develop curiosity about the diversity of languages in their communities, this will create an environment where they can be proud of their own plurilingualism. Plurilingualism should be desirable for all and should increase the motivation to learn more about languages in general and to learn more languages. One incentive and outcome of this is an appreciation and enjoyment of different cultures, literatures and texts, discourses, styles, and genres.

It must also be acknowledged that education that promotes plurilingualism involves all learners and all subjects. It must be inclusive, recognizing and building on all language skills, and considering a range of abilities and cultural backgrounds. An environment that values plurilingualism can build confidence, enjoyment and awareness in the use of different languages, while enabling learners to develop a strong and positive sense of their own identity. Respect for learners also extends to include their voices in their own learning through pedagogical innovations that aim to promote learner autonomy and responsibility for learning processes and outcomes (Boeckmann *et al.*, 2011).

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Conclusion: plurilingual approaches in HE: a much-needed paradigm shift for which competence training is key

(M. C. Conceição)

Plurilingual approaches in higher education (HE) imply an essential transformation and a paradigm shift in language education. These approaches acknowledge the multilingual nature of our globalized world and prioritize proficiency in multiple languages and literacies. The training of competences becomes pivotal in empowering students to effectively live within diverse linguistic and cultural environments.

Plurilingual approaches recognize the value of all languages and varieties a student possesses, including L1(s) and intend to integrate them into the educational and research experiences. They promote inclusive education by recognizing and valuing the linguistic and cultural diversity of students. These approaches empower students to embrace their own linguistic identities and fosters a sense of belonging. They also enhance students' communication skills, enabling them to effectively interact in multilingual and multicultural environments, both academically and professionally.

Plurilingual competence training prepares students for the demands of a globalized job market, where multilingualism and intercultural understanding are highly valued. It equips graduates with transferable skills that enable them to navigate diverse professional contexts and to collaborate with individuals from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

