



Understanding the ECML project

“A roadmap for schools to support the language(s) of schooling”

www.ecml.at/roadmapforschools

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Introduction

In September 2016, seventeen language experts from sixteen different European countries¹ took part in a *Think tank* meeting at the ECML, in Graz (Austria), focusing on the following four interrelated aspects of the language/s of schooling:

- the rationale for whole-school approaches (key arguments/why and for whom);
- whole-school language policies and strategies (what and how at institutional level);
- learning and teaching methodologies;
- the practical aspects of/barriers to cooperation and how these could be overcome.

Participants were presented with key findings from an online questionnaire² that had been sent out prior to the *Think tank* meeting; it produced a total of 107 complete responses from 33 countries, including 7 non-ECML member states. Nearly 20% of the respondents were teacher trainers, closely followed by academic researchers (18%). Most encouraging was to see that in addition to these two key ECML target groups, responses were received from parents, language teachers, teachers of non-linguistic subjects as well as headteachers. This is an endorsement of the ECML's decision to focus this *think tank* not only on the language/s of schooling but specifically on whole-school approaches. Moreover, teacher respondents came from all sectors from pre-primary to upper secondary.

After the *Think tank*, a new thematic area was created on the ECML's website, dedicated to the languages of schooling³. Furthermore, a new project⁴ was set up, led by four participants of the *Think tank* who had been selected by the ECML in order to enable the implementation of the ideas that had been discussed. The project team that was set up has since been constantly endeavouring to clarify the key concepts, the stakeholders and the thematic fields to take into account in the framework of the project.

1. Background

The theoretical framework underpinning this project is based on key developments undertaken by the Council of Europe. During the intergovernmental conference "Languages of schooling: towards a Framework for Europe" (2006)⁵ the importance of language as a medium of access to equal school education for all was specifically stated. There followed a series of key publications, which are listed below:

¹ The *think tank* was held with seventeen language experts from sixteen different European countries among which three experts were present in their capacity as representatives of International non-governmental organisations (ALTE – Association of Language Testers of Europe; FIPLV – Fédération Internationale des Professeurs de Langues Vivantes, EPA – European Parents Association), as well as a representative from the European Commission.

² To consult the questionnaire: www.ecml.at/Portals/1/documents/LANGUAGES-OF-SCHOOLING-questionnaire-EN.pdf.

³ See the website "Languages of schooling": www.ecml.at/languagesofschooling.

⁴ The project presented here is called "A roadmap for schools to support the language(s) of schooling" (www.ecml.at/roadmapforschools).

⁵ Vollmer H. (2006), *Towards a common European instrument for language (s) of education – Preliminary study*, Council of Europe (Language Policy Division), Strasbourg, <https://rm.coe.int/16805c7462>.

- *Language(s) of schooling* (2009)⁶. This text provides an explanation of the term “language(s) of schooling” and a description of two of its key components “language as subject” and “language in other subjects”.
- *Language and school subjects – Linguistic dimensions of knowledge building in school curricula* (2010)⁷. It is stated here that all knowledge building in the school context involves working with language.
- *Languages of schooling: focusing on vulnerable learners* (2010)⁸. In order to support all students to master the academic language that constitute the fabric of the different curriculum subjects, all teachers must be language teachers in the sense that they are aware of the specific language demands of their subject(s).

In 2014, all member states were invited to take into account the language(s) of schooling in the “Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the importance of competences in the language(s) of schooling for equity and quality in education and for educational success” (Council of Europe Recommendation CM/Rec(2014)5)⁹. A major handbook, written in order to help decision-makers, teacher trainers and teachers to develop curricula taking into account the language dimension of teaching, was issued in 2016: *The language dimension in all subjects: a handbook for curriculum development and teacher training* (2016)¹⁰. Many more key resources can be found on the Council of Europe’s [Platform of resources and references for plurilingual and intercultural education](#).

1.1. Key concepts

The ROADMAP constantly refers to a certain number of key concepts¹¹ defined below.

Language(s) of schooling

“Language of schooling” denotes the language used for teaching the various school subjects and for the functioning of schools. This language is usually the official language(s) of the State or the region, for example Polish in Poland or Italian in Italy, but may also concern officially recognised regional or minority languages, foreign or migrant languages. Depending on the national or regional context, several languages of schooling are used (Council of Europe Recommendation CM/Rec(2014)5).

⁶ Beacco J.-C., Byram M., Coste D. & Fleming M. (2009). *Language(s) of schooling*, Council of Europe, Strasbourg, <https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=09000016805a2238>

⁷ Beacco J.-C., Coste D., van de Ven P. H. M. & Vollmer H. (2010), *Language and school subjects - Linguistic dimensions of knowledge building in school curricula*, Council of Europe, Strasbourg, <https://rm.coe.int/16805a0c1b>.

⁸ Thürmann E., Vollmer H. J. & Pieper I. (2010), *Languages of schooling: focusing on vulnerable learners*, Council of Europe, Strasbourg, <https://rm.coe.int/16805a1caf>.

⁹ Council of Europe (2014), Recommendation CM/Rec(2014)5 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the importance of competences in the language(s) of schooling for equity and quality in education and for educational success (Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 2 April 2014 at the 1196th meeting of the Ministers’ Deputies), https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectID=09000016805c6105.

¹⁰ Beacco J.-C., Fleming M., Goullier F., Thürmann E., Vollmer H. & Sheils J. (2016), *A handbook for curriculum development and teacher training – The language dimension in all subjects*, Council of Europe, Strasbourg, www.coe.int/en/web/language-policy/a-handbook-for-curriculum-development-and-teacher-training-the-language-dimension-in-all-subjects.

¹¹ Some of these key concepts are also regularly used in the Council of Europe’s reference documents.

Academic language is the type of language necessary to successfully participate in, comprehend, and communicate in cognitively demanding and context-reduced, age-appropriate activities (Himmele & Himmele 2009). It is not usually learned outside the classroom setting (Chamot & O'Malley 1994).

The following citation highlights what is meant by the **language dimension in subjects**:

“Language requirements such as reading and understanding expository texts, listening to explanations, summarizing or answering questions orally and presenting results are present in all classrooms, in connection with content work. The language dimension in teaching and learning subject-matter is of equal importance as in language as subject itself.” (Beacco *et al.* 2016: 16)

Vulnerable learners are students who “are dependent on school to help them understand and learn the wide spectre of cultural codes embedded in formal language use”; in this, they are different from the group of children who “benefit from backgrounds which automatically offer socializing into academic uses of language” (Fleming 2009: 21).

1.2. Short description of the ROADMAP

The ROADMAP was set up to assist schools in finding ways to develop the linguistic and critical thinking skills all students, including vulnerable learners (i.e. students depending on the school to develop the language of schooling), need to learn and succeed in all subjects at school.

This can only be achieved if the different stakeholders (headteachers, teachers, non-teaching staff, parents and students), including the wider community (if possible), cooperate and establish a specific language strategy focusing on the needs of the students. To do so, it is necessary for everybody working in the school to be aware of the situation regarding the acquisition of the language(s) of schooling and to take part in discussions, where possible, in order to decide on the actions that can be implemented at different levels. The ROADMAP therefore offers three elements: the self-assessment tool, the promising practices database and the coordinator’s package.

The self-assessment tool consists of an online survey enabling each stakeholder to position the school according to a number of statements (corresponding to different areas) and a customised report based on the survey results. The survey is to be used by schools to identify and reflect on the way the language(s) of schooling is/are effectively taken into account, to identify possible gaps in the work they do related to different thematic areas. The survey is to be used by the following stakeholders in order to initiate a reflection upon the situation in their school: headteachers, teachers, non-teaching staff, students and parents. The statements tackle nine thematic areas¹² covering all aspects to be dealt with in a whole-school approach, according to which the results of the survey are organised. The

¹² See web section “Key concepts” to find out more about the thematic areas (<https://www.ecml.at/ECML-Programme/Programme2016-2019/roadmapforschools/Keyconcepts/tabid/4268/language/en-GB/Default.aspx>).

coordinator receives a customised report in order to be able to share the results effectively and initiate discussions.

The promising practices database: in response to the individual results of the school, the ROADMAP offers a wide range of promising practices which can be adapted to specific contexts. The purpose of the promising practices database is to both inspire and help the school plan a whole-school strategy according to the needs identified in the context of the self-assessment process.

The coordinator`s package contains a whole set of documents in order to support the implementation of the ROADMAP, including e.g. an overview of the ROADMAP, suggestions on how to choose a coordinator, how to present the project to colleagues and parents, etc.

The coordinator (a person or group of persons) and the management (i.e. headteachers) are key to the success of the project. The coordinator¹³ can be a member of the management-team of a school, a teacher or other staff member having knowledge and experience about language learning and teaching, good organisational and analytical skills, time allocated to do the work, etc.

1.3. Aim of the ROADMAP

A successful whole-school approach enables staff members to decide together on embedding solutions in the school planning that comply with curricular requirements. Moreover, it supports all actors in their willingness and ability to contribute to the language development of the students, fosters a language-sensitive culture among all stakeholders and also develops an inclusive ethos that values language in all its dimensions.

As Lorenzo & Trujillo (2017: 179) point out, the term “languages of schooling” gives rise to “an overall language policy action including initiatives in curriculum development, competence levels, and assessment for education amelioration”. This description stems, among others, from the work led by the Council of Europe since its first conference in 2006, and the many reference documents resulting from the Council’s work in language policy¹⁴. Indeed, as Beacco *et al.* (2016) underline, a student cannot properly learn subject content without having a proper command of the scientific, artistic and technical discourses used in the formal setting. This means that it is no longer possible to separate school subjects from language(s) as students need to develop a communicative competence to acquire content and achieve factual learning, whatever the field. A considerable body of research, dating back to the 1980s has shown that poor language competence compromises subject knowledge: “at school, disciplines use terms and wording that are foreign to ordinary communicative experience” (Lorenzo & Trujillo 2017: 179).

¹³ To find out how to choose a coordinator, please click here:

www.ecml.at/Portals/1/5MTP/roadmap/Coordinator's%20package/EN/02-How-to-choose-a-coordinator-EN.pdf.

¹⁴ Council of Europe’s reference documents for the language(s) of schooling: [www.coe.int/en/web/platform-plurilingual-intercultural-language-education/languages-of-schooling#{%2228069842%22:\[0\]}](http://www.coe.int/en/web/platform-plurilingual-intercultural-language-education/languages-of-schooling#{%2228069842%22:[0]})

2. Stakeholders

The stakeholders in this project are the headteachers, teachers, non-teaching staff, students and parents. The wider community plays a significant part in language development but is not considered as a direct stakeholder in this project, for reasons explained below (see 2.6).

2.1. Why focus on students?

Most students are equipped with the competences in the language of schooling required for ordinary communication. However, as Cummins (1979)¹⁵ claims, one needs to distinguish between Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) which enable everyday communication and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) which is required to partake in formal academic learning. Therefore, for the most vulnerable learners, i.e. those who use a different language for day-to-day communication and, especially learners from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds, the acquisition of competences in the language of schooling is a major challenge.

These findings are fundamental to the Council of Europe's Recommendation CM/Rec(2014)5¹⁶:

“The right to education can only be fully exercised if the learners master the specific linguistic rules that are applied in schools and are necessary for access to knowledge;

linguistic competences are one of the factors in educational success and [...] they are a prerequisite for undertaking further qualifying academic or vocational education and training, and therefore important for participation in society and sustainable inclusion;

some learners may be disadvantaged vis-à-vis mastery of these linguistic competences because of social and linguistic inequalities”.

2.1.1. Who are the students to focus on?

One can sometimes believe that a focus on “languages of schooling” aims exclusively at helping students from an immigrant background or refugee children better succeed at school. The scope of such an educational policy encompasses ALL students, since it has been shown that poor competence in L1 is among the first causes for overall learning deficits. For Van Avermaet (2006: 18), “allochtonous children do not by definition perform less well than autochtonous children” and the gap between the mother tongue/language used at home and school language is mainly sociocultural rather than ethnically determined, a statement confirmed by PISA studies. Again Gogolin *et al.* (2004) and Schmörlzer-Eibinger (2008) show that language competence acquisition is always problematic for pupils from educationally disadvantaged families, irrespective of the mother tongue.

¹⁵ Cummins J. (1979), “Cognitive/academic language proficiency, linguistic interdependence, the optimum age question and some other matters”, *Working Papers on Bilingualism*, 19, pp. 197-205.

¹⁶ Ibid. (https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectID=09000016805c6105).

Therefore, it seems essential to set up language-sensitive environments in schools in order to help students learn more language(s), to enable them to access deep understanding of knowledge and to enable them to express their understanding in coherent ways, corresponding to the academic language that is expected of them. Only by enabling them to do so, by setting up a whole-school approach, will one help students to become critically aware citizens.

As Cummins (2010: 40) states, “The starting point for understanding why students choose to engage academically or, alternatively, withdraw from academic effort is to acknowledge that *human relationships are at the heart of schooling*” (italics in the original text).

2.1.2. Student empowerment

For Cummins (2000), it is very important to help students become aware of relations of power. Very often, it appears that subordinated groups that fail academically have been discriminated against over many generations. The research led by Ogbu in the USA for more than 30 years (Ogbu & Simons 1998¹⁷) has led to a distinction between voluntary or immigrant minorities, who tend to succeed academically, and involuntary minorities (brought into society against their will, i.e. through slavery, colonization, conquest, etc.) who tend to experience academic difficulties. Even though this distinction can sometimes be questioned (especially in relation to refugee groups), it highlights important patterns of how coercive power relations operating in broader society find their way into the structures and operation of schooling.

Cummins (2000: 43)¹⁸ discusses the issues in terms of coercive and collaborative relations of power:

“Coercive relations of power refer to the exercise of power by a dominant individual, group, or country to the detriment of a subordinated individual, group or country. (...) Collaborative relations of power, by contrast, reflect the sense of the term “power” that refers to “being enabled”, or “empowered” to achieve more. (...) The term *empowerment* can be defined as the *collaborative creation of power*. Students whose schooling experiences reflect collaborative relations of power participate confidently in instruction as a result of the fact that their sense of identity is being affirmed and extended in their interactions with educators”.

2.1.3. Knowledge of the cognitive advantages of bilingualism

According to Cummins (2000), more than 150 empirical studies carried out over the past 35 years have shown a positive association between additive bilingualism and students’ linguistic, cognitive, or academic growth. These students have a higher awareness of language (metalinguistic abilities) which enables them to learn additional languages more

¹⁷ Ogbu J. U. & Simons H. D. (1998), “Voluntary and involuntary minorities: a cultural-ecological theory of school performance with some implications for education”, *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, 29(2), pp. 155-188.

¹⁸ Ibid.

easily. According to Cummins' threshold hypothesis (1979)¹⁹, for positive effects to manifest themselves, children must be in the process of developing literacy in both languages. Therefore, it is important to underline the importance of enabling children to develop their languages during elementary school in order to foster positive academic, linguistic and cognitive results. Raising awareness of this fact among administrators may favour a positive attitude towards the possibility of offering courses in the L1 or even setting up bilingual programmes, if there is a wider community of the same L1 speakers.

Therefore, the ROADMAP contends that developing the language(s) of schooling cannot be done without taking into account each student's plurilingual repertoire, and valuing it. This is also underlined by UNESCO (2017) who considers that "equitable quality education and lifelong learning for all is only possible when education responds to and reflects the multilingual nature of the society. Children, youth and adults require learning opportunities that are relevant to their lives and needs, in and through their own languages".

2.1.4. Knowledge of the interdependence hypothesis

Cummins (2000: 39)²⁰ reminds us that, "Instructional time can be focused on developing students' literacy skills in the primary language without adverse effects on the development of their literacy skills in English. Furthermore, the relationship between first and second language literacy skills suggests that effective development of primary language literacy skills can provide a conceptual foundation for long-term growth in English literacy skills. This does not imply, however, that transfer of literacy and academic language knowledge will happen automatically; there is usually also a need for formal instruction in the target language to realise the benefits of cross-linguistic transfer."

2.2. Why focus on teachers?

As Hattie (2003) argues, it is what teachers know, do, and care about which matters most in students' learning. Hence, it is essential to provide teachers not only with professional development opportunities which enable them to develop their teaching strategies but also to complement this with knowledge about societal power relations and psycholinguistic aspects of multilingualism.

Additionally, the Council of Europe's Recommendation CM/Rec(2014)5 states that:

"teachers and other educational actors in schools put into place processes for diagnosing and assessing linguistic competences and appropriate forms of support, in order to facilitate mastery of the language of schooling by:

- i. verifying at regular intervals, and in particular between different stages of education, learners' ability to master those aspects of the language of schooling

¹⁹ Cummins J. (1979), "Cognitive/academic language proficiency, linguistic interdependence, the optimum age question and some other matters", *Working Papers on Bilingualism*, 19, pp. 197-205.

²⁰ Ibid.

required at different stages of education, so as to adapt the course progression accordingly and provide appropriate forms of support taking account of learners' specific needs and aptitudes;

- ii. if possible, making full use of the linguistic resources which learners possess for knowledge building;
- iii. anticipating, for each subject, the kinds of competences in the language of schooling that will be required in assessments with a view to preparing pupils for them;
- iv. organising a diversity of approaches to assessment, in particular formative assessment and self-assessment, in order to acknowledge achievements and enhance the self-esteem of each learner”.

As the Handbook (Beacco 2016: 11) underlines, teachers of all subjects have to become aware of the need to support their pupils in mastering the specific language competences that the school subjects demand. In addition, their awareness of societal power relations is also essential in developing the students' language(s) of schooling.

2.2.1. Societal power relations

It seems necessary to make teachers aware of societal power relations in order to bring about the necessary change in school language policies. Indeed, not only do teachers need to understand language and the way it develops in academic contexts, they also need to take into account issues of equity and power in the wider society in order to educate the whole child rather than just teach the curriculum (Cummins 2000: 6-7).

García (2011) confirms that effective bilingual education pedagogy entails an emphasis on social justice which promotes equity between the two languages and challenges broader patterns of societal power relations that devalue the identities, cultures, and languages of particular communities. Such an instructional context “builds multiplicities of language uses and linguistic identities, while maintaining academic rigor and upholding high expectations” (Cummins, 2000: 318).

Whenever society or schools try to assimilate or totally integrate minority groups, they aspire to make subordinated groups invisible and inaudible. But by contrast, setting up a transformative/intercultural orientation means developing principles of racial and cultural equality, and educating students in such a way as to enable them to fully participate within a democratic society. Therefore, it is essential to give teachers opportunities to do so: teachers should enable students to decode the words but above all to read between the lines so they can understand how power is exercised through various forms of discourse (advertisements, social networks, political rhetoric, text books, etc.).

2.2.2. Psycholinguistic aspects

Cognitive advantages

Research has widely described the cognitive advantages related to plurilingualism whatever the age (Adesope *et al.* 2010; Bialystok *et al.* 2004; Carlson and Meltzoff 2008; Gold *et al.*

2013; Gollan *et al.* 2011; Lazaruk 2007; Mårtensson *et al.* 2012) and even suggests that, given certain conditions, the benefit for the individual starts early in life and can be long-term.

At the same time, Wong Fillmore's (1991) research shows that minority language children schooled through L2 lose their L1, or at the best, their L1 lacks in continued development. This could lead to alienation of children from their parents and prevents them from benefiting from the many cognitive advantages of being bilingual that psycholinguistic research has highlighted.

That's why it is essential for teachers to grasp these advantages and to underline the linguistic accomplishments of plurilingual learners, when they are being taught solely through the dominant language (see Edwards 1998 for multiple examples of how this can be implemented).

Development of academic language

According to the common underlying proficiency theory (Cummins 1979²¹), if time is devoted to the teaching of the L1, it is not detrimental to the academic performance in the majority language (as long as the instructional programme is effective in developing academic skills in the minority language). Indeed, whenever conceptual knowledge is developed in one language, it makes input in the other language more comprehensible.

Immigrant students can easily grow in conversational fluency in the dominant language of the society by being exposed to it in the environment and at school. However, many researchers (Collier 1987, Cummins 1981, Hakuta *et al.* 2000, Klesmer 1994) contend that it generally takes a minimum of about 5 years for them to catch up with native speakers in academic aspects of the language.

Gandara (1999) summarized data from California and underlined the fact that "while a student may be able to speak and understand English at very high levels of proficiency within the first three years of school, academic skills in English reading and writing take longer for students to develop" (p. 5). This means that despite their apparent ability to communicate, there is a major discrepancy with native speakers, which can lead to school failure, if teachers are not aware of this situation and help them develop these skills. However, developing the language(s) of schooling is the responsibility of the entire school staff and not just of language teachers.

Therefore, the ROADMAP not only makes teachers and the entire school community become aware of these issues but also offers a wide array of practical ideas to implement in the classroom.

²¹ Cummins J. (1979), "Cognitive/academic language proficiency, linguistic interdependence, the optimum age question and some other matters", *Working Papers on Bilingualism*, 19, pp. 197-205.

2.3. Why focus on headteachers?

The Council of Europe's recommendation CM/Rec(2014)5 states that it is important to "raise awareness among local educational staff of their role in devising and implementing a coherent whole-school policy for the language of schooling, including taking into account the various languages present in the school as a resource to be exploited". The coherent policy needs to be sustainable in order to have the best possible impact on all learners. As Fullan (2002) points out, if a large scale, sustainable educational reform is on the agenda, then leadership becomes the key.

The importance of leadership for the effectiveness of school has been emphasized in the literature and research. Cummins (2010: 36) also stresses the part played by administrators in schools who "should be competent to provide leadership in addressing issues of underachievement in culturally and linguistically diverse contexts". On the other hand, it has been well established that students of certain minority ethnic backgrounds do not achieve as well as their peers. That is why we need to examine the specific challenges for leaders in multi-ethnic contexts and the qualities necessary to reverse the trend of underachievement among minority groups should be examined (Blair 2002).

Gillett, Clarke & O'Donoghue (2016: 594) state that in the research literature on successful leadership of schools facing challenging circumstances, the following essential, interrelated strategies have been identified:

- setting a goal and vision to generate a belief in a culture of improvement by establishing clear expectations with students and staff and sharing a vision of improvement (Chapman & Harris 2004);
- focusing strongly on teaching and learning to generate a belief that *all* students have the capacity to learn, in order to dispel the notion of "cultural deficit" (Harris *et al.* 2006);
- setting of high standards and expectations for staff and students to generate a belief in the school by establishing clear expectations, encouraging respect for others and imparting a sense of urgency for maintaining high academic standards, and exerting pressure upon staff and students to excel (Chapman & Harris 2004²²);
- creating a positive school culture to foster a sense of community amongst staff and students and involve the broader community in the work of the school (Harris 2002);
- promoting continuous professional learning and development of staff to generate a professional learning community, which caters for particular internal needs and/or facilitates out of school initiatives and developments (Chapman & Harris 2004);
- exercising flexible leadership to generate creative approaches to tackling highly complex problems, especially by investing in the leadership of others (Harris 2006).

The self-assessment tool included in the ROADMAP covers the above-mentioned strategies, expressed as statements, and thus is a valuable tool for developing leadership addressing

²² Ibid.

the challenging issues in promoting support for language(s) of schooling in culturally and linguistically diverse contexts.

2.4. Why focus on non-teaching staff?

The school as a learning community consists not only of learners, teachers and the headteacher but also of the non-teaching staff. They form an integral part of the educational system and we should consider not only their services but also their linguistic input as indispensable in the quest to enhance the quality of education. The manner in which all adults in the school act is transmitted to the learners, who adopt values, attitudes and customs prevalent in their school community. Non-teaching staff have long been considered as builders of an adequate and effective relationship with the public and thus the learners (Lutz 1948). Additionally, when developing a language-aware school culture and enhancing the mastering of the language(s) of schooling, each adult should be considered a linguistic model (Finnish National agency for Education 2016, National Core Curriculum for Basic Education).

For all these reasons, the ROADMAP offers the possibility to involve non-teaching staff in the assessment of the school and to take part in discussions so as to find ways to enhance, collaboratively, the students' development of the language(s) of schooling.

2.5. Why focus on parents?

Language learning starts even before birth (Mampe, Friederici, Christophe & Wermke 2009). Family and environment play a major part in the language development of each and every child (Hoff 2006; Sorenson-Duncan 2017). Research shows evidence that in certain linguistic tasks, such as metalinguistic awareness or phonological awareness, bilingual children perform better than monolingual children (Bialystok 1986; Bialystok, Majumder & Martin 2003). Furthermore, Noble, Wolmetz, Ochs, Farah & McCandliss (2006) suggest that poverty has a negative impact on language development, interestingly affecting the same functions. When both sets of findings are combined, this suggests that monolingual children from low socioeconomic status (SES) families are at high risk of experiencing language development problems, followed by bilingual children from low SES families. These two family-effects on language development should be taken into account by schools when planning their language strategies in order to foster true language learning in school.

Typically, schools in Europe concentrate their efforts on students from bilingual (or plurilingual) low SES families. This approach is problematic because on the one hand, it disregards the needs of students from low SES, local, monolingual families and on the other hand, it does not take into account the added value related to bi/plurilingualism. The same is true for the families themselves, since many families are ashamed or unsure of raising bi/plurilingual children. It thus seems essential to value family languages and enable parents to take part in school activities. Valuing the mother tongue/languages being used at home

can also be a means of shifting the power relationship by enabling minority-language communities to assert their identity in a positive way.

The ROADMAP, therefore, takes parents into account as one of the school's stakeholders and focuses on the parents as a possible resource for language development and learning. Parents can take part in the school's self-assessment in order to express their vision of the way languages are taken into account and valued; in addition, many examples of promising practices show ways to involve parents in school life, thus underlining the essential part they play in the development of the student as a whole person.

2.6. Why focus on the wider community?

Support from the wider community is an essential part of building an effective - and thus also a language aware - school. Even though this project focuses on all learners, the importance of improving the mastering of the languages of schooling is essential for second language learners. In many cases, the schools where second language learners form a significant part of the learners are located in disadvantaged areas. Research shows that building and improving the reputation of the school and engaging with the wider community in those areas is fundamental. Schools cannot work in isolation from the community, so a community-oriented approach to schooling is viewed as important, particularly with respect to supporting disadvantaged communities (see Harris 2004; Dyson & Raffo 2007; Furman 2003). Nonetheless, even though the community is acknowledged for the part it plays in the development of an effective school, the ROADMAP does not invite the wider community to take part in the self-assessment as this was considered too complex to set up by a school, but some statements and promising practices do address the part played by the wider community.

3. From four thematic fields to nine areas

Initially, four thematic fields were thoroughly considered during the first phase of the project in order to determine the target areas and dimensions needed for setting up the online tool: Language awareness in learning and teaching, Languages of schooling in the curriculum, Organisational framework, and Language-sensitive culture.

After having explored the meaning of each thematic fields and presented them to the expert eye of the participants of the network meeting in November 2017²³, it was decided to reorganise them into nine areas which are considered essential in designing and developing a school culture that aims to develop the whole-school approach to support language/s of schooling. These areas are partially overlapping, and certainly interrelated.

²³ The Network meeting took place at the ECML premises in Graz (Austria) in November 2017 and involved 16 experts from 12 different countries.

3.1. Awareness of language dimension in learning and teaching

The thematic field *Awareness of language dimension* in learning and teaching was set up keeping in mind the fact that being bilingual or plurilingual is an asset for the learner's personal, cognitive and knowledge development. This also means that language is vital to content access and academic achievement and that the school community should provide opportunities for all students to engage in higher-order thinking in order to help them reach their academic potential. Indeed, students need instructional support to scaffold their language learning, but it does not mean simplifying the language or giving them less-challenging tasks. On the contrary, the students need challenges and the teachers should maintain the same high expectations.

It is important to raise language awareness both among teachers and students to improve students' mastery of academic language. Indeed, one can easily have the feeling that the students in our classroom, whether they come from an immigrant background or not, master the language of schooling since they are able to communicate perfectly well. However, some of them underachieve in tests, probably because of a lack of language competence and not merely subject knowledge.

Language and content should be taught simultaneously by helping learners become aware of the specificities of written and spoken language. Indeed, "All school teachers will be better able to help their pupils learn and understand subject content if they are able to provide support for them based on recognising the language dimension of the subject" (Beacco *et al.* 2016). And yet, the responsibility to put an emphasis on language learning is not only the teacher's, but should be shared by the entire school community who should be language models.

In the ROADMAP, three areas cover the main ideas included in this thematic field:

- **Awareness of language dimension** which means putting an emphasis on language learning in general, understanding the importance of being language models (for the whole staff), and giving the students challenging activities.
- **Developing language knowledge and skills** means that the teachers focus on the specificities of language in their teaching, increase the students' awareness of spoken and written language, and improve constantly their speaking/writing and listening/reading skills.
- **Metalinguistic awareness** means taking into account the language dimension in subject teaching and exploring/learning language-related concepts with the learners, whatever the subject, to help learners understand and use content more easily.

3.2. Language(s) of schooling in the curriculum

Once teachers have become aware of the language dimension in subjects, it is essential for them to work together in order to develop their common understanding of the strategies that will support the students' learning and help them to deepen their thinking to make better connections to both written and oral language. Blachowicz & Fisher (2000) discuss numerous strategies with detailed directions that will help teachers understand how vocabulary learning takes place, stressing the importance of building bridges between subjects. Research also points out the importance of building on students' strengths (Warren & Rosebery 2008 and Zentella 2005).

Both Freeman & Freeman (2009) and Schleppegrell (2005) describe how teachers can teach language and content simultaneously by setting language and content goals. However, to be able to access content taught in class, students need to master the academic language to be able to successfully comprehend, participate and communicate in cognitively demanding and context-reduced, age-appropriate activities (Himmele & Himmele 2009).

One should not forget that the students bring to school the knowledge, cultural and linguistic practices and skills that originate in their homes and communities. Therefore, following Ladson-Billings (1995) who explores connections related to education and culturally-responsive teaching, the ROADMAP also takes into account informal language learning and the way language can be developed at home.

Hence, the two following areas cover this thematic field:

- **Role of languages in learning** means that the importance of language in subject teaching is recognised, and students' language development is promoted. It means also using the advantages of plurilingualism during lessons, bridging languages for learning, and building upon students' previous knowledge and experiences.
- **Promoting informal language learning** means supporting the opportunities for students' informal language learning and their language development at home.

3.3. Organisational framework

The project aims at improving the students' mastery of the languages of schooling. As mentioned earlier, this cannot be achieved without setting up a language and learning policy, embedded in the school environment, in its working culture - and in its ethos. Setting up a supportive school policy requires an organisational framework where change and development can take place. Developing the framework needs dedicated leadership (Alvesson 2011). Researchers and practitioners recognise that a positive school culture enhances both students' day-to-day experiences and plays a role in raising their achievement (Kraft, Marinell & Yee 2016; Fergus, Noguera & Martin 2014).

School leaders are essential when welcoming newcomers and their families, and should consider using the resources offered by the school community. School leaders play a key role

in setting up the professional development necessary to improving teachers' competences and developing collaborative learning.

This thematic field, therefore, covers the following areas:

- **Orienting newcomer students and families** means supporting newcomers by using the language resources of the school environment, including both the professional and community resources for communication. This could be e.g. producing the necessary key documents in different languages.
- **Professional development** means having the structures for planning and reviewing teachers' competences, developing their awareness and cooperation, and creating and supporting professional learning communities inside the school. This area can, for example, include action-research, collaborative learning, etc.

3.4. Language-sensitive school culture

No change can come about without changing the school culture which should not only enhance the students' day-to-day experiences but also highlight the students' achievements. The school culture is shaped by both conscious and unconscious factors; therefore, it affects those who are within its sphere, regardless of whether its significance and impacts are recognised or not. Considering the impact of the school culture and recognising and rectifying its undesirable features play an important part in its development. To do so, all stakeholders should value all the languages, and not only the language(s) of schooling; they should recognise the resources of people who speak other languages than the languages of schooling and use the resources of parents and the wider community in fostering language development beyond everyday language.

These ideas are implemented through the following areas:

- **Attitudes towards languages** means valuing students' languages, and tracking their individual literacy development. This area also recognises the importance of plurilingual approaches and the way languages are visible in the school environment.
- **Language resources at school** means knowing about the languages of the students, staff and families, and knowing when and how to use them to facilitate the students' integration.

4. From nine areas to thirty-two dimensions

After the very fruitful network meeting in November 2017²⁴, the statements for the self-assessment survey which had been reorganised into nine thematic areas and written for each stakeholder (headteachers, teachers, non-teaching staff, parents and students), were tested and commented on by 536 participants of Pilot phase 1. They were then harmonised into 32 dimensions, which are subcategories of an area. Each dimension focuses on some principles, approaches, procedures or concrete actions illustrating the implementation of the particular area into school practices.

They enable the development of a whole school approach to support the language/s of schooling. The dimensions are expressed as statements in the self-assessment tool, to be evaluated by different stakeholders²⁵.

Conclusion

The ROADMAP builds upon an extensive theoretical framework regarding both the targeted stakeholders and thematic areas. It offers tools enabling schools to set up a whole-school approach to support all their students to master the language(s) of schooling and thus improve their learning and school success.

The project team members would like to acknowledge the importance of the collaboration that took place and enabled the team to set up a tool that can be used all over Europe.

Indeed, as mentioned before, the main ideas derive from a *Think tank* organised by the ECML, during which 17 language experts from 16 different European countries took into account 107 responses from 33 different countries. One can thus surmise that the development of a whole-school approach to support the language(s) of schooling is a need expressed by most European countries.

Then the network meeting of November 2017 contributed to the setting up of the 9 areas. The workshop held in November 2018²⁶ enabled the project team to get a final validation of the self-assessment survey and to start developing a database of promising practices from all over Europe and beyond. These tools are completed by a coordinator's package in order to facilitate the implementation of the ROADMAP.

Furthermore, the project team members would like to thank the different experts, Marisa Cavalli (ECML consultant), associate partners and the members of the ECML for the fruitful collaboration.

²⁴ The Network meeting took place at the ECML premises in Graz (Austria) in November 2017 and involved 16 experts from 12 different countries.

²⁵ See the list presenting the areas and dimensions on the website (in the coordinator's package): www.ecml.at/Portals/1/5MTP/roadmap/Coordinator's%20package/EN/07-Areas-and-dimensions-EN.pdf.

²⁶ The workshop involving 36 experts from 29 countries was held at the ECML premises in Graz (Austria) in November 2018.

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