International Talents in Education
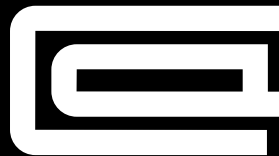
A Handbook for Employers and Other Decision-Makers

Edited by Comparative Research Network e. V.

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About LANG WORK

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Introduction

The contributions to this handbook aim at throwing light on the situation of international talents who are working, or seeking work, in the educational sector, their trajectories, assets and educational practices. More importantly, they offer tools and recommendations for employers and other decision-makers designed to facilitate their employment and promote a favourable work environment.

Chapter One on 'International Talents in European Educational Labour Markets' gives a brief overview of job opportunities for international talents at higher education institutions and in the general education system, as well as the non-profit and private sectors. Academic labour markets tend to attract more international talents in the north-western half of Europe, particularly for entry-level positions in research with temporary work contracts, because of better funding, higher salaries, more open recruitment procedures and the growing role of English as a scientific lingua franca among other factors. In the general education sector, the main hurdles for international talents appear to be strict language requirements and often regulatory barriers; in addition, teaching positions in Greece and Italy are less attractive for non-nationals because of lower salaries and uncertain employment prospect due to austerity policies that favour temporary contracts for supplementary teachers. Job opportunities for international talents in the non-profit and private sector are often associated with language teaching and educational activities targeted at persons with a migrant background. Entry barriers are generally lower but often come at the price of lower salaries and more precarious employment. The chapter also contains three personal testimonies of a Polish lecturer teaching in Finnish in Finland, a Ukrainian kindergarten educator in Germany and a former Russian academic working for an educational NGO in Germany.

In **Chapter Two** on 'Career Counselling for International Talents, Susy Galli, a self-employed career counsellor working out of London, explains how she prepares young Italian talents for moving to the United Kingdom to pursue their educational trajectory or finding an entry-level job. She insists on the importance of language barriers but also describes how the regulatory environment has radically changed since Brexit. Career guidance has become an essential part ahead of departure as the young people she advices are often ill-prepared for the application to higher education institutions and the expectations of employers.

Chapter Three on 'Assessing Language Proficiency' has a closer look at the ways language proficiency is being assessed. It describes the role and in4uence of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) in this process and then provides some recommendations how language certificates can be profitably used by employers to appraise a job candidate's language skills and how these certificates serve as gatekeepers. In education, international talents are often required to have an excellent command of the language of instruction, generally described as having attained 'native-speaker level'. The last part raises questions on the meaning and validity of this term.

Chapter Four on 'Job Interviews with International Talents' presents suggestions how to make the most of a job interview with a candidate from a different linguistic and cultural background.

Chapter Five on 'Communicating in a Multilingual Educational Environment' introduces the concept of individual 'linguistic repertoires', a set of language skills that migrants have acquired in their society of origin and during their journey to the host country, to describe the resulting multilingual and multicultural superdiversity. These repertoires defy labels such as ethnicity, language, and religion, and allow for a pluralistic approach in multilingual educational settings by recognising and validating their diversity. in such practices as translanguaging. Languages are not compartmentalised, but all linguistic resources are made use of for communication and forms of collaborative learning. Examples for good practices in these settings are open and 4exible curricula used in a learner-centred approach that promotes learning autonomy; a detailed needs analysis to consider learners' aims and motives; teachers' support to facilitate the transition from conversational to academic 4uency, and parental involvement to ensure respect for diverse identities and to benefit from familial funds of knowledge. The chapter is accompanied by a short text on linguistic landscapes whose study focuses on written productions in public spaces (boards, posters, graffiti, etc.). In education schoolscapes can be constructed in a way that includes students' multilingual linguistic repertoires and encourages practices such as translanguaging. Linguistic landscape walks, for example, are a form of collaborative learning in which students explore their social surroundings, negotiate their understandings of it and actively co-construct knowledge.

Chapter Six, 'Towards a Multilingual Workspace', presents examples and recommendations on how multilingual school and work environments can and should be adapted to the needs of multilingual users to create more welcoming workspaces for multilingual students and employees that are conducive to better learning outcomes or enhanced productivity. It also suggests an exercise that allows stakeholders to co-design such a space.

Chapter Seven on 'Supporting Language Aware Communication at the Workplace', investigates tools and practices that make workplaces linguistically accessible to foster better understanding and participation. These include plain language, language tutoring and mentoring during office hours, the use of linguistic mediation services for translation and interpretation, as well as plurilingual and multimodal communication. Each practice is examined in turn to describe how it works, when to use it and what are its potential benefits and limitations. The chapter also includes a template for evaluating these practices.

Chapter Eight on 'Teaching in a Multilingual School Environment: Translanguaging' comprises two parts. The first discusses the benefits of using translanguaging in classrooms and why multilingual teachers are likely to be more open to this practice. This is followed by an interview with the principal of a primary school in Berlin Kreuzberg, a district with a high share of children with a migrant background, on its pedagogical practices and by personal observations by one of the project partners who re4ects on Koopkultur's work in so-called welcome classes for Russian- and Ukrainian-speaking children and young people recently arrived in Germany and during extra-curricular workshops.

International Talents in European Educational Labour Markets

This introductory chapter aims at giving a broad overview of the job opportunities and perspectives for international talents in Europe's educational labour markets to provide background to the other parts of the handbook. Given the great complexity and diversity of educational institutions across Europe, this will be by necessity a very summary presentation limited to the four partner countries (Finland, Germany, Greece and Italy) for the general and non-formal education sectors and to a wider range of European countries for the academic labour market.

Academic labour markets

Over the last decades, academic mobility, both of students and academic staff, has increased in Europe. Unfortunately, the transnational mobility of academic staff has been much less studied than that of students. Statistical data are not available for all European countries or are fragmentary and not easily compared, while comparative studies usually focus on a small number of countries. Academics' mobility takes, of course, quite different forms. Here we focus on long-term mobility and do not consider short-term visits and time-limited exchanges. The share of foreign academic staff at country level may serve as a first approach.

Findings from a study based on data collected by the European Tertiary Education project (The ETER project, 2019) and complemented by recent statistical data from national statistics offices and universities show that the recruitment of foreign faculty and researchers is unevenly

distributed across Europe, allowing us to distinguish between several groups of countries. The highest shares can be observed in two very small countries, Liechtenstein and Luxembourg, followed by Switzerland, where about half of the professors, two thirds of assistants and scientific staff and 40% of other teaching staff were foreigners in 2021, and the Netherlands (45.3%), one of the first non-English speaking European countries to offer English-language degrees. The United Kingdom is the only large country with a historically high share (32.1% in 2021), reached in recent years by several smaller countries in Northern Europe (e.g., Norway 32%, Finland 27%, Sweden 26%) and central Europe (e.g., Austria 25%). Germany occupies the middle ground with (13.9%, of which 0.9% are professors) ahead of France (10.5% at universities and 15.6% at pure research institutes in 2015), while Southern European countries (e.g., Spain 2.2% in 2015) tend to have much lower, though recently growing shares. Low shares seem also characteristic of central eastern and eastern European countries.

Higher shares appear to be clearly correlated to higher levels of funding, in particular for research, more open recruitment processes, the presence of HEIs with a strong international reputation and the more frequent use of English for instruction and research. At the institutional level, high shares are associated with a high share of international students and PhD-awarding and research- rather than teaching-oriented HEIs; HEIs of applied sciences tend to have lower shares, while pure research institutions have largely higher shares, as suggested by German data (28% and even slightly more than half are foreign researchers at the institutes of the Max-Planck Gesellschaft).
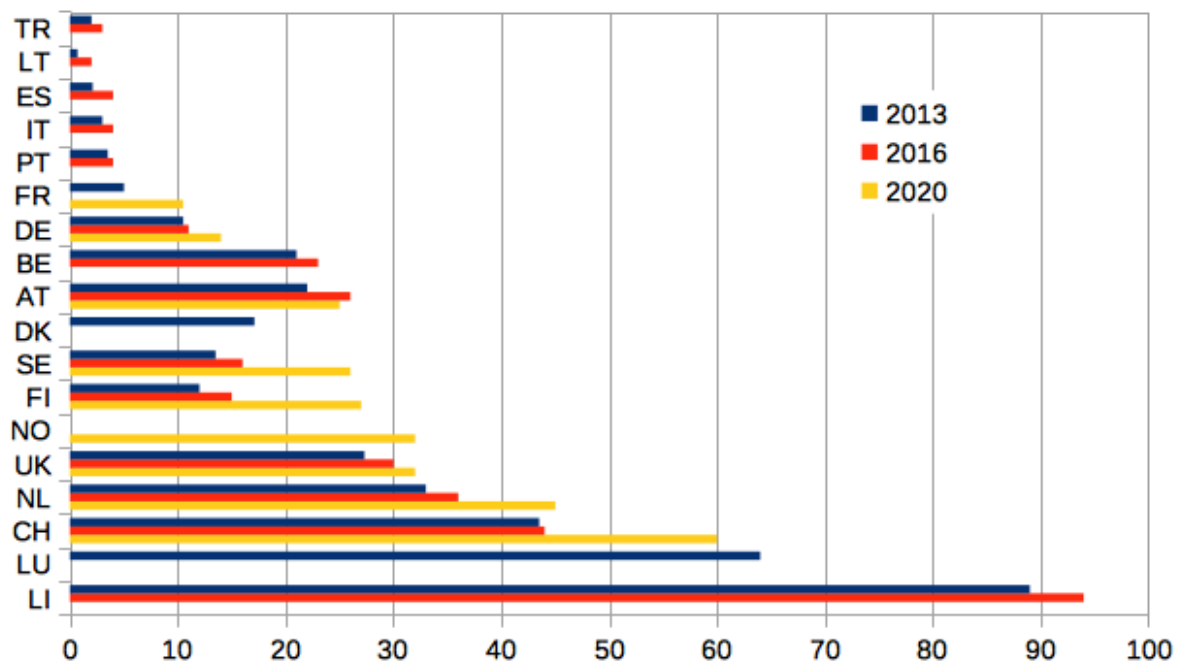

Figure 1: Share of foreign citizens among academic staff in selected European countries and for selected years in % (Source: statistical offices or science organisations in the respective countries)

Shares vary across disciplines, with the highest being observed for STEM disciplines, compared to, let's say, law. In Germany, for example, foreign academic staff accounted for 21% in

mathematics and sciences in 2020, ahead of engineering and medicine and other health care studies with 20% respectively, while the humanities (11%), law, economics and social sciences (9%) were far behind.

Lower shares in southern Europe are often attributed to less attractive employment conditions, such as lower salaries, and to recruitment procedures described as 'feudal' or characterised by 'local inbreeding' with administrative rules benefiting local candidates. In Spain, 'reports from the Spanish Ministry of Education indicate for instance that 73% of all faculty in 2014 obtained their PhD at the university where they are appointed and 85% of professors obtaining new positions already had a position in the same institution' (Alfonso n.d.). Language barriers may very well be another factor.

Regulatory barriers are also present in mid-range countries. In France, for instance, candidates for tenure-track positions at universities (but not at the Grandes Écoles, Science Po or pure research institutes that have their own rules) have to be approved by a national council, a measure originally designed to prevent internal recruitment but widely considered as a barrier for non-nationals, who may not be aware of this requirement and have to produce an important number of documents, such as a lengthy summary in French of their PhD thesis, to get their candidature validated. Similarly in Germany, access to a tenured professorship requires a *habilitation,* a sort of strong second PhD thesis.

Finally, the language used for instruction or in research appears to act as a barrier to, or on the contrary to favour, academic transnational mobility. As English has become the dominant lingua franca in many scientific disciplines, and particularly in research, most academics are today proficient in it – at least to a certain extent. Consequently, they find it easier to obtain employment abroad as researchers or, less frequently, teachers, notably at HEIs that have been at the vanguard of internationalisation through the adoption of English, including for study programmes. Proficiency in the national language of the host country, though useful, may not be necessary for research positions. But international talents may face difficulties in obtaining a tenure-track or tenured position, which often comes with a permanent work contract, if their proficiency in the national language is considered insufficient for a job that brings with it important teaching and administrative responsibilities.

At the same time, the growing importance of English in these countries has given rise to two kinds of concerns. On the one hand, fears have been voiced that the national language may in future no longer serve as a scientific language ('domain loss'). On the other, there is an apprehension that the quality of teaching may suffer because most students and faculty members are non-native speakers and might lack the necessary language skills. As a consequence, the University of Copenhagen has, for instance, established a Centre for Internationalisation and Parallel Language Use in 2008, which has developed and implemented a Test for Oral English Proficiency for Academic Staff (Dimova, Hultgren and Kling, 2021).

Furthermore, linguistically hurdles can be inexistent when international talents move to a country where the language of instruction is the same as their first language (e.g. a move between French- or German-speaking countries). German academics, for example, are particularly well represented in Austria (43% of all foreign academic staff) and Switzerland (30%). Language barriers are also likely to play a lesser role when an international talent has already arrived as an

exchange or graduate student or when the language of the target country is frequently taught as a foreign language at school, such as French or German. However, these barriers are relative. When taking into account the population of their respective countries of origin, Greek and Italian academics are represented above average among foreign academic staff In Europe.

Another feature of European higher education systems is their extraordinary diversity. With regard to employment conditions, a major distinction can be made between countries that offer entry- and mid-level permanent positions with the prospect of internal promotion over time (e.g. northern, southern and eastern Europe, the UK, the Netherlands) and those that do not (e.g. Germany, German-speaking Switzerland, Austria), although most countries of the former group now also have numerous temporary positions (typically grant-funded postdoctoral fellowships) as non-core funding has been diversified and become more important. In some cases, fixed-term contracts can be renewed indefinitely, allowing academic staff to remain employed in the expectation of advancing their career. In others, such as the main tenure-track positions in Germany, they cannot. Until the recent introduction of a junior professorship, there has even been a 5–10-year gap, which constituted an important push factor in the German system for academics to seek employment abroad. It also makes open countries with permanent entry- or mid-level positions, such as the UK and the Netherlands, particularly attractive for foreign academics. Overall, European HEIs have dealt with uncertain funding by creating large numbers of fixed-contract positions, notably for postdocs, which have increased precarious employment and led to more uncertain career prospects.

As data from Germany suggest, foreign academic staff tend to become less diversified over time and countries outside western Europe (i.e. before the eastward expansion of the European Union) and to be less represented when it comes to tenured positions. Thus, foreign academics from western Europe accounted for only a third of total academic staff in 2021, but two thirds of professors came from this region. Similarly the seven major countries of origin of total foreign academic staff were India (7.2%), Italy (7.0%), China (6.7%), Austria (5.3%), Russia and the United States (both 4.4%), and Iran 4.1%), while most foreign professors are citizens of Austria (19.4%), Switzerland (8.8%), Italy (8.3%), the United States and the Netherlands (both 6.9%), France (4.9%) and the United Kingdom (4.5%).

24 Total international academic staff and international professors at German universities, by region of origin and key countries of origin, 2021[1,2,3]

Country of origin	Total academic staff		Country of origin	Professors	
	Number	In %		Number	In %
India	4,520	7.2	Austria	722	19.4
Italy	4,334	7.0	Switzerland	326	8.8
China	3,961	6.7	Italy	310	8.3
Austria	3,118	5.3	US	257	6.9
Russia	2,535	4.4	Netherlands	256	6.9
US	2,448	4.4	France	183	4.9
Iran	2,384	4.1	United Kingdom	169	4.5
Spain	2,336	3.8	Spain	140	3.8
France	2,115	3.6	Russia	96	2.6
Turkey	1,811	3.0	Greece	94	2.5
United Kingdom	1,640	2.8	China	80	2.1
Greece	1,471	2.5	Belgium	75	2.0
Netherlands	1,360	2.4	Poland	72	1.9
Poland	1,280	2.3	Turkey	52	1.4
Switzerland	1,115	1.9	Canada	46	1.2

Source: Federal Statistical Office, university staff statistics

Figure 2: Total international academic staff and international professors at German universities by region or origin and key countries of origin, 2021 (Source: Federal Statistics Office, university staff statistics)

This raises the question of the long-term career prospects of international talents in academe. With appropriate academic qualifications, entry-level positions with fixed-term work contracts seem to be accessible to a large number of candidates, especially when the working language is English. As the career trajectory towards full tenure is funnel-shaped, with a decreasing number of persons being promoted to higher-level positions, international talents at critical stages will, however, often face the question whether to stay on or return to their home country. In the internationalisation discourse, academic mobility is usually seen as creating a virtuous circle: young talents move abroad, typically to occupy a postdoc position, where they are enlarging their academic horizon and expand their professional network before pursuing a successful career abroad at a university or in the private sector of their host country rather than remain unemployed or underemployed at home ('brain waste'). Alternatively, they will return to their home country to contribute to knowledge transfer and future research cooperations there. This may work well for international talents moving between open systems. Those who return to a country where internal recruitment and promotion are the rule will often find it difficult to re-enter the local system, especially if they have lost contact with local professional networks. Some sending countries, such as Hungary and Greece, have, however, become concerned about the 'brain drain' they are experiencing and have set up programmes to encourage a return by offering higher salaries or better working conditions to their expatriate academics.

A Journey to Become a Finnish-Speaking Lecturer and Researcher

Marta's Story

'I came to Finland as an exchange student, and afterwards, I decided to continue my studies as a master's student. After completing my master's studies in Finland, I embarked on my dream to do a PhD as work at the university has been my long-held dream. Finland seemed a great country to do so: the university was open to the international students, hard work was appreciated here, university staff were friendly and easy to approach, and studies were independent and highly flexible. I loved it here even though the weather was hard to cope with.

'Since the beginning, I have been interested in studying the Finnish language to fully participate in academic and social life. Back then, English was not so popularly spoken in and outside of academia. There were not many courses taught in English at the university either.

'Studying the Finnish language has been an intensive pursuit throughout my life in Finland. First, I took all the Finnish language courses that were available at the university to the exchange and international students. Then, I took language courses offered by the city's community college. When I received my first research grant, I spent a large part of it on language summer courses in another Finnish city. I was also fortunate to have the support of wonderful friends, my spouse, and some colleagues, all of whom patiently practiced Finnish with me. Some did so because they did not want to, could not or simply preferred not to speak English. We often shared enjoyable moments and laughter over my language mistakes. I have always been grateful when others offered language advice.

'After a couple of years, to elevate my Finnish skills to a more professional level, I undertook vocational training for community interpretation in another Finnish city. For about one and a half years, I juggled my PhD and this training. Afterwards, for a couple of years, I acted as a community interpreter, which provided me with valuable insights into the working life in Finland. Although I am no longer working as a community interpreter, the vocational training and degree equipped me with a valuable skill set and bolstered my confidence. This enabled me to actively engage in the Finnish academic community, gaining a deeper understanding of my rights and the intricacies of Finnish academia. Furthermore, it created avenues for me to provide teaching in both English and Finnish, even while I was still pursuing my PhD.

'Later, after attaining my PhD, I acted as a lecturer on three separate occasions substituting for my colleagues. It was during these periods that I realised my deep-seated passion for teaching. Each time I taught in Finnish different set of courses.

One of these positions was officially announced; I learned about it on Friday while the application deadline was on Monday. I dedicated the entire weekend to crafting the strongest job application possible, and, to my immense joy, I secured the position. This happened during a one-year period of unemployment when my hopes of obtaining any research grants or teaching positions were waning.

'The two other substitute lecturer positions were only published internally and linked to the peculiar situation I find myself in. The colleagues I filled in for generously shared their teaching materials with me. Moreover, they also welcomed my suggestions for further developing their courses, drawing on my own teaching experiences. One of these substitutions spanned the entirety of an academic year, culminating in a teaching award from the students. It was incredibly gratifying to learn that my teaching was perceived as inspiring, proficient, and beneficial by the students.

'In this regard, I have consistently embraced challenging positions and work tasks. The teaching roles I undertook were demanding, requiring extensive preparation and reading, given that all the courses were primarily based on Finnish research and required the use of the Finnish study materials. I spent an enormous number of hours learning to teach in Finnish the things I before was used to teach and discuss only in my native language and English.

'Moreover, although the traditional approach to teaching was tempting, I was keen on experimenting with interactive teaching methods, despite the additional uncertainties it brought to me as a teacher. Whenever possible, I also engaged in collaborative teaching, an experience I found exceptionally fulfilling. It offered a platform for reciprocal learning, where diverse educators could amalgamate their distinct skill sets to create fresh learning experiences for students. As a part of collaborative teaching, I aimed to demonstrate to students that one need not be close friends to be able to collaborate effectively. I wanted to illustrate how varied personalities and cultures can complement one another, coexisting in a mutually enriching and creative manner.

'Being part of academic professional networks has proven to be crucial in Finland, though not always easily attainable. Research and teaching are inherently collective endeavours, necessitating a supportive work environment. Hence, I found identifying considerate and supportive collaborators and mentors as paramount. I also found that being open, curious and friendly could help in doing it, at least to some extent. I also proactively approach people to gauge their interest in potential collaborations. Most of the time this attitude worked well for me. I have had opportunities to work with wonderful people within and beyond Finland.

'Following the attainment of my PhD, I was fortunate to have a remarkable mentor who provided invaluable support during a critical and uncertain period of my academic career. She consistently made time to review and provide feedback

on my job and grant applications, always encouraging me to persevere. Many of my collaborators exhibited similar kindness and support, serving as a wellspring of positive energy and motivation. This experience underscored for me the importance of surrounding oneself with considerate and kind people.

'Furthermore, I found it crucial to have the confidence to continually seek information, even if it may sometimes feel challenging, tiring or repetitive. As a female academic with a working-class and international background, it is necessary to become accustomed to operating outside one's own linguistic, cultural, and academic comfort zones. This may often require setting aside any pride or expectations of being automatically versed in the workings of academia. A significant amount of information circulates informally within professional networks, and if one is not a part of them, one risks missing out. Therefore, I believe it is crucial to persist in asking when in need of information, uncertain about how things operate, or unsure about one's rights and responsibilities. When working in two non-native languages, I have also learned the importance of not hesitating to sound less than perfect or even making mistakes. Simply asking, engaging with people, and seeking out kind and respectful people to surround oneself I found extremely important.

'Finnish universities might want to consider offering their international staff better opportunities to study the Finnish language and recognise it as part of the professional development rather than just a hobby or a private matter. I have consistently worked to dispel misconceptions about the idea that one can simply learn Finnish, particularly academic Finnish, by living in Finland or having Finnish friends, colleagues, or a spouse. Finnish is a particularly challenging language; its learning requires significant resources, and it is an ongoing effort that deserves recognition as such.

'Additionally, Finnish universities may want to contemplate formalising mentorship programmes and information channels to ensure that all academic members have equal access to information and mentoring. While I emphasise the importance of being able and willing to ask as a vital work practice, it is difficult to ask about or for something when one is unaware that it even exists.

Finally, every community benefits from informal but inclusive gatherings for its members, such as breakfast, lunch, or coffee meetings, celebrations of collective achievements, information sessions, and other opportunities to get to know one another better. This also helps to lower the barrier for extending collaborative offers. Due to language and cultural disparities, misconceptions even within diverse work communities may easily occur, therefore it is so important to facilitate opportunities for casual encounters in any workplace to increase opportunities for dismantling misconceptions, advancing intercultural communication and collaboration.'

Teaching in the general education system

Most European countries have procedures in place whereby international talents can apply for a teaching job in the public general education system or its similarly regulated private or non-profit equivalents. Formal requirements usually include proof of proficiency in the language of instruction, a recognised academic degree and prior teaching experience. Successfully completing an aptitude test, additional studies or compensatory measures may be necessary to fully qualify. Broadly analogous criteria are applied for the recognition of qualifications with regard to non-teaching educational professions (educators, social workers) in the regulated part of the education system. In practice, successfully applying for a job in education can, however, be a lengthy and laborious process.

Recruitment for teaching posts is often through competitive procedures (examinations, ranking lists, etc.), with successful candidates being guaranteed employment, mostly with permanent contracts, while less successful ones are appointed as substitute teachers with a temporary contract and on demand. This two-tier system allows governments and school authorities flexibility to respond to fluctuating demand and budgetary constraints. There are usually specific regulations for teachers instructing in a language other than the official national ones. As national systems tend to vary widely, the present presentation will be limited to a short summary overview for the four partner countries (Finland, Germany, Greece and Italy) with a particular focus on the German situation, for which more statistical data appear to be available. Many countries face or forecast teacher shortages to some extent in some subjects and regions but also oversupply in others.

In Italy teacher shortages are said to be 'most acute in disciplines like science and maths, foreign languages and learning support, and in the north of the country' (European Commission 2019a). About 80% of the teachers are from the south while most open positions are in the north. The high share of substitute teachers (18.5% in 2018/19) is responsible for a high turnover. Italy has the oldest teaching workforce in Europe (58% were over 50 years old in 2017, against an average of 37% in EU member states) and the government has undertaken repeated reforms of the recruitment process, which at present takes place through centrally administered competitions with ranked results for pre-primary, primary and secondary teachers at the national or regional level, to cope with persistent shortages. Newly appointed teachers have to undergo an induction period (training and supervised teaching) of at least 180 days (Eurydice n.d.). However, another reform is currently under way. Salaries are comparatively low and have been subject to freezes due to austerity policies in the recent past. Teaching qualifications obtained abroad need to be validated by the Ministry of Education for different teaching roles (nursery, primary, lower and upper secondary school teacher) and recognition may include taking part in compensatory measures (website of the Italian Ministry of Education).

Despite teacher salaries roughly similar to those of other graduates and excellent working conditions, Finland nevertheless has smaller shortages for special needs and early education teachers, career counsellors, as well as in the metropolitan area of Helsinki (European Commission 2019b). Admission to teacher education programmes is highly selective. Teaching qualifications obtained abroad have to be validated by the Finnish National Agency for Education with criteria varying for candidates from other Northern countries, other EU/EEA countries or Switzerland, and third countries (Finnish National Agency for Education). Qualifications from other EU/EEA countries and Switzerland are broadly recognised but candidates may have to successfully complete an aptitude test or an adaptation period under supervision, while those from third countries may require candidates to complete supplementing studies at a Finnish HEI, which must not exceed one third of the studies leading to the targeted degree. Specific regulations govern the eligibility of teachers instructing in a foreign language (i.e. other than Finnish, Swedish or Sami). Qualified teachers are hired by individual education providers (e.g. municipalities, private bodies), generally with a permanent contract. To cover temporary shortages, education providers usually employ substitute teachers (typically teachers with no permanent contract or students) with no time-limit or unqualified substitutes for a period of up to 6–12 months (Eurydice n.d.).

The situation in Greece is strongly affected by the difficult economic circumstances. Despite huge salary cuts in real terms in the recent past, teaching has remained a highly popular profession, with good salary levels compared to European countries with a similar per-capita GDP, below-average working hours and small classes. However, in the aftermath of the financial crisis, no permanent teachers were recruited until 2019 (418 teachers who had successfully completed competitive exams in 2008). In 2017, a recruitment drive for supplementary teachers, who have annual contracts and are paid by the hour, attracted 120,000 candidates for 20,000 open posts. During roughly the same period (2008–2018), 14,869 secondary teachers sought recognition in other EU countries, compared to 594 during the preceding decade (European Commission 2019c). In 2020, 3,345 permanent teachers were hired for special education and, in 2021, 11,699 for general education, as well as 8,087 in 2022 to compensate for retirements. At present, recruitment for permanent and temporary positions at public schools is based on ranked lists for each discipline that take into account educational qualifications, work experience and other

criteria. The bulk of vacancies continue to be filled with supplementary teachers. Private institutions follow their own rules of recruitment (data communicated by Stella Bratimou, University of Thessaly).

In Germany, teacher shortages are said to exist mainly in eastern Germany with a shortfall of 22%, while western Germany has a slight annual oversupply for new vacancies according to official figures from 2018 (European Commission 2019d). However, official forecasts at the time also spoke of the need for 81,000 full-time equivalents by 2030, particularly for primary, special needs and vocational education teachers. About 38% of primary and 44% of secondary school teachers were 50 years or older in 2018. Indeed, to cope with shortages, most of the sixteen federal states, who are responsible for education, have implemented a series of measures, such as incentives for the return of retired teachers and the postponement of retirement, the return to civil servant status previously abolished or at least permanent contracts for new teachers, and, more importantly, the increased hiring of personnel without initial teacher training (8.4% in 2016, with peaks in Berlin and Saxony where 40.1% and 50.6% respectively have recently been recruited as so-called 'career changers' or 'lateral entrants') or with teaching qualifications obtained abroad. Recognition procedures in the latter case are broadly similar to those described for Finland and Italy but vary from one federal state to another. One major hurdle for international talents, as well as for lateral entrants, is that German teachers generally have to teach two subjects, requiring them to complete additional studies, as a single degree is not sufficient. Those who start a teaching career have to successfully complete a probationary service of 2.5-to-3 and up to 5 years before being allowed to apply for permanent employment or civil servant status. Appointments take place on the basis of vacancies and 'qualifications, aptitude and record of achievement' by the competent regional Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs (Eurydice n.d.). However, some positions may also be advertised for a particular school that collects the applications and will participate in the selection process. Although appointed teachers may in principle move to another federal state, they have to reapply for appointment with a sometimes uncertain outcome in states strongly in demand. For international talents in particular, the federal system can be difficult to navigate.

A recent report published by the teachers' union GEW (2020) has thus identified a number of problems, namely 1. the long processing time for the recognition of a candidate's professional qualification (156 days on average and up to 462 days) and the difficult mapping to concrete teaching roles and specific teaching subjects, as well as the need for a second subject, in the context of a highly complex educational system familiar only to professionals (e.g. teachers, career counsellors); 2. a rarely used aptitude test because of uncertain requirements and lengthy compensatory measures that last from six months to three years with low success rates (5 to 10%); 3. a high level of proficiency in the German language (mostly at the C2-level); and financial barriers, such as comparatively high administrative fees for the recognition procedure and participation in compensatory measures, along with low incomes during this preparatory phase. By 2020, only 11% of the applications for the recognition of professional qualifications received a positive reply, 4% led to a partial recognition, 17% to a negative reply, and 68% of the applicants were asked to take part in a compensatory measure, successfully completed by an estimated 9%.

During the school year 2019/2020, the average share of teachers without German citizenship was only 1.6%, ranging from 0.6% in the region of Sachsen-Anhalt to 5.4% in Berlin (German Federal Statistics Office 2021). Of the 10,704 teachers without German citizenship employed in

the general education system in 2018/19, most were citizens of a European country (7,833), ahead of the Americas (1,110, with 696 from the US), Asia (447), Africa (180) and Australia/Oceania (153). In descending order, more than 70% of Europeans came from France (807), the UK (708), Austria (708). Poland (642), Turkey, Italy or Spain (all 591), Greece (441), the Russian Federation (381), Denmark (285) and the Netherlands (231).
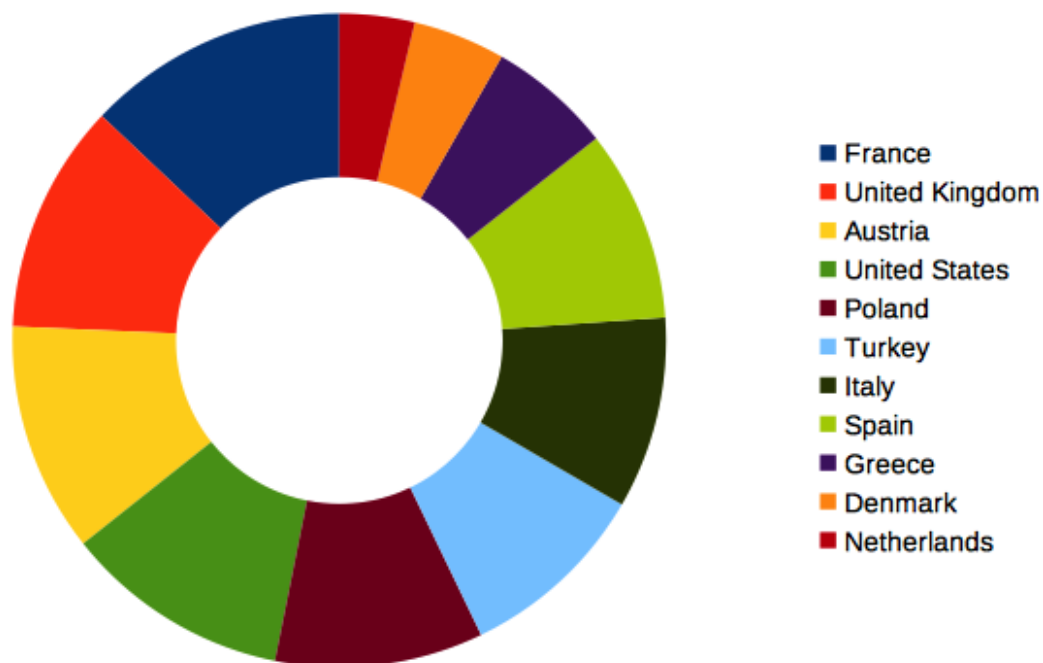
Figure 3: Share of foreign citizens among teaching staff of German schools from the top 11 countries.

A significant share is employed in federal states neighbouring their country of origin, have the citizenship of countries whose national language is one of the major foreign languages taught in German schools (English, French, Spanish) or are from countries with a long-standing labour migration to Germany. For comparison: teachers in the general education system with a migrant background account for one of the lowest shares (11.1%, similar to that of Finland with 10%) across all major economic sectors (with an average of 24.4% for all sectors) according to data from the Federal Statistics Office (2020), while 39% of students in general and vocational education have a migrant background (2021 micro census of the Federal Statistics Office).

Nursery schools, or kindergartens, in Germany mostly employ educators *(Erzieher/innen),* who also work in all-day schools and child and youth welfare institutions. The profession is regulated at the level of the federal states, with some variations between them. Educators usually have a degree from a university of applied sciences of social pedagogy or, more often, have been trained at a vocational school for two to five years, depending on the school leaving certificate and prior professional training or work experience. Recognition of qualifications obtained in other European countries are generally unproblematic, but candidates may have to successfully complete compensatory measures if the curriculum of their degree programme has not covered all subjects included in the German curriculum. More importantly, they are required to have reached a German-language proficiency level equivalent to C1.

How to become a Kindergarten Educator in Berlin

Marinessa's Story

'I studied in Ukraine for 6 years (4 years of college and 2 years of academy) and got my bachelor's degree as a pre-school teacher. I did my mandatory internship in state kindergartens. After graduation, I worked as a teacher with pre-school children in different private children's centres in Kharkiv and then Kyiv. In my work I used Ukrainian, Russian and English.

'After four years, we decided to move to Berlin so that my husband could study at university. We arrived with no knowledge of German and attended language courses in Berlin for a year. During this time, I worked as a nanny for Ukrainian families in Ukrainian and Russian.

'After a year in Berlin, I decided that I wanted to work as a pre-school teacher again. I started looking for Russian- or Ukrainian-speaking organisations as I didn't feel confident enough in German and English.

'Through Facebook and Ukrainian acquaintances, I found several non- profit organisations that work with children in Russian and Ukrainian. I started writing letters and received positive responses from most of them. That's how I started to work with very interesting teachers and activists on different projects in non-profit organisations.

'One of the areas in which I wanted to continue working was with children with special needs. And I managed to find a Russian-speaking organisation with this kind of work. No one required me to have a diploma for this kind of work.

'In order to work with non-profit organisations, I had to register as a freelancer. Luckily, in Berlin, this procedure is quite simple.

'While working on projects, I decided that I wanted to be able to work in kindergartens and schools. So, I decided to go to university, as I thought my Ukrainian diploma would not be recognised. I went to an open day at a private pedagogical university to find out about admission requirements. However, my German was weak, and I did not understand everything. The counsellor at the university, after studying my documents, said that it would be pointless for me to start the first year and study again. He suggested that I try to get my Ukrainian diploma recognised and gave me instructions on how to do this.

'I made translations of all the necessary documents, paid the fee and sent the documents to the Berlin Senate. A month later, I received a reply saying that my diploma could be confirmed if I passed German at C1- level and studied for six months at a pedagogical institute to complete the missing modules.

'Half a year later, I started studying at the institute. It was very interesting and useful. It also helped me to improve my language skills. The training and textbooks were fully

paid for by the Senate. After writing and defending my thesis, I received a certificate. But I still have to pass the C1 test in German.

'Parallel to my studies, I worked in a kindergarten in Berlin. An internship was a prerequisite for my studies. I managed not only to get an internship, but also a contract as an assistant teacher for pre-school children. I was doing the same work as a fully-fledged teacher, but my salary was a lot lower.

'For a year I combined my work in a kindergarten, my work as a teacher in non-profitt organisations and my studies. During this time, my German improved a lot because it was the only language used for working in the kindergarten.

'With the beginning of the war in Ukraine, many families with children came to Berlin. The work in non-profit organisations increased and there were many projects for children from Ukraine. So, I decided to quit my job at the kindergarten and focus more on working with children from Ukraine.

'I have not yet passed the German language test and keep postponing it. As a consequence, I have still not received the confirmation of my Ukrainian diploma as a teacher. I hope to solve this problem in the near future. Currently, I am successfully working as a freelancer for several non-profit organisations, and I am very satisfied with this work. In my work I use Ukrainian, Russian, German and English.'

Other Job Opportunities in the Educational Sector

International talents are generally well represented in language teaching, whether at language schools or at bilingual and international schools, whose numbers have been rising in areas with a high share of migrants and because of temporary migration patterns. They seem also strongly present in teaching the national language of their host country as a second language. In Germany, for instance, the share of teaching staff for the publicly subsidised German-language classes who do not have German citizenship is roughly 20%.

In schools, international talents play an important role in welcome, or reception, classes for newly arrived children and young people and the numerous extracurricular educational activities offered by, schools, NGOs and cultural associations or support programmes for those with a migrant background, as school authorities and some parents have become more aware of the benefits of multilingual classrooms. Job opportunities may also exist at certain unregulated private supplementary schools (embassy or international schools, music or journalism schools, higher vocational schools).

International NGOs that offer trainings or educational activities in a variety of languages are another option. The advantages of these mostly unregulated professional activities are lower

entry barriers and less competition from national talents, at the price, however, of frequently part-time or precarious employment, limited career prospects and lower salaries or reduced income in the case of self-employment. For these reasons, these occupations are often considered as transitional for new arrivals or as refuge zones for those, mainly from non-European countries, who remain attached to teaching and education but did not succeed in getting their professional qualifications recognised in their host country. This does not mean that there are no success stories outside public education. International talents with an entrepreneurial bent, for instance, have started thriving businesses as education providers in the private or non-profit sector in fields such as school support, general education or continued vocational education and training thanks to their specific language and cultural skills as well as networks better adapted to target groups of migrants and their descendants.

From Academia to the Corporate Sector to NGO Activism
Olesya's Story

'My education in Russia included 10 years at school and 6 years at university. During this time, I learnt English and some French as a hobby. After graduating from university with a Master of Science in Biochemistry, I wanted to experience living abroad. I found a programme for international students in Germany on the internet, which offered an education in one of the graduate schools in the federal state of NRW [North Rhine-Westphalia]. Three years of living and studying in such an international environment helped me to master my English skills and grow professionally. I also learnt German and completed my PhD in Molecular Biology. I made some attempts to learn French during this time, but it was extremely unproductive as my teacher used too much German in class.

'After graduation and a few months of work in Germany, I moved to London to work as a postdoctoral researcher in cancer research and ended up living and working there for almost ten years. I continued to study both German and French as a hobby alongside my work until my daughter was born. At some point, my contract with the university I was working for ended without an option to continue.

Additionally, my landlord terminated my rental contract. London was becoming a very expensive place to live, and our family decided to move to Berlin, where the cost of living was lower and where we had always wanted to live. My idea was also that I had great work experience, knowledge of languages, including German, and a PhD obtained in Germany. So, I thought it would be easy to settle in Berlin and find a job. That's why I didn't look for a job before we actually moved to a new city.

'The reality of finding a job in Berlin was much harder than I had expected. First of all, academia was out of the question after so many years as a postdoc abroad. Getting into biotech companies without any industrial experience seemed impossible. Moreover, after a gap of not learning and speaking German, my language skills were not sufficient to demonstrate my aptitude and motivation, and to get through the interview process. The whole process of getting a job that matched my qualifications was a painful and slow process, and I ended up without a job after six months. I asked my counsellor at the Employment Agency (Agentur für Arbeit) for help in writing my CV. He agreed that I should attend a series of one-to one CV writing consultations for two months offered by a private institution, which were fully paid for by the Agency. The CV writing consultations were partially successful in that I improved my professional German through regular speaking and writing practice, but they did not result in me getting a job. Companies were not willing to pay me according to my academic qualifications without relevant work experience in the industry. After these consultations, I realised that there was an option for me to do a

project management course to enter the job market with a new qualification in demand and a German diploma.

'I even received a positive response from my advisor in the Agency to pursue experience in the industry. After these consultations, I realised that there was an option for me to do a project management course to enter the job market with a new qualification in demand and a German diploma. I even received a positive response from my advisor in the Agency to pursue this option, but the course was eight months long and the family's financial situation was not favourable to afford full-time study. At the time, my family was not eligible for financial support in Germany. It's expected that by this time a foreigner should either have found a job or leave the country or be financially self-sufficient without state support.

'However, while seeking employment, I was building my network in Berlin and realised that there was a demand within the Russian-speaking community to preserve the Russian language. I got in touch with an NGO founded by parents and offered them some trial workshops combining art and science for children. The first workshops were a great success and I decided to try my hand as an educator and offer workshops for children on weekends. I registered as a freelancer and attended a course on taxation in Russian given by an experienced freelancer in my network. Then I started expanding my own network of parents and educators and running workshops in three languages – Russian, English, and German. I earned some money with my activities, but the cost of materials and rent was too high to make a profit, the only financial source to support my needs and those of my family.

'Fortunately, I kept in touch with former lab members I had worked with during my PhD. One of them helped me get a job in an international start ́five years I had progressed to a relatively senior position and salary. My background and skills seem to be useful to the company's business and are highly valued.

'At the same time, the network of multilingual educators was growing, and I became part of an international, multilingual team of activists who together registered an NGO to provide educational activities and workshops for multicultural and multilingual families. Therefore, I continued this activity as a freelancer and volunteer in parallel to my main job in the start-up. During this time, our team managed to get several grants, and this allowed us to work with many NGOs, freelance educators and migrant organisations in Berlin, offering people to run workshops and activities and sharing financial resources with them.

Career Counselling for International Talents

Member of the Italian National Association for Career Counsellors ASNOR (Associazione Nazionale Orientatori), Susy Galli works as a career counsellor in London orienting young people and international talents from Italy who want to pursue their education or start a professional career in the United Kingdom. The following is an edited interview with Susy Galli.

The prevalence of language barriers

'Language barriers are now more than in the past one important issue for Italian talents (who didn't study in international schools) and want to move to the United Kingdom today.

'Before Brexit, there were fewer barriers for students who wanted to get work experience or improve their language skills. As is probably the case in other countries, not so many students are fluent in English (or any other foreign language) despite studying it at school. The main difficulty is generally the spoken language. Without a good vocabulary and good pronunciation, it's hard to communicate or explain something in detail, especially attending University.

> Today students who decide to go abroad need guidance before departure. It's a very compelling process because they take action and commitment in the understanding of what they want to achieve.

'In fact, in the past, work experience or studying in the UK helped many students improve their language skills as well as become familiar with a different culture, besides understanding how life in the UK really is. Once a place to rent was found, students could start their studies or courses. Major planning wasn't necessary.

Today, this is no longer possible. Students who decide to go abroad need guidance before departure, and this is part of what I do. It's a very compelling process because students take action and commitment in the understanding of what they want to achieve. In some cases, this ends up in the evaluation that coming to the UK or Ireland, for example, could be the right choice to learn or improve not only their English but also their skills.'

A different school system

'Once ready, students must apply to the College through the University admission service, (UCAS) submit their academic history, explain what kind of experience they have, write a personal statement and provide proof of proficiency in the English language (at least B level). To support them in this process there are specialized Companies, sometimes built by international students, who know perfectly what it means to live this life changing experience and can help them in accessing global education, following the entire process.

'The educational system in England is different and most of the schools and Universities have an internal Career Guidance Service to support students. Schools also sponsor a non-mandatory programme called the Duke of Edinburgh Award, which encourages kids to volunteer, engage in physical activities of their interest and in the community, or start a business activity with friends. The aim is to enhance their skills and acquire new ones, test their limits, and build confidence, making them independent and more conscious when the time to start looking for a university career comes. English secondary school is the same for everyone, but students have to choose in year nine when they are fourteen years old, 4 subjects they want to carry on, alongside the compulsory ones (usually English, Maths and Sciences) based on their grades and on what they like most. In year 11 then, they take GCSEs end-of-year exams in all 9 subjects.

'During the last two years instead, in the Sixth Form, they study for their A-levels, only focusing on three or four main subjects. This means that the area of study they will pick at university is clearer. Thus, the process is smoother.'

Post-Brexit financial and legal hurdles

'Students who arrive from abroad, need a student Visa to stay in the UK. This kind of Visa, which has a cost itself, allows them, if they need to, to work twenty hours a week (the average salary for an international student part-time job varies from £8 to £12 per hour, yet this rate can vary depending on the student experience, job location or industry, making it quite difficult for students to afford housing, food, school fees, etc). Moreover, international students are required to pay for their health insurance if the study program lasts more than 6 months.

> With a student visa, an international talent is allowed to work only twenty hours a week, making it quite difficult to afford housing, food, school fees, etc., as well as the obligatory health insurance. Unless their family can provide financial support, it is not easy to plan on studying in the UK.

'That said, unless their families can provide financial support, it is not easy to plan on studying in the UK compared to the before Brexit era, a better and often most supported alternative is Ireland. For this reason, offering academic or career guidance to young people is important to me, on their future field of study,

educational and professional goals, as well as helping them understand what kind of courses are suitable for their personal needs and expectations, and finally preparing them to be capable to find the best job related to that.

'Usually, as a first job they can get an entry-level job or internship, unless they have some previous experience already, in any case, it is necessary to get a Graduate Visa (post study). This allows graduates to look for jobs and work for two years in the UK, regardless of starting salary or skill level.

'Coming from abroad, instead, an international talent must be sponsored by an employer, which entails a long and complicated bureaucratic procedure. It also means that the employer has to be quite sure that a particular candidate is the right person for the position and that no local applicants are available (holding a residence permit, a national insurance number and a work permit) since the employer will have to pay for a sponsorship licence. It can be a good opportunity for those professionals seeking a job in a sector with labour shortages, typically healthcare, where nurses, doctors and other healthcare professionals are always needed, or in the IT sector and finance.

> Admission to university in or outside London is challenging because the British higher education system is very competitive. Students need excellent grades and English knowledge, proven interests and achievements in academic disciplines. Even after securing a place at a university, they will still need to attend English lessons.

'Gaining admission to a university in or outside London, (e.g. Russell Group University such as Oxbridge, Imperial College) is challenging because the higher education system is very competitive. Students need excellent grades and English knowledge, proven interests and achievements in academic disciplines. Even after securing a place at a university, they should still need to attend English lessons. Missing exams can be tricky, because a student Visa can be extended for a while, but may not be renewed for longer periods, meaning that students waste time and money with no chance to finish their studies.

'Although I didn't do much counselling for fully qualified Italian workers seeking a job challenge here in London, I know that most graduate degrees and professional qualifications are recognised in the UK, however before applying for a job it's better to check the current qualifications and discover whether they will be recognised in the UK through the UK ENIC (National Information Centre for the Recognition and Evaluation of International Qualifications).'

Applying for a job

'British employers usually appreciate Italian talents. They can be creative, with a fine work ethic and often bring a good sense of community to their work environment due to their flexibility and sociability. For this reason, with proper qualifications and skills, it is possible to find a job at a good salary level, especially, as I said, in healthcare, IT and finance. On the other hand, Italian language skills are rarely in demand.

> The job application process is roughly similar to the Italian one. However, British candidates usually know how to better present themselves, confidently stating who they are and what they do.

'The job application process is roughly similar to the Italian one. However, British candidates usually know how to better present themselves, confidently stating who they are and what they do. In my experience, young people often are unaware of what a job description is, understand that a job position is a mix of competences required, tasks to perform and responsibilities. The following step is to pay enough attention to the fact that their skills have to closely match what the employer is looking for and reflect those skills in their CV.

'For instance, when a student states, "I want to work in marketing", this is far too generic and may refer to something else instead, e.g. Public Relations, after further knowledge of different roles and positions is gained. Given the context, I usually work with them to provide the necessary tools, information and support to enable students to take responsibility in these areas, as well as develop an educational plan compatible with their personal, academic and professional goals, highlighting what skills they need to apply for a specific job or position, and how to slightly adapt their CV for different job applications.

'The work culture in the UK is overall the same as in Italy, except we are used to working longer hours. In the UK lunch break is shorter, commuting takes longer, and for many employees, going to the pub after work for a beer is a good way to finish their day. That, on the contrary, is quite uncommon in Italy.'

Assessing Language Proficiency

International talents seeking employment in the educational sector in their host country often have to provide some proof of their linguistic proficiency at various stages of their trajectory. Whether and when such proof is needed, what form it may take and what levels of proficiency are expected depends largely on legislation, regulation and practices, which vary widely across Europe, on the one hand, and the legal status and characteristics of the person concerned, on the other. Proof of proficiency may be required for a wide range of purposes from obtaining a visa to enter the country and search for employment to acquiring citizenship, as well as for access to certain types of employment, as part of the recognition of professional qualifications or for being admitted to compensatory measures for upskilling. In general, this means passing a language examination to obtain a publicly recognised certificate that attests to a certain level of proficiency, frequently expressed with reference to the scales of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) or to furnish equivalent evidence (e.g. graduation from a school or a higher education institution in the host country).

What is the CEFR for Languages?

The *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment* was first published in 2001 by the Council of Europe and subsequently updated and extended in 2020 with the intention

> to promote quality plurilingual education, facilitate greater social mobility and stimulate reflection and exchange between language professionals for curriculum development and in teacher education. Furthermore, the CEFR provides a metalanguage for discussing the complexity of language proficiency for all citizens in a multilingual and intercultural Europe, and for education policy makers to reflect on learning objectives and outcomes that should be coherent and transparent.

The updated version mainly reflects changes in the methodology of second-language teaching from the 'communicative approach' prevalent at the time work on the framework started to an 'action-driven approach' widely considered today as state of the art. Moreover, it has added new sections with descriptions for signing competences (for the use of sign languages) and for other forms of linguistic proficiency such as 'mediation' (translation and interpreting). Finally, a highly simplified version has been published for lay users who wish to self-assess their language skills (see the chart in the annexe to this chapter).

The CEFR defines six common reference levels – A1 and A2 (basic user), B1 and B2 (independent user), and C1 and C2 (proficient user) – in regard to various forms of language use illustrated by 'descriptors', that is tasks that a user is expected to be able to accomplish. In the field of 'overall oral comprehension', for instance, a B2-level user

> [c]an understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialisation. Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party. Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide

range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options. (Council of Europe 2020)

The descriptive scheme further breaks down communicative language activities and strategies into more detailed descriptors for every scale (e.g. 'understanding as a member of a live audience' as part of 'oral comprehension').

From the very beginning, the authors of the CEFR have stated:

> One thing should be made clear right away. We have NOT set out to tell practitioners what to do, or how to do it. We are raising questions, not answering them. It is not the function of the Common European Framework to lay down the objectives that users should pursue or the methods they should employ. (Council of Europe 2020)

Despite this caution, the CEFR has exercised considerable influence on practitioners in fields such as the development of curricula or the conception of language tests for second-language acquisition (for a critical view of the CEFR see J.H. Hulstijn 2007). The framework itself has been adopted by some forty countries worldwide, and there exist numerous tables with equivalences for tests that do not use the same scales. However, notwithstanding almost ubiquitous references to the CEFR-levels in language certificates, this does not mean that these attest in any way the proficiency of a holder in the sense defined by the framework. This is the task of certification bodies who set standards for particular tests in specific languages.

Language Requirements and Discrimination

Article 21(1) of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union of 2000 explicitly lists language as one of the grounds on which any discrimination shall be prohibited. This principle has been introduced into the legislation of most European countries. In practice, this means that employers, for example, may not require of job candidates' language skills that go beyond what is necessary to exercise a particular professional activity. The requirement to be a 'native speaker' has thus largely disappeared from job advertisements because employers risk being liable for damages on the basis of discrimination.

In the same vein, the Directive on the Recognition of Professional Qualifications in the European Union and the European Economic Area (2005/36/EC) states in Article 53 that the applicant 'shall have a knowledge of languages necessary for practising the profession in the host Member State' but limited to only one official or administrative language that is also an official language of the Union.

Controls may be imposed if a profession has patient safety implications or 'in cases where there is a serious and concrete doubt about the sufficiency of the professional's language knowledge in respect of the professional activities that that professional intends to pursue' and these controls must be proportionate. As the user guide to the directive insists, the recognition of professional qualifications and the check of language skills are separate procedures with few exceptions (e.g.

healthcare professionals, 'a speech therapist or a teacher teaching the language of the host country'). A serious and concrete doubt about the sufficiency of language skills is said to exist, for example, when '[t]he competent authority barely understands your application for recognition, or it turns out that during a compensation measure you are unable to communicate or understand test questions'.

Certified language tests

Ideally, assessing a job candidate's language skills would mean to evaluate their proficiency in a test specifically designed for the tasks they will have to accomplish. For obvious reasons, employers and other decision-makers almost never have the resources to do so. Language certificates, or their equivalents, are therefore widely seen as a cost-effective way to evaluate a candidate's language competencies. Certified language tests, along with the corresponding preparatory courses, often have a specific focus in view of the purpose they are meant to serve. Examples are certificates for acquiring citizenship or a residence permit, for granting access to higher education or for specific professional activities (e.g. certificates issued by chambers of commerce), which test for different and limited ranges of language skills. Employers should therefore be aware of what these tests are certifying to and what not. Professional linguists, for example, have expressed doubts whether the writing of a single essay on a particular topic, a common exercise in such examinations, is sufficient to assess an examinee's proficiency for written productions. For this reason, certified language tests mainly serve as gatekeepers.

Moreover, language exams are like snapshots that capture linguistic proficiency at a certain point in time, some certificates have a limited validity (generally two years), as examinees are likely to improve or lose some of their linguistic competences in later years. This sometimes leads to suspicions that the certificate has been obtained fraudulently when the holder no longer appears to be proficient at the certified level. The date when a certificate has been obtained is therefore an important piece of information. It is also useful to consult the more detailed ratings, usually mentioned on the back of a certificate, for the different dimensions tested, such as oral and writing skills and oral and written comprehension, as levels of proficiency are rarely evenly distributed.

Employers and other decision-makers involved in hiring should be aware of the advantages and limitations of language tests and, if available, should take into account other information that allow to assess language skills, such as previous stays or work experience. In any case, they should never attempt an assessment on the basis of a short interview and be aware that professional evaluators emphasise different criteria than lay persons, who tend, for instance, to lend more importance to fluency than to accuracy (e.g. Duijm, Schoonen and Hulstein 2018). Finally, higher

levels of proficiency (B2 and above) as measured by language tests require usually a certain educational background, such as the equivalent of A-levels or studies at a higher education institution, because they increasingly rely on cognition and certain cultural contents accessible only to well-educated individuals.

Table 1 Major language certificates in the partner countries

Country	Certificate	Purpose	Levels
Finland	National Certificate of Language Proficiency (YKl) and the Civil Service Language Proficiency Certificate (VKT)	for the personnel in public administration to prove their command of the second national language (Finnish or Swedish) but can also be used when applying for Finnish citizenship (at least a satisfactory level)	1-6 (satisfactory, good, excellent)
Greece	the Certificate of Attainment in Greek (Ellinomatheia)	Proof for fulfilling the language requirements for a long-term residence permit or a public sector position	A1-C2
Italy	CELI (Certificato di conoscenza della lingua italiana)	to teach in state and non-state schools and institutes where the language of instruction is Italian (at least level CELI 5, corresponding to C2 in the CEFR) but can also be used to gain access to higher education institutions (CELI 3 or B2)	CELI1-6
Italy	CILS (Certificazione di italiano come lingua straniera)	CILS Due (B2) permits successful candidates to enrol at Italian universities without undergoing another compulsory language test.	4 levels of proficiency, corresponding to the levels B1, B2, C1 and C2 of the CEFR

Italy	The AIL certificate, administered by the Italian Language Academy		DELI A1 and A2, DILI B1 and B2, DALI C1 and C2, additional levels for business language at levels B1, B2 and C1 and for immigrants (DELI A2 Integration)
Italy	PLIDA (Progetto lingua italiana Dante Alighieri)	to enrol at a university or to obtain a long-term residence permit	PLIDA A1 to C2
Italy	Certit	application of a long-term residence permit (A2), enrolment at university (B2) and foreign teachers working in an Italian-language environment	
Italy	DITALS and CEDILS	for teachers of Italian as a foreign or second language	
Germany	Association of Language Testers in Europe (ALTE)	for non-EU citizens who want to obtain a permanent residence permit after five years (B1 level) or after three years (C1) and for all persons who apply for German citizenship (B1 level).	6 levels
Germany	DSH (Deutsche Sprachprüfung für den Hochschulzugang), Goethe-Zertifikat, Test Deutsch als Zweitsprache and telc	for enrolment at universities. As a rule, candidates applying for a permanent position are required to have the 'necessary language skills' and, where specified, mostly at C2 level but at least C1	6 levels

What does 'native-speaker level' mean?

International talents seeking work in the educational sector are generally expected, or required, to have a very good, if not excellent, command of the language of instruction, often described as having reached 'native-speaker' or 'near-native speaker level'. This implies that a native speaker's proficiency is the benchmark against which that of a non-native speaker should be measured. Both in common usage and in linguistics a native speaker is often described as someone who has learned a particular language during early childhood – imbibed it with his or her mother's milk, in the words of Dante – and is therefore a fully proficient speaker (for a good overview see Grammon and Bable 2021).

Native-Speakerism

The term 'native-speakerism' was coined by the British scholar Adrian Holliday (2003) in a contribution to an ongoing debate about the quality of teachers and the efficiency of methods for Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) to describe 'a set of beliefs supporting the view that "native- speaker" teachers represent the ideals both of the target language and of language teaching methodology', with the latter referring to 'specific types of active, collaborative, and self-directed "learner-centred" teaching-learning techniques that have frequently been constructed and packaged as superior within the English-speaking West' (Holliday 2006). Teachers, students and methods that do not conform to these ideals are considered problematic and often depreciated by evoking negative cultural stereotypes. Native-speakerism as an ideology, to which both native and non-native speakers may subscribe, is also said to be deeply dividing the community of TESOL professionals (e.g. teachers, writers, curriculum developers and publishers) and to have major implications for employment and educational policies and practices.

One example would be the preferential hiring of native-speaker teachers. Native-speakerism as an ideology, to which both native and non-native speakers may subscribe, is also said to be deeply dividing the community of TESOL professionals (e.g. teachers, writers, curriculum developers and publishers) and to have major implications for employment and educational policies and practices. One example would be the preferential hiring of native- speaker teachers. Nativespeakerism is said to have originated as official policies by the British government to promote the use of English as a second language and to maintain British influence in the postcolonial era, soon to be followed by similar attempts undertaken by the US government. Critics sees this approach as outdated because today's students have numerous technical resources (tapes, videos, etc.) at their disposal that allow them 'to be exposed to a wide range of native-speaker models as well as second language users of English' but also because of emerging varieties of English associated with bi- or multilingualism (Phillipson 1992a and 1992b).

They point to other successful language teaching traditions in Europe (French in Britain, English in Scandinavia, etc.) where the ideal teacher comes from the same linguistic and cultural background as the learners. In these cases, a proficient non- native teacher can serve as a role model for the learner, teach learning strategies more effectively, better anticipate difficulties, be more empathetic to the needs and problems of learners and, if necessary, have recourse to the learners' first language (Medgyes 1992). In fact, an estimated 80% of the world's English-

language teachers are non-native speakers. While native-speakerist ideas are still common it can no longer be considered a dominant ideology in most western countries.

Historically the term 'native speaker' is linked to the emergence of European nation-states and colonial contexts and was used to distinguish members of a national speech community, so to speak by virtue of birth, from outsiders who learned the language as a second one and were thought to master it only imperfectly, an idea that has still widespread currency in second-language acquisition (see box on 'native-speakerism'). The idea of native speakers as 'ideal' speakers of a language has also played a crucial role in the standardisation and linguistic study of languages as 'bounded linguistic objects that exist apart from speakers and contexts of language use' and can be described by certain features (e.g. lexical, grammatical) 'that can be objectively evaluated, separated, and codified in dictionaries and grammars' *(ibidem)*. Certain linguistic models, such as the Chomsky's approach to linguistic competence, thus postulate native speakers as highly competent speakers-listeners with an intuitive grasp of the language in question. However, this idea has been questioned in particular by variational linguists and sociolinguists, who see languages as social constructs. In their view, boundaries and membership are not determined by the structural features mentioned above but 'by the ways in which people are recognized as native speakers – or not' *(ibidem)*. For this reason, the sociolinguist Rampton (1990), for instance, has suggested to replace the term 'native speaker' by different notions such as expertise, affiliation and inheritance.

Moreover, there exists no conclusive scientific evidence that adult second-language learners are prevented from reaching high levels of proficiency because their linguistic competence has not been 'hard-wired into the brain' during early childhood or for similar reasons. A learner's motivation and experience appear to be more crucial factors. This is not to say that proficient non-native speakers may not experience interference from their first language or generally have a more limited linguistic repertoire (e.g. a narrower range of vocabulary, less familiarity with colloquialism, various dialects and sociolects). But their linguistic performance should not be compared to that of an idealised 'native speaker', a model to which few 'native speakers' conform in practice.

More importantly, in a particular professional context, as that of education discussed here, the hurdles for becoming proficient are lower and non-linguistic factors (know-how and soft skills) play a larger role in the quality of teaching. Under these circumstances, international talents have a good chance of performing at similar levels as 'native speakers' or even better. While national languages have remained at the heart of educational systems, increasing linguistic diversity in European classrooms have led some school authorities to become more aware of the potential benefits of teachers with additional linguistic resources, especially in pre-primary and primary schools, and more open to the idea of hiring international talents and teachers with a migrant background.

*Table 2: CEFR levels explained, source: **Council of Europe***

PROFICIENT USER	C2	Can understand with ease virtually everything heard or read. Can summarise information from different spoken and written sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation. Can express him/herself spontaneously, very fluently and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning even in more complex situations.
	C1	Can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts, and recognise implicit meaning. Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. Can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes. Can produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organisational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.
INDEPENDENT USER	B2	Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialisation. Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party. Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.
	B1	Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. Can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. Can produce simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes & ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.
BASIC USER	A2	Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.

A1   Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. Can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has. Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.

Job Interviews with International Talents

During a job interview international talents should, of course, be treated on an equal footing with national talents. At the same time, candidates are individuals, and a job interviewer will want to make the most of an interview by adapting his technique and strategy to the particular characteristics of a candidate. International talents will probably share some of them. They will usually be non-native speakers and may need more time to process information than a native speaker. Both interviewer and interviewee are likely to be less familiar with each other's background. Here we would like to present recommendations how to efficiently conduct an interview with an international talent. Not all of them will be of equal importance in particular situations and therefore should be understood as suggestions to improve an interview's quality.

Ahead of the interview, familiarise yourself closely with the candidate's job application, paying particular attention to possible language limitations and aspects of the educational and professional career that may need clarification because you may be less or not familiar with them. You may want to plan for additional time.

Ensure that the environment in which the interview takes place is quiet and makes the interviewee feel welcome. Some candidates may expect some initial small talk or being offered a drink and may feel disconcerted if the interviewer immediately plunges into job-related questions. If necessary, consult a colleague with a similar background as the candidate or invite him to the meeting.

Speak clearly when addressing the interviewee and speak at a moderate speed in well-structured sentences. Avoid using colloquialisms, less common idiomatic expressions, bureaucratic language and complex syntactic constructions.

Avoid interrupting or correcting the interviewee and finishing their sentences, even when the candidate seems struggling to find the appropriate words. Non-native speakers may need a bit more time to formulate an appropriate response.

Avoid direct comments on the interviewee's language proficiency during the interview. Even a compliment could be understood ambiguously.

Encourage the interviewee to ask questions when they feel they have not well understood what has been said. This will lead to more accurate answers.

Be empathetic and supportive if a candidate shows signs of linguistic insecurity. Language and cultural barriers can be frustrating for all participants.

If needed, rephrase questions or provide additional context to ensure that questions are fully understood.

Use follow-up questions if an interviewee's answers are not what you have expected or remain unclear to you.

Try giving regular positive feedback during the interview and guidance. Use positive nonverbal cues to show active listening, such as nodding, maintaining eye contact and showing interest in a candidate's answers.

Summarise and recapitulate if the thread of the conversation risks having been lost, offering the interviewee some respite to absorb what has been discussed.

During the initial phase, leave room for a candidate to tell their own story and to make them feel at ease. Use open questions when seeking clarification of the candidate's educational and professional background and close questions to elucidate a particular aspect or to obtain confirmation.

Think of using visual aids for complex topics (e.g. organigrams when explaining how your own organisation works) or when an interviewee appears to be unable to cope with a question, such as 'Where do you see yourself in five years?

Be aware of possible biases. The hesitant speech pattern of a candidate, for instance, may not be due to a lack of proficiency but be also present when they use their first language.

Avoid drawing conclusions on the interviewee's language proficiency from a short conversation which may not reflect their overall linguistic competencies. Teaching, for example, involves preparation of the lesson.

Focus your evaluation on the interviewee's professional qualifications and work experience. Try to assess what additional skills an international talent may bring to your organisation or the team and audiences with which they will be working.

Be aware of possible cultural differences in communication and work styles. Try to assess how a candidate would fit into your organisation. Being less familiar with the national context may also be a means to bring innovative ways of teaching to your organisation.

If a candidate's language proficiency appears insufficient for the job, consider their learning potential and options to improve their language skills after hire by providing or making room for language training or offering other forms of support.

Be attentive to non-verbal clues, such as body language, gestures and facial expressions, that may indicate that the interviewee has difficulties to follow the conversation, hasn't well understood a question or seems not to be at ease.

Take detailed and objective notes to document the interview. This allows you to critically reflect on a candidate's performance later on and provides for the possibility that you may have misunderstood some of their statements during the interview.

Communicating in a Multilingual Educational Environment

Superdiversity and linguistic repertoires

Due to global mobility and the emergence of multicultural-multilingual societies, modern states have had to design their responses to diversity, including of course linguistic and educational policies. Evidently, state and social attitudes towards multilingualism, ranging from segregation or assimilation to inclusion through integration, have had their impact on educational policies regarding multilingualism in the classroom. Under this light, critical multiculturalism promotes inclusive multilingual education that avoids generalisations and, thus, overlooking the individual needs and identities of multilingual learners (Guo, 2015).

Critical multiculturalism in education takes under consideration that migrant learners should not be categorised based on general labels such as ethnicity, language and religion because this is a disempowering practice that ignores that the real-life experiences and the trajectories of individuals vary in many ways, leading to unique and fluid identities (Gorski & Parekh, 2020). To describe this complex reality Vertovec (2007) proposes the term 'superdiversity' to raise awareness of the fact that diversity is multifaceted (cf. ethnicity, languages, health, generation,

gender, prior educational experiences, religious affiliation, social and migratory (legal) status) and thus not only a social characteristic but also a personal attribute (Beacco, Krumm & Little, 2017).

Naturally, superdiversity includes and at the same time impacts on migrants' linguistic repertoires. As early as 1972, Gumperz & Hymes introduce the notion of 'linguistic repertoire' as a key sociolinguistic term describing the plurality of meaning-making resources employed by members of a given sociolinguistic community. As research on superdiversity progressed, Blommaert & Backus (2011) proposed that the term 'linguistic repertoire' instead of focusing solely on shared, communities' resources, can also describe individual repertoires, i.e. the assemblage of linguistic resources that each person amasses in her/his lifespan depending on her/his trajectory and meaning making needs and practices.

Embracing the notion of individual 'linguistic repertoire' allows a pluralistic approach on multilingual educational settings while avoiding the danger of grouping learners based on social and linguistic stereotypes. If not, education compromises the already developed communicational skills of the learners and, by ignoring and devaluing their linguistic and educational habitus, produces feelings of frustration. It should also be noted that the linguistic repertoires of many migrant learners are already multilingual, either in languages they have learned during their migration journey or/and since they may come from (officially) multilingual societies, as is the case in many African and/or Asian countries (Krumm & Plutzar, 2008). Additionally, the educational experiences of individuals further diversify their linguistic repertoires, even when sharing the same L1, depending for example on their literacy levels, the years and contexts of prior schooling and, thus, the different degrees of metalinguistic awareness (Bigelow & Schwarz, 2010).

It is therefore evident that the linguistic repertoire of each person reshapes throughout her/his life in dynamic way that is always relational with the social context of communication (COE, 2014). This indicates that societal stances – including education as an establishment – towards multilingual speakers have important impact on the development of migrants' linguistic repertoires (Beacco, 2008). Educational practices that prize the affluence of linguistic resources and the flexibility with which multilingual speakers adapt in order to communicate in various circumstances (e.g. employment, education, access to public services etc.) validate the linguistic repertoires of migrant learners, as in the case of translanguaging (García & Wei, 2014).

Multilingual educational settings and translanguaging: why it matters

Since language is shaped through use in social interactions within superdiverse societies, as any other social phenomenon, is also subject to social and international inequalities that are usually reproduced by language and educational policies. Due to such policies, as Blommaert (2010) has vividly showcased, linguistic diversity can be easily converted from an index of communicational creativity and capability to a stigma and a means of social exclusion. The emergence of elite, dominant languages of high status (cf. English, French, German etc.) and others of low status, has also led to differentiated stances towards multilingualism, which in turn have informed

educational practices (Lin, 2015). Multilingual repertoires have been praised when involving high status languages but frowned upon if they consist of low status languages and/or if the communicative resources in elite languages don't meet up with their standardised form.

Building on that, (García, 2016) proposes that the linguistic repertoire of multilinguals is a unified assemblage of meaning making resources with no barriers between resources in different languages and that its compartmentalisation is artificial and reproduces linguistic inequalities. In other words, since language is used as a tool with the aim to communicate and make sense of the world and people resort to any linguistic-semiotic resources available in their own repertoire, practices of linguistic alteration – such as code switching, language brokering, translation etc. – are not evidence of incompetence (García & Wei, 2014). On the contrary, translanguaging theory, as a dynamic approach on multilingualism, proposes that these practices stem from the multilingual's creativity and adaptability to employ the full scope of their repertoire in order to make meaning (Tsokalidou, 2017).

Nonetheless, migrant learners are often implicated in educational processes that degrade their linguistic repertoires in an assimilationist way that – implicitly or explicitly – imposes the dominance of the named, national language (Blommaert, 2010; Pennycook, 2010). These educational policies also reproduce social inequality since the linguistic and educational habitus interplays with employment, migrant (legal) status and in general social mobility (Mori, 2014). On the contrary, inclusive education requires respect towards diverse linguistic repertoires thus constructing a safe learning environment where learners are empowered instead of Communicating in a Multilingual Educational Environment mainstreamed (Krumm & Plutzar, 2008), while keeping in mind the disrupted schooling experiences of many migrant learners (Sinclair, 2002).

In order to achieve this, employing the full scope of multilingual learners' linguistic resources in the learning process is necessary. Firstly, it is a stance legitimising diverse linguistic repertoires and promoting inclusion. Contrariwise, excluding L1 from the educational process rejects multilingual learners' identities and demotivates them (Cummins, 2001). Secondly, apart from validating migrant identity, such an educational approach on multilingualism is also based on the understanding of language as a cognitive and communicational tool, since it 'carries' the already developed learners' cognitive and cultural habitus. Hence, instead of incapacitating multilingual learners by assuming that low proficiency in the dominant language is an index of ignorance, education should recognise and employ the full scope of their linguistic repertoire, their metalinguistic awareness and metacognitive strategies, in order to facilitate learning (Cummins, 2001). All in all, pedagogical translanguaging engages the wealth of the learners' meaning making tools in the learning process while promoting inclusion through granting visibility to diverse linguistic repertoires.

Good practices in multilingual educational settings

Adopting open-flexible curricula

Recognising superdiversity within the classroom and deciding to employ in the educational process the multilingual repertoires of the learners, understandably leads to the adoption of

learner centred approaches during the lesson, as well as for the educational material design and assessment (Psaltou-Joycey, 2008). In order for education to be meaningful, learners' prior knowledge and linguistic resources should form the springboard for further development through authentic communication, collaborative learning and careful scaffolding by the teacher when necessary (Marsden, 2013; Rodgers, 2009). The latter implicates the exploitation of the multilinguals' linguistic repertoire and, hence, the implementation of translanguaging practices (García & Flores, 2012).

While a predefined curriculum probably will not address the diverse educational needs of multilingual learners (Beacco, 2008), tailored education cherishes diversity in practice and takes into account the social contexts of language use, where learning also happens (COE, 2014). Finally, inclusive multilingual education also considers the stressful impact of assessment, which can be multiplied when related with multilingual learners, and it is thus important to be designed in ways that promote learner autonomy instead of functioning as a means of subjugation and/or rejection (Lange & Baillie Abidi, 2015).

Learners' Needs Analysis

Undoubtedly, tailored education and employing multilingual repertoires in the classroom, requires that the educators have mapped both the linguistic repertoires of their students as well as their educational needs. In this respect, needs analysis is a prerequisite for the successful implementation of inclusive education in multilingual settings through pinpointing what and how should be taught after taking under consideration the individuals taking place in the learning process, their aims and motives. (Kantzou, Manoli, Mouti & Papadopoulou, 2017). Of course, needs analysis, much like language, is a dynamic procedure and therefore the development of the learners' linguistic repertoires in conjunction with their learning goals, should be reanalysed from time to time (Long, 2005). Most importantly, Androulakis, Mastorodimou & van Boeschoten (2016) highlight that needs analysis should always implicate the critical, self-reflective stance so as not to impose on the learner predetermined assumptions and educational goals, bypassing her/his actual needs

Distinguishing between Conversational and Academic Fluency

In addition, educators, while mapping the linguistic repertoires of their multilingual students, should consider that conversational, everyday life language is easier to use than academic language. A student may be capable to achieve everyday life communication that usually implicates contextual cues and is not cognitively challenging. However, academic language requires cognitively challenging meaning-making while the help of contextual cues is usually missing. According to Cummins (2001), Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills (BICS) usually take 2–3 years to develop while Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) requires 5-10 years, or it might never be achieved. Therefore, using academic language requires support by the teacher mainly through contextual facilitation so that the multilingual learners can engage cognitively while capitalising on their linguistic repertoires. Peer-to-peer scaffolding can also facilitate multilingual students to co-construct knowledge collaboratively and process the lesson (Kaneva, 2012).

Parental involvement

Finally, inclusive education means respect for diversity and hence for the diverse identity of each specific person implicated (Norton, 2018). As aforementioned, this respect is "translated" into specific practices that recognise the capabilities of the multilingual learner, employ her/his cognitive and linguistic resources by actively engaging them in the learning process and affirming translingual communication. Apart from adding languages to the classroom, affirming diverse identities also includes affirming their familial funds of knowledge through implicating parents in the educational procedure and school life (Chumak-Horbatsch, 2008). This way assimilationist pressures to abandon their L1 in order to progress are limited and multilingual families are empowered to become agents who co-create knowledge drawing on their sociocultural and linguistic habitus that in this case transforms into a valuable resource while learning expands beyond the classroom to embrace the community (Olsen, 2000).

What is the 'Linguistic Landscape'?

Landry & Bourhis (1997) introduced the term linguistic landscape to refer "to the visibility and salience of languages on public and commercial signs in a given territory or region. It is proposed that the linguistic landscape may serve important informational and symbolic functions as a marker of the relative power and status of the linguistic communities inhabiting the territory".

In other words, the linguistic landscape might be considered as the ecology of meaning making resources (texts, images, sounds, smells, gestures, tastes) that are embedded in (public) space. People, make sense of space and navigate in social environments by making sense of the linguistic landscape and, occasionally, co-constructing it to transmit their own messages.

Therefore, the linguistic landscape is produced both in a top-down way, expressing official policies about languages and in general access to public space, as well as from the bottom-up, in this case expressing social discourses and the dynamics of various languages in a society.

Linguistic landscape as an educational resource

Although research on linguistic landscape in relation with education is a quite recent field of study, there are already various studies supporting its importance on the one hand as a resource for learning and on the other, as an important aspect of inclusive/exclusive educational environments. Specifically, schoolscapes (i.e. linguistic landscapes in educational settings, cf. Brown, 2005) that are constructed with respect to the students' linguistic repertoires and that encourage translanguaging practices scaffold the learning process and, most importantly, validate multilingual identities (Karafylli & Maligkoudi, 2022). On the contrary, when the languages – and consequently the voices – of the students are excluded from the official schoolscape, the students produce transgressive, usually translingual, texts in order to assert visibility on the schoolscape and to appropriate the educational space (Kitsiou & Bratimou, 2023).

Figure 4: Photos taken during a linguistic landscape walk through Berlin's Kameruner Straße, organised during the Multilinguals at Work training in Berlin, November 2023

Towards a Multilingual Workspace

Multilingual employees have the potential to add significant value to an organisation, whether a company in the private sector, a school or a non-profit organisation, in a number of ways. As well as improving internal operations, they also enhance relations with customers or users, particularly in the context of a diverse or international market.

> A multilingually diverse workforce has the potential to increase the generation of innovative ideas and problem-solving strategies by providing varied perspectives from different cultural backgrounds.

As a multilingual workforce often means a culturally diverse community, diversity has the potential to increase the generation of innovative ideas and problem-solving strategies by providing varied perspectives from different cultural backgrounds. Some studies have indicated that bilingual persons are able to switch between tasks more quickly than monolingual ones and to process information more efficiently because bilingual people's brains are constantly managing two languages, which enhances cognitive task performance.

In addition, employees who are fluent in one or several foreign languages can help expand into international markets or cater to local communities that do not speak a national language. Acquiring a new language often involves gaining an insight into the culture associated with it. Cultural awareness can be crucial when interacting with international customers or to improve brand perception. Moreover, providing multilingual customer support facilitates the acquisition of a broader customer base who are comfortable communicating in their native language, thereby increasing their purchasing confidence and fostering brand loyalty.

Several studies have shown that the physical office environment can have a significant impact on employee behaviour, perceptions and productivity (for an overview, see Kamarulzaman et al., 2011). Temperature, air quality, lighting and noise levels are all important, but creating a welcoming and inclusive environment in all office communal and meeting spaces is also a critical element that affects employee wellbeing and productivity.

Multilingual schools

Some educational institutions, such as schools and kindergartens, deliberately create a multilingual learning environment to represent, value and recognise all children and to celebrate the linguistic and cultural diversity that all students bring with them. This approach helps both children and educators to become more aware of the languages that coexist with the national language in their local communities.

One school in the United States told us that teachers focus on a few key points to set up the learning space:

> 'We usually think about which parts of the classroom environment we could make multilingual and how you, as a teacher, can make the languages of your bi-/multilingual students visible in the classroom in a way that is manageable f or you.

'We always think ahead about the topics to be covered over a period of time and prepare a multilingual pack of resources we can find books, pictures, magazines, calendars, etc. Furthermore, we either translate materials or use resources from different authors on the same topic.'

'We use greetings in the languages the children speak and use songs, poems and books as part of the activities in different languages. Moreover, when we switch activities, we can apply different languages. We also extensively use labels in different languages for desks, baskets of books or common classroom items

and supplies. We always think ahead about the topics to be covered over a period of time and prepare a multilingual pack of resources we can find (books, pictures, magazines, calendars, etc.). Furthermore, we either translate materials or use resources from different authors on the same topic.

'In addition, we incorporate collaborative learning practices into everyday activities. This includes pairing children together whenever possible on the basis of who speaks the same language at home. We also form groups of children with different levels of knowledge of the national language, including students who speak the same language at home. Moreover, we use digital translation tools to facilitate communication, try to translate materials and ensure that children with an insufficient knowledge of the national language receive some materials in advance so that they can prepare and ask questions.

'To make sure that our activities and methods work well to support children and to create a friendly environment, we elected a core group of passionate educators and administrators who can help to address the issues of designing the educational and common spaces, organising the learning process and activities, and creating a welcoming and inclusive atmosphere. This team has several functions. It addresses the needs of the school's diverse population, sets the agenda for the school, solves problems around challenges, and maintains and enhances the multilingual ecology of the school, using students' multilingual skills as a resource for learning.'

Multilingual workspaces

The working environment is somewhat similar to the learning environment, where people meet not only to work on projects, but also to communicate, attend training sessions and organise and participate in discussions. Therefore, recommendations and practices from the school environment can be transferred to a work-space environment.

One can think of instructions and welcome signs in different languages, using greetings in different languages at meetings, organising cultural days or weeks to celebrate diversity or labelling rooms or desks in different languages. It is also possible to set up a library of books in Towards a Multilingual Workspace   41

different languages that are relevant for work processes, create dictionaries of company-specific terminology and translate materials for distribution within the company.

The HR team can apply smart hiring, which means paying attention to the language mix in teams. Team members may think about introducing smart presentations by placing them in a shared folder before a meeting so that participants can read them, prepare questions and actively discuss topics after the presentation. The company may also want to collect and use digital tools that support multiple language.

> The Human Resources team can apply smart hiring, which means paying attention to the language mix in teams. Team members may think about introducing smart presentations by placing them in a shared folder before a meeting so that participants can read them, prepare questions and actively discuss topics after the presentation.

Employees should have the option of using their home language in the office spaces on different occasions whenever this does not concern colleagues.

Building a diversity core group within the company to develop and apply company practices, address the needs of this diverse population within the company and solve problems as they arise should be a must.

Below are summarised recommendations from the Accessible Translation Solutions agency blog post for HR teams on how a company can create a welcoming atmosphere for employees who speak multiple languages (see the links in References):

- ✓ Consider having training materials and HR documents translated and localised professionally to ensure that all employees are on the same page and on board with your company's brand and mission. Translating these kinds of materials will allow you to connect with your multilingual staff more effectively from the time they join your company.

- ✓ Your work environment should be welcoming and accommodating for all employees. You can achieve this by allowing them to take days of cultural significance off from work, encouraging them to speak freely in their native languages or even providing specific lunch or snack options for those with dietary restrictions.

> Your work environment should be welcoming and accommodating for all employees. You can achieve this by allowing them to take days of cultural significance off from work, encouraging them to speak freely in their native languages or even providing specific lunch or snack options for those with dietary restrictions.

- ✓ A solid multilingual workforce can really help your business thrive. So don't forget to request feedback from your employees! They will be happy to let you know if things are as welcoming as intended and will feel empowered an appreciate as a result of you asking!

- ✓ Ensuring that the work environment is safe, and that policies and job expectations are clear to each employee are other important issues for any HR department.

The translation of safety materials and company policy documents is critical, for multiple reasons. Companies are protected from potential legal implications and the well-being of both employees and visitors is ensured. Proper translations help employees understand machine

operating manuals and safety indicators, thereby preventing workplace injuries and costly machine malfunctions. A clear understanding of company policies and job expectations is allowed for non-English-speaking employees by translating onboarding materials. Furthermore, it demonstrates the organisations' dedication to inclusivity and assistance. The translation of such vital documents, however, presents challenges. These materials often contain specific technical jargon, which requires careful translation by professionals familiar with the industry. The use of clear, unambiguous English originals helps to ensure smoother translations. The failure to provide these translated resources could discourage potential skilled employees from joining, as they might feel unsupported or undervalued, leading to higher turnover rates. High-quality, accurate translations are important to ensure employee safety and job comprehension.

Figure 5 A conference interpreter at work.

An exercise for improving a multilingual office space

The objective of this team exercise is to identify solutions that can help transform educational or working spaces into a more welcoming multilingual environment.

Materials:

- A large-scale ground plan (e.g. format A0) with photos illustrating the functional spaces as presently used,
- Sticky notes in two colours (yellow and green),
- Pens or markers,
- A whiteboard to present the results of the exercise.

Tasks:

As members of the diversity core group in an international organisation with multilingual employees, you will have to address the following points during the exercise:

1. How can different functional spaces be made more comfortable and multilingual-friendly for everyone? Use green sticky notes to collect the answers and attach to the corresponding spaces on the ground plan.

2. Think about practices that could help facilitate communication and encourage participation in activities by all employees in a particular space. Use the yellow sticky notes to make suggestions and fix them on the ground plan.

3. Present your results in a plenary session, get feedback, and prepare an action plan.

Variants of the exercise:

If your organisation is big enough divide the participants into small teams according to their functions (top management, HR department, etc.). Once each team has presented its results, these can be summarised and compared to find similarities and differences because of different perspectives. Then identify the actions needed and required.

Implement the exercise as part of a training for HR staff from different organisations and use a generic ground plan.

Figure 6: Figure 5: Photos of the exercise taken during the Multilinguals at Work training in Berlin, November 2022

Supporting Language Aware Communication at the Workplace

This chapter is a practical guide to building a language aware workplace. You will get to know what language awareness (LA) is, and what communication goals it supports. You will also get to know several solutions that support communication in a linguistically diverse workplace. We present these solutions as a library of tools and practices. Note that each tool brings in certain benefits, as well as shortcomings. This guide will help you select appropriate tools for specific routine workplace situations that involve international employees or mismatched language skills. It will also give you means to assess the workplace's linguistic accessibility and to develop a language awareness plan. Note that foreign language speakers are not the only group who language awareness targets. There are other linguistic minorities, such as sign language users, whose needs you may want to consider.

Language awareness: a quick introduction

Language awareness (LA) is a framework founded on the principle that people have different linguistic needs. Language aware practices help accomplish specific communication goals, while respecting these needs. LA developed as a framework that supports speakers of minority languages or people who have not developed fluency in concrete languages. LA practices can differ, depending on the context where they are use. For example, at schools the focus may be on showcasing the linguistic diversity of students, and motivating students to use minority languages through translanguaging assignments. Whereas, at the workplace the focus may be effective delivery of information, or effective learning on the job.

This guide is based on the language awareness approach for expert organisations proposed by Rask, Teräsaho and Nykänen (2021). They advocate for a workplace language awareness that removes barriers to understanding and participation. Understanding is about effective delivery of information, whereas participation is about having a voice and a sense of belonging in the organisation. Different paths, and different languages, may

> Workplace language awareness removes barriers to understanding and participation. Understanding is about delivery of information, whereas participation is about having a voice and a sense of belonging in the organisation. Different paths and different languages may lead to these objectives.

lead to these objectives. Therefore, organisations must develop their language support practices, considering a comprehensive perspective. The organisation's rules concerning the choice of language(s) must comply with relevant legislation, including antidiscrimination laws.

We acknowledge that building a linguistically inclusive organisation may seem like a challenge. We recommend that you approach the task systemically, following the values of patience, trust,

and rapport. The tool library is there to be used as guidelines, or as an inspiration to come up with new solutions.

Tool library

The tool library is a collection of language support practices that are suitable for the workplace. Each description contains basic information about the practice, what it does and what it does not.

Plain language

Plain language (PL) prioritises clarity over aesthetics. It uses shorter sentences and common everyday words and calls to action. It avoids technical terms, idiomatic expressions, or passive sentences. PL communication can be written or spoken.

Plain language (PL) is an approach to communication that focuses on clarity, and accessibility. Plain language prioritises clarity over aesthetics. PL uses shorter sentences and common everyday words and calls to action. PL avoids technical terms, idiomatic expressions, or passive sentences. PL communication can be written or spoken. A message crafted in plain language takes into consideration the needs of recipients at the highest risk of misunderstanding, like children or the elderly, people with intellectual disabilities or people with developing language skills. A typical example of PL communication includes instructions, warnings or texts explaining how to do something. However, PL is fit for any context, from news programs on television to fiction literature.

When to use it? PL serves both personnel with developing skills, and native speakers, alike. At the workplace, plain language may be applied to bureaucratic procedures (forms, templates and explaining processes). PL may also be used in presentations and even in meetings, to engage more participants.

PL helps ensure that the recipient will understand the message instantly, without needing assistance. So, it helps save time, and makes it easier for employees to accomplish tasks independently.

In small print. Communication in plain language still requires a certain level of language skills, even though it may be lower than in the case of ordinary language. However, if the message is generally accessible, assistance will also be more easily available to those who need it. So, in many cases PL may be more effective in supporting understanding than participation. However, its effectiveness depends on how well it fits the needs of people whom it should serve.

Although both are strategies for simplification, PL is not the same as foreigner talk. The former is a systematic and professional approach, whereas the latter is intuitive. Some forms of foreigner talk imitate ungrammatical language in a patronising way. Therefore, training is recommended. *Resources.* Plain language is becoming more widespread in institutional communication across

Europe. Resources for new adopters are available in many languages. See, for example, 'How to write clearly', the European Commission's guide to plain language.

Language tutoring during office hours

When to use it? Combining work with home life can be straining, especially when one adds learning a language to the mix. Lack of time, scheduling conflicts or fatigue are typical reasons why international employees may give up on language courses, despite the long-term benefits of knowing the working language(s) of their organisation. To make learning easier, some organisations allow international employees to take lessons during working hours.

While the solution seems like part of a generous benefit package, it is perhaps the easier way to boost learning motivation. Plus, language training certainly supports professional skills development. So, it is clearly a justified investment.

Organisations have a lot of flexibility how to organise language lessons on the job, from the choice of the training provider and financial arrangements to the number of lessons and the mode of learning (group/individual, online/on-site). Each decision has its own consequences, similar to those concerning learning privately.

In small print. While there are many language tutors to choose from, they are external experts, so finding the right one may require some work. The decision about the syllabus, or learning content, is also an important one. So, planning the tutoring intentionally will help ensure that the learning progresses in the correct direction.

Language mentoring in the office

If asked for advice how to learn a language, many people will say 'take a language course'. However, routine tasks at the workplace can be valuable learning opportunities. Language mentoring is one way to take advantage of these opportunities.

When to use it? There is always a risk of confusion in a multi-language environment, which brings a need for instruction or guidance from someone who knows how things are done. Mentoring is a practice that connects 'an expert' with another person who wants to develop professionally in the same field, and the relationship benefits both. For an international employee without an extensive support network, having someone – a mentor – to answer questions is invaluable. The questions may concern working language practices; what is the appropriate style and tone, which word is the most appropriate, is this correct/acceptable. Informal conversations about how to use language can effectively advance learning. So, workplace language mentoring may effectively remove barriers to understanding and participation, directly contributing to better language awareness, and strengthened linguistic cohesion. Importantly, the practice also benefits the mentor if they have interest in leadership roles.

> For an international employee without an extensive support network, having someone – a mentor – to answer questions is invaluable. The questions may concern working language practices, what is the appropriate style and tone, which word is more appropriate, is this correct or acceptable.

A healthy mentoring relationship must follow certain rules. Non-formal arrangements may not work well when the situation calls for long-term or intensive support. It is helpful to see mentoring as a practice that is part of a larger support network. It must follow a certain contract, or a playbook. This is one area that the organisation can support systemically. Also, it is important that the organisation acknowledges the existence of mentoring arrangements, as these tend to increase employees' workload.

In small print. In practice, many workplace support networks are formed spontaneously, as nonformal arrangements. Someone needs assistance, and there is a colleague ready to offer it out of kindness. A one-time favour often turns into a more permanent arrangement. However, it may become overwhelming, especially when a wider support network is missing.

Linguistic mediation services: translation and interpretation

This section introduces the practices of translation and interpretation. There are many misconceptions about these services. Knowing how to match the type of service to the situation will help ensure that communication supports both the delivery of information and participation.

The term translation more specifically refers to re-writing texts from the source language into the target language. Interpretation is a similar process that involves speech. Put simply, each should produce an 'identical' message in the target language. Localisation and transcreation are also linguistic mediation services. Their aim is to adapt the message to the target language reader's local context.

While translation can be used as an umbrella term for different linguistic mediation services, the term specifically refers to re-writing texts from the source language into the target language. Interpretation is a similar process that involves speech. Put simply, each should produce an 'identical' message in the target language. Localisation and transcreation are also linguistic mediation services. Their aim is to adapt the message to the target language reader's local context (e.g. convert units, adapt tone).

There are different providers of translation services, from professionals to amateurs, and from humans to AI-based automated tools.

There is also a lot of variety in terms of cost and quality between these options. Some organisations employ in-house translators,

whereas others buy services from freelancers or larger LSP enterprises. The next point contains information on how to select a correct service to the situation at hand.

When to use it? Linguistic mediation services should be used when there is no shared language through which to communicate. Alternatively, translation is worth considering when there is little margin for misunderstanding, for example because of security risks or conflicts. The table below is a concise overview of available translation services.

In small print. The key to ensuring good quality linguistic mediation services is sufficient quality control. Proficient language users do not necessarily make good translators because translation requires a broader set of skills.

Interpreters are supposed to be neutral participants in cross-linguistic interactions. However, some trust issues may emerge in practice. In sensitive communication situations or conflict, the interpreter should be chosen carefully.

Table 1: When to use selected linguistic mediation services

Service	Recommended use	Means to ensure quality
Professional translation	Documents that require high accuracy, consistency and specific style (e.g. strategies, websites, technical document)	A professional editor comprehensively revises the translation, correcting errors, checking terms, and improving the reading experience.
Professional interpretation	High-stake meetings or presentations, on-site or remote.	Provide the interpreter with materials in advance so they can prepare. Provide interpreters with comfortable workspace. For simultaneous interpretation, always use an interpreting team.
Non-professional translation	Routine communication and announcements where minor inaccuracies are acceptable	A quality check done by another person with relevant language skills
Non-professional interpretation	Routine office situations without significant legal implications, onsite or remote	A follow-up multimodal communication, e.g. a summary email. Also, adapt tips for professional interpretation.
Machine translation	Standardised texts, drafts and working versions, any information that must be made available immediately. Style is not important; some inaccuracies are acceptable.	Machine translation is prone to errors. Postediting (MTPE) is a service where a professional human post-editor corrects errors but does not make stylistic or aesthetic changes in the document.
Certified translation/ interpretation	Legal documents (if required by law)	Only nationally accredited professionals may deliver certified translations.

Plurilingual communication

Plurilingual communication is a practice that requires a planned and systematic use of two or more languages in presentations, meetings or written announcements. Plurilingual communication is somewhat similar to linguistic mediation, but the former is a strategy, and the latter is a set of procedures that may be used to implement it.

There are several approaches to plurilingual communication. First, there may be a balance between the working languages; whatever is said or written in language A, must also be said or written in language B. Second, working languages may be given different spaces or airtime. For example, the talk may be in language A, but the visual aids are in language B. Or, the talk may be in language A, and only a summary follows in language B. The choice of the approach should follow a specific communicative goal.

When to use it? Plurilingual communication is a working solution for organisations where monolingual communication is not an option. The organisation may be obliged to recognise other languages, or the personnel may not have a common language. The method is especially practical for presentations with a multilingual audience, but meeting organisers may deploy it in discussions, too.

The method is suitable for the organisation culture that values a sense of togetherness, and a meeting style that encourages discussion. Plurilingual communication has the potential to remove barriers to information and participation. However, it is not easy to maintain linguistic balance in discussions without a management strategy. Hence, discussions are a risk area.

In small print. Symmetrical plurilingual communication in meetings means repeating each point. So, a bilingual meeting takes twice as long as a monolingual meeting. An asymmetrical plurilingual meeting may not allow equal opportunities for participation. Although a plurilingual meeting aims to be inclusive, there is a risk to run it as parallel monolingual meetings. So, successful plurilingual communication requires heightened language awareness, management, and flexible boundaries between working languages. Last but not least, the method has a clear cultural cornerstone.

Multimodal communication

A typical example of multimodal communication is the use of visual aids, like pictures and graphic elements that illustrate the point being made in writing or in a presentation. Multimodal communication also involves a speaker's intonation and discourse markers, facial expressions, or body language.

In multimodal communication, a meaning conveyed through language is accompanied by non-linguistic elements. The aim is to facilitate understanding. Multimodal communication may use one working language, or more. A typical example of multimodal communication is the use of visual aids, like pictures and graphic elements that illustrate the point being made in writing or in a presentation. Multimodal communication also involves the speaker's behavioural choices: their intonation and discourse markers, facial expressions, or body language. In addition, multimodal communication may also underlie the communication system's design. There are many examples of useful multimodality for the workplace. First, a discussion may take place as talk, but the

moderator may also allow remarks in writing, which is a normal practice in online meetings. Next, a discussion may be planned as talk, but participants will be provided with written material before and after the event. Also, there is software to enhance multimodality by turning speech into text, or text into speech. To strengthen the participative potential, multimodality may be coupled with an asynchronous design, giving people a bigger platform to exchange ideas.

When to use it? Multimodal communication has a universal application. It benefits communication with international employees and anyone else, regardless of their linguistic or other background. Visual aids and behavioural elements remove barriers to understanding, and help the audience stay focused and engaged. Whereas the multimodal communication design helps remove barriers to participation.

In small print. Although multimodal communication has real potential to enhance workplace inclusion, it still carries certain risks. For example, someone who is linguistically insecure may decline meeting requests from certain colleagues, and instead demand email communication. While this may be a perfectly functional solution in some situations, in others it may create a sense of hostile isolation. So, an inclusive multimodal communication design is also about understanding and accepting people's communicative needs.

Table 3 Practice evaluation template

What is this practice?	Objective (examples)	Does it support understanding? You can use a rating system. Explain how it supports understanding.	Does it support participation? You can use a rating system. Explain how it supports understanding?	Resources
Practice 1	Support personnel in learning the working language.	Yes, it is highly effective.	Yes, it is somewhat effective	High cost, intensive staff involvement.
Practice 2	Support personnel in learning additional languages.	No, understanding is not the focus.	Yes, it is highly effective.	Moderate cost, intensive staff involvement
Practice 3	Train staff in resolving misunderstandings	Yes, it is highly effective.	No, participation is not the focus.	High cost, minimal staff involvement.

Teaching in a Multilingual School Environment: Translanguaging

Translanguaging can be simply defined as the natural language practices of bilingual or multilingual people that involve the simultaneous use of two or more languages. These methods allow people to use their different linguistic resources for communication and education, depending on the environment they're in. In a pedagogical context, translanguaging is a methodology that is deliberately used to maintain and exploit students' diverse language practices for the purposes of teaching and learning. It involves both the ways in which bilinguals talk and the ways in which bilingual students use their language skills to teach difficult content and develop language practices for academic purposes.

In this chapter we want to give the voice to school practitioners (multilingual teachers, a school principal and a member of Koopkultur e.V.) so they can speak about their experience with translanguaging in education.

> Translanguaging is a methodology that is deliberately used to maintain and exploit students' diverse language practices for the purposes of teaching and learning.

What are the benefits of using translanguaging in the classroom?

- Translanguaging helps bilingual/multilingual students to use their different languages to communicate. It recognises that their abilities are beyond what is expected in the classroom, which increases children's self-esteem and motivation. More particularly, it helps children who have just arrived in a new country without knowledge of the main language of instruction by giving them a voice.
- Translanguaging pedagogy recognises the knowledge that students already have in their mother tongue and uses it to bridge the gap between learning the same content in another language. For example, understanding mathematical concepts in one language can be used as a basis for learning related vocabulary and expressing that understanding in another language.
- Translanguaging improves students' overall understanding of how languages work, promotes academic growth and helps them to understand how literacy skills can be transferred across language systems.
- The process of translanguaging sees language as a means of efficiently acquiring knowledge and enhancing understanding of the subject by combining it with instruction rather than treating them as separate entities.
- The basic idea behind translanguaging is to enhance the acquisition of two or more languages, while valuing and recognising the importance of learners' mother tongues and personal cultural identities. It has also been shown to be particularly beneficial to the development of children's weaker languages.

> Multilingual teachers are often better equipped to appreciate the importance of incorporating multiple languages in the classroom.

Many teachers who use translanguaging are themselves multilingual. They are often better equipped to appreciate the importance of incorporating multiple languages in the classroom. Their personal experiences, cultural insights and linguistic knowledge make them more open to implementing translanguaging practices effectively.

Why are multilingual teachers more open to translanguaging?

First, multilingual teachers have a great deal of experience in navigating between languages. They understand the fluidity of language use and the cognitive processes involved in juggling multiple languages. This *personal experience* has the potential to enhance their empathy and enable them to better support students' language learning.

Multilingual teachers have a wealth of *linguistic knowledge* to draw on, which can be used to clarify, illustrate or extend ideas, making learning more meaningful, engaging and fun for students.

Multilingualism often means exposure to different cultures, values and perspectives. This cultural understanding can make teachers more receptive to the diverse backgrounds of their students, thereby fostering a more

A multilingual teacher is more likely to understand *the limitations of strict adherence to a single language* in the classroom. They can understand that sometimes a concept is easier to understand in another language.

Fluency in more than one language can enable teachers to adapt their teaching strategies and tools to better suit the linguistic backgrounds of their pupils and to be open to *new ideas.*

Through their own experience, multilingual teachers often see *language as a resource* rather than a barrier. They are more likely to encourage students to use all their linguistic resources to support their learning.

Having a teacher who uses translanguaging can help multilingual students understand their own *linguistic identity.* It sends a message that their languages and experiences are valuable and essential to the learning process.

Multilingual educators are more likely to be aware of the *cognitive benefits of bilingualism,* including improved executive function, metalinguistic awareness, and problem-solving skills. The use of translanguaging can further enhance these benefits.

By allowing students to use their home languages, teachers can make lessons more relevant and engaging, thereby *increasing participation and comprehension.*

When students can utilise all their languages in class, they can provide *stronger support to each other,* particularly when they share a common language that is not the primary medium of instruction.

A school principal's view

The interview was conducted at a primary school in Berlin-Kreuzberg, one of the city's most multicultural districts, home to over 180 nationalities and known for its large number of immigrants and their descendants, a significant number of whom are of Turkish origin. Since 1995, the school has introduced and developed the Montessori educational system, which is based on the child's need for activity and self-determination. All the classrooms have been designed as attractive learning environments in building projects with the children.

Which languages are used in the school and how?

We have teachers who speak Russian, Turkish, French, English and other languages. In the class next door, we have a child from Ukraine who speaks Russian. Everything is labelled in the Russian language. The boy learns German and other children learn Russian. Another class has a teacher with a Turkish background. She had a difficult educational experience here in Kreuzberg when she was a child. She was attending the so-called mainstream class. Every time she spoke Turkish, she had to put 10 pfennigs in a box. Now, being a teacher herself, she is very committed to educational justice and to getting her Turkish-speaking children ahead. We have another class in which two out of 23 children speak only English. One child had a Spanish background but speaks good English. The class has decided that most of the lessons will be in English. Maths is also done in English. It is easier with English because it is so common. It is more difficult with Turkish. Turkish is one of the marginalised languages. In my own maths class, I have two Ukrainian girls and I also use some sentences in bad English now and then. In maths lessons, it is often the case that three or four children who speak Turkish work together in a group. This can help. We already do that.

How do you work with Ukrainian children?

For four or five hours a day children have German lessons with a Russian-speaking teacher. The rest of the time they are attending regular classes. In this way, they are better integrated into these classes. We have a policy in the school that we do not have welcome classes [reception classes for newly arrived children without previous knowledge of the German language]. We don't want segregation. If needed, we use digital aids in our lessons for communication. The children come with their mobile phones, and we can talk to them by using the text-to-speech function of Google Translate.

How are children allocated to classes? Should someone speak the child's language?
No, we don't do it that way. We ask the teachers whether they want to take in a child from Ukraine. Some say yes, others say they are better not. We always find

someone. But it's a bit exhausting when the child doesn't even know a decent amount of English. Then it's a bit tiring and a bit of work.

How do you deploy a new teacher who doesn't speak German very well but other languages?

All our teachers speak good German. This is a prerequisite. However, we always have two teachers in each group so that they can use more than one language. Once it happened that an English-speaking teacher made mistakes and the parents complained.

Do you have an official language policy?

So far, there is no written language policy. But we intend to write one. There are already attempts to set up a working group. So, we have a plan dealing with it, but nothing in writing yet. There are no measures, such as language courses, to promote multilingualism among teachers. It would be important for our language policy. If we work out a concept, we'll include them. The official policy is to celebrate languages. We got an award for our library because we have a large selection of books published in languages other than German, mainly Kurdish, Arabic, and Turkish. If someone comes and says I want my language to be represented here, they have a right for a study group to be organised. But you have to find someone who can teach the group. We have a Swedish-language group. We had a Polish- and a Spanish-language group. The workshops appear and disappear because the children leave, or the group leaders leave. We want to celebrate the languages, but not the nations behind them. We are not allowed to show flags. No nationalist perspectives. In the case of Ukraine, it's not very comfortable to have the flag hanging on the wall. There was a Kurdish-language group with an excellent Kurdish teacher. Unfortunately, the group is no longer active. When the group started, we found out that many children who spoke Kurdish had previously been identified as Turkish. Some of them would rather not show their identity openly. There are six hours a week of lessons in the legacy language paid for by the Senate administration.

Do you encounter specific problems or face particular challenges?

Unfortunately, we still have far too few teachers who speak Turkish. If I had to choose between teachers who speak Turkish and those who don't, I would choose those who speak Turkish in the recruitment interviews. I feel that there is an inner resistance when the children speak Turkish. The official policy is that we should support them. However, there were cases when teachers asked children to switch to German. I don't think it's right. I am working on it. It feels different with English. You don't feel this resistance. I know it's wrong. A very common German bourgeois attitude among many teachers. There is room for improvement.

Teachers need diversity training. There are some teachers who are very sensitive. We had a reading of Daughters and Sons of Gastarbeiters [a collection of short stories] and there were only three teachers present. It was difficult with the diversity training, which is now back on the programme and compulsory.

How do you deal with diversity?

We want to write a manifesto on diversity. We formed a network of three schools in Kreuzberg to develop a common approach to discriminatory incidents and racism. Furthermore, we did a three-year project on diversity and difference. It's called NÜRTİ KULTİ. Every committee, every meeting was observed, and feedback was given. An intensive observation of the school regarding these projects. There was also a lot of resistance. There were two big diversity trainings and one of them was cancelled. It helps when there are groups of parents who demand it. There are parents of black children who consciously enrol their children in our school. Or from the queer community. We have three children who don't fit into any category. Now we have a single-sex toilet. The student parliament has been working on this for a long time. The last big resistance came from the caretaker, who didn't want to put up a wall of shame between the urinals. When I say in class, please form groups.
Then the white German girls sit at one table, the Turkish-speaking boys at the other. And whenever I divide the group, they do good work, they do even better together. But it doesn't happen by itself.

What about the visibility of diversity?

We have a fundraising event coming up and we are sending out invitations in different languages. The people from the support association decide which languages to translate into. We have a mother in the school for whom it is essential. I think visibility is good. In everyday life, when conversations take place and there is a need, an interpreter is always there. It's very uncomplicated now. At parents' evenings, there is sometimes a whispered translation, or if there is a need, there is an interpreter. For 13 years, I have been trying to ensure that the parents' council is not just made up of white middle-class parents. There are always attempts to get immigrant parents involved. But it's hard work to get parents really involved. At one parents' evening, for example, there was a mother sitting all alone. The group members should be more welcoming towards each other. There is little sensitivity. It is always difficult in practice.

Personal observations on welcome classes and Koopkultur's work

Figure 7 Welcome classes are preparatory activities for bilingual children (a stock photo)

The non-profit association Koopkultur e.V. is an intercultural team of artists, cultural workers, scientists, educators and activists. Koopkultur was founded in 2018 with the main goal of promoting cooperative work in the areas of interest of its members, including interdisciplinary and intercultural exchange. The association focuses on several areas: research into interdisciplinary methods; development and implementation of multi- and interdisciplinary educational projects for children, young people and adults; and development and implementation of projects focusing on cultural diversity and multilingualism.

'Welcome classes in Berlin are usually groups comprised of children of mixed age. For primary schools there are children of age 6 to 12 and for secondary schools of age 12 to 14. We have worked with mono-/bilingual groups of children who speak both Russian and Ukrainian and with multilingual groups, although there were more Ukrainian-/Russian-speaking children.

'In terms of language, working with mono-/bilingual children in these classes is relatively simple. All the children understand Russian, and many can speak it. The children enjoy the activities we offer. We were able to offer a variety of projects and get written and oral reflections, as well as a variety of creative objects produced. However, we invited Ukrainian-speaking partners whenever possible. They were essential, especially when working with young people.

'Among the main challenges in communicating with mono-/bilingual groups we found that the group of teenagers needed more psychological support than workshop activities. There were cases of racism and discrimination against their group and the children didn't feel safe in their own group. The teacher didn't speak or understand Ukrainian and Russian well enough to understand the problems within the group. Issues of bullying and harassment were discussed with the children and addressed with a teacher. Children couldn't communicate difficulties that are not so visible because of the language barrier. Parents are also not used to it and do not have sufficient language knowledge and skills to deal with these issues.

'We realised early on that our projects required more reflection and self-reflection on the use of languages, and this was a quite challenging task. Teachers weren't happy if we used Russian or Ukrainian if some children were excluded from communication or if they couldn't understand us.

'When we looked at what is special about a multilingual group of children in welcome classes, we realised early on that the projects required more reflection and self-reflection on the use of languages and that this was a quite challenging task. Teachers weren't happy if we used Russian or Ukrainian if some children were excluded from communication or if they couldn't understand us. Usually, the teachers use German as the common language, which doesn't help much when the children have just arrived.

Of course, the children form groups in class based on a shared language. Within these groups there may be children who learn the language of instruction faster or have been attending for a longer period and can help to facilitate communication. However, the quality of such communication is difficult to assess if the teachers or workshop leaders don't know the language.

For the most useful methods we used lots of pictures, objects, art and drama techniques to facilitate communication and involve all the children in the activities. The children were encouraged to use their language to name objects, pictures and actions. They were also invited to draw in answer to questions, an activity that children enjoyed regardless of their drawing skills. We also use Google Translate options to communicate.

'There were many elements to learn German. There was a theatre exercise where an actor told a story in German, but the children had to remember body movements and gestures for certain words. This helped the children to concentrate and follow the text in a foreign language. Visual aids in the form of pictures of animals, food they eat and places where they may live helped with understanding and the children were able to use their language to describe the pictures they saw. There was also a lot of handiwork during which the facilitators could speak Russian, Ukrainian or English with some of the children. Google Translate was used for some children. When reflection and extensive use of language was needed, we invited people from local migrant organisations who spoke the children's language to help with translation, writing and communication.

'Teachers play a crucial role, especially in mixed multilingual classes. It worked best when teachers were involved in the process. It was important for some teachers to have a very detailed plan of the workshop day to prepare the children so that they knew what to expect and to learn the terminology of the topic in class. Some teachers were good at keeping the attention of the group and keeping the group together. Others failed to do this and then communication was extremely difficult. The children's expectations were not met, we could not fully communicate even with the Russian-/Ukrainian-speaking group.

'Teachers would hand out materials translated into a child's mother tongue so that the children could read the material and be prepared. We have to say that it didn't work well, perhaps because of a lack of commitment on the part of the parents. There was one case where a child's parents

couldn't read or write themselves. It's always helpful to be in a thematic space, so it's easier to understand. Museums, parks, community gardens are all places where it's enough to point at things and name them or describe what's happening in another language.

> 'It was always helpful to be in a thematic space so it's easier to understand.
> Museums, parks, community gardens are all places where it's enough to point at things and name them or to describe what's happening in another language.

'First of all, language skills and a migrant background greatly helped in our work because you can easily relate to the children you are working with. Especially when they are learning a new language in an unfamiliar environment. You understand the difficulties and fears of the child and also the frustration of the teachers. There were often one or two languages we could speak, plus English, which the children usually knew at varying levels. If the language isn't known, it's no problem to use digital tools. We had experience of using them, so it was not a new method.

'In addition, we also work outside the school with multilingual children and families. Parents often wish for their children to maintain or acquire their mother tongue by letting them meet other children who speak it.

'The main source for our methods is multilingual materials. We often prepare them ourselves. It can be nature observation journals, where plants, animals and objects are represented by photos and described in several languages, including a national and a mother tongue, plus English and maybe scientific terms in Latin for plants.

'We use video material in different languages with or without subtitles. Project work is not complicated if you can get groups of children or families together and they can help each other. And we use a lot of books in different languages so that the children can work independently and with us.'

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