

Studies + Reports | 34E

# COORDINATION OF LANGUAGE TEACHING IN SWITZERLAND

Current Status – Developments – Future Prospects

Sandra Hutterli (Editor) | Bern 2012



**EDK | CDIP | CDPE | CDEP |**

Schweizerische Konferenz der kantonalen Erziehungsdirektoren  
Conférence suisse des directeurs cantonaux de l'instruction publique  
Conferenza svizzera dei direttori cantonali della pubblica educazione  
Conferenza svizra dals directurs chantunals da l'educaziun publica



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The opinions and conclusions contained in the *EDK's* series «Studies + Reports» are those of specialists and are not necessarily those of the *EDK*.



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**Glossary** | Terms central to the field of language teaching have been assembled in a five-language glossary (see annex 1). However, in the interest of readability, these terms are not indicated in the text.

**Compulsory eleven-year education** | The numbering of school years conforms to the system given in the *Harmos* Agreement (art. 6). For cantons that follow this system, pre-school is compulsory (from the age of four) and lasts two years, which brings the number of compulsory school years to eleven. According to this system, the first year of primary school becomes the third school year, the second becomes the fourth, and so on. This does not mean that school-based learning begins in pre-school. The two years of compulsory pre-school do however contribute to the development of the child's competences, especially in the language of schooling.

**Authors:**

Sandra Hutterli (Editor) | Daniel Coste | Daniel Elmiger | Brigit Eriksson | Peter Lenz | Daniel Stotz | Susanne Wokusch | Daniela Zappatore

**Special contributions:**

Gian Peder Gregori | Brigitte Jörimann | Rosanna Margonis-Pasinetti | Basil Schader | Gé Stoks | Martine Wirthner

**Specialist revisors:**

Raphael Berthele | Daniel Coste | Gabriela Fuchs | Thomas Lindauer | Georges Lüdi | Olivier Maradan | Waldemar Martyniuk

**Participants in the development and implementation of the project:**

- Coordination Group for Language Teaching (*KOGS*)
- Professional Group Foreign Languages of *COHEP*

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# PREFACE

Language teaching constitutes the main disciplinary area in the Swiss education system on which the *EDK* has logically and for historical reasons a major influence.

On the basis of the School Agreement of 29 October 1970, the *EDK* on 30 October 1975 adopted recommendations and decisions regarding the introduction, reform and coordination of the teaching of the second national language to all pupils during their compulsory schooling. It took a number of years to put these into practice in all the cantons – i.e. lay the groundwork in view of bringing second national language teaching forward to the 5<sup>th</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> year of primary school. For twenty-five years the *Commission Langue 2* supported this coordination effort.

During this time, Switzerland also became a resolutely multilingual country as the number of children from migrant backgrounds in its classrooms increased dramatically. Recommendations concerning the schooling of foreign language children were published for the first time in 1972 and updated several times, most recently in 1991, to supplement the directives aimed at fostering and promoting the multilingualism that is becoming an ever more important aspect of Swiss society. These were followed in 1985 by recommendations concerning the introduction of Italian language and civilisation in the upper secondary schools and student and teacher exchanges in Switzerland; the definition of common meeting points at the pivotal stage between compulsory and post-compulsory schooling (1986); and finally a declaration on the promotion of bilingual teaching (1995).

During the 1990s, when the *EDK* was about to celebrate its hundredth anniversary (1997), the question of the third language – English in this case – in the context of compulsory schooling became increasingly pressing. A group of experts was given the task of putting forward coherent proposals, and in 1998 it produced a General Concept of Language Teaching that was never officially adopted

but had a lasting influence on teaching policy and political debates.

Shortly thereafter, the 2001 European Year of Languages saw two decades of evolving teaching methodology set down in a Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (learning, teaching, assessing) which would rapidly trigger and stimulate the creation of teaching and assessment concepts, throughout Europe and beyond, in a deliberately multilingual and intercultural approach.

After an unsuccessful attempt in 2001, on 25 March 2004 the *EDK* finally unanimously adopted a Strategy of Language Teaching and an ambitious medium-term working programme that established a common national framework and, ultimately, better regional coordination. This decision, both bold and consensual, prompted diverse reactions. Since then, our strategy has been confirmed on several occasions by popular vote at the cantonal level and, in 2007, was included in the Intercantonal Agreement on the Harmonisation of Compulsory Education and backed by the Swiss Parliament's adoption of the Federal Act on the National Languages and Understanding between the Linguistic Communities (LangA). Regional conferences, the education departments of the cantons, universities and Universities of Teacher Education, and professional and cultural associations have since been closely involved in the implementation of these decisions and recommendations.

It is against this background, and at a time when expectations for educational competences (the language of schooling and foreign languages) are for the first time being jointly determined by means of national Educational Standards, that a summary report has been drafted which presents the changes that have been made to date, current priorities, challenges, problems to be solved, and avenues to be explored. The publications *Studies + Reports of the EDK* are distinctive in that they have been drafted by specialists – they are not

political texts. A number of specialists working in the Universities of Teacher Education and education and methodology services of the different linguistic regions, led by the General Secretariat, have managed to give a concrete overview and a selection of current methodological approaches with a view to implementing the *EDK's* strategy. Recognised specialists both Swiss and foreign have also read and commented on the texts. It was a momentous task and we take the opportunity to thank the coordinator, the authors, and the specialists who have given their time.

One of the salient messages of this effort is that language learning cannot be compartmentalised; it fulfills the different needs of different individuals according to the use that they make of language and the competences they acquire for that purpose. This is referred to by specialists as «functional plurilingualism». This is exactly what the *EDK's* Strategy of Language Teaching is aiming for. It does not rely solely on language teachers but on the school system as a whole, as well as on the extracurricular opportunities and support provided by families, training institutions, the media and community associations, and indeed on Switzerland's multicultural society as a whole.

The *EDK* is happy to present this summary report to its members, its wide intercantonal network, and to the public at large. It hopes that it will lead to debate, mobilisation and training – which in the long run constitute the only coherent way in which to durably improve, broaden and diversify the language teaching to which every student in our country is entitled.

January 2011

Isabelle Chassot  
State Counsellor  
President of the *EDK*



# 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Context

In a multilingual, federal state such as Switzerland language learning and, consequently, language teaching, are of prime importance. The Federal Constitution provides for four national languages (German, French, Italian, and Romansh)<sup>1</sup>. The working languages at the federal level are German, French, and Italian, with Romansh being used only for Romansh speakers<sup>2</sup>. The cantons of Bern, Fribourg, and Valais are bilingual (German/French) and therefore have two official languages. Canton Graubünden is trilingual (German/Romansh/Italian) and thus has three official languages. The official languages are also the languages of schooling. Moreover, German-speaking Switzerland has what is known as «medial diglossia»: Swiss German dialects are used orally while standard German is used for writing but, depending on the situation, the two varieties may compete, as in the use of the dialect in the public sphere and the standard language in the official sphere. The language of schooling is mainly the standard language.

In Switzerland, as in Europe more generally, each citizen is entitled to learn two other languages in school alongside the local national language<sup>3</sup>. This is seen both in Switzerland and in the wider Europe as a means of safeguarding and promoting linguistic and cultural diversity. Knowing several languages facilitates communication between different language groups and improves mutual understanding, fostering tolerance of other cultures. Promoting languages is a means of ensuring stability among different language groups within a country as well as between states. Daily life takes place in a globalised, hence multilingual,

environment: the exchange of information, economic competitiveness, and private and professional mobility depend directly on languages or, more specifically, on the language competence of individuals. Language competence is part of a human being's basic competences: languages that one has acquired naturally and those that one has learned at school contribute to forging an individual's identity and are an integral part of that individual's perception of him- or herself. Knowing the language of schooling is one of the essential conditions for learning in all subjects, and for educational success in general. Knowledge of additional languages increases an individual's career opportunities. In working life, knowledge of English is often an essential basic condition for success, while knowledge of other languages constitutes a necessary or at least a desirable qualification, depending on the field of activity.

The promotion of languages in schools fulfils an important function. It is a matter of increasing and improving learning conditions for all students, from the beginning of their schooling, via the acquisition of the language of schooling. By integrating all languages spoken by learners (in other words, including those that are not languages of the country, such as languages of origin / of migration), one makes use of all available language resources, which in turn benefits other learning. This is an advantage for learning foreign languages: students should be given the opportunity to make as many connections as possible with the languages concerned (for instance, by introducing early foreign language teaching in the primary school as well as bilingual teaching of a non-language subject). Languages are learned through a cross-mobilisation of resources that

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1 Cf. art. 4 <http://www.admin.ch/ch/d/sr/101/a4.html> (22.02.2010)

2 Cf. art. 70 <http://www.admin.ch/ch/d/sr/101/a70.html> (22.02.2010)

3 In Switzerland: Languages Act of 5 October 2007, art. 15, para. 1 and 3, art. 16 lit. b (<http://www.admin.ch/ch/d/ff/2007/6951.pdf> [07.06.2010]) and Strategy of Language Teaching ([http://edudoc.ch/record/30008/files/Sprachen\\_d.pdf](http://edudoc.ch/record/30008/files/Sprachen_d.pdf) [07.06.2010]). In Europe: art. 149, al. 2, of the EC Treaty ([http://www.europarl.europa.eu/parliament/expert/displayFtu.do?id=74&ftuid=FTU\\_4.17.3.html](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/parliament/expert/displayFtu.do?id=74&ftuid=FTU_4.17.3.html), 28.02.2010) and the EU's action plan of 2004 ([http://ec.europa.eu/languages/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/languages/index_en.htm), 28.02.2010)

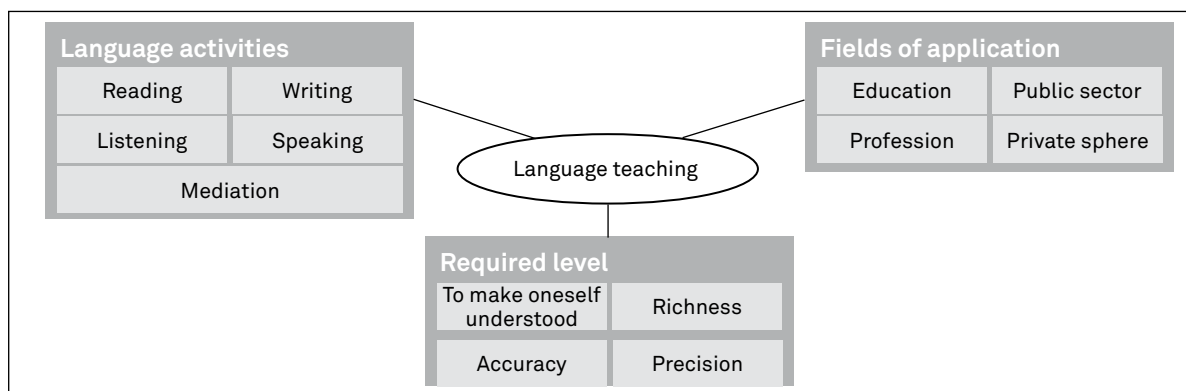
spans the years of schooling and extends beyond into daily professional and private life. The individual thereby acquires functional multilingual competences. Some languages are learned for a specific purpose, and cultural aspects play as important a part in the process as do purely linguistic competences.

Consequently, the coordination of language teaching is essential in several regards:

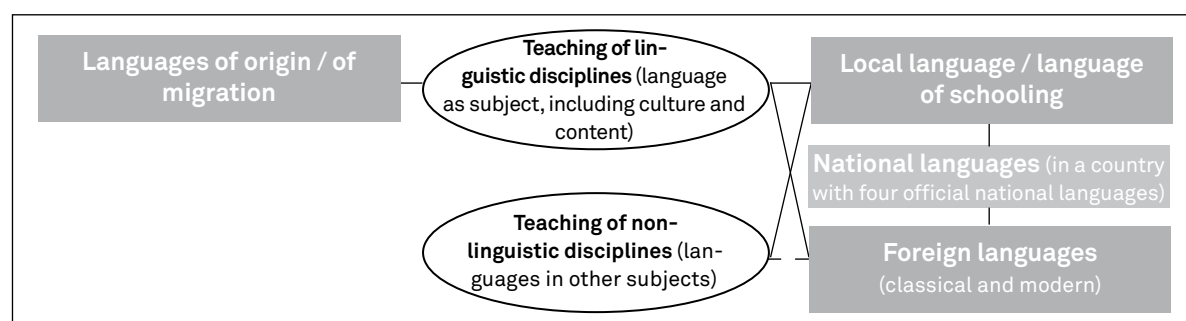
- **Aims** | Language teaching has several aims. As well as offering practice in the language, it is clearly advisable to promote or put special emphasis on all **language activities** (reading, writing, listening, speaking, as well as mediation activities). In this respect, the **fields of application** (education, public sector, the professional or private sphere) play an important role: in the course of compulsory education, for example, the aim is to develop a language competence that is as broad as possible and communication-based, in order to provide students with foundations for the remainder of their education. Among the **potential objectives** of language learning is another central element, i.e. the level required for its use: is the language intended merely to make oneself understood, should it be as rich as possible, or should it attain a high degree of terminological precision or correctness? The objectives of language learning should be coordinated and adjusted according to constantly changing realities as well as to the needs of society and the economy. The steadily accelerating pace of communication and the ever-present availability of information thanks to new technologies, not to mention the use of languages in different contexts, are reinforcing the practical, communicative orientation given to language learning, focusing also on the use of new media. The main goal is thus no longer primarily developing «native speaker-like» competence but rather the development of functional language skills. This functional orientation can vary: the child of migrants wishes to master the local language (the language of schooling) as rapidly as possible in order to be accepted by others in the playground and to

be able to understand what the teacher says. A future train conductor must have sufficient oral proficiency in foreign languages to be able to provide information to a tourist. Knowing Turkish may increase a student's chances of finding an apprenticeship position as a medical assistant in a multicultural neighbourhood. The holder of a Swiss Baccalaureate Certificate must possess sufficient language skills to be able, in the course of his or her further studies, to understand specialised texts written in other languages. The examples are endless. Illustration 1a shows the different levels of objectives in language learning that must be coordinated and adjusted according to needs.

- **Language** | Quality **language teaching** implies coordinating learning beyond the languages themselves. It is an undertaking that consists in consciously integrating horizontal coherence into language teaching to promote the integrative acquisition of language as naturally as possible by not making an artificial distinction between subjects – or at least by taking advantage of the two-way potential of curricular and extracurricular language learning. Experience already acquired in the field of language learning is consciously taken into consideration, for instance by means of a transfer process, or by revisiting strategies and establishing concrete comparisons between languages. In this context, the language learning biography of the individual, including for instance the **languages of origin / of migration**, represents an important starting point for further learning. For some students, the **language of schooling** is also the first language; for others, it is already a second language. For some, English is the first language; others must learn it as a **second language**. Some speak only one language at home; others have parents who speak different languages. They all find themselves in the same classroom, learning languages together in the same school context, but from different starting points. The field of languages is evolving towards functional multilingualism, where each individual speaks several languages, which are not necessarily the same from one



**Illustration 1a** | Examples of fields that must be coordinated according to the aims pursued



**Illustration 1b** | Examples of fields to be coordinated in terms of languages

individual to another. These languages are acquired at school, but also outside the school. The acquisition of languages at school is not limited exclusively to language subjects, but should also take place during the teaching of non-language subjects. For example, one might learn an Italian song as part of a music class, or sports classes might be given in two languages, in English and in the language of schooling; interpreting an original text for a history class will actively contribute to improving reading skills, etc. The fact is that in order to make the most of the potential offered by the language skills that an individual already possesses on the one hand, and of the innumerable opportunities for language learning on the other, it is essential to coordinate between languages and the corresponding learning opportunities. Illustration 1b is a simplified representation of the levels to be coordinated in the field of languages.

- **Education** | Language learning is a continuous, lifelong process that begins as early as the prenatal stage. Consciously consolidating vertical coherence, i.e. continuously developing language learning at every level of education, is one of the basic conditions for motivating, successful language acquisition which at the same time teaches students an autonomous learning process that will continue throughout their life. The conditions in which the language learning process takes place change over the years, according to the individual's cognitive development. For children of pre-school and primary school age, learning conditions are fairly open and flexible (for instance, sound perception, which is more highly differentiated at an earlier age, or a greater degree of freedom of oral expression); at a more advanced age, at lower and upper secondary education, language learning can be more consciously directed and the pro-

cess can be more closely studied. The ideal, therefore, for the acquisition of languages, is to constantly strengthen the learning process by drawing on the skills that have already been developed. At a higher level of competence this is more abstract and specialised, which is apparent in advanced learning, at upper secondary education and at **tertiary level**, and is dependent on the level of language during **continuing education**; hence the need to ensure that the coordination of language teaching spans all levels of education. The diagram below presents some of the aspects of general language skill development according to the different levels of schooling. These are merely examples – others could be added to complete the picture. Moreover, it is worth noting that extracurricular learning plays just as central a role as school learning in the development of language skills. Finally, the order in which the different languages are acquired is also significant (see illustration 1b), and may constitute an aid for the development of skills in other languages.

- **Educational system** | The coordination of language teaching through the different levels of the educational system is an essential condition for quality, permeability and mobility within the system. For the *EDK*, the principle of subsidiarity applies; in other words, the cantons are sovereign in matters of public education. Together, the Confederation and the cantons shall, within the scope of their powers, jointly ensure the high quality and accessibility of the Swiss Edu-

cation Area. (Federal Constitution, art. 61a, Swiss Education Area). The Swiss Conference of Cantonal Ministers of Education (*EDK*) performs functions that cannot be carried out by the regions or the cantons and bases itself on legally binding intercantonal agreements. The Strategy of Language Teaching of 2004<sup>4</sup> adopted by the *EDK*, as well as the *HarmoS* Agreement (which took effect in August 2009)<sup>5</sup>, provide a coordinated approach for language teaching nationwide (for example, two foreign languages at the primary school level and the option of studying a third national language at lower secondary education) and set national Educational Standards for the language of schooling as well as for foreign languages at the transition points between levels<sup>6</sup>. The order in which languages are learned (a second national language and English, or the reverse) as well as the **curricula** (*Plan d'études romand, Lehrplan 21*, curricula of canton Ticino) are determined at the level of the linguistic region. The actual implementation is carried out at the level of the canton. Cantons that have signed up to the *HarmoS* Agreement take it upon themselves to support classes in language and culture of origin (LCO)<sup>7</sup>. The aim is to improve collaboration between the teachers in mainstream schools and those who teach LCO classes. The development or selection of teaching resources for language classes is done both at the cantonal level, and through intercantonal collaboration (*D-EDK, CIIP*). The Coordination Group for Language Teaching (*KOGS*)<sup>8</sup> appointed by the *EDK* contributes to the coordination of language teaching, the

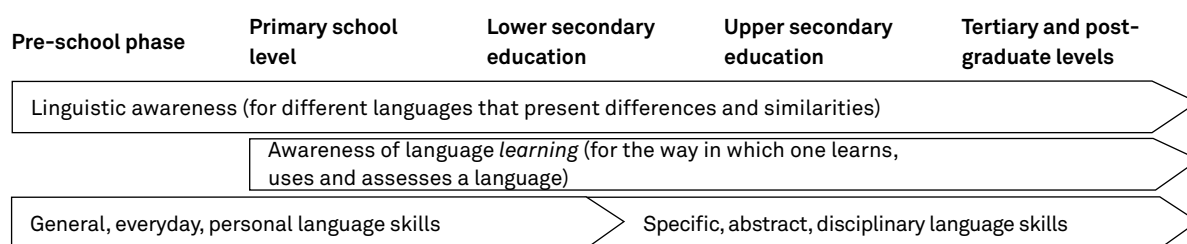
4 *EDK* (2004): Language teaching during compulsory schooling: the Strategy of Language Teaching of the *EDK* and the working programme for coordination on a national scale: [http://edudoc.ch/record/30008/files/sprachen\\_d.pdf?version=1](http://edudoc.ch/record/30008/files/sprachen_d.pdf?version=1) (28.02.2010)

5 Cf. *HarmoS* Agreement, harmonisation of objectives, art. 3, 4, 7 and 8: <http://www.edk.ch/dyn/12220.php> (28.02.2010)

6 Cf. the working programme of the *EDK*: the *EDK* ensures the implementation and continuity of its strategies for the development of language teaching and the promotion of multilingualism in the national and European contexts, by attending to the development and use of concepts, tools and system assessments. (Working programme 2008–2014, 18 June 2009, chapter 2: [http://edudoc.ch/record/33416/files/TP2009\\_d.pdf](http://edudoc.ch/record/33416/files/TP2009_d.pdf) (28.02.2010)

7 The text of reference of the *EDK* on classes of language and culture of origin (LCO), i.e. the teaching of the first language: <http://www.edk.ch/dyn/18766.php> (28.02.2010)

8 Cf. <http://www.edk.ch/dyn/11943.php> (28.02.2010) and «Collaboration and cooperation» in the annex.



**Illustration 1c** | Examples of areas to be coordinated at the different levels of schooling

exchange of information between linguistic regions via networks, the coordination of development projects and work in the field of language teaching methodology, and works in collaboration with the European Centre for Modern Languages (ECML) in Graz<sup>9</sup>. With the aim that by 2015 95% of all students in Switzerland who complete their compulsory education should continue their education at upper secondary education, the *EDK* has been seeking to develop upper secondary education language teaching<sup>10</sup> in a coherent way since the Strategy of Language Teaching of 2004 came into effect. This is also because knowledge of languages plays an important part in both the Baccalaureate Certificate and the Federal Vocational Baccalaureate Diploma and for specific professional training. Tools are developed for use by the cantons, at both the national level and the level of the linguistic region, in order to contribute to the implementation of this strategy. This is the case for the European Language Portfolio (ELP)<sup>11</sup>, which is available for all levels of education and exists in three versions, each for a specific age group. International and domestic mobility are facilitated by the recognition regulations for diplomas established by the *EDK* in the field of **teacher training** (for pre-school

and primary school levels, lower secondary education and baccalaureate schools, as well as for specialised teachers, speech therapists and psychomotor therapists). *COHEP*<sup>12</sup> was instructed by the *EDK* to ensure the coordination of subjects and quality. With the help of the *EDK*, the *ch Jugendaustausch*<sup>13</sup> Agency offers **exchanges** for students, classes, apprentices and teachers, as well as internships in other linguistic regions. At the **international level**, the *EDK* also works with the Council of Europe and the European Union in the area of language learning. Research in this area is conducted at Universities of Teacher Education. The *EDK* also regularly delegates specialists to workshops and occasionally to research programmes at the European Centre for Modern Languages (ECML) in Graz. Finally, **private service providers** are playing an increasingly significant role in public education, with resources such as international language diplomas. There is a free market in this area, but the use of such resources and their place in the education system are currently being debated at the national level. Illustration 1d gives a simplified representation of the different areas of language teaching that must be coordinated within the education system.

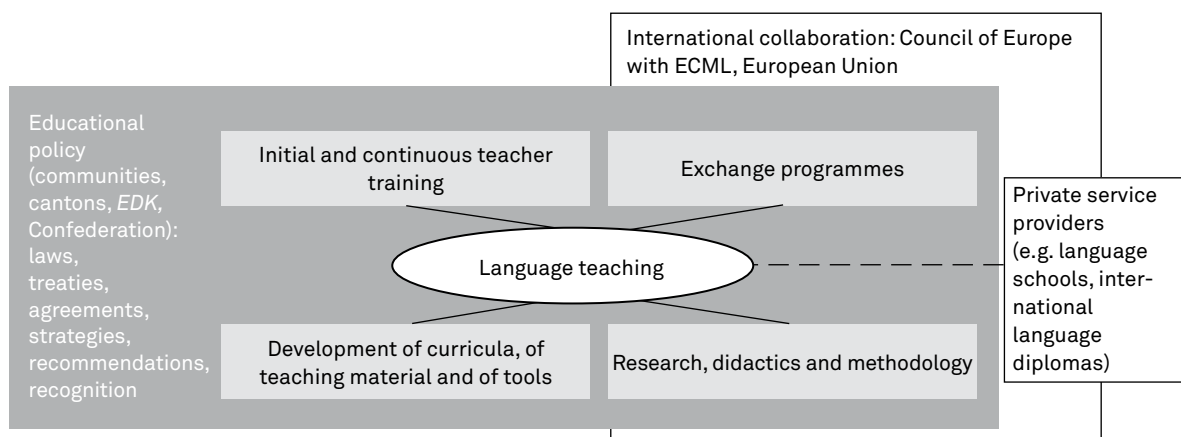
9 Cf. <http://www.ecml.at/> (28.02.2010). Cf. «Collaboration and cooperation» in the annex.

10 Cf. Language teaching at upper secondary education: <http://www.edk.ch/dyn/12040.php>

11 The Swiss version of the European Language Portfolio: <http://www.edk.ch/dyn/17490.php>

12 *COHEP* represents the Conference of Rectors of Universities of Teacher Education as well as other teacher training institutions: <http://www.cohep.ch> (28.02.2010). For teacher education, see also: <http://www.edk.ch/dyn/15526.php>. Cf. also annex 3.

13 Cf. <http://www.echanges.ch/> (28.02.2010) and «Collaboration and cooperation» in the annex.



**Illustration 1d** | Examples of areas that need to be coordinated within the education system

## 1.2 The objectives and structure of the report

The coordination, development and improvement of language teaching are part of a continuous process. This report provides a broad outline of this process for Switzerland, giving an overview of what has already been accomplished, what is currently being implemented, and what is planned for the future. It concentrates on the question of both vertical and horizontal coherence, referring on the one hand to language learning at all levels of schooling and for different age groups and, on the other, to the learning of different languages. These two main themes are fundamental to language learning that is aimed at encouraging the learner and also serves as a basis for the development of teaching tools and concepts in the field of language promotion. The objectives of this report are first and foremost the following:

- to give an overview of the **legal bases**, the **strategies** and the concrete content of how language teaching is coordinated in Switzerland and, at the same time, place language teaching in Switzerland within the European context (chapter 2);
- to show the change of paradigm that is taking place between a monolingualistic conception of learning and **multilingual comprehension**, and the move away from a representation of skills that aims for a degree of correctness equivalent to that of the first language towards

**multilingual skills** oriented towards practice and communication (chapter 3);

- to document the **current state of teaching of different languages** (languages of origin / of migration, language of schooling, foreign languages) as well as the change towards a plurilingual approach with an integrated language methodology in Switzerland (chapter 4);
- to present and compare **projects and tools** related to the coordination of language teaching in Switzerland (national Educational Standards, development of curricula and teaching resources, tools to assess and record the level of language skills such as ELP, *Lingualevel*, etc.), and demonstrate their potential as well as their limitations (chapter 5);
- to present an **overview** of projects that are planned for the future and of emerging trends in the development of language teaching in Switzerland (chapter 6).

Coordinating language teaching and adapting it to current needs is a constant challenge, a matter of finding the balance between the preservation of diversity as cultural heritage on one hand, and the need for harmonisation and coordination on the other. Linguistic diversity offers real potential, but it also calls for commitment. Initiatives taken in relation to language teaching should be part of general school development work.

This publication breaks new ground in that, for the first time, specialists in all languages (lan-

guages of origin / of migration, language of schooling, foreign languages) and from the three largest linguistic regions of Switzerland (German, French, and Italian) have collaborated as a team to produce this report on language teaching in Switzerland. This pluridisciplinary, multilingual collaboration has made it possible to focus on a number of different areas, to find answers to different questions, and to draw a number of conclusions. Drafting the text required a high degree of cooperation and a considerable effort of coordination among the specialists of different languages and from different linguistic regions. It was an enriching process, during which some known elements were confirmed and other new elements emerged thanks to the different approaches. The idea is therefore that this text be seen as an open window on the debates that are taking place, and as evidence of the coordination achieved in the areas of comprehension, learning and teaching of languages. Things being constantly evolving, the status of certain projects has changed during the drafting of this text; these changes have been taken into account whenever possible. In spite of (or indeed because of) the joint drafting of the text, which was done in several languages, certain passages may still require some adjustment. This is a defining quality of the report as it places the process of language learning – by definition a complex one – in the global context of teaching, with its constantly changing realities, such as the strategies, concepts and tools that are deployed in this field. For this reason the report is not to be considered as a finished work. Rather, the object is to give readers a sense of this dynamic, inviting them to make their own critical reflection and take part in the movement that has been started, each in his or her own field of activity. Some steps have already been taken to coordinate and improve language teaching; other initiatives have yet to be launched.

### 1.3 Target groups

As mentioned in the introduction, language teaching represents a key element in our multilingual culture – it concerns all of us. This publication, in

the Studies + Reports series, is therefore intended for a broad audience:

- those involved in education policy
- educators and specialists in graduate teacher education schools
- authors and those in charge of curricula and teaching resources
- researchers in the fields of language teaching and learning
- teachers
- those responsible for education in other countries (for example, member States of the Council of Europe and of the European Union)
- different groups and partners with an interest in language teaching

With such a broad range of readers who all take a different perspective on the theme of language teaching, the text must meet stringent demands. Taking into account the diversity of interests and the varying degrees of detail required, the authors have designed the report as follows:

- an introduction at the beginning and a summary at the end of each chapter to give a general overview of the different aspects of language teaching coordination
- the texts within the chapters to provide in-depth information on the subject
- the annex contains a brief summary of activities, projects and tools, as well as a glossary in five languages and additional links; it enables readers to find their bearings and contains references to the text

There is a certain degree of repetition in the text which is deliberate: it makes it possible to read the text from the different perspectives mentioned above and also show the complexity of the areas to be coordinated.

### 1.4 Acknowledgements

The authors benefited from the support of a number of other professionals in coordinating content and specialisations. One of the central aims of the work was to bring together all the

languages (languages of origin / of migration, language of schooling, foreign languages) and the four national language regions (German, French, Italian, and Romansh), while placing them in the European context. And so, for their participation in the development and realisation of the project, we wish to say thank you – *merci, Danke, grazie, grazia* – to Gian-Peder Gregori, Brigitte Jörimann, Rosanna Margonis-Pasinetti, Basil Schader, Gé Stoks and Martine Wirthner for their contributions as specialists; Raphael Berthele, Daniel Coste, Gabriela Fuchs, Thomas Lindauer, Georges Lüdi, Olivier Maradan and Waldemar Martyniuk for their revision work; the Coordinating Group for Language Teaching (*KOGS*), the representatives of the Universities of Teacher Education (Professional Group Foreign Languages of *COHEP*), Regina B. Bühlmann, the delegate for education and migration of the General Secretariat of the *EDK*, Franziska Bischofberger, member of the *EDK's* Education and Migration Commission (*KBM*), and Katarina Farkas who represented the *Fachvorstand der Didaktikerinnen und Didaktiker der Schulsprache*. And finally, we wish to thank all those who devote themselves to language and to the continuous improvement of language teaching, hoping that this text will be of help to them in their work.



# 2 LANGUAGE POLICY AND LANGUAGE LEARNING IN EUROPE AND IN SWITZERLAND

In recent years the linguistic and social landscape has undergone changes, in Switzerland as in Europe. A multitude of languages are spoken in Switzerland and in Europe Union's member states, a result of multilingualism and also of increased private and professional mobility. It is therefore necessary to develop strategies on a national as well as on a European scale, to facilitate understanding among different cultures. Moreover, language competence also plays a central role in schooling and in professional life.

Both Switzerland and Europe regard the diversity of languages and cultures as a valuable asset and have enacted legislation to safeguard and promote it. Every student is entitled, during his or her compulsory education, to acquire two foreign languages in addition to the language of schooling. Therefore, schools need to offer the relevant methods and tools for early language learning. In order to establish coordinated planning, the 26 Cantonal Ministers of Education in Switzerland, who together represent the Swiss Conference of Cantonal Ministers of Education (*EDK*), in 2004 adopted a Strategy of Language Teaching to be implemented over several years. At the European level, the Council of Europe in Strasbourg and the European Union in Brussels are also drawing up recommendations and comparable projects relating to language promotion.

This chapter presents the importance of languages today and of the strategies that are being deployed to promote them, both in Switzerland and in Europe; it focuses on the following main themes:

- **The importance of languages in Switzerland (territorial and individual multilingualism)** (chapter 2.1) | The object is to study the importance and function of languages in society today.

- **Language strategies in Europe (Council of Europe and European Union)** (chapter 2.2) | This chapter gives an overview of the efforts that have been made in Europe to promote languages.
- **Language strategies in Switzerland** (chapter 2.3) | This chapter describes how language promotion is being oriented in Switzerland in line with current needs.

## 2.1 Switzerland and languages – general observations

Switzerland is known for and defined by the coexistence of several languages. The official quadrilingualism, which includes German, French, Italian and Romansh, is emblematic of the country. Multilingualism pervades every area of life: political, economic, cultural, social and private life are all marked by a mix of languages and cultures. The importance of language and communication in all of these areas needs no emphasising: in a society in which geographic distance no longer matters as much as it once did it is easy to reach people both near and far; however, if the exchange takes place across linguistic borders it can only be successful if the interlocutors understand each other – that is, if they are sufficiently acquainted with each other's cultural codes and conventions. It is therefore necessary to ensure (both individually and collectively) that communication is possible. Obviously, languages are important in every area of individual and social life. We will confine ourselves to two that are of particular importance: the political and administrative institutions on the one hand and the plurilingual repertoire of the individual on the other.

**Political level** | At the political level, language management follows the principle of subsidiarity: depending on the importance of the subject, it

will be dealt with either at the federal level or the level of the canton (or sometimes at the level of the commune).

- In its Constitution, the Federal Government guarantees the official status of quadrilingualism, but also the principle of individual linguistic freedom<sup>14</sup>.
- The cantons are responsible for the concrete application of language policy, particularly with respect to the teaching of languages at school level. They work together within various institutions such as the Swiss Conference of Cantonal Ministers of Education (*EDK*)<sup>15</sup>, among others, for regional (or even national) coordination.

**Individual level** | There is of course also the individual level: it is rare for people living in Switzerland to be exposed to only one language. Most are frequently in contact with two or more languages, be it for private or professional reasons or due to migration (inside Switzerland or from another country). All these contacts generate different forms of personal bi- or plurilingualism<sup>16</sup>, that individuals manage either autonomously or with the help of varying degrees of guidance. The entire population of the Romansh-speaking region is functionally bilingual, or even plurilingual for socio-economic reasons. Romansh monolingualism no longer exists.

### 2.1.1 The role of schools

Many social expectations are attached to schools and to the language teaching they provide, both

as regards the language of schooling and other languages. A school is supposed to provide students with the tools they need in order to function in society as plurilingual individuals (in private, civic and professional life) but, increasingly, it must also manage multilingualism in classrooms that include a significant number of students already possessing a personal plurilingual repertoire (see chapter 3.1).

In the Romansh-speaking region schools have a special mission, which is to transmit and use Romansh, Italian and German as languages of schooling so that students will have achieved an advanced, functional multilingualism by the end of their compulsory education.

### 2.1.2 Some recent history

Language policy has always been especially important in Switzerland. A look at a number of decisions taken at the intercantonal and federal levels in the past few years will help to better understand how language teaching is being oriented:

- In 2004, the Swiss Conference of Cantonal Ministers of Education (*EDK*) defined its Strategy of Language Teaching in compulsory education<sup>17</sup> and its programme of activities.
- In 2006, the Swiss voted overwhelmingly in favour of decisive new constitutional articles on education for better harmonisation of language learning and management of the system and its objectives.

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14 Cf. Federal Constitution, art. 4, 18, and 70.

15 The *EDK* consists of 26 Cantonal Ministers of Education. According to the School Agreement from 1970 the cantons ally in four regional conferences. The *EDK* is composed of four regional conferences: the *BKZ* (Central Switzerland), the *CIIP* (Western Switzerland and Ticino), the *EDK-Ost* (Eastern Switzerland and the Principality of Liechtenstein) and the *NW EDK* (Northwestern German-speaking Switzerland). Since 2010 the *BKZ*, *EDK-Ost* and *NW EDK* act as *D-EDK* (German-speaking Switzerland).

16 Cf. Werlen 2009 for demolinguistic details. Swiss (adults) speak two foreign languages on average, which puts them at the top of the European classification. Werlen notes inter alia that parents of schoolchildren consider language learning as an important factor in improving their children's chances in the jobs market.

17 The *EDK's* Strategy of Language Teaching repeats several essential points of the General Concept of Language Teaching (*EDK* 1998), drawn up by a *EDK* working group, which has no direct political significance. However, it was decisive for the establishment of several cantonal concepts regarding languages.

- In 2007, the Swiss Parliament approved the new Languages Act (LangA). It aims to encourage individual and institutional multilingualism and specifically mentions student and teacher exchanges, noting that students must have skills in at least one other national language and one foreign language (generally English).

These decisions will be developed further on (in chapter 2.3 and in the remainder of the document). To understand them fully, they must be placed in a broader context, i.e. language learning in Europe. This will clearly show not only that Switzerland has contributed to redesigning teaching and learning according to new principles but also that its aims are in line with what is being done on the rest of the continent.

## 2.2 Europe and languages

### 2.2.1 European societies all face the same challenges

Being in Europe, Switzerland is confronted with many of the same challenges faced to varying degrees by other European countries.

At the start of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, limits, borders and sovereignty are once again at the forefront of European preoccupations, while at the same time convergence movements are at work: globalisation of the world economy, the process – albeit slow – of European Union dynamics, affirmation and promotion of common values, particularly within the Council of Europe<sup>18</sup>. Languages are an integral part of this interplay.

Europe is also experiencing population displacement and internal as well as extra-European migration. These movements of people, which are not only linked to economic factors, continuously

modify the linguistic configuration and have an impact on education systems. Moreover, regional entities and ethnic minorities are demanding greater recognition. Language is often among their concerns.

In this regard, European societies must recognise that they are, in fact, multilingual and multicultural bodies defined by the movement of people and by the exchange of information, which also in turn reflects this double plurality. Consequently, national, regional and European language policies comprise ideological, cultural, social and even humanitarian and ethical variables that make them particularly difficult to apply. At any level, choices are neither easy nor constant, rarely coherent, and are made, in any case, in a context of diverging interests.

### 2.2.2 Diverse concerns and options

On the complex European scene, with its multiple stakeholders, language issues generate strong stances among the different European authorities concerned – at least in principle. They can be classified according to different issues.

#### Issues of values and rights

- Language does not have only an instrumental impact. It – and not only the language of birth – is also a marker of identity.
- Languages are part of, and carriers of, the collective heritage and their multiplicity and diversity must therefore be preserved and fostered.
- Language rights must be respected and upheld as citizen's rights, even if they do not have force of law and are expressed in diverse forms.

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**18** The European Union and the Council of Europe are frequently confused, particularly where language-related activities are concerned, although the statutes, history, aims and means of the two international bodies are very different. Hereinafter (see chapters 2.2.3 and 2.2.4) is a reminder of their distinct and complementary perspectives based on their respective establishing principles.

## Issues of social integration and cohesion, as well as of citizenship

Taking into account the language and culture of minorities must be considered not as a compartmentalisation of separate entities, but as a condition for membership, integration and participation in a pluralist society. Today's societies must reposition their national language(s) with respect to those with which they come into contact in the social sphere. Moreover, today, responsible democratic citizenship is exercised at several levels: local, regional, national and European, and access to other languages, however limited, can only be beneficial.

## Issues that affect the development of plurilingualism

Because of the concerns stated above, the defence of a multilingual Europe (at the societal level) must be complemented by the plurilingualism (individual) of European citizens, and the notion that a single *lingua franca* could become the sole medium of communication among them must be rejected<sup>19</sup>. The development of plurilingualism requires taking into consideration the whole body of language skills that an individual possesses or may acquire, whatever the official status or the degree of mastery of the linguistic varieties in his or her repertoire.

This implies that any language strategy, at whatever level (national, regional, local) must take a holistic approach and take into account the different languages present in the context, whatever their designation: languages of origin, national, regional or minority languages, dialects, languages of schooling, foreign languages, languages of migration, sign language(s), etc.

## Issues of professional and social mobility

The usual motives (communication and intercomprehension) still apply, but are often revisited in economic and social terms. Proficiency – however uneven – in several languages is an advantage in a labour market in which geographic and professional mobility and international opportunities may represent a means of promotion and social success for some, and for others a necessity in order merely to preserve their employment.

In addition, there is the awareness, not only on a strictly professional level, but also in terms of cultural capital, quality of life, and family strategy for children's future, that languages are an indispensable part of the knowledge base.

## Issues of knowledge building and transmission

Science and technological innovation seem to be shaping the future in a world of economic and scientific competition with which Europe can only keep up by staying at the forefront of progress. Knowledge building and transmission of knowledge and know-how would suffer if they relied only on a local vernacular or a single international language. For this reason, bilingual and multilingual teaching (chapter 4.2.2) tend to be regarded as a means of promoting the ability to work in academic and technical fields using several languages.

## Issues of assessment and certification

Public authorities, private operators, families and the learners themselves are therefore justified in expecting more concrete results from language learning. This expectation is also expressed by the call for recognition and, in many cases, for

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**19** Increasingly, the terms multilingualism and multilingual are used in referring to the plurality of languages present in a territory and society, and the terms plurilingualism and plurilingual to refer to individuals who possess a variable degree of proficiency in several languages. A multilingual territory can have monolingual individuals and plurilingual individuals can exist in a (hypothetical) monolingual society. The distinction is not always made by all parties, and indeed cannot be made in this form in a number of European languages.

validation and certification of acquired knowledge (chapters 5.4 to 5.5), requiring international norms, comparability, and the harmonisation of diplomas and certifications for a particular language and between different languages.

This is the reason, as we will see later, for the success encountered by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) (particularly for the competency levels it describes), the interest focused on the European Language Portfolio (ELP) (chapters 2.3 and 4.1.2). The wish to define European benchmarks for international comparisons between school systems, and for the inclusion of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages levels in the **Europass** project of the European Union.

### 2.2.3 Trends in the European Union

The Common Market, created in 1957, which later became the European Community and then the European Union, is marked by its origins. The primary vocation of the European Union, a community essentially founded on the market economy and partly regulated by a set of common rules, places language learning within the general context of its contribution and usefulness to the economy, professional requirements, and worker and student mobility. Questions of identity or connection to a broad-based educational programme or to the values of democracy and citizenship are, basically, matters for the Council of Europe rather than for the European Union.

The EU-27, with 23 official languages, has carried out and developed numerous programmes promoting multilingualism. The *Lingua* programmes of the 1990s, the European Label, an award for innovative initiatives, and the annual celebration of the European Day of Languages are some of the initiatives that have marked the last two decades. The 2004–2006 Action Plan «Promot-

ing language learning and linguistic diversity», the publication in 2005 of a strategic framework for multilingualism, and the creation – albeit temporary – of the post of Commissioner for Multilingualism within the European Union, are recent, tangible European Union milestones in the area of language strategy. The **Erasmus**, **Leonardo** and **Grundtvig** programmes all contain a component or aspects related to language learning, as does the Lifelong Learning Programme.

Moreover, surveys and studies conducted by the **Eurydice** network or commissioned from external consultants provide an interesting perspective on the role of languages in different educational systems or their significance for companies, for instance. Besides the European Council resolution on the learning, in school, of at least two languages in addition to the mother tongue, and the implementation of the **Europass**, it is indubitably the creation of the European indicator of language competence to assess the level of proficiency of European 15-year-olds in their first and second foreign languages that will have the most impact in the near future, including in countries that are not members of the EU. The European Council of 21 November 2008 adopted a resolution on a European strategy for multilingualism<sup>20</sup> that invites member states and the Commission to

1. promote multilingualism in order to strengthen social cohesion, intercultural dialogue and European construction
2. strengthen lifelong language learning
3. better promote multilingualism as a factor in the European economy's competitiveness and people's mobility and employability
4. promote linguistic diversity and intercultural dialogue by stepping up assistance for translation, in order to encourage the circulation of works and the dissemination of ideas and knowledge in Europe and across the world

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**20 The European Council is a body of the European Union (not to be confused with the Council of Europe). The Union, contrary to the Council of Europe, makes no distinction between multilingualism (societal) and plurilingualism (individual) and uses only the term multilingualism.**

Each of these headings is subdivided into numerous subparagraphs. The action verbs employed are not binding due to the principle of subsidiarity (in this context one can only speak of «guidelines»), but these objectives, although they are not dated and no figures are given, are likely to lead to invitations to tender and for project financing. The terms used have been carefully chosen and a great deal of care has gone into the last point in particular, relating to translation.

European Union language initiatives have been reinforced by the Recommendation on Key Competences for Lifelong Education and Training (COM [2005] 548 final) which places languages among the key competences<sup>21</sup>. But although the European Council has adopted the recommendation that all young Europeans should learn two languages other than the main language of schooling in the course of their compulsory education, the field of education is governed at the national level and its recommendations are not binding.

Although Switzerland is not a Member of the European Union, it has been associated with various projects involving member states. Swiss researchers are actively working on important international projects such as the Dylan project (Language Dynamics and Management of Diversity), which is financed by the European Union<sup>22</sup>.

## 2.2.4 The activities of the Council of Europe<sup>23</sup>

The essential objectives of the Council of Europe, which was created in 1949, were, and still are, the respect and defence of human rights, democracy and the rule of law. This mission was reactivated and extended after 1989, when the Council admit-

ted a number of new member states (there were 47 in 2009, compared to 22 in 1989). The general presentation of the Council of Europe currently states that: «During the Summit in Strasbourg in October 1997, the Heads of State and Government adopted an action plan to strengthen the Council of Europe's work in four areas: democracy and human rights, social cohesion, the security of citizens and democratic values, and cultural diversity»<sup>24</sup>.

This core mission has led the Council of Europe to work for the protection of migrants and to address their linguistic and cultural needs beyond those strictly necessary for integration in the host country; to develop and implement, together with those countries willing to collaborate, normative documents such as the Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (1992) or the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (1995); and to undertake programmes for Roma communities.

The work of the Council of Europe in the field of language teaching and learning has consisted in providing useful instruments for decision makers, teacher trainers, examining bodies and authors of textbooks. Successive modern language projects, from 1973 to 1996, led to the development of threshold levels intended to facilitate the identification of objectives and learning content within the framework of a functional and competence-based methodological approach that emphasises the development of aptitudes and skills in communication situations.

More recently, the former Modern Languages Section, now Language Policy Division, has widened its objectives and its field of action. A brief description is given below of a number of instru-

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21 **The Union's activities to promote multilingualism are described at [http://ec.europa.eu/education/languages/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/education/languages/index_en.htm) (28.02.2010) – for instance, the Early Language Learning (ELL) project. Numerous reference texts can be downloaded from the site.**

22 **Cf. [http://www.dylan-project.org/Dylan\\_en/home/home.php](http://www.dylan-project.org/Dylan_en/home/home.php) (28.02.2010)**

23 **As Switzerland is a member of the Council of Europe and has contributed significantly to the work carried out in the field of modern languages, the following exposé is more thorough than that relating to the European Union.**

24 **Cf. <http://www.coe.int>, under the «Who we are» heading (28.02.2010)**

ments that have been developed as a result of its activities, and which have received widespread recognition in Europe and even beyond.

- Development, implementation and use of the **Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)**, published in 2001 to coincide with the European Year of Languages), which has had a significant impact on European education systems. The CEFR includes developments pertaining to plurilingualism, the concept of plurilingual and intercultural competence, and reflection on the curricular scenarios that integrate languages within a single educational project, but its success and uses are mainly due to the proposals it sets out regarding the evaluation of communication skills. It defines six levels (A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, C2) that have become key reference points for the definition of objectives, conception of programmes, and assessment of language proficiency. It is also a valuable instrument for comparing the results of language assessment internationally. Its contribution, in spite of the all-encompassing definition given for plurilingual and intercultural competence, has mainly focused on the assessment, teaching and learning of foreign languages (often according to an additive and compartmentalised concept of multilingualism). Hence the question of whether to extend the concept of a common European framework of reference to the languages of schooling (Polish in Poland; Luxembourgish, German and French in Luxembourg). It is based on this question, but also pursuant to the reflection that has been carried out on the European Language Portfolio (ELP) and Language Education Policy Profiles that the Languages in / for Education project was developed. It encompasses the languages of schooling, but makes no provision for a common European framework of reference for them (see below and chapter 3.1.2).<sup>25</sup>
- Development of the **European Language Portfolio (ELP)**, of which over one hundred models presented by different countries or regions of Europe for different school and post-school levels were validated between 2002 and 2009. It is an instrument that closely complements the CEFR but also provides a record of the language repertoire of the learner – for whom it is intended – and makes it possible for them to become progressively more autonomous in their language learning. ELPs have evolved over the years. The language biography and record that they contain provide evidence of the learner’s overall language resources and his/her linguistic experience and achievements, which are not limited to foreign languages learned at school. Portfolio-type approaches could be envisaged that would also include the different uses of the languages of schooling. The objectives of the Autobiography of Intercultural Encounters, a new tool for learners, are somewhat different but complementary. This encourages learners to «exercise independent critical faculties, including critical reflection on their own responses and attitudes with regard to other cultures.»
- Creation of a **Guide for the Development of Language Education Policies in Europe** to introduce and illustrate ideas such as plurilingual education, offering a set of proposals regarding methods and resources and the argument for an educational language policy that includes plurilingualism in schools. The purpose of the Guide for the Development of Language Education Policies in Europe is to establish principles and approaches for coherent language education policies. It can thus serve as a framework for the development or reorganisation of language teaching in member states, above all in education systems. Its premise is to base these policies on the development of plurilingualism as an asset and a competence. The diversity of languages

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25 Switzerland played an important role in the initial conception phases of the CEFR (particularly regarding the establishment of reference levels). It was also in Switzerland that the structure of reference of the European Language Portfolio (ELP) was defined. See chapters 2.3 and 4.1.2.

(whether national, regional, minority, foreign, etc.) is reflected in the plurilingual repertoire and profile of the learners.

- Establishment of **Language Education Policy Profiles** for countries and regions within the Council of Europe member states to allow them to analyse and discuss their language teaching policies in a global perspective. The Language Education Policy Profiles (which, at the end of 2009, concerned 16 countries and regions of Europe) clearly demonstrate which sensitive areas should be considered in establishing an educational language policy:
  - The place and treatment accorded to the main language of schooling in regard to regional languages or languages of minorities.<sup>26</sup>
  - The place given in the curriculum to the mother tongues of migrants and to the language(s) of the host countries as languages of schooling: depending on the country, the question is addressed to a greater or lesser degree by the education system, but it is arising more and more frequently.<sup>27</sup>
  - The place and importance given to foreign languages and their diversification in curricula with respect to the national language and potentially to regional languages or languages of minorities.<sup>28</sup>
- Conduct of a project with an integrative aim, that fully takes into account the languages of

schooling (*Schulsprache, langue de scolarisation*) and includes putting online a platform of resources and references for plurilingual and intercultural education.<sup>29</sup> This platform is the current form given to the proposals of the integrative approach designated by the heading Languages in education / Languages for education. It presents plurilingual and intercultural education as a right and a project and deals with the double aspect of languages as subject and languages in other subjects. The overall aim of the project is to propose to the member states resources and reference documents that they can use to develop their language of schooling programmes and programmes for language teaching in general by drawing on the experience and expertise of other member states. It particularly addresses the predicament of young students who start off their schooling at a disadvantage because their language skills do not correspond to schools' requirements (children of disadvantaged or migrant families, children whose first language is a regional language).

Due consideration should also be given to the multiple activities of the European Centre for Modern Languages (ECML) in Graz, Austria, arising from an initiative of Austria and established through a «partial agreement» (i.e. a specific agreement between a majority of Council of Europe member states).

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- 26 On the one hand, there is a tendency to insist on the national language as essential to national cohesion and as a vector of transmission of national identity, whose norms must be preserved and expressive potential developed, particularly in countries that have recently regained full independence; on the other hand, there is a wish to preserve the linguistic practices, cultural traditions and characteristics of languages that are not only minority languages but often perceived by the communities concerned as minorised.
- 27 More emphasis is generally placed on learning the language of schooling as a second language for the children of migrants (and as the language of the host country for the adults themselves) than on the preservation of the language of origin, even though the latter can contribute an added value to the resources of the country of immigration and help to open up schools to a plurality of languages.
- 28 Thus, on the one hand there is a tendency in non-Anglophone countries to concentrate efforts on the national language / English pair; on the other hand, in accordance with the recommendations of the European Union, there is a determination not to be confined only to English and to introduce another compulsory foreign language, even if it means limiting the choice of possible second languages.
- 29 The activities of the Language Policy Division are described at [http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Default\\_en.asp](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Default_en.asp) (28.02.2010). Almost all the documents and instruments that have been produced can be accessed and downloaded, in English and in French.



The strategic aims of the ECML are to help its 34 member states to implement efficient language teaching policies by:

- recognising practical experience in the field of language learning and teaching
- promoting dialogue and exchange among individuals active in this field
- training multiplying agents
- supporting research networks and projects related to the Centre's programme<sup>30</sup>

### 2.2.5 Healthy tensions and necessary choices

To sum up the objectives and activities of these two European bodies, we note in particular:

- that international organisations such as the Council of Europe and the European Union have taken an increasingly active role in the area of language policy in recent years
  - either, in the case of the European Union, through a growing involvement in training and education as a means of adapting human resources to encourage worker mobility and a knowledge-based economy in a context of market globalisation and competitiveness,
  - or, in the case of the Council of Europe, by reinforcing the link established between human rights, democratic citizenship, social inclusion and cohesion on one hand and, on the other, respect for multilingualism and recognition of the value of plurilingualism and intercultural relations.
- that this growing commitment, stemming from different origins and distinct objectives, contributes – among other things – to a better integration of languages into the educational

planning of states, into policy dynamics at different levels (national, regional, community, etc.), and into the representations of languages in society.

It is not surprising that, at this level, the same tensions can be found which exist all across Europe between the wish for harmonisation (avoiding standardisation) and an affirmation of diversity (which is not to be confused with fragmentation or break up). It is important not to underestimate these tensions and to make sure that the necessary dynamics are democratically regulated.

## 2.3 Recontextualisation

Swiss language policy for compulsory and continuing education must of course be relevant and coherent domestically, respecting the constraints and needs of the different linguistic regions, the cantons, the economy and the other social actors, but it must also reflect the fact that the country is surrounded by other countries with which it enjoys extensive economic and cultural relations. It is therefore not surprising that Switzerland is careful to coordinate its language teaching with what is being done elsewhere in Europe and in the world.

The most significant joint progress has certainly been the development of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), in which Switzerland actively participated:

- in 1991, one of the founding events for the future CEFR and for the European Language Portfolios (ELP) was a symposium of the Council of Europe held at Rüslikon (Zurich)
- between 1993 and 1998, a research subproject conducted within the framework of National Research Programme 33 established descrip-

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30 An excerpt from the introduction to the ECML is available at <http://www.ecml.at> (28.02.2010). It offers a host of information on the outcomes of the various programmes undertaken by the ECML. These and reports concerning the completed projects can be downloaded in English, French and German.

31 This Portfolio III is currently under revision; since 2008, the Swiss Portfolio series has been complete; it contains the Portfolino (for children from 4 to 7) integrated into the ELP I (students from 7 to 11) and ELP II (for students from 11 to 15).

tors with which language proficiency can be described in a positive and differentiated way, not only according to a progressive scale but taking into account various partial skills (cf. Schneider and North 2000)

- in 2001, the first European Language Portfolio (ELP) (for teenagers and adults) recognised by the Council of Europe originated in Switzerland<sup>31</sup>
- in the framework of the IEF project (*instruments for evaluation of foreign language competences*), conducted under the auspices of regional Swiss German EDK [Conferences of Cantonal Ministers of Education] (2002–2006), more refined descriptors for levels A 1.1 to B 1.2 were developed, as well as a databank containing exercises («communicative tasks») to evaluate student competences. The product is marketed under the name *Lingualevel*<sup>32</sup>

The new method of describing learner competences according to the action-based CEFR approach has had a significant impact on the teaching of languages in Switzerland. Not only are competence scales included in recent curricula (cantonal as well as regional<sup>33</sup>) and in competence models that serve as a basis for national Educational Standards, but they have also become a key point of reference for private language courses, editors of teaching materials, organisations that hold standardised international examinations, etc.

### 2.3.1 The parties involved in Swiss language policy

As the organisation of schools in Switzerland falls within the remit of the cantons (and gives the municipalities manœuvre fair degree of autonomy, particularly regarding administrative matters), many actors from the political, administrative and educational fields are involved in organising

language teaching. At the intercantonal level, the Swiss Conference of Cantonal Ministers of Education (*EDK*) coordinates the work of the cantons through intercantonal agreements and recommendations. Certain tasks and projects are dealt with by the regional conferences, of which there are four: the Intercantonal Conference of Cantonal Ministers of Education of Western Switzerland and Ticino (*CIIP*), as well as the Intercantonal Conference of Cantonal Ministers of Education of Central Switzerland (*BKZ*), the Intercantonal Conference of Cantonal Ministers of Education of Eastern Switzerland and the Principality of Liechtenstein (*EDK-Ost*) and the Intercantonal Conference of Cantonal Ministers of Education of Northwestern Switzerland (*NW EDK*). The last three conferences have recently been formed into the *D-EDK*. As education is the responsibility of the cantons, most practical decisions are managed at cantonal or municipal level. Several working and coordinating groups assist the authorities in their work; in particular:

- the Coordinating Group for Language Teaching (*KOGS*)
- the regional language groups
- the Professional Group Foreign Languages of *COHEP*

Many new projects have been launched in Switzerland since the beginning of the new century and a number of important decisions have been made regarding the teaching of languages.

### 2.3.2 The *EDK*'s Strategy

In 2004, the *EDK* established a Strategy of Language Teaching at compulsory education level.<sup>34</sup> In addition to general considerations about the goals of language teaching and the principles for its development and coordination, it also includes

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32 Cf. <http://www.lingualevel.ch> (28.02.2010); French and Italian versions are in preparation.

33 Thus, the *Plan d'études romand* (Curriculum for Western Switzerland) (which will come into effect in 2011) and the *Lehrplan 21* (Curriculum 21) (which will probably come into effect in 2012) are both based on the CEFR in the presentation of their objectives.

34 A draft strategy is being drawn up that covers both compulsory and post-compulsory schooling.

measures concerning the number and order of languages to be learned during the compulsory education. For the most part, this concerns the following points:

- a first foreign language (national language or English) is learned from the 5<sup>th</sup> school year onwards
- a second foreign language (national language or English) is learned from the 7<sup>th</sup> school year onwards
- a third foreign language (national language) is optional from the 9<sup>th</sup> school year onwards<sup>35</sup>

Although a consistent solution has been found for the question of when to start foreign language learning, no solution has been found for the order of the languages learned, a question which was the subject of heated debate. A compromise solution coordinated at the regional level has been reached that factors in the sovereignty of the cantons over education. Except for Graubünden and Ticino, which are special cases, two regions emerge (see illustration 2a) that are putting in place the following configurations:

- Western Switzerland and the bilingual or German-speaking cantons close to the linguistic border (*Passepartout* cantons Bern, Basel Stadt, Basel Landschaft, Fribourg, Solothurn, Valais) as well as Graubünden<sup>36</sup> and Ticino begin with a national language (as first foreign language) and continue with English. (See chapter 5.2 on *Passepartout*.)
- The Eastern German-speaking cantons begin with English (as first foreign language) and introduce French as the second foreign language in the 7<sup>th</sup> school year.

The *EDK's* Strategy of Language Teaching of 2004 also underlines the importance of the needs of students who are non-native speakers, stipulating (in point 2.1) that: students with a foreign

mother tongue will have the opportunity to consolidate their initial linguistic competence. In order to promote the languages of migration (point 3.8) it lists two concrete tracks:

3.8.1 Within the ordinary curriculum, languages of origin that are linked to a context of migration will be promoted within the framework of language awareness, *Begegnung mit Sprachen*, *éveil aux langues* activities

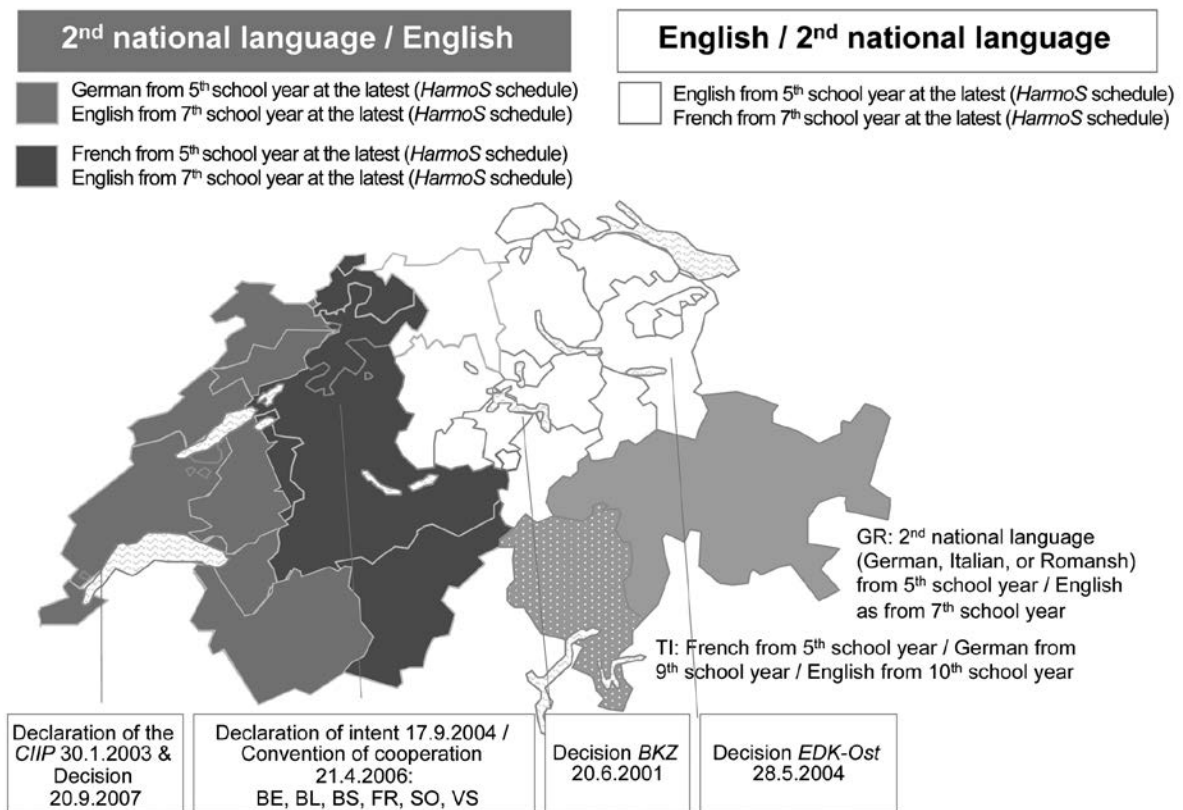
3.8.2 Support for their language of origin / of migration is offered to children by organised language communities via language and culture of origin teaching (LCO). The cantons authorise these courses and invite schools to cooperate with the persons in charge

The teaching/learning of the classical languages (Latin and Greek) is not addressed in the 2004 Strategy of Language Teaching; this is because their status in compulsory education varies (from canton to canton and from one programme to another).

The reorganisation of foreign language teaching in Switzerland means that almost everywhere the teaching and learning of the two foreign languages is reinforced at primary school level. It is particularly favourable to English, which is not only learned by all students but is also taught over a longer period in almost all cantons, whereas the teaching of the second national language is only emphasised in some cantons, in comparison with the previous model with one foreign language (a second national language) from primary school level (cf. Elmiger and Forster 2005). If language learning is emphasised in primary school, it of course means that all subsequent schooling must be revised to reinforce vertical cohesion (see chapter 4.6), involving an effort with respect to teacher training and teaching resources but also – most importantly – to mutual knowledge of the learning cultures between the primary school

35 Usually Italian; in Ticino, where the L4 is compulsory, it is German, which is taught as of the 10<sup>th</sup> school year.

36 In the trilingual canton Graubünden, students learn one of the other cantonal languages (German, Italian or Romansh) as the first foreign language, and English as the second.



**Illustration 2a** | Language teaching according to the *HarmoS* Agreement (art. 4): order of introduction of foreign languages

level (where language education has traditionally been conducted by generalists) and the secondary education (where teaching is more specialised).

### 2.3.3 The constitutional articles on education and the *HarmoS* Agreement

In 2006, by popular vote, the Swiss people accepted the new constitutional articles on education.<sup>37</sup> Several school projects connected with language teaching are based on the new possibilities for collaboration available to the cantons. We will list only the most important of these in this document.

Even before the popular vote, the *HarmoS* Agreement was introduced at the beginning of 2006. Among other things, it includes items relating to the objectives and content of teaching (regional curricula, introduction of national Educational Standards, individual portfolios) and measures to ensure and develop the quality of the school system at national level (Swiss Education Monitoring in relation with national Educational Standards). The Intercantonal Agreement of 14 June 2007 on the Harmonisation of the Compulsory Education (*HarmoS* Agreement) came into effect on 1 August 2009<sup>38</sup>.

Regarding languages, in art. 3 (basic education), point 2a, the intercantonal agreement has its

37 These are modifications of art. 48 and 61–67 of the Federal Constitution (cf. <http://www.admin.ch/ch/d/as/2006/3033.pdf>, 28.02.2010).

38 Fifteen cantons subscribed to the agreement (encompassing approximately 76% of the population); seven did not subscribe (approximately 1/7<sup>th</sup> of the Swiss population); in other cantons the ratification process is still under way (as in January 2011).

goal: languages: a solid linguistic culture in the local standard language (oral and written mastery) and essential skills in a second national language and in at least one other foreign language.

The *HarmoS* Agreement does not provide for any special measures regarding the language of schooling; it is clear however that mastery of the standard language is especially important, particularly in the German-speaking part of Switzerland where standard German (*Hochdeutsch*) coexists with dialects (diglossia). For foreign languages, the *HarmoS* Agreement adopts parts of the *EDK*'s Strategy of Language Teaching (see chapter 2.3.2), specifying that not only should the learning of two foreign languages be brought forward to primary level, but: At the end of compulsory education the levels of competence expected in these two languages should be equivalent (art. 4, para. 1). A third national language should also be promoted. The *HarmoS* Agreement states that during compulsory education optional third language teaching should be offered (art. 4, para. 2). The issue of language and culture of origin teaching (LCO) is mentioned, but it is left up to the cantons and countries of origin to deal with it: concerning migrant students, the cantons lend organisational support to courses in the language and culture of origin (LCO courses) organised by the countries of origin and the different language communities and which respect religious and political neutrality (art. 4, para. 4)<sup>39</sup>.

The *HarmoS* Agreement regards the national Educational Standards as a nationwide tool (in addition to regional language curricula, teaching resources and assessment tools) for development and improvement. The first national Educational Standards concern the language of schooling and foreign languages (and mathematics and natural

sciences). In order to benefit from models of competence and proposals for national Educational Standards based on scientific research, four consortiums were commissioned, two of them for languages (one for the language of schooling and one for foreign languages), between 2005 and 2008, to establish a model of competence and proposals for national Educational Standards. The outcome will be open for scrutiny and debate in 2010. Where foreign languages are concerned, there are numerous improvements compared to the existing model of competence (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages [CEFR]): levels of language proficiency have been more precisely defined; tasks have been developed (and tested) for the 8<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> school years to enable testing of certain partial skills; in addition, the consortium has tried to integrate language mediation and methodological and intercultural competences into the existing model.<sup>40</sup>

As regards the language of schooling, the consortium concerned was not able to base itself on an existing model and therefore had to develop a new model of competence for very diverse languages – and ways of teaching (see chapter 5 on this subject). The national Educational Standards were published in the summer of 2011.

### 2.3.4 Bilingual teaching

Other forms of contact with languages have developed markedly in Switzerland in recent years on the margins of the conventional teaching of foreign languages during compulsory education. In addition to exchanges, which must be organised by the teachers themselves<sup>41</sup>, various forms of bilingual or immersive teaching<sup>42</sup> are becoming more and more widespread in the Swiss

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39 For planning regarding LCO, cf. *EDK* (2009, 15, point VIa).

40 However, it has not been possible in either case to scale these competences precisely as is done for other partial competences. The proposals for Educational Standards and the scientific reports are available at <http://www.edk.ch> (28.02.2010)

41 A coordination service is provided by <http://www.echanges.ch> (28.02.2010) with the support of the *EDK*.

42 The terms «bilingual» or «immersive» teaching sometimes designate programmes (in which part of the teaching is given in a language other than the usual language of schooling) and sometimes the teaching sequence itself (in which more than one language is used during the lesson). Sometimes, both terms (bilingual/immersive teaching)

school system. Since the modification of the ruling on recognition of Baccalaureate Certificates in 1995, the number of schools offering bilingual programmes (50% of baccalaureate schools in 2010) has grown constantly (cf. Elmiger 2008 and Elmiger, Näf, Reynaud Oudot and Steffen 2010). This development mainly concerns upper secondary education (next to baccalaureate schools it is principally the vocational education and training schools that have developed bilingual programmes), but one can expect that the trend will put pressure on the lower levels, where projects exist, notably in the cantons of Bern, Graubünden and Valais (cf. Brohy 2004b, Kaufmann 2006 and Merkelbach 2007a). From now onwards, the cantonal school legislation of bilingual cantons Fribourg, Bern and Valais, and also of Zurich (for upper secondary education) provides for the facilitation of bilingual teaching programmes.

In canton Graubünden, since the 1990s, bilingual school projects have been carried out at all levels from pre-school through upper secondary education. These projects are always conducted in German, and in one of the other cantonal languages, either Romansh or Italian. In 2001, the canton published guidelines<sup>43</sup> for bilingual school projects undertaken within compulsory education.

### 2.3.5 Other projects pursued by the EDK

Currently, the EDK is pursuing other projects in the area of language teaching concerning:

- the place of language certificates and standardised tests in the teaching and learning of languages (working group set up in 2008) (see chapter 5.5.1)
- the training of teachers speaking a foreign language (in particular their status, profile and the level of proficiency required for language teaching) (see chapter 5.3)
- the search for a coherent strategy to bridge both the compulsory and the post-compulsory phases of education: in 2008, the EDK drafted a coordination strategy project for the teaching of languages at upper secondary education, which was analysed and discussed; it showed that there is a diverse range of expectations regarding languages and the EDK's coordination role<sup>44</sup>
- the development of the ELBE (language awareness, *Begegnung mit Sprachen, éveil aux langues*) methods (see chapter 4.1.2)<sup>45</sup> as well as teacher networking and training for the European Language Portfolio (ELP) and *Lingua-level* (see chapter 5.2), in the different regions
- the state of language and culture of origin teaching (LCO) in the different cantons<sup>46</sup>

## 2.4 Summary

In Switzerland, as in the rest of Europe, the learning and preservation of languages and, more generally, questions of language policy, are the subject of debate in the public sphere. The stakes are considerable – the issues are educational and economic but also concern culture and identity. They involve not only foreign languages but also regional and minority languages, the languages

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are used interchangeably (alongside other terms such as CLIL/*EMILE*, etc.), or they may designate different didactic formats (immersive generally designates programmes where the contribution of the target language is very significant, whereas bilingual teaching is used for forms where the target language carries less weight).

43 Cf. [http://www.gr.ch/DE/institutionen/verwaltung/ekud/avs/Volksschule/richtlinien\\_zweisprachigkeit\\_de.pdf](http://www.gr.ch/DE/institutionen/verwaltung/ekud/avs/Volksschule/richtlinien_zweisprachigkeit_de.pdf) (28.02.2010)

44 Cf. <http://www.edk.ch/dyn/12498.php> (28.02.2010)

45 Cf. for example the report *Apprendre par et pour la diversité linguistique* (Learning by and for linguistic diversity) (Saudan et al., 2005), which sums up the results of a pilot study of the ELBE (language awareness, *Begegnung mit Sprachen, éveil aux langues*) concept. Note also the symposia and study days regularly organized by the EDK of Northwestern Switzerland, on the European Language Portfolios (ELP) among others (*Netzwerktagung ESP*).

46 Cf. <http://www.edk.ch/dyn/19191.php> (28.02.2010)

of origin of migrant populations and, last but not least, national or official languages, in particular where their role in schooling is concerned.

Multilingual situations are becoming the norm, with very different configurations depending on the country, region, or locality. The multiplicity of languages and the linguistic heterogeneity of populations, particularly in schools, are ambivalently perceived: on the one hand as a resource and an asset, on the other as an obstacle and a risk. In this complex context, plurilingualism (as the more or less developed mastery of the various components of a progressive, individual, language repertoire) is perceived not only as an asset but also as a project, or even as a necessity, and often indeed already as a reality.

This linguistic and cultural plurality can also be – as we well know – a source of diverse tensions. It requires consultation and coherence in implementing policies, which are also of course diverse in European democracies. This is why we have recently seen the establishment, at a number of levels, of bodies and strategies designed to preserve this plurality and manage it in a responsible, efficient manner in both the common and the individual interest. This chapter has shown how international institutions such as the Council of Europe and the European Union, as well as intercantonal organisations in Switzerland, such as the Swiss Conference of Cantonal Ministers of Education (*EDK*) and its regional conferences, are suggesting orientations and proposing tools of reference to ensure a certain harmonisation of principles and practices. But at the same time more «local» entities must obviously be in charge of and responsible for their choices. And indeed they are, including the contextualised use they make of the tools at their disposal or which they produce.

The fact remains, in a phase of marked transformation of most European societies, that these international or national initiatives concerning schools and languages are taking place in an environment in which the concepts of learning and teaching are themselves subject to questioning, tensions and change. What are the models of

learning or acquisition of languages that are being proposed as a result of research today, and how does one switch from these models to representations of plurilingual approaches and communication? What are the paths and the methods of teaching to be envisaged when the teaching methodology of one language must also be considered in terms of multilingually-oriented language teaching methodology? How do such movements affect the development of curricula and modes of assessment and recognition of acquired competences? In the following chapters we will attempt to answer these questions and describe the progress that has already been achieved in Switzerland.

# 3 LANGUAGE COMPETENCE AND LANGUAGE LEARNING

In order to coordinate language teaching one must begin by creating a common understanding of language learning. What is the goal of language learning, what language skills and competences should learners have, and what are the particular factors to consider in learning languages? Recent developments in society play an essential role as regards the objectives of language learning, the way in which languages are learned, the preconditions for students, as well as the findings based on research.

Sixty years ago, in a typical Swiss classroom, most students spoke only the local language and grew up in the local culture. A foreign language-speaking child was the exception. The acquisition of the language of schooling<sup>47</sup> (local language), which was the first language of most of the students, happened in the same way for the majority of them: the first, mainly oral, phase of acquisition was followed by a second, which took place in school and focused on the formal written language (literacy), and on accuracy. Almost all students began learning a foreign language in school (at the time, this was a second national language) without having any prior knowledge of that language. The language of schooling and the foreign language were learned separately, but with the same goal: to master both languages as accurately as possible. This meant that for the foreign language the emphasis was also on mastery and accuracy, i.e. an idealised mother-tongue competence. As future practical contact with the foreign language was out of reach for most learners, or was limited to a job as an au-pair, holidays or higher education, there was something artificial, elitist, or even exotic about learning foreign languages.

Most children nowadays are in contact with a multitude of languages and cultures. When they first start school, some do not understand, or just barely understand, the language of schooling (the local language), and are barely familiar, or even completely unfamiliar, with the local culture. In Switzerland, the first language of some 23% of youths under 16 years of age is not one of the national languages (Lüdi and Werlen 2005). For these students, the language of schooling is often the second, or even the third language they learn; and some of them cannot use it at home to communicate with their parents, or only very little. The object of teaching the language of schooling is no longer just to develop literacy and to perfect the knowledge of the language. Some of the students must begin by learning this language, which is the common means of communication. The development of literacy is crucial because it constitutes an indispensable prerequisite to learning in all subjects and to successful school and professional careers. This is why it is also important that each subject in the curriculum (such as history) be used to promote the language of schooling in a practical context.

Many students today already possess a broad experience of interculturality before they start school, as well as of acquiring and using other languages. For instance, children with parents who both speak a different language learn the foreign language taught at school as their third language; children of migrants have already realised that learning the local language is important to establishing contact and integrating and that, at first, the important thing is to use the language, not to speak it with formal accuracy. Even though school

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47 The introduction of national Educational Standards has produced new terminology. The term first language has been replaced by language of schooling and is thus in line with the international efforts that have been undertaken to coordinate the teaching of the language of schooling, and thus establishes the use of a previously unused term (see the work done on this subject by the Council of Europe at [http://www.coe.int/T/DG4/Linguistic/Default\\_en.asp](http://www.coe.int/T/DG4/Linguistic/Default_en.asp), 28.02.2010).



learning and extracurricular (natural) acquisition of a language are not identical, this learning experience can be built upon. When children and young people learn the language of schooling and foreign languages, they draw on the experience they have gained by learning other languages, such as their language of origin / of migration; they take advantage of their knowledge of those languages to deduce words and rules of the language they are learning. Today, we know that context is important to language learning. The primary objective is no longer language knowledge that focuses on accuracy, but the ability to use languages appropriately in real-life situations. Accuracy has its place as part of this over-arching objective.

In recent years, developments in society – and hence the evolution of the conditions for learning – combined with findings in a number of scientific fields – have produced a change in the concept of learning from a monolingual to a plurilingual approach. This re-orientation constitutes the core of the Strategy of Language Teaching adopted in 2004 by the *EDK*, mentioned in chapter 2, whose purpose is to promote the language of schooling as a basis for learning across the curriculum, and at the same time promote languages of origin / of migration as a basis for learning new languages and orienting foreign-language learning towards actual language use while taking into account learners' prior linguistic experience. Promoting the languages of origin / of migration, of schooling and foreign languages should begin as early as possible and preferably as intensively as possible in order to foster children's cognitive development on the one hand and improve equality of opportunity for further learning on the other.

Current language teaching methodology is action- and competence-based and takes a plurilingual approach to learning. In order to be able to coordinate this type of approach to language teaching, the basic institutional expectations regarding competences must first be clarified. This

can be done in the form of Educational Standards such as those developed within the *HarmoS* project. The concept of learning and the models of competence which constitute the basis of the Educational Standards must also be understandable and widely accepted. The aim of this chapter is to clarify these two conditions so that they can serve as a basis for the coordination and teaching of languages:

- **Models of competence and national Educational Standards** | Chapter 3.1 describes how language skills and competences are integrated into models of competence for the language of schooling and foreign languages, which serve as a basis for developing national Educational Standards, curricula and teaching materials.
- **The concept of multilingual action- and competence-based learning** | In order to promote multilingual action- and competence-based learning, excellent knowledge of the processes and factors on which language learning is based is required and must be taken into account. The aim of chapters 3.2 and 3.3 is to present these aspects in more detail, according to the current state of knowledge. Chapter 3.2 is dedicated to the learning of languages in the context of an action- and competence-based concept. Chapter 3.3 uses this basis to extend this understanding of learning to plurilingualism. At the same time, this chapter attempts to lay the foundations for chapter 4, which deals with methodological innovations.

### 3.1 Models of competence and Educational Standards

A key objective of the *EDK's* Strategy of Language Teaching (2004, see also chapter 2.3.2) is to define Educational Standards for the regional languages of schooling and the main foreign languages (the second national language and English)<sup>48</sup>

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48 Not only are there Educational Standards for the language of schooling and foreign languages, but also for mathematics and natural sciences. Following public consultation, the national Educational Standards will be revised as of July 2011 before coming into effect. See <http://www.edk.ch/dyn/20692.php> (28.02.2010).

describing the skills and competences required at the interfaces between educational levels (i.e. the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> school year for the language of schooling, the end of the 8<sup>th</sup> school year and the 11<sup>th</sup> school year for the languages of schooling and foreign languages). The national Educational Standards are based on two different models of competence: one concerns the languages of schooling (see chapter 3.1.2) and the other foreign languages (see chapter 3.1.3). It may seem surprising that the *EDK* commissioned a dual approach at a time when everything is focused on an integrated concept of language learning and language competence. A closer look shows however that this (simple) subdivision constitutes in itself a fine feat of integration. For the first time in Switzerland, educators and linguists from the different linguistic regions have agreed on a common model of competence, on the one hand for German, French and Italian as the languages of schooling and on the other hand for French, German and English as foreign languages. In order to achieve this, numerous, often intense discussions were held between 2005 and 2009 among specialists within the scientific consortia commissioned by the *EDK*.

The specialist consortia based their work primarily on current trends in their fields, while carrying out extensive conceptual work themselves. To keep the project well anchored in Swiss practice, the *EDK* put at their disposal detailed analyses of all the cantonal curricula<sup>49</sup> which were current at the time. The consortia also based their findings on teaching material and, where necessary, called on teachers and their classes to establish a concrete link with practice. The draft models of competence that were thus developed served as a base for the development of tests to be applied on representative samples of the student body in the different linguistic regions. The results of the tests helped to validate the models of competence and were also important for defining the levels of the models of competence and the Educational Standards. This chapter will provide

a short explanation of the concept of the models of competence and the national Educational Standards before presenting the two models of competence of the languages of schooling and foreign languages, and concluding with a brief comparison of the two.

### 3.1.1 Characteristics of the national Educational Standards

#### Models of competence

Models of competence define important aspects of competence and educational content. According to Weinert and the conception of German Educational Standards, competences are considered as a device that allows individuals to successfully resolve certain types of problems, and therefore to master concrete situations of a particular nature (Klieme et al. 2003, 72). This understanding of competence-oriented towards task- and problem-solving emphasises the combined use of knowledge and know-how. It is a holistic approach (the use of language in concrete situations with the aim of achieving successful task completion), to be distinguished from an approach that focuses on discrete areas of knowledge and know-how (such as vocabulary or grammar). In didactics, this orientation of teaching towards applied competences is often referred to as competence-oriented teaching.

According to the mandate, the models of competence were to be implemented in the form of tests. The different components of competence therefore had to be defined.

Both consortia opted for models of competence featuring five dimensions of language activity (also called language skills) as primary constructs:

- listening comprehension (and listening)
- reading comprehension (and reading)

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49 The analyses of the curricula are available at <http://www.edk.ch/dyn/12154.php> (28.02.2010).

- spoken interaction
- spoken production
- writing

The foreign language model contains an additional dimension of language activity:

- mediation (between different languages)

Mediation activities are basically the transmission of messages heard or read in one language to another language, orally or in writing, so that an individual with an insufficient grasp of the original language understands the message. The mediating person's own communicative intentions that go beyond facilitating understanding play a secondary role. «Traditional» mediation activities are translation and interpretation. In a school environment, however, mediation is more generally concerned with mediating language activities that include more than one language.

The model for the language of schooling also comprises the following partial competences:

- spelling
- grammar

These two partial competences were included in the model of competence for the language of schooling at this level due to their importance in school tradition. Today, this would perhaps no longer be necessary, given the current debate on language teaching methodology. In the model of competence for foreign languages, these two partial competences play a secondary role (see chapter 3.1.3 for details on the common aspects and differences of the two models of competence).

The five language skills common to both models, with these additional elements, together form the basis of the models of competence.

## National Educational Standards

The national Educational Standards are conceived as fundamental competences and indicate the competences that «practically all»<sup>50</sup> students must possess when they pass from one school level to the next (end of the elementary level [*Grund-/Basisstufe*], primary school level and lower secondary education). Educational Standards are expressed in the form of competences which can be measured by means of performance tests. This characteristic is typical of outcome-oriented standards, i.e. of standards which focus on the outcomes of learning and not, for example, on the quality of teaching methods (input). The aim of this type of Educational Standards is, on the one hand, to direct schools towards binding objectives, which is why the Educational Standards are also integrated into the curricula of the three linguistic regions, thus making it possible for classroom work to follow them (see chapter 5.1.1). On the other hand, these Educational Standards constitute a basis that makes it possible to check whether, and to what degree, students achieve the target competences, and thus whether the Swiss education system provides the foundation necessary for achieving the required competences, or if measures must be taken to improve it (cf. Klieme et al. 2003, 9ss.). Standards based on outcome do not impose explicit requirements on the content of the programme or on the organisation of teaching<sup>51</sup>. They are included in the curricula and the teaching materials and are influenced by the teachers. The *EDK* confines itself to steering the compulsory education system and defining the desired outcomes and corresponding assessment tools (see chapter 5.1).

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50 This applies for all students who are learning in normal conditions. For instance, some of the children and young people who require special teaching support in integrative school models may not achieve some of these Educational Standards; it also applies for newcomers.

51 See Oelkers and Reusser 2008, chapter 2.4, for details regarding the different types of Educational Standards.

### 3.1.2 The model of competence for the languages of schooling

The Language of Schooling consortium<sup>52</sup> included specialists from the three linguistic regions and educational traditions, working together for the first time on a large national project. At first, developing a consensual model of competence and defining common Educational Standards required a great effort as regards integration. Contrary to what exists for foreign languages (see below), there was no recognised and/or widely used reference work for the language of schooling that could serve as a starting point for the development of the concept. Clear conceptual bases and empirical experience, in particular from the PISA study, existed only for reading. In the case of the language of schooling, the productive competences writing and speaking, and the receptive competence listening had never really been the object of an empirical assessment before; moreover, there is hardly any comprehensive or in-depth theoretical description available (see Eriksson, Lindauer and Sieber 2008). The objective of the Language of Schooling Consortium was to create a model of competence for the three national languages involved which would provide a framework for the development of tasks and also facilitate an empirical study, while taking into account the three educational traditions.

The common model of competence is based firstly on theories of language use (see Harras 2004) and therefore on a functional pragmatic approach to language competence: language skills such as reading, listening, writing and speaking are frequently used in social life in situations where requirements vary in form and content. An individual may be considered to be competent in a language as soon as he or she can use the language successfully in a given

situation (see chapter 3.2.1). It is quite obvious that the idea of language skills that focus on the students' ability to use the language extends the teaching of the language of schooling to the other subjects (see chapter 4.2).

The model of competence for the language of schooling takes as its starting point the four basic modes of language use that are centred on two dimensions: reception–production and spoken–written:

	Reception	Production
Written	<b>Reading</b>	<b>Writing</b>
Spoken	<b>Listening</b>	<b>Speaking</b>

**Illustration 3a** | The four central domains of language activity (Eriksson, Lindauer and Sieber 2008, 3)

This basic model was extended in the course of the project to include educational traditions and to ensure compatibility with the model of competence for foreign languages, and its terminology was adjusted. As we saw briefly in the introduction, this approach generated a model of competence comprising six in fact, seven domains: four domains of language activity, (with speaking subdivided into two subdomains), and two further domains specific to the language of schooling as a school subject.

Domains related to language activity:

- listening comprehension and listening
- reading comprehension and reading
- speaking<sup>53</sup>
- spoken production
- spoken interaction
- writing

52 Cf. the final report by Lindauer et al. (2010), and the intermediary results by Müller, de Pietro and Wirthner (2007).

53 Contrary to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, spoken interaction is not an autonomous domain in the model, but a subdomain assigned to speaking. This categorisation is on the one hand based on teaching traditions and on the other is oriented towards the assessment of this competence, which relies much more on spoken language production rather than on reception.

School subject-specific domains:

- spelling
- grammar

Where the development of comprehensive language skills is concerned, the language activity-related domains and the school subject-specific domains are not of equal importance. Whereas the activity-related language domains reading, listening, speaking and writing are among the core competences and are central to school learning and real-world communication, the school subject-related domains spelling and grammar play a secondary role in the acquisition of communicative (language) competence. In consideration of school traditions and social values, they have been put on a par with the higher-level competences of language activity-related domains.

The language of schooling model of competence features two other differentiating aspects:

**1. Language activities** | Situating, planning, executing, evaluating and repairing aspects constitute the second dimension of the model of competence. They structure the different language activities, but not all of these aspects can be observed in each language activity. Unlike in speaking, repairing while listening, for instance, is not observable even if that aspect also plays a role, i.e. whenever the expectations of the listener must be revised. In task construction the language activities have made it possible to define a structure that not only determines the development of the test items, but also facilitates the evaluation and interpretation of the tests and provides a differentiated basis for the fundamental competences and the level descriptions. Teaching can also take this approach as a starting point to promote communicative language competence in a targeted manner.

**2. Text types – Genres** | Language activities cannot only be described more precisely through different aspects of language use. They are also more comprehensively characterised by the language forms in which they are carried

out: one does not just «speak» – one tells, reports, argues, etc. in the framework of texts with specific characteristics. Language forms (*genres* or text types) are conditioned by socio-cultural factors and are developed in school in accordance with the traditional teaching of the subject. In school, for instance, the idea that narrative texts are easier to produce and understand than argumentative texts is widely held, so narrative is developed earlier than argument even though there is no empirical evidence on the subject. In the language of schooling model of competence *genres* make up an integral part of the descriptions of competence. For reasons of manageability and to reduce complexity, not all the *genres*, which are particularly numerous, have been integrated into the model of competence, but only the three main functions that make it possible to group them: a) narrating/playing with language; b) exposing/relating/describing actions, and c) arguing.

The verification of the language of schooling model of competence using a national sample revealed that both the type of skill, and also the type of text influenced the findings. However, the aspects of language activity provided better information where productive competences (writing in particular) were concerned than in the case of receptive competences.

Representative surveys (communicative paper-and-pencil performance tests) were carried out among students finishing the primary school level (8<sup>th</sup> school year) and lower secondary education (11<sup>th</sup> school year) as to their listening, reading and writing skills; the reading and writing tests were carried out in three linguistic regions of the country – German-speaking, French-speaking, and Italian-speaking Switzerland – and the listening tests were carried out only in the German-speaking and French-speaking regions for reasons of cost.

The speaking skills (spoken production and spoken interaction) of students in the 8<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> school years were also tested on a smaller scale and also only in the German-speaking and French-speaking regions. A small sample of 4<sup>th</sup> school

year classes (the second school year at the time) took listening, reading and writing tests.

For the three age groups surveyed and the seven domains of competence, four levels were described based on the empirical evidence and reflection drawn from language didactics as well as from the point of view of the aspects of language activity, text types and tasks. A distinction was made between German and French with respect to the partial competences spelling and grammar.

### 3.1.3 The model of competence for the foreign languages

During its development study, the Foreign Language Consortium took advantage of the fact that a model of competence already existed that was widespread in Switzerland and abroad, for which the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) (Council of Europe 2001) and several subsequent studies had laid down detailed specifications. In Swiss schools, the model of competence of the CEFR was at least partly known thanks to the Swiss versions of the European Language Portfolio (ELP) (see chapter 4.1.2), the intercantonal *Lingualevel* project providing assessment tools compatible with the Common European Framework for younger learners (Lenz and Studer 2007; see chapter 5.4), as well as more recent cantonal or regional curricula.

#### Language use competence

In the CEFR, language competence is considered mainly as an ability to use language, i.e. the ability to act (communicatively) by means of language, in particular, in certain contextual circumstances and interpersonal environments,

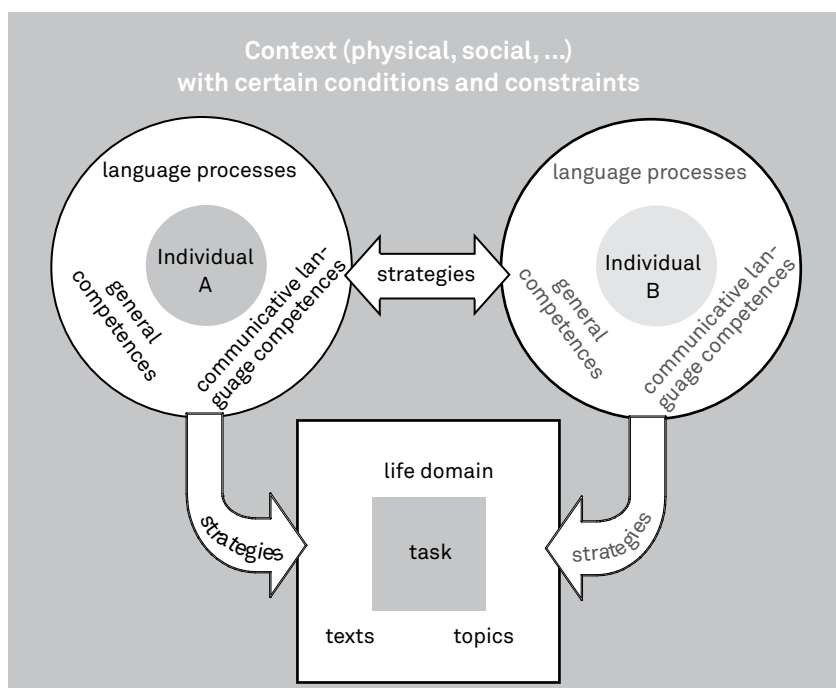
to carry out various tasks. The CEFR describes the essential characteristics of language use as follows: «Language use, embracing language learning, comprises the actions performed by persons who as individuals and members of the community develop a range of general competences, and in particular **communicative language competences**. They draw on the competences at their disposal in various contexts under various **conditions** and under various **constraints** to engage in language activities involving **language processes** to produce and/or receive **texts** in relation to **topics** within specific **fields**, activating those **strategies** which seem most appropriate for carrying out the **tasks** to be accomplished. The monitoring of these actions by the participants leads to the reinforcement or modification of their competences.» (Council of Europe 2001, 21)

Illustration 3b gives an idea of the model of language use of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.

The diagram may be read as follows (the terms taken from the diagram are in bold): The use of language for communication purposes takes place in the specific conditions of a **physical and social context**. Alone, or in their exchanges with others, the communicating individuals activate and use **general competences** (such as a knowledge of the world, or intercultural competences) but also **communicative language competences**<sup>54</sup> (lexical or grammatical for example) as soon as they need to carry out communication tasks, on the basis of **strategies** (general strategies for action and specific strategies for communication). **Cognitive language processes** (for instance, decoding processes) then occur. The tasks to be dealt with arise in certain **life domains** (for instance, in the private sphere) and bear specific characteristics. Spoken or written **texts** that are received or

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54 **General competences and communicative language competences are presented in greater detail in chapters 5.1 and 5.2 of the CEFR. The CEFR's use of the term «competences» is different than that, for example, of the notion of competence orientation of Weinert. The latter considers competence as the direct ability to act, the skill to use what has been acquired, whereas the CEFR defines as «competences» resources (of competences) which are called upon in the context of action. The English-language version of the CEFR uses the term «language proficiency» in referring to competences according to Weinert. Differences in the use of the term «competences» are widespread in the literature.**



**Illustration 3b** | Language use according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)

produced and the **topics** they contain are among the principal characteristics of the tasks. The individual (in grey) on the right is placed there for situations in which tasks have to be carried out in spoken or written interaction. The diagram does not cover language mediation (see the following paragraph).

Language is certainly central to the model of the CEFR, but not in a unilateral, reductionist sense. It is always the individual «as a whole», with his/her repertoire of strategies and resources of all kinds who acts when language activities are being used. This repertoire is built over time and evolves dynamically through action. Competences and experience related to learning and to the use of other languages, as well as competences and experience acquired through contact with different cultures may of course also be part of this accessible repertoire. Sociocultural and intercultural knowledge as well as sociocultural and intercultural skills play a particularly significant role in the communicative use of language (language activity) in a bilingual or multilingual context.

### Communicative language skills

In the model of competence for foreign languages, as for that of the language of schooling, the communicative language skills (the [macro] skills of traditional foreign language teaching methodology, referred to as fundamental modalities of language activity in the model of the language of schooling) occupy the first tier of the hierarchy. They form the construct to be implemented and verified through tasks and tests (see illustration 3c).

Most communicative language activities can be integrated into this system. Some language activities may only be defined by linking different cells of the model, for instance listening and taking notes in class (listening comprehension and writing). In the context of this national project however, communicative language skills are described and verified only singly, which indeed is customary practice in communicative language testing in Europe. One can fault this as a simplistic approach, a distortion of the authentic use of language. However, competences defined as

		Mode of communication					
		Production	Interaction	Reception	Mediation		
Canal	Spoken	Spoken production	Spoken interaction	Spoken comprehension	Spoken to spoken mediation	Mediation of written to spoken	Mediation of spoken to written
	Written	Writing		Reading comprehension	Written to written mediation		

**Illustration 3c** | The classification system of communicative language skills according to the mode of communication in the model of competence for foreign languages (with reference to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages [CEFR])

standards must be verifiable insofar as possible.<sup>55</sup> In teaching, there are of course other forms of assessment, such as self-assessment and collaborative assessment.

### Types of discourse

The model of competence for foreign languages is further distinguished by its functional linguistic category of types of discourse (also termed rhetorical functions). Five types of discourse are included in the model:

- inform / describe
- invite / motivate to do something
- narrate / report
- express an opinion / argue
- maintain contact

With a model that takes these types of discourse into account, it is possible for instance to ensure that comprehensive communicative writing tests contain not only exercises or parts of exercises dealing with descriptions or accounts but also those that require expressing or arguing an opinion. There are certain approaches in the literature

according to which, the requirements of the different types of discourse are not only higher or lower but also different, which different learners master to varying degrees. For example, the different types of discourse are related to different types of text or are composed for the most part of this type of specific text. There is therefore a close correlation between the distinction that is made between the type of discourse and the category of text *genre*, such as it is presented by the Language of Schooling Consortium. In the framework of *HarmoS*, it was not possible to analyse to what degree the different types of discourse actually mobilised different competences, because there were not enough possible variations in the tasks. When the tasks were set, however, a sufficiently broad range of the types of discourse was included in order to avoid one-sidedness.

### Competence resources

In the model of competence for foreign languages, the third aspect concerns the competence resources necessary to master (communicative) tasks. These are, on the one hand, the resources that the CEFR ascribes to general competences

55 It is often not possible to single out individual elements of performances stemming from more complex tasks, with the consequence that results can only be analysed rather generally. It is thus difficult to obtain differentiated results more suitable for detailed diagnosis. Example: a task requires students to find out about a subject with the help of three different texts and to write a text based on this information. If one of the students has trouble writing, it is probably this difficulty which will be noted, rather than his/her reading comprehension.



and, on the other, those which are termed communicative language competences in the CEFR. In the test exercises, the students' general competences (for example, the knowledge of the world or of the cognitive complexity of a topic that is expected of them) are tested insofar as possible as factors external to the construct. However, the requirements and performance related to communicative language competences (such as differentiated vocabulary and the structural complexity of reading texts) are aspects of the construct that must be assessed. Communicative language resources play an important role in assessing written and spoken performance, for example the range of the vocabulary used, the level of grammatical complexity and correctness or fluency.

### Intercultural and methodological competences

In its proposals for Educational Standards the Foreign Languages Consortium also emphasises intercultural competence and methodological competence (learning to learn). Both are recognised learning objectives for foreign language teaching in addition to the learning objectives concerning the communicative use of language. In contrast to the domain of language use, there are no reliable and/or recognised models of competence that include dimensions of competence and levels of competence. Many questions remain unanswered, particularly regarding the testing of these competences. Given the circumstances, the Foreign Language Consortium held back from outlining a model and referred in its report on the Educational Standards only to the main competences often mentioned in the literature relating to the learning objectives in these domains.

### 3.1.4 Educational Standards for the language of schooling and foreign languages

Practically all students having the benefit of normal learning conditions should achieve the fundamental competences by a given point in time (4<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> school years). The levels of competence to be reached were defined on the basis of an empirical study carried out nationwide. When the qualitative sample was insufficient (for example, for grammar in the language of schooling) the findings of other research into subjects and teaching methodology were also taken into account.

For foreign languages, the starting point was rather difficult, in that Educational Standards had to be defined for the implementation of the Strategy of Language Teaching (*EDK 2004*). Educational Standards had to be established on the basis of current student performance and these Educational Standards would then be applied to students who would have learned two foreign languages at primary school level and who would therefore have begun to learn them at an earlier stage and over a longer period, with new curricula, teaching methods and concepts. This is why, in addition to the consortium that had already been commissioned, specialists in research, foreign language teaching methodology and school practices had to be called in to establish the levels in question.

Prior to the adoption by the *EDK* of the national Educational Standards<sup>56</sup> and their integration into the curricula of the different linguistic regions and then into the new teaching methods, the Educational Standards were examined. Teachers' associations, the heads of schools, parents' associations, representatives of upper secondary and vocational education, employers' associations and trade unions, as well as other interested parties were invited to express their views. According to their acknowledgements the proposed Educational Standards will be adapted and officially released by summer 2011.

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56 Cf. for the national Educational Standards <http://www.edk.ch/dyn/20692.php> (28.02.2010)

### 3.1.5 Comparing the models of competence

Leaving aside the differences inherent in the models of competence for language of schooling and foreign languages, both have the following in common:

- Both emphasise task- and problem-solving-based competence as per Weinert and Klieme (see above), giving priority to language use and communicative language skills, and thus favouring competence-based teaching.
- Both models consider «text types» or «types of discourse» as essential elements of communication tasks.

However, there are differences relating to specific aspects, in particular:

- The Language of Schooling Consortium introduced aspects of competence to the model which refer to different phases or moments in language activity (situating, planning, etc.). However, we have observed that it is not possible to measure the competences involved in the same way by means of communicative tasks for all areas of competence. In the model of competence of the CEFR that is the basis of the work carried out by the Foreign Language Consortium, the ability to situate, plan, etc. is an aspect of strategic competence that guides communicative action, the targeted use of the diverse resources that make it possible to implement competences to successfully complete a task (see also Bachman and Palmer 1996, 63). The model does not focus specifically on this aspect of competence however, in particular because it emphasises assessment and because the strategic aspects are basically linked to the process and it would be difficult to single these out by the outcome. From the perspective of the Language of Schooling Consortium, the main methodological potential is contained in this particular aspect of competence: teaching can focus on learning to situate or plan, not only to improve the quality of concrete language activities, but also to

develop flexible situating and planning strategies.

- In the model of competence for foreign languages, communicative language skills also include mediation between two distinct languages. A series of descriptions of competence has been established on a trial basis which gives examples of mediation activities at different levels. Various sources and target channels (spoken, written) have been combined. For instance, it describes how content can be transmitted orally in language B if it has been read in language A beforehand, and this has been done for several levels. Taking into account mediation should, among other things, at least partly reflect the opening up of the different language subjects, as must certainly happen in the context of a multilingual concept of schooling.
- The two consortia have taken different approaches to describing the domains and levels of competence. The two types of description have their advantages and disadvantages. The descriptions of the language of schooling model on the one hand seem rather technical and hard to understand for non-specialists. The meaning in terms of the ability to communicate outside school tasks is rather opaque. On the other hand, they offer clear guidelines to test-setters and teachers who wish to create their own tasks.
- The descriptions of levels in the model of competence for foreign languages, should be understandable to a wide audience. They give a good idea of the scope and quality of communicative language use at different levels and for different areas of competence. However, one could make the same observation about the descriptions given in the model of competence for foreign languages, as about the descriptions of the CEFR: they are not particularly useful for test-setters because many of the parameters are unclear, whereas they need to be specific in order to be applied concretely in the context of a task.

- There are differences in the two models where terminology is concerned. But it is often easy to find the corresponding term. The divergences are mainly due to the different traditions. The experience gained from the application of the national Educational Standards will show whether and in what measure these differences are acceptable in practice and can be maintained. It will be interesting to have feedback on this from classrooms that try out integrative language teaching. The project on national Educational Standards should be considered as a work in progress. An important first step has been made, and others must now follow in the context of the ongoing restructuring of language teaching.

### 3.2 Action- and competence-based language learning

It is the aim and duty of schools to foster in all students, whenever possible, solid competences in the language of schooling, and most importantly in the written language. Moreover, they must enable students to develop functional communication competences in foreign languages, such as those defined in the Educational Standards described above, which concern both the language of schooling and foreign languages. Notwithstanding this, schools should not neglect languages of origin / of migration but rather should promote them in order to raise cultural and language awareness (*ELBE*: language awareness, *éveil aux langues*, *Begegnung mit Sprachen*) and encourage individual plurilingualism. To achieve this three-dimensional goal, certain conditions must be met regarding both language learning and the educational, methodological and institutional context. As previously mentioned, the Educational Standards do not specify teaching content, the implementation of teaching and

methodology or even the learning processes that enable the desired learning outcomes. On the other hand, the models of competences, and in particular of language use, described in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) pave the way for a reconceptualisation of learning. Rather than emphasising the transmission of knowledge alone, the CEFR – which reflects developments in the field of methodology, and not only in language subjects – focuses on an action and competence-based approach (see chapters 3.1 et 4.5.3). With this approach, learners must on the one hand have the partial competences and skills that allow them to carry out tasks and master challenging situations and, on the other, increase their ability and their motivation to use them in different situations in order to solve problems in a responsible manner. At the same time, for almost ten years we have been seeing the emergence of a multilingual conception of learning which is tending to become the norm in the field of language education. The creation of the CEFR has been an essential contribution to both these fields<sup>57</sup>. The following chapters will examine in greater depth the competences that students acquire, i.e. an action- and competence-based conception of learning, and those related to a multilingual understanding of learning.

#### 3.2.1 Native speaker competence as the ideal

Traditional language teaching placed great importance on students' acquiring a high degree of accuracy and a good style, both in the language of schooling and in foreign languages. This appreciation of the degree of accuracy is closely linked to the ideal of perfect mastery of a language, be it the first language or mother tongue, or even a foreign language. Yet, in sociolinguistics, the «competence of the native speak-

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57 Although the model of competences for foreign languages, among others, is based on the CEFR, a multilingual understanding of learning and multilingual competence have until now been addressed, though very broadly, only in connection with the element of mediation (see chapter 3.1.1) in the model of competence for foreign languages. It must be pointed out however that the aspect of multilingualism was not part of the mandate.

er»<sup>58</sup>, as understood by Chomsky, is a construct that does not correspond to the reality of the way language is used by native speakers who may, for instance, come from different sociocultural backgrounds. Even so, many language teachers are still, to a greater or lesser degree, attached to the «ideal of the native speaker», which is expressed by the importance they place on the formal and explicit mastery of grammar. Thus, in their teaching, they put the emphasis on knowledge rather than on skills and know-how.

The level of accuracy still plays an important role in language teaching; this is the case for the formal aspects of language such as grammar or spelling, especially in the language of schooling where a high level of competence is the goal. The level of mastery of these specific aspects can determine success at school and later in professional life, given their importance in the eyes of society (see also chapter 3.1.2). Often however, in the traditional models of foreign language teaching, too much weight is placed on the role of grammar and vocabulary. Indeed, according to current findings in the realm of cognitive psychology and in research into the acquisition of languages, it seems that students initially work most efficiently (a) by drawing on the language or languages they have already learned and (b) by using commonplace colloquialisms and idioms. This is why, in the early stages, error tolerance should be relatively high; according to the Common European Framework

of Reference for Languages (CEFR) it is only when they reach B2 level that learners consciously have recourse to their knowledge about the language. At B1 level, which is what is generally aimed for at secondary education, it seems that cognitive ability is sufficiently developed for the student to take an interest in aspects of the linguistic system (endings, sentence construction – see illustration 3d). In this context, it is also advisable to take into account the ability of students, depending on their age, to learn implicitly or explicitly, i.e. consciously, and to verbalise what they have learned (see chapter 3.2.6).

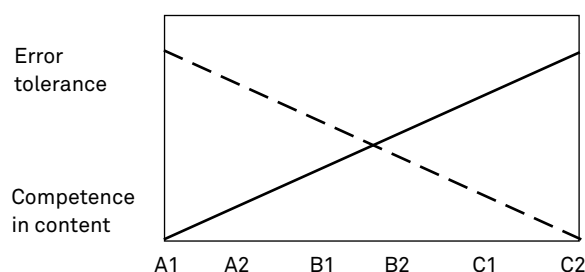


Illustration 3d | Comparative trends of competence in content and error tolerance (according to Westhoff 2007, 14)

### 3.2.2 Language as a system of thought and knowledge

In the life of a human being, language is useful for communicating on the one hand, and is closely

58 This notion refers to hypothetical grammatical competence in the first language; it is both abstract and neutral from a sociocultural point of view. It is hardly possible to define what is meant by «the perfect competence of the native speaker» because it is altogether impossible to determine what it encompasses – the oral or the written language? What are the social variants? To what level of education does it correspond? etc. Berthele (2008) points out, to that effect, that those referred to as «native speakers» all receive a completely different input, be it from the point of view of quality or quantity, and that for this reason their personal competence also varies. Furthermore, Berthele refers to surveys showing that those who are called «native speakers» may in fact present gaps in the areas of reading and writing, and that competence in the first language is greatly influenced by social level. This observation highlights the complexity of language skills and puts into perspective the notion of «native speaker competence». These considerations are also clear indications not only of the importance of improving reading and writing skills in the language of schooling, but also that the «mother tongue» develops very differently depending on the area of competence, and that this development is especially influenced by input – from the linguistic environment in which individuals function as well as through the support made available to them. But this, unfortunately, is particularly limited where first languages are concerned for children and adolescents with a migrant background: their parents are often unable to offer them sufficient support; as regards language and culture of origin teaching (LCO course) the support available in that area is optional, often insufficient, and, in the great majority of cases, only loosely developed within the Swiss school system.

linked to the way in which we represent knowledge on the other. It is therefore important to the way in which thought is structured. By the same token, perception of the world and therefore the representation of knowledge are conditioned by the surrounding culture (Dirven and Radden 2002, p. 15): «Language is not only a communication tool, it also reflects the perception of the world that prevails in a given cultural community».

Gaonac'h (2006) underscores the central role played by children's language skills, not only for the development of verbal thought, but also for the development of non-verbal thought.

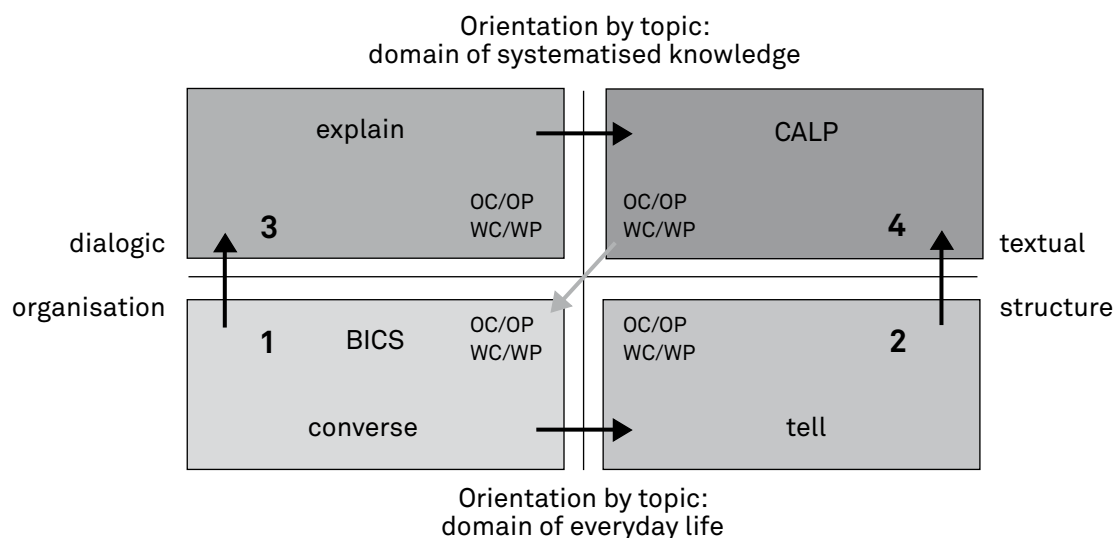
Furthermore, a distinction must be made regarding the use of language, between use of language that depends on context and that which does not: oral language mainly fulfills the function of communication and depends on context, whereas written language is more akin to the verbalisation of thought and the use of language independently of context. This distinction was theorised by Cummins in the 1980s (Cummins 2004). The dichotomy between BICS (Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills) and CALP (Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency) emerged in the context of the integration of children with a migrant background. In the first language, BICS are acquired mainly before the beginning of schooling. But they do not cease to develop at that time; they continue to grow up to and during adulthood, for example regarding ease in the use of language or in the daily routine of professional life. BICS do not require formal education. What is more, these everyday skills are also picked up relatively quickly in situations of immersion in a second or foreign language. They are based on mastery of pronunciation, intonation, elementary grammar and a vocabulary that covers the situations of everyday life. They are used in everyday communication, and are therefore highly dependent on context and undemanding on a cognitive level. CALP, in contrast depends much less on context and carries a greater cognitive load. It is used in abstract situations that are to a certain degree disconnected from their context – information texts, the language of schooling, etc. CALP is strongly linked to literacy and is essential for a successful school

career. Consequently, the development of this cognitive academic competence, first of all in the language of schooling, is of prime importance for all learners and is thus a basic task of the school. It is also essential to encourage the development of CALP continuously and coherently as it evolves fairly slowly in both the first language, and in a second or foreign language. For example, while it takes one to two years for students, depending on their age, to acquire a BICS competence level in a second language equivalent to that of monolingual children, it will take them five to seven years to attain a CALP level corresponding to their age.

Today, one talks less about BICS and CALP and more about literacy skills. Cummins' dichotomous model has been taken up by Portmann-Tselikas and Schmörlzer-Eibinger (2008). Their model consists in describing the degree of difficulty of texts. In so doing, they base themselves on the following two aspects:

1. Textuality: the more information a statement has to contain, the more textual or structured it must be. In dialogue, on the other hand, utterances are briefer.
2. Orientation according to topic: the more a statement is focused on everyday experience, the simpler it is to formulate and understand. The more one refers to specialised knowledge, the more the statement must be formulated according to specific technical criteria of form and meaning.

Portmann-Tselikas and Schmörlzer-Eibinger (2008) represent these two aspects by means of four quadrants (illustration 3e). These quadrants contain oral comprehension (OC) and written comprehension (WC); oral production (OP) and written production (WP). The arrows indicate the direction of development: thus, through their stories and accounts (quadrant 2) and the questions they ask (quadrant 3), small children already begin to acquire the skills they will need later on to be able to read factual texts (quadrant 4) for example. It is not possible to pass directly from quadrant 1 to quadrant 4. However, skills acquired by contact with texts and formal knowledge influence other areas of language use (grey



**Illustration 3e** | The four quadrants according to Portmann-Tselikas and Schmörlzer-Eibinger (2008), completed by Claudio Nodari (March 2009, personal note).

arrow), particularly in quadrant 1. One can also place BICS (quadrant 1) and CALP (quadrant 4) in these four quadrants.

Textual skills, or BICS and CALP, are acquired as much in school as before it, after and in parallel to the school career, i.e. throughout one's lifetime. Linguistic and non-linguistic demands are determined by the circumstances and the task at hand, which also influence the linguistic resources that are brought into play and the other necessary skills or resources (the ability to interact, communication strategies, etc.). In order to take part in communication events, learners must acquire the necessary partial knowledge and skills (see skill models in chapter 3.1.). They must also learn to use these skills in complex interaction (for example, when interacting with communication partners) and to use support strategies; in other words they must position themselves, plan, mobilise resources, make choices, implement, and evaluate whether, for example, their interlocutor has understood them and, if necessary, apply a repair mechanism. This complex process does not occur spontaneously; it must be learned and become increasingly automatic. The skills that process information then once again become available for other learning.

### 3.2.3 Action-based language learning

A number of conditions are indispensable in order to trigger the acquisition / learning process. Among the four conditions set out below, at least the first three must be met (Willis 1996):

- exposure to the language; rich but comprehensible input of real oral and written language used in concrete situations
- use of the language; for example, in order to undertake something, to understand meaning and communicate it
- motivation to listen, read, speak and write in the language, in other words to process the contacts that a learner has had with a language and to use that language
- instruction in language, in other words, the opportunity to focus on form, i.e. on formal language aspects and written language

The four conditions set down by Willis can be considered as a good starting point for establishing a comparison between the conditions of acquisition and learning of the first language, and those that exist for foreign languages. The four conditions are different depending on whether the language in question is the first language or a second language, respectively a language of origin / of

migration, a local language, language of schooling or foreign language. If the language of schooling corresponds to a variety of the local language, students receive a great deal of input from the situations and contexts in which they use it daily, outside of school as well as in school. Little motivation is required to establish access to this language. In the case of German-speaking Switzerland moreover, a distinction must be made between the Swiss-German dialect and the standard language. When the language of schooling is not the same as the first language, as is the case for students coming from a migrant background and whose first language is therefore not German, there may be more or less well developed notions of the Swiss-German dialect since the children and adolescents concerned have, for the most part, lived in Switzerland for more than six years. Nevertheless, they lack several years of learning in the German language and in terms of language problems may arise concerning vocabulary (lexis) and sentence construction (syntax) at higher levels of differentiation. Teachers must have specific skills in methodology and in their subject as for many such children, learning languages in school amounts to immersion, i.e. they are plunged into the language of schooling, the use of which is rewarded; at the same time, knowing the language and culture of their country of origin is also encouraged (for instance, through LCO courses). Immersion should not however become submersion; in other words, weak skills at the beginning in the language of schooling should not be interpreted as a sign of limited learning ability, leading as a consequence to the language of origin being devalued, and in fact repressed. The situation is different again for foreign languages, to which students have less easy access. They can normally only practise them during language lessons, with limited time and input – unless they have access to immersive or bilingual teaching in a non-language subject. Their use of the language is also limited mainly to foreign language courses taught within the school timetable. Lack of contact with native speakers of the language as well as inadequate use of foreign languages in authentic situations may have the effect of discouraging students from using the language. As regards the fourth condition relating to directed

language learning in the context of a course, Willis describes it as non-essential since language may also be acquired through natural situations, without benefit of any teaching. However, he considers this condition to be desirable in that the opportunity to work consciously on the formal aspects of language leads, in the long run, to a better mastery of the language from a qualitative point of view. Moreover, teaching allows the transmission of the general knowledge that goes hand in hand with any linguistic knowledge. This is especially true for the local language of schooling. Where foreign languages are concerned, more emphasis must be placed on the role of foreign language teaching in providing a context for authentic language use. When this is not the case, foreign language teaching comes down to a simple transmission of knowledge about form, mainly written, whereas the development of oral production is relegated to extracurricular, or even post-school learning.

If the indispensable conditions for language acquisition / learning are the motivation of the learner, his/her exposure to language and the use of said language, and if formal teaching is only a desirable condition, then the natural milieu appears to be the ideal situation. The natural milieu, also called the informal context, is indeed characterised by this absence of formalisation and by the fact that any element liable to be acquired, and which the user / learner internalises, will happen in everyday life. This applies to small children who internalise language, and their first language, through contact with their mothers and families with whom they want to communicate, or to any person of any age who is faced by force of circumstance with a situation in which they must communicate with representatives of another language / culture than their own (mobility / migration). The non-natural milieu, also called the formal, or institutional milieu, essentially comes down to the different school systems in which students of all ages spend the greater part of their education. The audience concerned is also called a captive audience, because it is constituted once and for all, over a given period of time, and will not change. [...] It is captive because it is limited by its learner status, that is to say obliged, among other things, to follow such a course (ASDIFLE

2003). There is thus little opportunity to choose, in a system where programmes, schedules, teaching materials and time limits are predetermined.

In a constraining situation, how does one stimulate motivation comparable to that created by reality? Action-based teaching can be a solution to the problem, i.e. teaching that is task-based, in the sense of problem solving.

A «task» has been defined as follows by three of the main researchers working in this field:

«In general, I [...] will consider the communicative task as a piece of classroom work which involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing or interacting in the target language while their attention is principally focused on meaning rather than form. The task should also have a sense of completeness, being able to stand alone as a communicative act in its own right.» (Nunan 1989)

«In this book, tasks are always activities where the target language is used by the learners for a communication purpose (goal) in order to achieve an outcome.» (Willis 1996)

In 2003, Ellis defined the task as follows:

- «1. A task is a work plan.
2. A task involves a primary focus on meaning.
3. A task involves real-world processes of language use.
4. A task can involve any of the four language skills.
5. A task engages cognitive processes.
6. A task has a clearly defined communicative outcome.»

It seems obvious that implementing an action- and task-based approach in the language classroom amounts to subscribing to the definitions of teaching and learning given above, and to working in the direction advocated by all the declarations promoting action for efficient language policies.

### 3.2.4 A use-oriented conception of language acquisition / learning

As seen in chapter 3.2.1, language, in the context of the school, is frequently considered as a system composed of rules and vocabulary that must be formally learned, and in which social factors do not play a central role. This is a conception that generally reflects the expectations of teachers as much as those of learners and their parents. If one refers to even the most recent educational literature on foreign language teaching, one observes that it is often oriented towards the progression of linguistic structure (grammatical progression). In the present context of action-based teaching and learning objectives this gives rise to contradictions, on the one hand because teachers are required to proceed according to communicative criteria, and on the other because grammatical progression seems to confirm that the formal aspects still take priority. However, with the competence- and action-based approach that has been adopted by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) we are seeing the emergence of a vision of language teaching based on use, and whose scientific grounding plays a very important role in bringing language teaching closer, wherever possible, to «real» learning processes.

One can consider the CEFR as a distillation of the prevailing scientific findings, methodological and educational developments, and empirical knowledge at the moment of its publication in 2001. Since then, scientific research has continued in the area of language acquisition and learning and the following sections present a brief introduction to the main issues currently under discussion.

Tomasello (2003) sees the acquisition of language as a sociocognitive phenomenon. Leaving aside biological conditions, the acquisition of languages rests largely on the ability of individuals to focus their joint attention on an object and then to read the intention of others, as well as on the intuitive certainty that others' theories of mind of others closely resemble our own. This process proceeds essentially from the human being's general tendency to cooperate, i.e. from his/her social nature.



Language learning processes themselves are based on general cognitive processes of categorisation and analysis of the function of the various linguistic elements. The acquisition of languages is seen as a building process that begins by item-based learning that fulfils a special communication function; the more frequently the different elements are used, the more they – or rather the underlying construction representations that correspond to them – are deeply entrenched in the individual's competence. The increasing complexity of the language competence of children can be explained by the interaction that takes place in increasingly complex situations and the fact that they are faced with an increasingly complex language that coincides with greater cognitive maturity, and therefore more highly developed analytical and categorisation abilities. Berthele (2008) calls the language competence of the individual a «*Konstruktikon*» – with reference to the «*Lexikon*». The term refers to an individual's personal inventory of linguistic units. And it seems that the construct may contain elements of several languages.

Language competence develops progressively, as has been described above, as isolated elements and their underlying models of construction become more and more abstract. Moreover, the acquisition of language competences can also be seen as the outcome of meaningful interactions that occur in diverse social groups (Pekarek Doehler 2005). Therefore, this model may also integrate the notion of multilingualism and the idea of functional language skills (see chapter 3.3).

Consequently, for the theoretical and scientific basis of language teaching there must be a model that on one hand encompasses the social factors and the interaction through which language develops and is learned, and on the other can describe the dynamic development of plurilingual repertoires created through the use of the language. One finds interesting concepts to that effect in usage-based linguistic approaches (Tomasello 2003) or in interactional linguistics (Mondada 2001, Pekarek Doehler 2002). This type of model of practice-based language acquisition and usage appears to offer promising avenues of reflection.

It is compatible with the concept of multilingualism and has strong potential for theoretical demonstration. It may also have a concrete bearing on language teaching: thus, a use-oriented concept would favour a more lexicalised approach to grammar teaching (see chapter 4.1.3), and furthermore would recognise the importance of interactive negotiation processes that take place in group work during text comprehension exercises for language acquisition.

### 3.2.5 Strategic competence and metacognition

The orientation towards action and competences, for language use as well as for language learning, rests on the observation that purely linguistic components are a necessary requirement, but not a sufficient one. The use of language(s) in different contexts raises various problems for learners, to which they respond by means of problem-solving strategies. Students must increasingly be able to analyse by themselves the problems posed by a task or situation in order to find solutions. The same goes for individual language learning processes, which learners must increasingly manage on their own, autonomously: they must for instance be able to set objectives for themselves and determine whether they have achieved them, and if so, in what measure. The experience that students acquire in resolving a communication or learning task can help to reinforce or modify strategic competences and support the development of what is called metacognition. The term characterises the act of taking stock of one's own reflections, actions or learning. It is a matter of awareness, but also of self-reflection, an evaluation process and, if need be, a revision of one's own approaches or conceptions and attitudes. On the one hand, students must assume control of and responsibility for their own learning and, on the other, the development of their metacognitive competence should enable them individually to direct their learning processes to become more efficient and, with age, faster. Because when students observe their own way of learning or of carrying out a task and identify and analyse these processes, especially of course those that

are successful, communication or learning strategies have a more significant impact. Metacognitive competence and the metalinguistic awareness associated with it (i.e. the ability to conduct conscious reflection, for example on word construction or on the formal expression that best communicates a certain meaning; see also metacognition), are developed and reinforced with every new language one learns.

Strategic competence (see chapter 3.1.3) comprises:

- communication strategies; for example, interaction or repair strategies
- production strategies; for example, writing strategies
- reception strategies; for example, reading strategies
- metacognitive strategies, which orientate certain processes; for example, planning strategies, evaluation strategies and revision strategies
- learning strategies

The latter play a central role in the training objective that consists in enabling students to pursue life-long learning. According to O'Malley and Chamot (1990, 1) learning strategies are «special ways of processing information that enhance comprehension, learning, or retention of the information». According to them, they comprise the following aspects: «focusing on selected aspects of new information, analysing and monitoring information during acquisition, organising or elaborating on new information during the encoding process, evaluating the learning when it is completed, or assuring oneself that the learning will be successful as a way to allay anxiety. Thus, strategies may have an affective or conceptual basis, and may influence the learning of simple tasks, such as learning vocabulary or items in a list, or complex tasks, such as language comprehension or language production» (O'Malley and Chamot 1990, 43). Although learning strategies may be conscious, they are not necessarily so; however, it is possible to make students aware of them. Thus, a large repertoire of learning strategies is characteristic of able learners, who know how to use

them efficiently to achieve an objective. According to Missler (1999), efficiency and effectiveness in using learning strategies can increase, from a qualitative point of view, up until the eighth language a plurilingual individual learns.

But if such communication strategies as «making sure the other has understood» are often encountered in the interaction that occurs in the teaching context, developing learning and metacognition strategies requires special attention and planning. Whether in language courses or in non-language subjects, it may be of benefit to students to receive strategy development training, on condition that it is well presented and properly conducted. However, this must be done alongside reflection on the method that is best for each individual student, because strategies do not always work equally well for all students, depending on their individual learning preferences and cognitive styles.

### 3.2.6 Implicit and explicit learning

Our mental processes deal differently with the language spoken in everyday life and with written language as is found, for example, in high-level factual texts; the spoken language is much more automatised than written language. It is not possible to go forward or backwards in one's comprehension of what is being expressed orally, as one can when reading, for instance. Consequently, language knowledge is also different: there are areas of declarative knowledge (for example, knowledge of rules or of the use of language that the learner can verbalise, also called «explicit knowledge», ASDILFE 2003), of non-declarative knowledge (for example, intuitive knowledge, which cannot be verbalised, about the appropriateness of what is expressed, or regarding precision or accuracy, also called «implicit knowledge») and procedural knowledge (articulation, intonation, automatised learning processes, etc.), which can also be described as being implicit.

The distinguishing element between explicit knowledge and implicit knowledge is the fact that the learner is conscious of this knowledge and can

verbalise it. Explicit knowledge can be named; implicit knowledge is intuitive and is demonstrated through the use of language. The first language is learned mainly in an implicit manner in the first years of life. Generally speaking, young students have a tendency to learn implicitly, whereas older and adult learners are more inclined towards explicit learning (De Keyser 2003). This is due to the fact that during the first months of existence the child only has an implicit memory, and that explicit memory only develops, slowly, from the first year of life onwards (Schacter and Moscovitch 1984, Parkin 1989). However, with time, it is always possible – and indeed, this is what happens – to combine implicit and explicit learning. Implicit learning takes longer than explicit learning. Adults often show a preference for explicit learning, and this can be explained by variables related to development psychology; for example, the need to control. Nevertheless, it is possible, for instance, that multilingual speakers develop preferences for implicit language learning due to individual variables and to the experience that they have accumulated by learning different languages. One observes then that the brain deals similarly with the first language and with the foreign languages learned in the classroom (Zappatore 2006). A strong preference for explicit learning or for implicit learning can both help a multilingual individual to develop excellent competences in the various languages he/she practises. However, able learners distinguish themselves from the others by the fact that they know how to combine these two ways of learning efficiently, that they have at their disposal a wide range of learning strategies and that they have a heightened awareness of their own learning (see chapter 3.2.5).

Learners' perception of school teaching, and also the perceptions of teachers and parents, are marked by explicit learning, and this is particularly true for foreign language teaching. However, academic learning cannot and should not be equated with explicit learning because, in reality, one observes that implicit learning occurs just as frequently. Every learning method involves linguistic knowledge and skill which is sometimes explicit, sometimes implicit (Hutterli, Stotz and

Zappatore 2008). One must also take into account the age of the students, particularly if the teaching of foreign languages begins at primary level. Young learners until the age of about eight benefit from teaching that facilitates implicit, playful learning. Older and adult learners, on the other hand, benefit from teaching in which implicit and explicit learning complement each other. This also goes for personal reflection on learning, i.e. the development of metacognition. However, it is possible, and important, to gradually introduce metacognition from as early as primary school level. In this respect, one must also consider the fact that implicit learning requires more time and greater input and exposure to the language, because the objective is not to learn random information, but to develop complex skills, for which different types of knowledge often need to be combined.

### **3.3 Coordinated learning of several languages to achieve plurilingual competence**

In the past ten years, a multilingual conception of learning has been emerging in language teaching methodology. In recent decades, the situation regarding languages has changed considerably, in Switzerland as well, due to the social changes brought about by mobility and globalisation. Thus, children living in the Swiss-German speaking region are surrounded with the local dialect, while being exposed to standard German through television. But they may also grow up with two different dialects if their parents come from different regions of Switzerland. For many students, the local language, which is the language of schooling, is not the same as their first language. Nine percent of the population of Switzerland state that their main language is not one of the national languages (Lüdi and Werlen 2005, population census of 2000). In the compulsory education system, this percentage is higher than in the remainder of the population, amounting to almost 23%. Likewise, the proportion of so-called «heterogeneous» classrooms, i.e. classrooms with over a third of children from a migrant background, has also risen during the last decade; the average nationwide percentage is currently almost 40%. In the

large cities, industrial regions and border zones in particular, such as the cantons of Basel Stadt with almost 70% and Geneva with 80% there is a higher than average of very heterogeneous classrooms. The situation is similar in other cantons, such as cantons Vaud, Ticino or Zurich (cf. the Report on Education in Switzerland 2010, 68, and education statistics of the different cantons).

In the Romansh-speaking region, and more particularly in the Romansh-speaking schools, a bilingual or even plurilingual approach to learning has been a vital imperative for decades. A high level of proficiency in German (reinforced bilingualism) is a necessity for the Romansh-speaking population and this is reflected in the fact that both languages (Romansh and German) are used as languages of schooling. In the traditional Romansh-speaking school system, German is taught from the 4<sup>th</sup> school year onwards (and since 2010–2011, from the 3<sup>rd</sup> school year); in bilingual school projects it is even taught as early as pre-school). These two concepts (partial immersion in both languages) ensure that Romansh-speaking children acquire basic competences in German on the one hand, and on the other that children speaking another cantonal language or with a migrant background are well integrated into Romansh culture and language. Moreover, the bilingualism thus acquired offers children a good foundation for learning a foreign language.

### 3.3.1 Functional plurilingualism

The profile given below is an example of a plurilingual person: in this case it is a young woman of Croatian origin, a second generation immigrant, who acquired her language competences partly in the school context and partly before the beginning of her schooling or outside of school. Illustration 3f presents her levels of competences in different types of activities (listening, reading, taking part in a conversation, continuous oral expression and writing) in the languages she uses. When

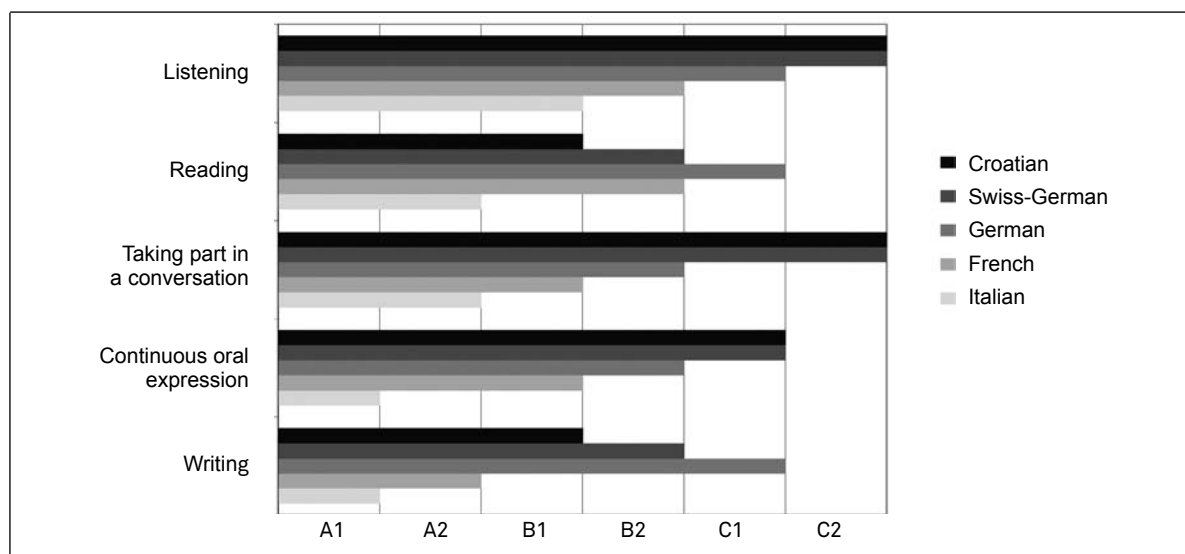
speaking of individual plurilingualism, reference is often made to «*plurilingual repertoires*<sup>59</sup>» to indicate the totality of language resources that an individual can mobilise according to circumstances (Moore and Castellotti 2008).

One observes that a low level of competence is achieved in mastering the written language, both reading and writing, in the Swiss-German dialect, which is hardly surprising considering that dialects are almost exclusively oral languages. Likewise, one observes that in Croatian, which is the first language, listening and oral production are markedly better developed than reading and written production. Once again, this is due to the fact that languages of origin are often used only orally, in the home in the course of everyday life. A survey of Albanian-speaking children and adolescents in Switzerland (Schader 2006) showed that second and third generation young people are, for the most part, practically illiterate in their first language. Conversely, reading and writing are more developed in standard German, i.e. the language in which these fields have been practised most in the Swiss school system. This person's profile shows that competences in the different languages and language activities develop according to the education available, to the need to use certain languages and to the use the speaker makes of them, and that, consequently, these languages take on different functions.

One of the characteristics of individual plurilingualism is therefore the functional nature of the components of the plurilingual repertoire. It also indicates the highly social origin of our language competences (Lüdi and Py 2009). Moore (2006b) indicates that the development of communication competences in an individual's different languages is tailored, so to speak, to his/her communication needs. Since each variety, each language that composes an individual's repertoire fulfils certain functions (the language used in the family, the language used at school, the language used at work, etc.), they all develop differently and are

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59 The notion of «*repertoire*» refers to the work of sociolinguist J. J. Gumperz (cf. Gumperz 1964). Moore and Castellotti (2008) outline different aspects of the development of plurilingual repertoires.



**Illustration 3f** | The functional language skills of a plurilingual individual (taken from: Hutterli, Stotz and Zappatore 2008, 107)

not, in principle, interchangeable; they complement each other – their use being dictated by circumstances, topic or interlocutor (see chapter 3.2).

In the abovementioned case, one could therefore speak of functional plurilingualism, but this affirmation should be qualified. Indeed, the Swiss education system (unlike the Scandinavian systems for instance) offers few possibilities of developing the first language or the language of origin / of migration in the areas of reading and writing (see literacy) through a well-integrated and cohesive system of language and culture of origin teaching (LCO) – which would not only be functional and make sense for the children and adolescents concerned (see chapter 3.3.2), but would also represent, from the point of view of the national economy, a sound investment in multilingualism as a characteristic Swiss resource (see chapter 4.3).

### 3.3.2 Development of the plurilingual repertoire

Plurilingualism is one of the key concepts of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR): «(...) the plurilingual approach

emphasises the fact that as an individual person's experience of language in its cultural contexts expands, from the language of the home to that of society at large and then to the languages of other peoples (whether learnt at school or college, or by direct experience), he or she does not keep these languages and cultures in strictly separated mental compartments, but rather builds up a communicative competence to which all knowledge and experience of language contributes and in which languages interrelate and interact. In different situations, a person can call flexibly upon different parts of this competence to achieve effective communication with a particular interlocutor».

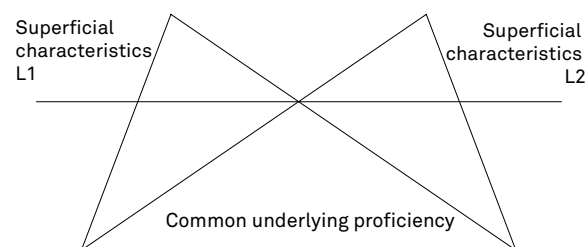
Consequently, languages are learned in diverse cultural contexts. These different learning experiences shape a common communication competence which facilitates comprehension – up to a certain level – of other closely related languages thanks to the knowledge already acquired in one or several languages; this is called intercomprehension. The competence that allows one to draw upon existing language knowledge, to use communication strategies that have already been learned and to combine all one's linguistic experiences constitutes one of the central conditions for communicating in the target language, even

with little knowledge of it, by being flexible and object-oriented.

Although the prevailing view of individual plurilingualism is a positive one, functional plurilingualism is interpreted differently in some milieux which associate it with a lack of mastery of the language (see chapter 3.2.1, «Native speaker competence as the ideal»). Moreover, it was long thought that children who grew up in a bilingual environment could be expected to be a linguistic disadvantage. Yet the literature on the subject describes the positive effects of bilingualism (for examples of these effects, cf. Baker 2006, Furlong 2009) on linguistic domains such as the ability to construct a narrative, metalinguistic awareness (see also metacognition) or reading strategies. Moreover, bilingualism can have positive repercussions on general cognitive domains such as conceptualisation, problem solving, learning strategies, or even mathematical aptitude. There are, in particular, the positive effects that have been demonstrated with respect to social competences. And when it comes to learning foreign languages, bilingual individuals may also have an advantage over those raised in a monolingual environment (see, for example, Cenoz and Valencia 1994, Gajo 2001, Moore 2006a). But obviously, bilingualism or plurilingualism on their own are not sufficient to guarantee the positive effects described here (Balke-Aurell and Linblad 1983, Sanders and Meijers 1995).

To explain the interaction that takes place between linguistic competence and general cognitive ability, it is necessary to refer to two other theoretical concepts: (1) the distinction between BICS (basic interpersonal communication skills) and CALP (cognitive academic language proficiency), and (2) the interdependence hypothesis. Both were developed by Cummins. In his hypothesis of interdependence (Cummins 1981), he postulates that even if the superficial characteristics of languages are clearly different, i.e. their pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar, the existence of a common underlying proficiency permits the transfer of CALP, of conceptual elements and of cognitive ability. This link is generally represented by two overlap-

ping icebergs (illustration 3g), with only the superficial characteristics of languages visible.



**Illustration 3g** | A representation of bilingual competence

Cummins (2001) explains that there is a close link between the development of the first language and that of a second language: the more developed the first language, the easier it will be to learn a second language or foreign languages. Conversely, if knowledge of the first language is shaky to begin with, it will be all the more difficult for the learner to develop a satisfactory plurilingual competence. But it is also possible that the limited progress of children who experience difficulties in their first language is due to the intense effort they must make during their early years to learn a second language.

To better define the concept of common underlying proficiency, one can use the distinction established by Berthele between interlanguage competence and cross-language competence (Berthele 2009), which both consist in establishing links between languages and using them. Interlanguage competence builds bridges between languages by making use of the regularities in their syntax, morphology and phonology to facilitate comprehension and learning. Cross-language competence, for its part, is a general competence that is not linked to any language in particular and comprises, for instance, reading competence and the knowledge of different types of texts and their structures; although, in all probability, if linked to a given culture, it could in principle be transferred.

Common underlying proficiency, the hypothesis of interdependence according to Cummins and interlanguage and cross-language competence

according to Berthele all refer to the transfer of competences, i.e. to taking elements of knowledge and competences in one language and transferring them to another (see chapter 3.3.3). This principle is in the nature of a cognitive-constructivist conception of learning, according to which all learning is constructed on the basis of knowledge already acquired. The elements of learned knowledge are then associated with and integrated into other elements of the existing knowledge base. This process enables learners to restructure and differentiate what they have already acquired.

As another central feature of plurilingual competence, Herdina and Jessner (2002) mention its dynamism, i.e. the fact that individual plurilingualism is in constant development – it increases or diminishes depending on the needs of the individual. They therefore advocate taking a holistic approach to the individual's language competence and plurilingualism and that, rather than analysing languages and their norms separately, they should be viewed in relation to the person as a whole.

### 3.3.3 Language transfer

From a holistic point of view, it would be wrong to think that in learning a language one is merely transferring linguistic knowledge. There may of course be a transfer of regularities and similarities in the areas of spelling, phonology, vocabulary, morphology or syntax, particularly in the case of closely related languages. But transferring from one language into another may just as well concern reading and writing abilities or the knowledge of how a language functions. One can also transfer methodological competences, such as the way in which one uses a dictionary, or cognitive and metacognitive elements, to the management of one's own learning. Learning strategies that have already been acquired can be transferred from one foreign language to another in which they can be used directly or in a different way. Transfers often occur without the speaker being aware of them, but they can also be directed consciously and utilised in a targeted manner.

This phenomenon can be put to positive use to accelerate the learning process. But previous knowledge and experiences can also have negative effects and may constitute obstacles to other learning. Take the classic example of the problem of deceptive cognates («false friends»), as illustrated by the following joke: «Waiter, when do I become a steak?» (here, the English verb *to become* is confused with the German verb *bekommen* [to receive]). Moreover, as has already been mentioned, interferences may occur on an emotional level and affect the image learners have of themselves. This is what can happen when the language of schooling is the learners' second language, when they see themselves as ungifted for language learning and transfer that attitude to the foreign language they are learning. Furthermore, we must point out that transfers also occur – and should occur – between the school environment and the extracurricular environment, and at all levels. Indeed, non-formal extracurricular learning takes on definite significance with regard to learning that takes place in the school because it provides students with concrete, authentic, ways of using the language, and at the same time it may also give meaning to the learning that takes place in the school. One of the main objectives of schooling is to prepare learners so that they can apply and continue to develop what they have learned in school in the different areas of their life, and in their professional environment (Hutterli, Stotz and Zappatore 2008, 124).

A comprehensive approach to previous knowledge should also deal with the cultural and social dimensions of that knowledge. Previous knowledge that students have acquired in their diverse social roles, and which are related to gender, level of education, ethnic origin, etc., may have an impact on learning patterns and should be given special consideration, at least in multilingual and multicultural classes. Bono and Stratilaki (2009) show that learners benefit more from language transfer when they are in an environment that lends itself to it, which includes language curricula as well as methodology. Conversely, the environment may also hamper the process, which is the case for instance when too much emphasis is placed on accuracy and for-

mal correctness, and little leeway is allowed for language variation.

Although the concept of language transfer is presented here specifically in relation to language learning, it would be a mistake to think that it is limited to this field; like implicit and explicit learning, or cognitive and metacognitive aspects, it also applies to learning as a whole. Raynal and Rieunier (2007, quoted in Wokusch 2009, 32) define language transfer thus: The generally-accepted meaning of transfer is the application of a known solution to an unknown situation. It rests on an ability to generalise and a capacity for abstraction. Various psychologists and educationalists (such as Bransford, Brown and Cocking 2000) point out that the transfer is connected not only to the capacity for abstraction but is based also on metacognitive competences, i.e. on the generalisation of strategies as well as on the active selection and assessment of the latter. As a result, the transfer is an active, dynamic process that should be encouraged in the teaching context so that its benefits are not restricted to able learners who apply it on their own initiative.

### 3.3.4 The development of cultural and intercultural awareness and competence

Learning a language always includes learning a culture, because the language act follows specific cultural patterns. If one does not acquire certain intercultural and sociocultural competences it is not really possible to speak another language properly. Language is also the external sign of a collective and individual identity, which ties in with regional and ethnic belonging. All individuals acquire experiences that are conditioned by mobility, migration, and by the dynamics of the society in which they move, and which enable them to call into question their exclusive belonging to a linguistic and cultural community. However, at certain moments or in certain contexts, a person might feel at the same time Swiss,

Genevan, European, etc. Likewise, our way of expressing ourselves may change depending on the person addressed. Thus, with bilingual friends we use code-switching, whereas at our place of work we feel the need to use a more formal register. Mainly because our society is becoming increasingly multilingual and multicultural, we no longer live in a single culture, but in a range of traditions and different forms of expression which overlap and continue to evolve throughout our life.

If we define culture according to the Universal Declaration of UNESCO<sup>60</sup>, as «the set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of society or a social group, and that it encompasses, in addition to art and literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs», we see clearly that language and culture are inextricably linked, since they develop through the process of socialisation and since culture manifests itself (inter alia) through specific forms of expression within the context of social groups. This is what also emerges from the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) and from the Framework of Reference for Pluralistic Approaches to Languages and Cultures (FREPA) that it inspired. The latter (ECML 2007) distinguishes:

«a) Culture as a system (models) of learnt and shared practices, typical of a particular community, which allow us to predict and interpret aspects of the behaviours of people from that community.

b) Culture as mental attitudes (ways of thinking, of feeling, etc.) which are acceptable in a community, when these are social attitudes not strictly individual. As the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages says clearly one's world view and language develop in a mutual relationship and efficient communication depends on the congruence between the ways in which interlocutors categorise their experience of reality and the language they use to express this (...).»

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60 Cf. <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0012/001271/127160m.pdf> (28.02.2010)



This definition also indicates that one can make a distinction between different cultural categories. For each of the languages taught in school, it must be determined to what degree each of these cultural categories should be developed. Where the language of schooling is concerned, it is plain that one must first of all take into consideration the values related to the culture in question, as well as the art and literature, traditions and convictions; the same certainly goes for languages of origin / of migration. As for the teaching of foreign languages, it must – in order to develop functional language skills – first and foremost deal with the social aspects of the culture, with everyday life with others («daily culture»), and especially in the beginning. One must also emphasise the importance of language and culture in the development of identity, which is expressed especially in the feeling of belonging to one (or more) group(s) or communities. Membership in a group manifests itself in the norms of cultural and linguistic behaviour (Davies 2003). These aspects comprise intercultural dimensions that come into play between the language of schooling and the languages of origin / of migration, the language of schooling and foreign languages, between foreign languages, between the varieties of languages of schooling, and between national languages; these are therefore aspects that concern all students. It is a reality that proves particularly important at secondary school level, since for that age group the issue of identity is central and, it goes without saying, especially for foreign-language children who may encounter conflicts of cultural identity.

In this context, language teaching must fulfil an additional set of tasks, consisting in sparking off and encouraging a search for plurilingual and pluricultural identity through chosen contents, objectives, teaching methodology and teaching aids, both in the teaching of foreign languages and the language of schooling and also in the teaching of languages of origin. In highly heterogeneous classes, linguistic and cultural diversity should be taken as the starting point for guided learning in the classroom and as the object of learning. The concept of language awareness (see *ELBE*, chapter 4.1.2) is particularly suited for this as it allows

students to experience and become aware of the relationship that links language and culture. Intercultural learning may also be stimulated by language contacts and exchanges, whatever the form (see education through contact, chapter 4.2.3). Exchanges need not take place outside the school context, or individually: they can happen within the school context (real or virtual, for instance through class or group exchanges, themed project weeks bringing together two language communities, etc.).

The need to develop intercultural competences in the context of foreign language teaching is closely tied to the concept of multilingualism and to the idea of multiculturalism associated with it. Therefore, there is no question of learners developing a new cultural identity in a foreign language; rather, they should learn to recognise the main cultural differences, to be open to the fact that there are differences and to identify them, and to be curious about and tolerant of cultural peculiarities (cf. Byram, Gribkova and Starkey 2002), i.e. able to serve as go-betweens among different cultures. The different versions of the European Language Portfolio (ELP) included in the language biography provide the possibility for learners to share their reflections about their intercultural experiences.

According to the authors of the FREPA (Framework of Reference for Pluralistic Approaches to Languages and Cultures 2010) project, it is impossible to achieve a multilingual education if one does not study cultural elements in general (the transcultural dimension) and if one does not focus on specific aspects of a given language and culture (the intercultural dimension). Regarding the cultural dimension and comparative approaches in the domain of linguistic structures, presenting language and culture thematically in foreign languages may be considered as a «pluralist approach» – which systematically concentrates on several languages and cultures, and in the case of foreign languages on at least two languages: the foreign language in question and its culture(s) as well as the local language of schooling and its culture(s); but in reality there are often more, because the

languages and cultures of origin of the learners should also be taken into consideration. The European FREPA project tries to fill the gap in the descriptors in the area of (inter)cultural elements.

As explained in the CEFR, there are three dimensions of knowledge that are important to the development of intercultural competences (FREPA, 2010): knowledge, know-how and interpersonal skills (attitudes, conceptions). For each of these areas, FREPA presents detailed descriptors that can serve as a basis for the development of curricula, teaching materials and teaching strategies, as well as for (self-)assessment of learners' competences. A bank of teaching materials<sup>61</sup> has recently been established within the framework of the FREPA project; the teaching proposals it contains combine content- and action-based learning on the one hand, and cross-language (intercomprehension) learning on the other. They concentrate on language awareness or intercultural learning.

It is not enough to encourage the development of (inter-trans-)cultural competences for them to be integrated into the teaching. These areas of competence must be anchored in the curriculum, by means of detailed descriptors such as those proposed by the FREPA project, and not just in the form of comprehensive descriptions and referrals to possible content, as is the case now. If the objectives of learning are clearly defined in this way, it seems obvious that progress in this area of competences will be assessed and measured (see chapter 5.4). This seems desirable and quite conceivable where knowledge and know-how are concerned, but assessing interpersonal skills, i.e. attitudes and conceptions, proves problematic – as much in terms of feasibility (how can one measure, in the school context, the ability to confront multilingual and multicultural situations confidently?) as from an ethical point of view.

### 3.3.5 The potential of different learning contexts

If one wishes to encourage the full spectrum of linguistic and cultural learning, it is not enough to teach different languages using a compartmentalised approach and only in the classroom. Different learning contexts, curricular and extracurricular, present different learning potentials for students' plurilingual and multicultural development. Conventional language teaching must therefore be supplemented with concepts that take into account multilingual and intercultural learning. This means that, taking into consideration the level of learning and age of the students, one must find, coordinate and develop common concepts that encompass the different levels of schooling and also different languages and subjects. Furthermore, the plurilingual and cultural potential of the students must be considered and taken advantage of both in language teaching and in non-language subjects.

Table 3a, referring to Saudan 2003, provides an outline of the learning potentials provided by various school contexts from the perspective of multilingual and multicultural learning. Table 3b gives an outline of these potentials in extracurricular learning contexts.

## 3.4 Summary

The aim of chapter 3 was to present the main scientific bases for the development and coordination of language teaching. These bases help to explain developments presented in chapter 4 that have occurred in the practice of language teaching.

The first central basis for the coordination of language teaching is provided by the national Educational Standards and the corresponding models

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61 Cf. <http://carap.ecml.at/Teachingmaterials/tabid/1937/language/en-GB/language/en-GB/Default.aspx?en-GB=Default.aspx> (28.02.2010)

Learning contexts	Learning potentials
Teaching of languages of schooling, languages of origin and foreign languages in the school context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Formal aspects</li> <li>- The ability to reflect on language and on one's own learning (metalinguistic and metacognitive activities)</li> <li>- Improving competences in a particular language, literacy (CALP)</li> <li>- Aspects characteristic of a certain culture</li> <li>- Encouraging strategic and metacognitive competence</li> </ul>
Sequences focused on content and oriented towards action in language teaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Content, concepts, notions and vocabulary</li> <li>- Discursive competences</li> <li>- Strategic and metacognitive competences</li> </ul>
Teaching of non-language subjects (also bilingual or immersion)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Subject-specific and content-specific competences</li> <li>- Content, concepts, notions and vocabulary</li> <li>- CALP</li> <li>- Taking advantage of and implementing monolingual and bilingual communication competences</li> <li>- Strategic and metacognitive competences</li> </ul>
Awareness activities in the school context; for example <i>ELBE</i> (language awareness, <i>Begegnung mit Sprachen</i> , <i>éveil aux langues</i> ) and the European Language Portfolio (ELP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Orientation towards awareness and less towards acquisition</li> <li>- Accepting and recognising the value of all the languages and cultures represented in the classroom</li> <li>- Recognising the value of languages of origin / of migration</li> <li>- Raising linguistic and cultural awareness</li> <li>- Intercultural competences</li> <li>- Using multilingual materials to raise awareness of basic aspects of language</li> <li>- Learning strategies and metacognition</li> <li>- Curiosity and motivation for learning</li> </ul>

**Table 3a** | School learning contexts and their potentials

of competence for the language of schooling and for foreign languages. They serve as a reference on a nationwide scale for the development of the curricula and teaching resources of the different linguistic regions, which continue to observe their different traditions. The national Educational Standards define competences, and acquisition of these can be assessed through tasks. The purpose of these Educational Standards is, on the one hand, to direct schools towards binding objectives. At the same time, they constitute the benchmark against which to assess whether, and to what degree, the targeted competences have been attained by the students. Furthermore, this assessment indicates whether a given system of education already provides the conditions necessary to attain the targeted competences or if measures need to be taken to improve these conditions. The *EDK* restricts itself to guiding the compulsory education system by defining the re-

sults that must be obtained and the corresponding measures of assessment. It makes no recommendations regarding teaching content or the organisation of schooling. These are determined through the curricula and teaching materials, and are strongly influenced by the teachers themselves.

Although the methods through which languages are acquired are not compartmentalised but combined, and since individuals have multilingual repertoires and learning experience of languages that they can draw on to communicate and continue to learn, two distinct models of competences have been developed, along with Educational Standards, for the language of schooling on the one hand and for foreign languages on the other. But both are linked to a common conception of learning, which is that of action- and competence-orientated learning.

Learning contexts	Learning potentials
Daily, extracurricular (language of origin, local language / language of schooling)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Everyday communicative skills (BICS)</li> <li>- Aspects characteristic of a particular language</li> <li>- Taking advantage of and implementing competences characteristic of a particular language, in a range of contexts of use</li> <li>- Code-switching</li> <li>- Content, concepts, notions</li> <li>- Social and cultural learning</li> <li>- Strategic competence</li> <li>- Activating and using available resources</li> <li>- Developing identity (bi-multilingual)</li> </ul>
Exchanges in the school context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Intercultural learning</li> <li>- Social and communication competence</li> <li>- Strategic competence</li> <li>- Curiosity and motivation to discover other languages and other cultures</li> </ul>
Exchanges in the extracurricular context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Autonomy and responsibility for the learning process and its success in intense communication situations</li> <li>- Improving competences in a particular language (for instance BICS)</li> <li>- Social and intercultural learning</li> <li>- Strategic competences</li> <li>- Taking advantage of and implementing competences characteristic of a particular language</li> <li>- Activating and using to the fullest all available resources</li> <li>- Bi-/plurilingual identity</li> </ul>

**Table 3b** | Extracurricular learning contexts and their potentials

This conception establishes a close link between language use and language learning. The idea is no longer that one has to attain competence equal to the level of accuracy of a native speaker in the language of schooling and in foreign languages, because such a competence would be a tantamount to a construct, and not reality. Rather, the idea is to differentiate the various elements that make up language competence: language and cultural awareness, functional use of the language for communication, and the formal aspects such as grammar and spelling. In relation to the individual plurilingualism of children and adolescents, their learning relies on the experiences and contacts they have already made through language learning, be it in or outside the school.

Languages fulfil a central function for the structuring of the thought process. Already before they begin school, children acquire basic communication competences (BICS, basic interpersonal com-

municative skills) such as pronunciation, intonation, and elementary grammar and vocabulary, in order to make themselves understood in the situations they encounter in their everyday lives. Abstract language competence (CALP, cognitive academic language proficiency) comes into play in situations that are to some degree detached from their context, such as during schooling, and constitutes an important and necessary condition for learning in all subjects. It is closely related to students' literacy. BICS and CALP develop simultaneously throughout the individual's lifetime, through the various situations he or she faces and through those tasks that they must perform which lend themselves to learning.

Conditions essential to the natural acquisition and guided learning of languages include: rich and comprehensible language input in situations that are as close to reality as possible, use of language (exposure and use of language), and the motiva-

tion to be exposed to the language and culture, to take advantage of contacts with them, and to utilise these contacts (motivation). Language teaching also offers the possibility of focussing learners' attention on linguistic form and the written language (instruction in languages and focus on form).

All language acquisition and learning take place in a social context and can be considered the result of social interaction. This observation indicates a use-oriented conception of language acquisition / learning in the school context. Learners must employ the target language in an increasingly autonomous manner, using it to carry out a task or react appropriately to a situation. To do this, they must on the one hand use certain strategies (for instance, communication, reception, production and learning strategies) and, on the other hand, become aware of their own language activities (metacognition), so as to be able to direct and continue to develop their personal learning process. Although it is true that very young learners (primary school children for example) mainly learn in an implicit (unconscious) manner, they may nevertheless be gradually led to develop metacognition and the ability to think about a set of rules of which they are aware (explicit learning). Conversely, we observe that, even in the school context, adolescents and adults do not only learn in an explicit manner (in a traditional grammar lesson for instance); part of their learning also takes place in an implicit manner (for instance in teaching situations where priority is given to communication).

A multilingual understanding of learning has emerged due to the social changes that have taken place that have led people today to be plurilingual, since they are in daily contact with several languages and cultures (via the media, travel or in their circle of friends, etc.). Consequently, individuals possess a plurilingual repertoire, mobilising their different language resources according to the situation in which they find themselves. In this way different languages (for example the language of origin / of migration, the second language, a foreign language) fulfil different functions, hence the notion of functional plurilin-

gualism. The plurilingual repertoire is constantly developing, for instance when one uses one's linguistic knowledge and transfers it to another, closely related, language that one does not yet know (intercomprehension). Some knowledge of French may for instance be useful to get the gist of information contained in a simple Italian text. Moreover, learners develop interlanguage competences that enable them to build bridges between languages (syntactic, morphological or phonological similarities, etc.). Finally, cross-language competences facilitate the transfer into different languages of general knowledge – concerning various sorts of texts for instance. These two competence-related aspects facilitate the learning process since they allow learners to take advantage of language learning experiences and of the common underlying proficiency they have already acquired.

Languages are not acquired in a compartmentalised manner: learning a language implies using other languages that one knows, by means of interactions that take place during the learning process. This process can be facilitated by what is called the transfer, which consists in transferring one's knowledge of the rules of language, of strategies and methods – such as knowing how to use a dictionary, etc. Negative transfers (interference) can also happen, such as with deceptive cognates or, regarding motivation, when negative experiences of language learning are carried over to other languages.

Language and culture are inextricably linked. Hence the importance of developing intercultural competence simultaneously with language competence, without which one runs the risk of behaving inappropriately in the cultural community of the target language. If one wishes to encourage linguistic and cultural learning as a whole, one must consciously choose a variety of learning contexts (language learning in the classroom, language learning through other [non-language] subjects, exchanges of students and classes, extracurricular language learning through leisure activities, etc.).

An institutional environment, mainly school, can strongly influence multilingualism to the benefit

of learners, whether through the curricula, teaching, teaching materials or, especially, the attitude and approaches of the teachers. This integrated approach to language learning and the awareness of the importance of the institutional environment attest to the need for coordination for language teaching. Developments in the implementation of this objective are discussed in chapter 4.

## 4 TOWARDS A PLURILINGUAL APPROACH TO LANGUAGE TEACHING

Recent findings regarding language learning and the new approach that is emerging in the field of language competences (chapter 3) indicate the need for teaching models, curricula and teaching resources adapted to this new approach. Furthermore, these should be coordinated beyond the sole aspect of language. Thus, policies for instance are not only central to the teaching resources for foreign languages: they are also an important part of the many teaching resources for the language of schooling. The transmission and development of strategies must be carefully organised in order for students of the different language subjects to be able to draw on what they have learned in other subjects. Moreover, teaching must be organised so that learners can put to use their personal resources and the language experiences gained outside the school context (for instance, in relation to their language of origin / of migration). Other elements are also important in this area, i.e. language awareness and reflection on languages (the *EOLE* and *ELBE* approach<sup>62</sup>), which facilitate the learning of additional languages.

Increasingly in recent years, a harmonisation is taking place between the different methods of language teaching, insofar as the basics of language learning are being jointly defined in order to facilitate the learning of several languages and provide a solid foundation for language skills as a whole thanks to the concept of a multilingually oriented language teaching methodology / integrated language teaching methodology. Language education is not confined only to language subjects; it also requires more conscious promotion of languages in other subjects. In fact, the language of schooling can be used for instance as a tool for reflection or for understanding non-language content (cf. CALP, chapters 3 and 4.2) in

different subjects, and this competence can be transferred to other languages. The new teaching concepts are aimed at use and communication, and this also goes for language teaching. This means that a given language is not taught for the language itself or in order to be reproduced as faithfully as possible in well-turned phrases; instead, languages should be learned through situations and, if possible, concrete situations (such as student exchanges, reading circles, student newspapers, etc.) Moreover, students should be able to use them to acquire non-language knowledge. In the language of schooling this is already happening; where foreign languages are concerned, this can be done through the fundamental concept of content-based teaching methods (*EMILE*, teaching of subjects through integration of a foreign language / CLIL, content and language integrated learning, bilingual teaching of non-language subjects). Besides the horizontal coordination of language learning (i.e. that which occurs in parallel, in different subjects, such as language subjects – see horizontal coherence) a marked effort is being made in the field of language teaching coordination to adopt an approach that encompasses the entire school career and even beyond (vertical coherence). This trend is on the rise, on the one hand because children starting school have already had several language learning experiences and contact with several languages and on the other because there must be continuity from one school year to the next to ensure that learning is uninterrupted, which is particularly important in the light of the anticipated teaching of two foreign languages at primary school level.

The language strategy adopted in 2004 by the *EDK*, as well as the General Concept of Language

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62 *EOLE* (language education and awareness in school); *ELBE* (language awareness, *éveil aux langues*, *Begegnung mit Sprachen*).

Teaching of 1998<sup>63</sup> that preceded it and had been commissioned by the *EDK*, had the following objectives: the coordination of language teaching, support for bi-/multilingual teaching models, binding educational objectives for the different levels of schooling, and the promotion of education through contact (contacts and exchanges between classrooms and students of different languages, from the beginning of compulsory education). Such measures should help to improve the quality of language teaching. In this approach, the different languages are always taught as distinct school subjects – which, moreover, corresponds to the functional separation of languages observed among plurilingual individuals – but this plurilingual approach (and the downplaying of monolingualism in education) also makes it possible to take into account the common representation of languages that we suppose to be that of the speaker.

This chapter looks at language teaching as it is and as it should be, from six different angles:

- **A holistic conception of language teaching** (multilingually oriented language teaching methodology / integrated language teaching methodology) (chapter 4.1) | This chapter broaches the question – which has not yet been definitively settled, even among specialists – of the definition of multilingual teaching; it also deals with the issue of the feasibility of actually implementing this teaching in schools.
- **Parallel learning of language, content and culture** (chapter 4.2) | The aim is to define how to organise learning so that it integrates in the best way possible the aspects of language, content and culture to encourage learning and the students' cognitive development, but without overloading them.
- **The language of schooling as object and as teaching medium** (chapter 4.3) | This chapter addresses the role of the language of schooling, from the standpoint of the teaching of the

language of schooling and of teaching in all subjects on the one hand, and in relation to students' overall educational success.

- **Languages of origin / of migration** (chapter 4.4) | This section explains the role of languages of origin / of migration, and the teaching of the language and culture of origin (LCO) in the broad context of language teaching.
- **Simultaneous learning of several languages** (chapter 4.5) | This chapter looks at how to manage several languages in teaching.
- **The coherence of language teaching** (chapter 4.6):
  - a. Horizontal coherence. We will consider how competences can be encouraged and used to best advantage and how they can interact in different languages.
  - b. Vertical coherence. The aim is to determine how to promote language learning, in the best way possible, throughout the school career and beyond.

## 4.1 A holistic approach of language teaching: multilingually oriented language teaching methodology / integrated language teaching methodology

As seen in chapter 3, the way in which we conceive of language competences and learning has changed considerably in recent decades. At the same time as new approaches emerge, voices are speaking out for the development of a holistic approach to language teaching and, along with it, teaching that provides students with solid competences in the language of schooling and, moreover, encourages individual plurilingualism.

These considerations are not new to Switzerland, because the General Concept of Language Teaching of 1998 (*EDK* 1998) already defined three avenues that go in this direction:

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63 The General Concept of Language Teaching is a report by specialists on the findings of research in the field of language teaching and learning. It also contains recommendations for further work in Switzerland. The *EDK* in particular has referred to the report to develop its *Strategie of Language Teaching of 2004*.



8. The teaching of all languages in the curriculum, including the local national language, comes within the framework of coordinated language teaching.
9. Various methods of bi-/multilingual teaching must be encouraged, trialled and managed on a large scale.
10. All students should have the opportunity to participate in language exchanges that are coherently integrated into their language studies.

Point 8 of this approach is particularly innovative in two respects: on the one hand it requires that teaching concepts be coordinated among the languages taught, the curricula, the learning objectives, and also the terminology that is used in the different languages, for instance regarding grammar, in order to encourage transfer phenomena and avoid duplication. It also suggests that the methods of teaching foreign languages and language of schooling should be brought closer together. Today, innovation in the methods of language of schooling and foreign language teaching tends to happen within the separate subjects and transfers are tentative, whereas at the same time an effort is being made in teacher training to correct this to a certain extent by offering courses for different languages.

Point 9 recommends that various methods of bilingual teaching of non-language subjects be widely trialled and introduced. And yet, at present, the immersion method in particular is a somewhat elitist phenomenon that is offered as an option in certain secondary school or private school classes. However, the fact of offering earlier foreign language teaching opens up considerable potential for development in this direction: thus, new teaching resources also place greater emphasis on content-based approaches such as CLIL (see chapter

4.2.2), right from the beginning. At the same time, at lower secondary education, we are seeing projects for bilingual teaching of non-language subjects (Aargau, Basel Stadt, Solothurn, Graubünden) and canton Valais even offers two bilingual programmes from the start of primary school. In 2009, canton Fribourg also officially adopted a legal basis for bilingual teaching and launched projects<sup>64</sup> to that end. In canton Graubünden, bilingual programmes span the entire phase of compulsory education from nursery school onwards. The cantonal directives of 2001<sup>65</sup> and the cantonal law on languages of 2006<sup>66</sup> establish the legal basis and fundamental principles that apply to this type of project. In addition to official projects, there is the fact that more and more teachers are conducting small-scale bilingual projects as isolated teaching units. This development can be considered as a positive result of initial and continuous teacher training that places a great deal of emphasis on these new approaches.

Finally, in point 10, the General Concept of Language Teaching deals with the promotion of various forms of exchange, for all students. What is still an individual experience in the majority of cases today – requiring considerable personal commitment moreover – must be made available to all students. In this respect, the role of exchanges as significant learning contexts must be recognised, and the schools should support this special potential; the promotion of school exchanges was also legally ratified in October 2007 with the adoption of the Languages Act (LangA)<sup>67</sup>. In this regard it is useful to mention the *Echanges* organisation ([www.echanges.ch](http://www.echanges.ch)), which facilitates exchanges among young people. It depends on the *ch* Foundation and has the support of the *EDK*. In 2006, the positive effects of exchanges were demonstrated by a wide-scale survey that was

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64 The cantonal concept of language teaching of canton Fribourg: [http://admin.fr.ch/fr/data/pdf/cha/090202\\_concept\\_langues\\_projet\\_fr.pdf](http://admin.fr.ch/fr/data/pdf/cha/090202_concept_langues_projet_fr.pdf) (20.02.2010)

65 Directives concerning bilingual school programs and the various partial immersive course options: [http://www.gr.ch/DE/institutionen/verwaltung/ekud/avs/Volksschule/richtlinien\\_zweisprachigkeit\\_de.pdf](http://www.gr.ch/DE/institutionen/verwaltung/ekud/avs/Volksschule/richtlinien_zweisprachigkeit_de.pdf) (20.02.2010)

66 The cantonal law on languages of canton Graubünden: <http://www.gr.ch/DE/institutionen/verwaltung/ekud/afk/dokumentation/Gesetze/Sprachengesetz.pdf> (20.02.2010)

67 The Federal Act on the National Languages and Understanding between the Linguistic Communities: <http://www.admin.ch/ch/d/ff/2007/6951.pdf> (20.02.2010)

commissioned by *ch Jugendaustausch* (Jörimann Vancheri 2009; for education through contact see chapter 4.2.3). Cantonal initiatives in this area should also be mentioned, such as the *Educomm* school partnerships of canton Basel Stadt<sup>68</sup>. And the new 2009 agreements made with the European Commission have broadened the field: Switzerland now has access to Comenius projects.

To conclude this section on a holistic concept of language teaching, we come back to point 4 of the *EDK* General Concept of Language Teaching of 1998, which is of great importance in this context: 4. The cantons respect and encourage the languages of their student population and integrate them into the curricula.

As is recommended by the General Concept of Language Teaching, the first concern is to develop and integrate language and culture of origin teaching (LCO) which, according to these recommendations, must be enhanced as to content and better coordinated with the rest of the curriculum and teaching. In accordance with art. 4 of the *HarmoS* Agreement (see chapter 1.1), the cantons support learners from a migrant background by organising language and culture of origin courses (LCO).

#### 4.1.1 The meaning of multilingually oriented language teaching methodology / integrated language teaching methodology

As the title of this chapter shows, the terminology of this holistic approach to language teaching has not yet been determined in a unified way, either in Switzerland or in Europe. It is variously designated, depending on the region, as «multilingually oriented language teaching methodology» or «integrated language teaching methodology»<sup>69</sup>. We should therefore take a closer look at these two terms, which as yet have not been entirely

defined. They both relate to teaching concepts that integrate what is known at the present time about the learning and use of several languages – i.e. regular cases of individual plurilingualism – as well as to the need, which manifests itself at both societal and individual levels, to promote multilingualism. Both are also based on an integrative approach: today, we favour the integration of all languages taught in school, a development due in large measure to the influence of Roulet's work (1980) on the integration of the language of schooling (which he still refers to as the mother tongue) and foreign languages. At about the same time, on the German-speaking side, Wandruszka laid the foundations of a multilingually oriented language teaching methodology (Wandruszka 1979). In his conception, the main issue was to encourage transfer phenomena and strategies (see chapters 3.2.5 and 3.3.3) in order to facilitate and optimise the learning of other languages using the local language of schooling as a basis. One must bear in mind that multilingualism always involves several cultures, which in turn implies relations between these cultures (intercultural aspects) and the cultural identity or identities of individuals. Therefore, multilingually oriented language teaching methodology or integrated language teaching methodology cannot be limited to language (see chapter 3); it must also foster a pluricultural identity and well-developed intercultural competences. This is indirectly expressed in the *EDK's* Strategy of Language Teaching, with regard to the recognition of languages of origin / of migration, and it is also addressed in the introduction to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).

The notions of multilingually oriented language teaching methodology and integrated language teaching methodology thus refer to a concept that underlies all language teaching and to the terms of point 8 of the abovementioned Gen-

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68 A brochure on exchange offers, with numerous links to different exchange and contact options, can be downloaded at: [http://educomm.edubs.ch/broschuere\\_austausch\\_08\\_09.pdf](http://educomm.edubs.ch/broschuere_austausch_08_09.pdf) (20.2.2010)

69 Various authors (such as Le Pape-Racine, 2007; Brohy 2008) give a brief history of this terminology and of the different nomenclatures encountered in the literature on the subject.

eral Concept of Language Teaching. But the integrative approach goes beyond the strictly linguistic aspects and comprises the following three elements (which are explained in detail below):

- the integration of the linguistic aspects of the languages concerned (the interlinguistic dimension)
- the integration of language learning and content learning
- the integration of language learning and cultural learning<sup>70</sup>

How many components the two notions should encompass has not yet been clearly defined. Depending on the interpretation given, the emphasis is placed only on foreign languages or on languages of origin / of migration, where integration is based on forms of immersive teaching or education through contact (see chapter 4.2.3); the fact of integrating the language of schooling, i.e. the idea of integrated language promotion – teaching (a subject) means teaching languages – is often seen as desirable. The *EDK's Strategy of Language Teaching* (2004) takes a clear position, in which language as an «essential capacity of the human being» is explicitly presented as central to all learning processes. In this sense, the highest priority is given to encouraging competences in the local language of schooling. At any rate, it should be noted that the integrative approach is a recent prospect and that the development of a common teaching culture for languages of schooling and foreign languages represents a highly complex process, if only because of the different teaching traditions mentioned above; this is why today certain areas can only be outlined or identified as desirable. A great deal more experience is still needed in this field and there is very little research available on the subject; there are only a few practical examples and very little teaching material.

Because the terms «multilingually oriented language teaching methodology» and «integrated language teaching methodology» obviously refer to very similar concepts, they will both be used simultaneously in the remainder of this chapter.

### Models of multilingually oriented language teaching methodology / integrated language teaching methodology

As seen in the *Strategy of Language Teaching* adopted by the *EDK* (2004), the complex situation with regard to languages in the different cantons and regions has given rise to a profusion of regulations concerning language teaching. The same goes for teaching models which, moreover, for reasons of implementation, must take into account in each instance the local educational culture.

Various concepts can be envisaged for multilingually oriented language teaching methodology / integrated language teaching methodology. They differ in their scope, the aspects that they address, and their objectives. The relevant elements can be represented as follows:

#### The scope of the model

- limited concepts: this concerns first and foremost the coordination between the different languages, for instance between foreign languages or between the language of schooling and the first foreign language
- holistic concepts: all languages, including the language of schooling, are coordinated and compared; languages of origin and classical languages can also be included in a holistic concept

#### The aspects addressed in the model

- aspects of language in the strict sense (lexical, morphological, occasionally also

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70 In their study entitled *A European Reference Document for Languages of Education?*, Coste, Cavalli, Crisan and van de Ven (2007) refer to the fields of language subjects, of cross-curricular aspects and non-language subjects as well as potential areas of rationalisation likely to enable curricular and cognitive economy.

syntactic links with closely related languages)

- aspects of language in the broad sense (linguistic aspects, discursive and metalinguistic, concerning textuality, gender, etc.; this aspect includes for instance specific texts or the terminology that describes language phenomena)
- metacognitive, strategic and methodological aspects (knowing how to communicate efficiently and directing one's attention towards the person with whom one communicates; reflecting on the use of language, etc.)
- language and content (simultaneous learning of language and content, in a bilingual learning context for instance)
- language and culture (language as an expression of culture and identity, as for instance in the language of young people, idioms; literature and art)

#### The model's target competences

- language skills: speaking, writing, interaction, comprehension of oral and written texts, (partial) comprehension of languages that are – at first sight – unknown, but closely related to known languages, transfer of the content of one language to another (productive and receptive competences, literacy skills, intercomprehension, mediation)
- strategic competences and methodological competences (such as reading and writing strategies, knowing how to use dictionaries)
- intercultural competences (such as knowing the rituals of communication in other language-cultures, putting one's own culture into perspective)

#### The types of multilingualism included in the model and pursued as objectives

- retrospective multilingualism (the integration of languages and cultures of origin / of migration)

- prospective multilingualism (the contribution to the development of individual plurilingualism)
- retrospective and prospective multilingualism (integration of the two aspects)

#### The aspects of implementation included in the model

- support for curricula
- support for coordinated learning methods
- concepts without a direct connection to curricula and learning methods

Out of this array of conditions we can define the maximum (global), median and minimal variants of multilingually oriented language teaching methodology / integrated language teaching methodology. The maximum models cannot logically be limited models.

Wiater (2006a) gives another classification which makes a distinction, on the basis of their relative importance and the objectives pursued, between three models of multilingually oriented language teaching methodology: a teaching methodology by groups of languages (*Sprachgruppendidaktik*), an integrated teaching methodology of languages of origin, and the promotion of the plurilingual identity.

If schools are to be able to encourage the development of plurilingualism, one must take into account the fact that each language fulfils a specific function in the life of an individual. Therefore, to create a model of multilingually oriented language teaching methodology one must first examine the question of the role of the different languages taught<sup>71</sup>. If the first foreign language is a national language used in neighbouring regions, it can act as a language of encounter. This is the case, for instance, for French as the first foreign language in the *Passepartout* project region (see chapter 4.1.2); and also for the trilingual

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71 This corresponds to the idea of a differentiated curriculum mentioned in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (chapter 8) and can easily be achieved through curricular scenarios (cf. Cavalli, Coste, Crisan and van de Ven 2009).

canton Graubünden, where another cantonal language (the neighbouring language) is taught as the first foreign language, i.e. Italian or Romansh in German-speaking schools and German in the Romansh and Italian-speaking schools. But the first foreign language may also prepare for the study of the second foreign language or of other languages, which is partly the case, for example, in the «German before English» language learning sequence in the French-speaking region of Switzerland<sup>72</sup>; combinations of the two scenarios could also be envisaged.

In the context of the development of functional plurilingualism (see chapter 3) one must carefully consider the role of the languages taught in school, in order to determine which language competences students must acquire in each language, and at what level. Needless to say, the local language of schooling will play a leading role because, as we have mentioned, it is the backbone of the students' literacy, as is pointed out in the Strategy of Language Teaching adopted in 2004 by the *EDK*, and must therefore be developed to the fullest. On this subject, beyond language teaching per se, one must also mention integrated language learning, and in particular the systematic promotion of cognitive academic competence for the optimum development of literacy skills (CALP, see chapter 3). The aim of these efforts is to increase the chances of educational success of all students, regardless of their linguistic or cultural background. This is also the motivation behind the decision set down in the *HarmoS* Agreement regarding the starting age for elementary school (four).

On the other hand, the respective roles of foreign languages may differ depending on the region and cultural or language strategy-related factors (cf. Cavalli, Coste, Crisan and van de Ven 2007 on the various curricular options).

In addition to the development of performance and communication skills (language activity) in the foreign languages taught, it is also very important to develop intercultural skills and acquire

a plurilingual and pluricultural identity, as has already been mentioned. Indeed, it is to be hoped that such an approach would produce openness and tolerance with regard to other cultures as well as – in the case of migrants – better integration into society; not to mention that tolerance enriches not only the personality of the individual but society as a whole (Lüdi 2010). Regarding language teaching, Wiater (2006b, translation) observes: Through the choice of content, objectives, methods and resources for teaching a first, second or third language, it is possible to stimulate and encourage students to search for a transnational, plurilingual and pluricultural identity.

### The fundamental principles of multilingually oriented language teaching methodology / integrated language teaching methodology

We can identify seven principles that form the basis of the different models of multilingually oriented language teaching methodology and integrated language teaching methodology (cf. Hutterli, Stotz and Zappatore 2008; Wokusch 2008). These principles form a link between the different components of these models; they can be considered as the continuation of the fundamental principles presented in chapter 3. To begin with, it is essential to point out that multilingual teaching methodology often has recourse to methodological processes used in modern language teaching, such as education through contact or the promotion of language awareness (*ELBE*). On the other hand, the novelty resides in the coordination and linking of the different language subjects, a process that still, admittedly, requires a great deal of work – especially with regard to the language of schooling. But the fundamental principles of an integrated language teaching methodology can be summed up as follows:

1. For learning purposes, a multilingually oriented language teaching methodology is directed towards functional plurilingual communica-

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72 This has been demonstrated by A. Haenni Hoti's study (2009) on English before French.

tion skills (functional plurilingualism); therefore, as the basis of this learning process, the language of schooling must be developed as fully as possible.

2. It is the result of a constructivist understanding of learning, concentrating on the learners and the learning process. It takes into account the knowledge and language skills that learners already possess and uses them as resources and potential capital in a prospective, retrospective or retrospective/prospective approach.
3. Its aim is to develop plurilingual competences and transfer potentials (transfer) rather than following an additive monolingual approach to language teaching.
4. It emphasises the development of meta-linguistic awareness and metacognition. It encourages the development of learning and communication strategies, of autonomous learning, methodological skills and self-awareness.
5. It uses as a basis for transfer phenomena the linguistic, strategic and encyclopaedic curricular and extracurricular knowledge acquired by learners.
6. It encourages the development of an intercultural and pluricultural competence as well as a plurilingual identity.
7. It emphasises horizontal and vertical coherence: horizontal coherence means making available through networking and systematically using subjects or teaching units of the same school level<sup>73</sup>. Both horizontal and vertical coherence, require the coordination of language teaching, to ensure its continuity beyond school and lay the groundwork for continuing lifelong learning.

Here, we must underline the need for both levels of coherence (horizontal and vertical) (see chapter 4.6 and Saudan's observations, 2007). Two

issues are involved in an earlier start to foreign language learning (the first foreign language in the 5<sup>th</sup> school year, the second in the 7<sup>th</sup> school year according to *HarmoS*): firstly, it is important to ensure the continuity of this new learning period and avoid interruptions during the passage from the primary to the secondary level. Secondly, it is essential to create synergies among the different language subjects in order to avoid discouraging students with useless duplication<sup>74</sup>, or complicating their learning process with different teaching strategies or explanations. The idea of creating synergies ties in perfectly with the concept of plurilingualism, which is based on the notion that the languages one already knows help one to learn new languages (see chapter 4.6 on coherence). Nonetheless, it must be made clear that standardising language teaching is not an option.

One of the essential elements in the field of foreign language teaching is the interaction between functional language skills and objectives stemming from the domains of language awareness (ELBE) and linguistic reflection (metacognition) (principle 4, for example). Even though the time devoted to languages is increasing overall (see chapter 4.5), the number of hours per foreign language is still limited. As the intensity of a learner's contact with language and culture is a determining factor of success (see chapter 3) it is important to ensure, in every language subject, that language awareness is not developed to the detriment of the functional language skills.

#### 4.1.2 Towards the implementation of a multilingually oriented language teaching methodology / integrated language teaching methodology

As seen in the preceding chapter, the implementation of a multilingually oriented language teach-

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73 Besides coherence between languages, this also refers to coherence between language and non-language subjects, between curricular and extracurricular learning, between curriculum, teaching material and assessment practices, and between content-based and reflexive teaching.

74 We observe for instance that the same situations and themes are dealt with in a similar manner in many foreign language learning methods.

ing methodology / integrated language teaching methodology is a complex and ambitious project which, moreover, must take into account different regional characteristics. This is why it can be carried out only gradually and not uniformly: in the European Language Portfolio (ELP) (see chapter 4.6.1) we already have an instrument on a national scale; concepts aimed at promoting language awareness and embracing other cultures (*EOLE* and *ELBE*) concern methodology and teaching. The *Passepartout* project concerns a new concept of language teaching in a given region. The recommendations of canton Ticino reveal an implementation strategy of multilingually oriented language teaching methodology that is fairly specific, and integrated language teaching methodology only exists in French-speaking Switzerland at the present time in the form of a mandate and concept<sup>75</sup>. The *Pädagogische Hochschule* Graubünden [University of Teacher Education of canton Graubünden] has integrated into its training programme for first and second language education the particularities of trilingual canton Graubünden, as well as the concepts of language awareness, immersive and bilingual teaching of non-language subjects.

### The European Language Portfolios

Switzerland now has the entire series of European Language Portfolios (ELP)<sup>76</sup> for the compulsory education period: the *portfolino* is for children aged 4 to 7, the ELP I for children aged 7 to 11, the ELP II for students aged between 11 and 15 and the ELP III for all those over 15 years of age<sup>77</sup>; the development of the language portfolios was commissioned by the *EDK*. The different versions of the ELP all have the same objective: to promote plurilingualism, facilitate intercultural dialogue and at the same time support cultural diversity. The aim of the learning process is to increase learners' autonomy, thereby facilitating

lifelong language learning and mobility within Switzerland and in Europe. These objectives point to the ELP's potential in the context of multilingually oriented language teaching methodology. The complete range of these instruments is already available in the four national languages and will be brought into general use throughout Switzerland as part of the *HarmoS* Agreement. The actual introduction of the instrument is up to the individual cantons, which have each set a different timetable for its implementation. For the time being, numerous cantons are in the process of setting up and offering in-service training for teachers.

### Linguistic and cultural awareness: *ELBE* / *EOLE*

The *ELBE* (language awareness, *Begegnung mit Sprachen, éveil aux langues*) and *EOLE* (language education and awareness in school) approaches are very interesting in the context of integrated language teaching methodology. Like the European Language Portfolio (ELP) they are connected to European projects (such as *Janua Linguarum*, Candelier et al. 2003). These approaches, which have occasionally been given concrete expression in the form of teaching resources, are conceived in a cross-linguistic perspective and are being developed in both the German and French-speaking regions of Switzerland. They include the language of schooling, but also foreign languages and the learners' languages of origin / of migration and therefore have high potential for facilitating integration (for a detailed presentation, see chapters 4.2 and 4.6).

Like the European Language Portfolio (ELP), the *ELBE* and *EOLE* approaches also have a place in a holistic concept of multilingually oriented language teaching methodology and in the *EDK*'s Strategy of Language Teaching (2004).

75 References to these projects are indicated further on in the text.

76 Cf. <http://www.sprachenportfolio.ch> (19.02.2010)

77 A revised version of the ELP III (for adolescents from 15 years of age and adults) was published as a pilot project in 2010.

## The *Passepartout* project

This project is based on a holistic concept of foreign language teaching and was developed as a prelude to, and to optimise, foreign language teaching<sup>78</sup>. Six cantons (Bern, Basel Landschaft, Basel Stadt, Solothurn, Fribourg [the German-speaking part], Valais [the German-speaking part]) took part in the project with the aim, firstly, of preparing for foreign language teaching together, according to the Strategy of Language Teaching adopted by the EDK in 2004, and, secondly, of jointly developing language teaching methodology. The first foreign language taught in these cantons located on the linguistic border is the neighbouring language, i.e. French. Early in the development process, the terminology and a common understanding of the targeted language teaching methodology had to be agreed upon. Although the main focus is on the teaching of foreign languages, there is a consensus in these cantons on the fact that the aim is the development of language teaching as a whole. This means that it includes teaching in the local language of schooling as well as the promotion of dialects or of languages of origin / of migration. The term «multilingually oriented language teaching methodology» was chosen to designate this holistic approach.

In the *Passepartout* project, functional plurilingualism (see chapter 3) is specifically defined as an objective to be attained. Illustration 4a (Sauer and Saudan 2009) shows the different components of this approach; horizontal methodological coherence is ensured by the coordination of foreign language curricula (French and English). In this regard, we should point out that the teaching resources used for the *Passepartout* project are intended to be revised on the basis of the provisions contained in the curricula. Curricula coordinated for the different school years should make it possible to ensure, or at least improve, vertical coherence. However, this project also requires the contribution of the initial and continuing teacher education institutions, the senior management of the establishments concerned and, above all,

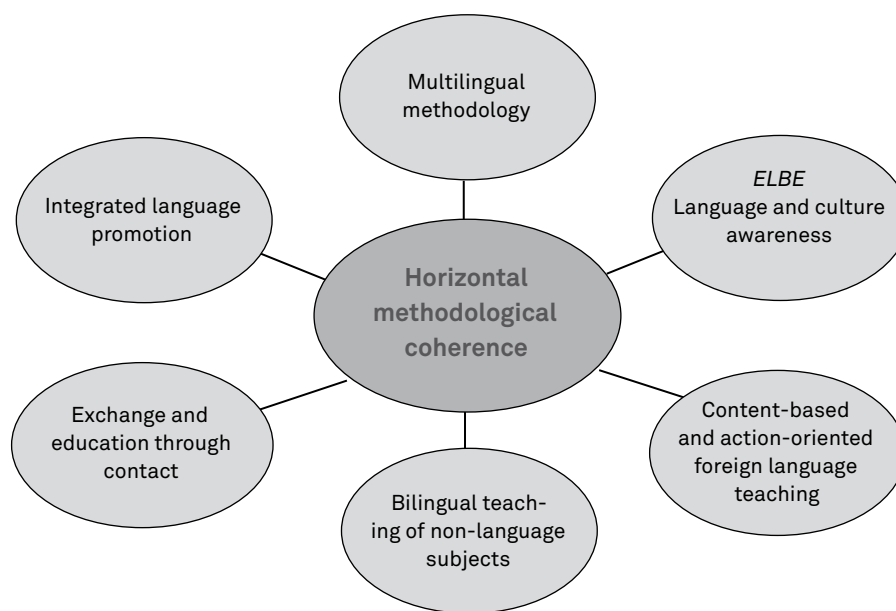
the teachers themselves (for vertical and horizontal coherence see chapter 4.6). On the whole, it should be noted that the approaches connected to multilingually oriented language teaching methodology presuppose a strong will to cooperate on the part of the teachers, due to their scope, which goes beyond languages and subjects. The *Passepartout* project also sets high standards for the level of language and educational-methodological competences as well as for the level of information made available to the teachers, who should, for instance, be informed about the content of the other language subjects.

The different components of the model are defined in a reference document containing proposals for terminology (Sauer and Saudan 2009). They are explained below, reading clockwise. **Multilingual methodology** (multilingually oriented language teaching methodology) aims to connect the languages learned in school by including the following aspects: fostering awareness of the common points and differences between languages by comparing languages, demonstrating possible transfers between them, and taking advantage of language learning experiences. The purpose is to improve the efficiency of teaching and learning processes at the cognitive and methodological level. The **ELBE** (language awareness, *Begegnung mit Sprachen und Kulturen, éveil aux langues*) component, whose aim is to promote awareness of language and culture, shows another way of implementing a multilingually oriented language teaching methodology. It favours reflection on language, awareness of language phenomena, of the functioning of language, and of cultural diversity. The **ELBE** approach also facilitates the integration of the languages of origin / of migration represented in the classroom and can be applied in practically all subjects. **Content-based foreign language teaching** (action and content orientation) is at the centre of teaching delivered in the classroom and its aim is above all to help develop functional language skills. Content-based teaching should enable the integration of general knowledge using the foreign language and thus – as in

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78 Cf. <http://www.passepartout-sprachen.ch> (19.02.2010)





**Illustration 4a** | The components of multilingually oriented language teaching methodology in the *Passepartout* project (Sauer and Saudan 2009)

bilingual teaching of non-language subjects or immersion – stimulate the language acquisition process. Action and content-based foreign language teaching also implies working on language resources as such, but the selection of the latter and progression in this area must be determined by the targeted action competences. Alongside foreign language teaching delivered in the classroom, one can teach a subject either partly (**bilingual teaching of non-language subjects**) or entirely in a foreign language (**immersion**). This type of teaching can be of variable duration and underlines the connection between language learning and content learning. Another component is apparent, at least in part, outside the foreign language class: the **exchange and education through contact**, which is considered as a necessary complement in that it makes it possible to develop intercultural competences as well as the capacity for action in a foreign language and that, moreover, it also often has a positive effect on the learners' motivation. Finally, the concept of **integrated language promotion** exceeds the bounds of foreign language teaching; it deals with the intention to expressly encourage students in every subject to develop their competences in the language of schooling.

The *Passepartout* project clearly demonstrates that implementing multilingually oriented language teaching methodology in a region must be based on a joint political decision of the cantons concerned. This is also the observation of Cavalli, Coste, Crisan and van de Ven (2009) in their study on the conditions for the feasibility of a multilingual and intercultural education; they point out the following: If one of the objectives is the development of individual repertoires through teaching, which does not concern only a small, privileged elite but the entire school population, multilingual and intercultural education can only be the fruit of a strong stance and of a conscious, concrete commitment of the political decision-makers.

Although the *Passepartout* project indubitably has a pioneering role in the implementation of a multilingually oriented language teaching methodology in Switzerland, it also demonstrates the difficulty that lies in trying to coordinate all the language methodologies, given that integration of the language of schooling has not (yet) been achieved in this project, even though it serves as an example.

## Multilingualism and schooling in canton Graubünden

Multilingualism in the schools of the trilingual canton Graubünden represents an altogether unusual challenge. The language concept adopted by Graubünden<sup>79</sup> is revelatory of the complex situation in its schools, which have three first languages (German, Romansh, Italian). These same cantonal languages are taught in primary school as first foreign languages, or second languages, and English – from the 2012–2013 school year – as the second foreign language from the 5<sup>th</sup> primary school year on. Moreover, these second languages are given different time allocations, different syllabuses, and different learning objectives. One observes that in the case of German as a second language, for Romansh speakers for instance, the learning objectives are more ambitious than for a foreign language in primary school. In addition to the three types of language teaching provided for in the compulsory education curriculum, there has since 1996 been a steady increase in bilingual school projects that include an immersive teaching component, either in parallel to the mainstream school offer in towns of a certain size such as Chur and Ilanz, or as an offer open to several communities of Upper Engadin, Maloja and Trin.

## Reflections on multilingually oriented language teaching methodology in Ticino

The cantonal department of education of Ticino has put in place, since 2002, a group (*Gruppo plurilinguismo*) to promote plurilingualism. The curriculum (2004) for secondary schools (*scuola media*) has made significant changes in the field of languages: French is taught as the first foreign language from the third year of compulsory education (*scuola elementare*) and during the first two years of secondary school (*scuola media*). Then,

from the third and fourth years onwards, it is offered as an option. German is taught as second foreign language from the second to the fourth year of secondary school. English (formerly an option) is taught to all third and fourth year students in secondary school.

The mandate of the *Gruppo plurilinguismo* is to develop proposals for better coordination of foreign languages in secondary education and improved efficiency in foreign language learning<sup>80</sup>. In this context, and based on these proposals, various projects have been launched; within the framework of these projects, the foreign language teachers of a given school had to develop a common method of functioning. Common modules were conceived by the University of Teacher Education of Locarno (*SUPSI-DFA*, formerly *Alta scuola pedagogica*) for future foreign language teachers, as well as a module to address third language teaching methodology and the *ELBE* (language awareness, *Begegnung mit Sprachen, éveil aux langues*). Moreover, the specialists who assist the teachers in their practice have been working together for years and organise continuing training for several languages.

## Integrated language teaching methodology in French-speaking Switzerland

The declaration of the *CIIP* (the Intercantonal Conference of Cantonal Ministers of Education of Western Switzerland and Ticino) on Language Policy in French-speaking Switzerland of 30 January 2003 (*Déclaration de la CIIP relative à la politique de l'enseignement des langues en Suisse romande*) is a fundamental political document for Western Switzerland which explicitly lays down the foundations of integrated language teaching methodology, as is clearly shown in the following excerpts:

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79 The Concept for languages of canton Graubünden: [http://www.gr.ch/DE/institutionen/verwaltung/ekud/avs/Volksschule/Sprachenangebot\\_uebersicht\\_de.pdf](http://www.gr.ch/DE/institutionen/verwaltung/ekud/avs/Volksschule/Sprachenangebot_uebersicht_de.pdf) (20.02.2010)

80 The final report of the group was published in 2004 and can be consulted at: [http://www.scuoladecs.ti.ch/scarica\\_insegnamento\\_lingue/Approcci\\_plurilingue\\_nella\\_scuola\\_media.pdf](http://www.scuoladecs.ti.ch/scarica_insegnamento_lingue/Approcci_plurilingue_nella_scuola_media.pdf) (19.02.2010)

1.3 (...) Language teaching / learning must take place within an integrated curriculum common to all the languages (local language, foreign languages and classical languages). This integrated language curriculum will define the place and the role of each of them with regard to the general linguistic and cultural objectives. It will define the respective contributions of and interactions between the different language learning processes.

2.3–1.1 The learning of the different languages is conceived to be complementary and interactive.

On this basis and in the context of the mandate of the *GREL (Groupe de référence enseignement des langues étrangères)* group of specialists formed by the *CIIP*, Wokusch (2009) developed a model<sup>81</sup> of which the first draft is limited to foreign languages<sup>82</sup> and is guided by the principles presented in chapter 4.1.1.

In this model, the curriculum represents the main coordination tool. As observed in the *CIIP* declaration on Language Policy, and as also set out in chapter 8 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), this curriculum should be based on coordination and diversification. It thus guarantees a certain continuity as well as vertical and horizontal coherence (see chapter 4.6). This is particularly important since, unlike the region of the *Passepartout* project and other regions of Switzerland, the French-speaking region does not, for the moment, have its own language teaching resources; the teachers in the French-speaking region must rely on existing resources<sup>83</sup>. The specific components of the model are as follows:

- The point is to define the role and the skills profile to be attained for each language; it is based on hypotheses concerning the needs of the learners and the requirements of society.

- Definition of the role and of the skills profile allows us to determine the preferred working modalities for each language (for instance, working mainly on receptive or productive competences; emphasising strategies or routines to acquire elementary communicative competence).
- Action-oriented, content-based processes are essential methodological and teaching strategies for the development of functional language skills.
- Teaching processes focusing on linguistic tools (emphasis on vocabulary and grammar) and terminology are harmonised (horizontal coherence).
- Assessment is harmonised among several languages (in accordance with national Educational Standards).
- Coordinated use of the European Language Portfolios (ELP) represents an important tool for integration and for the future of multilingualism; responsibility for the ELP can change for each school year and be passed from one language subject to another.
- Interculturality should be developed based on observation and comparison (ethnographic approach); education through contact is put into practice in all its forms (not only through exchanges that involve physical displacement, but also through contact via Internet, etc.).
- Reflection on languages should be encouraged in order to contribute to efficient learning via language awareness (*ELBE*, language awareness, *éveil aux langues*, *Begegnung mit Sprachen*), in a more linguistic approach.
- All forms of strategies, the ability to read, the development of writing, etc. must, as processes taking place at a high cognitive level, be dealt with in the framework of a cross-linguistic approach in order to facilitate the transfer of these abilities from one language to the other.

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81 This model has no official status as it has never been validated by a decision of the *CIIP*.

82 However, classical languages can also be included.

83 The same goes for the language of schooling, in this case French. Teachers work partly with teaching resources from France.

- Students must be individually encouraged to develop autonomous, self-directed learning abilities, which will prepare them for lifelong learning; a suitable process to this end could be, for example, the intercomprehension approach.
- Coordination with the language of schooling is important and remains to be achieved; languages of origin / of migration should, wherever possible, be taken into consideration.

The similarity between this concept and the *Passepartout* project shows, once again, that the different approaches come together in seeking teaching methods that could contribute to the objective of individual plurilingualism. In contrast to the *Passepartout* project, which is in the implementation phase, there seems to be a certain caution in French-speaking Switzerland with regard to integrated language teaching methodology. The implementation of multilingually oriented language teaching methodology / integrated language teaching methodology is possible at present in a one-off, progressive manner. Moreover, there must be constructive dialogue with regard to language of schooling teaching methodology, French in this case, as there are certain differences between this methodology and the teaching methodology for foreign languages. Thus, in the teaching methodology for the language of schooling, texts and text *genres* are primarily used as the structuring principle (CIIP 2006) in addition to language competences. In the teaching methodology for French as the language of schooling, «integrated methodology» or «plural approaches» are meant as the integration of the linguistic and cultural diversity of the learners, particularly in relation to the *EOLE* approach (language education and awareness in school). We are seeing a dialogue emerge concerning French as language of schooling and the «plural approaches» it entails. But considerable additional work and coordination are still needed, as is evident in the new cur-

riculum for French-speaking Switzerland which in its present state is still far from fulfilling the mandate conferred by the declaration of the *CIIP* (the Intercantonal Conference of Cantonal Ministers of Education of Western Switzerland and Ticino) on Language Policy in French-speaking Switzerland of 30 January 2003 (for information on Strategy of Language Teaching in French-speaking Switzerland cf. Nicolet 2007, and Elmiger 2010).

These examples of the implementation of an integrated language teaching methodology clearly show how the degree of implementation of a concept such as this can vary according to the canton and region. It should also be pointed out that all multilingually oriented language teaching methodology concepts are based on solid theoretical foundations and set out processes whose efficiency has been, in part, empirically demonstrated, and that this methodology should therefore prove effective, at least in those partial domains<sup>84</sup>. But what is new is combining and linking all these strategies (for more concrete methodological and educational elements, see chapter 4.5). It is evident that there is considerable need for research and development in this area because it must still be proven that this new concept of language teaching is really efficient and that multilingually oriented language teaching methodology indeed constitutes the method of choice for contributing to the development of multilingualism among learners.

### 4.1.3 Development prospects for multilingually oriented language teaching methodology / integrated language teaching methodology

As has been pointed out repeatedly in the preceding chapter, we observe that there is still a great need for development in the field of multilingually

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84 Task-based language teaching is based on solid theoretical foundations and its efficiency has been empirically proven in several instances (cf. Ellis 2003); this also applies for content-based processes, which can be viewed as particular cases of bilingual or immersive teaching, and whose efficiency has been demonstrated.

oriented language teaching methodology / integrated language teaching methodology. The main issue here seems to be to integrate all the languages used in schooling into a holistic concept of language teaching, but languages of origin / of migration should also be better integrated into the teaching. In the recent work of the Council of Europe, the emphasis has increasingly been put on an approach that integrates all the languages of schooling<sup>85</sup>. It is important to remember that it is increased efficiency – in methodology and learning processes – that is sought by means of coordinated processes in the language subjects (and, ideally, also in non-language subjects) which must fulfil three essential functions (cf. Coste, Cavalli, Crisan, van de Ven 2007), i.e.:

- increasing the coherence of language teaching and encouraging transfer phenomena
- coordinating and bringing together language teaching methodologies to enable more efficient language learning
- coordinating language teaching methodologies makes it possible to differentiate between the languages taught

Verifying the desired effects represents a real challenge for researchers, since the development of an integrated language teaching methodology has not yet been completed; however, such verification is necessary. It must be noted that at the present time we have only very little information regarding the teaching practices in use in the schools. It is absolutely necessary to be familiar with current practices in order to be able to assess whether the *EDK's* Strategy of Language Teaching (2004) is being carried out and, if so, how – and to what degree the available tools are used, etc.<sup>86</sup>

The models of competence and the national Educational Standards developed on this basis (see chapter 3.1) define the functional language skills that students must attain, with descriptions for

all the languages taught, but separately for each language. The examples of implementation given above show that multilingually oriented language teaching methodology goes far beyond those aspects and that in order to get the most benefit out of language competence in everyday life, the sociocultural context must be taken into consideration in foreign language teaching.

This is the purpose of the following table 4a, which presents the objectives and characteristics of integrative language teaching as well as their consequences for methodology. These elements are in line with the theory developed in chapter 3 and are relevant in almost all cases for all the languages taught in school (the language of schooling as first and second language, foreign languages and, to a certain extent, classical languages). However, the relevance of these elements must of course be evaluated and they must be selected according to the concrete language teaching objective being pursued. The purpose of this table is not to establish a curriculum but to put forward options, hopefully well-timed, on how to create a frame of reference to promote learners' multilingualism and intercultural competence in the teaching of different language subjects.

## 4.2 Language and content – language and culture

As seen in the preceding chapters (in particular chapter 3.3.4), all language learning should be accompanied by cultural learning and is most effective when implicit learning and explicit learning complement each other. To trigger implicit learning processes in the most natural way possible it is important to emphasise content. Multilingually oriented language teaching methodology (see chapter 4.1.1) therefore stresses the development of language in relation to culture on the one hand, and language in relation to content on the other.

85 Cf. [http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/langeduc/le\\_platformintro\\_EN.asp](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/langeduc/le_platformintro_EN.asp) (19.02.2010)

86 The *CIIP* has commissioned the *Haute Ecole pédagogique* of Lausanne to conduct a survey in the French-speaking region to identify prevailing teaching practices; the aim is to determine to what extent teaching includes elements of an integrative approach to language teaching and the concept of multilingualism.

Objective, characteristic	Methodology and examples
Integrated language promotion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with a cross-curricular and possibly comparative approach among languages on text <i>genres</i> and language tasks (such as summaries, accounts, arguments, etc.)</li> <li>• Carry out cognitive linguistic tasks<sup>87</sup> (such as selecting and organising information, taking notes, constructing an argument, etc.)</li> </ul>
Language education ( <i>Allgemeine Sprachziehung, educazione linguistica</i> )	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Address various language functions<sup>88</sup> and practise them (language as the medium of thinking, expressing oneself and communicating)</li> <li>• Define and understand linguistic norms by using examples taken from different languages (for example, the use of the passive in various languages)</li> <li>• Understand the relation between communication situations and linguistic resources; also in comparison with different cultures (for example forms of greeting and leave-taking; composing an e-mail message)</li> </ul>
Openness to other languages and cultures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integrate <i>ELBE</i> (language awareness, <i>Begegnung mit Sprachen, éveil aux langues</i>) or <i>EOLE</i> (language education and awareness in school) processes and approaches into teaching (see chapter 4.1.2)</li> <li>• Proceed through observation and comparison with respect to social and cultural issues (such as the rules applied in the schools of different countries)</li> <li>• Integrate education through contact into teaching and encourage the development of intercultural competence (for instance through the exchange of e-mails with a partner class in a region where a different language is spoken; see chapter 4.2.3)</li> </ul>
Development of methodological and strategic competence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and practise reading, comprehension, and strategies in a coordinated manner; similarly for auditory and visual comprehension processes (for example, by introducing reading strategies and their use in different languages)</li> <li>• Develop writing processes, create and practise writing and revision strategies in a coordinated manner (for example by introducing brainstorming techniques for a language and additional practice for other subjects)</li> <li>• Develop and practise communication strategies in a coordinated manner (use of language strategies), for oral use and particularly for interaction (for example, facial expressions and gestures)</li> <li>• Develop and practise learning strategies in a coordinated manner (for example, by using a vocabulary list)</li> <li>• Manage auxiliary resources and means (for example, by using dictionaries and reference works)</li> </ul>
Promotion of individual plurilingualism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integrate language and culture of origin teaching (LCO) (for example, using the European Language Portfolios [ELP])</li> <li>• Show the connections that exist between languages (for example, English technological and sports terms in other languages, French expressions in English, such as «a feeling of déjà vu»)</li> <li>• Coordinate work with the European Language Portfolios (ELP) (for example, by introducing and practising strategies across different language subjects; specific reflection on language with the help of the ELP)</li> <li>• Take into account the intercomprehension approach in teaching (for example, by decoding a text with the help of similar words in other languages)</li> <li>• Introduce students to mediation and practise it (for example, by summarising the essence of a foreign language text in the language of schooling)</li> </ul>
Development of functional language skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work on the different areas of language competences (for example, by learning the vocabulary specific to a given situation)</li> <li>• Practise language skills in a specific and targeted manner (productive and receptive skills; interaction)</li> <li>• Analyse needs and act according to the situation (for example, by having students choose texts and carry out tasks)</li> </ul>

87 With reference to Coste, Cavalli, Crisan and van de Ven 2007, 72.

88 With reference to Coste, Cavalli, Crisan and van de Ven 2007, 68.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integrate task-based teaching processes (for example, task-based language learning [TBL]) – see chapter 4.5.3)</li> <li>• Take into account content-based teaching processes (for example, CLIL, content and language integrated learning, see chapter 4.2.2)</li> </ul>
Use-oriented language learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Define tasks (by creating communication situations that are as real as possible, for example)</li> <li>• Work with realistic models (by creating dialogue models based on real situations, for example)</li> <li>• Integrate sociocultural aspects (by comparing typical conversations or manners in different cultures, for example)</li> <li>• Work preferably with lexicalised grammar and extended lexical units (for example, by thematically presenting and learning models of sentence construction and collocations)</li> </ul>
Availability of adequate implicit learning opportunities (as a complement to explicit learning)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integrate content-based teaching processes (for example, CLIL, see chapter 4.2.2)</li> <li>• Promote education through contact (for example, through student exchanges)</li> </ul>
Development of intercultural competence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Address cultural differences and similarities (for example, by comparing nursery rhymes or jokes in different languages)</li> <li>• Address sociocultural issues through observation and comparison (for example by comparing recommendations regarding eating habits in different countries, with different languages)</li> <li>• Promote education through contact (for example, through the exchange of video messages with another class, in another language)</li> </ul>
Development of lexical and formal competence (language competences in the strictest sense)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take a lexical approach to grammar, through mainly idiomatic, lexicalised structures (for example, recognise and practise typical pivotal words, learn verbs and complements together)</li> <li>• Take into account, for the formal aspects, consciousness-raising teaching processes (for example, by deducing a grammatical rule based on examples)</li> <li>• Work with BICS using situations, with the help of expressions and formulaic language (for example, everyday conversations)</li> <li>• Work with CALP to differentiate between meanings of vocabulary (for example, in definitions, possibly also in several languages), compare syntactic models or typical expressions according to functional criteria (for example, by working on the contrast between the passive in German and the use of «on» in French in impersonal formulation)</li> </ul>
Taking into account the age and cognitive style of the learner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Foster the development of BICS among younger learners and familiarise them with CALP (for example, through CLIL, see chapter 4.2.2)</li> <li>• Make better use of and develop CALP among older learners (for example, by means of bilingual teaching of non-language subjects, see chapter 4.2.2)<sup>89</sup></li> </ul>

**Table 4a** | Multilingually oriented language teaching methodology / integrated language teaching methodology: objectives and examples

**89** The younger the learners, the more natural learning situations must be and the more BICS must be encouraged; content-based language teaching can lay the groundwork for CALP and help develop the common underlying proficiency. The older the learners, the more explicit the work can be and the more one can take advantage of the common underlying proficiency – CALP is more easily acquired.

Both dimensions are important for all languages, but they are addressed mainly in foreign language teaching methodology with the aim of increasing the efficiency of foreign language teaching. Consequently, this chapter will address the teaching procedures that are best for learning about aspects of culture and for the development of intercultural competence as well as the simultaneous learning of language and content.

### 4.2.1 Language and culture

It is interesting to note that the Strategy of Language Teaching adopted in 2004 by the *EDK* only mentions cultural objectives in relation to national languages. Against a background of different concepts of plurilingualism and cultural diversity, this might, at first glance, be somewhat disconcerting. But the situation is less ambiguous if one refers, for example, to the recommendations of the Intercantonal Conference of Cantonal Ministers of Education of Western Switzerland and Ticino (*CIIP*) concerning the teaching of French as the language of schooling in French-speaking Switzerland (*CIIP* 2006). These recommendations reveal that the underlying notion of culture is very limited, since it is restricted to literature. The Languages Act (*LangA*) of 2007<sup>90</sup> specifies that, regarding the teaching of foreign languages in the national languages, the «cultural aspects connected to a multilingual country» must be taken into account (*LangA*, art. 15, para. 3). Even though the link between language and culture is addressed here mainly from the perspective of foreign language teaching, we must point out that the sociocultural dimensions of the language of schooling as second language are also very important, as students find themselves in a situation of intercultural communication (exactly as in a foreign language when it is used in a real-life situation) (cf. Müller-Jacquier 2004). Learners must develop intercultural competences in order to be able to adjust their communication to their conversation partners (Byram

2004). According to Byram, in the field of foreign languages this is the communicative competence, i.e. the ability to communicate in the other language with persons of that language and culture. Therefore, learning languages from the perspective of multilingualism implies navigating between two cultures or more and possibly also between several cultural identities. The need to establish intercultural relations lends particular significance to cultural attitudes and also has a bearing on the training of language teachers who must therefore develop better intercultural competences.

#### Language and culture: the intercultural dimension of foreign languages

Integrating the cultural dimension into foreign language teaching, in an intercultural perspective, involves addressing the similarities and differences between the cultures in question, encouraging awareness of language and culture, and stimulating reflection on linguistic cultures and their characteristics (see intercultural competence and *ELBE*). A wise course is to take an ethnographic approach, observing and comparing, like that developed by Byram, Gribkova and Starkey (2002) in their practical introduction for teachers. Tasks and concrete content must naturally be adapted to the students and their age group. In this respect, one might envisage a progression that would consist in addressing, mainly through discovery, general cultural differences at primary school level and not limit teaching to foreign languages; at the secondary education one could then address the specific characteristics of the cultures associated with the foreign languages taught, observing and comparing them while taking into account specific linguistic structures. Often, when an intercultural approach is adopted, a so-called «critical incident» is taken as a point of departure, i.e. differences are illustrated based on a misunderstanding stemming from interculturality.

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90 The Federal Act of 5 October 2007 on the National Languages and Understanding between the Linguistic Communities (*Languages Act*).



In addition to the intercultural angle which, since its aim is functional language skills, is concentrated mainly on aspects of everyday culture, the artistic and literary products of the languages and cultures taught also remain very important, in keeping with the broader educational mandate of the school.

If we take language and culture as a whole, it seems reasonable to integrate the cultural / intercultural aspects into content and tasks rather than to deal with them separately. Indeed, the (inter)cultural dimension is a perspective and concept that lends a certain flavour to teaching in general. This kind of integration is particularly recommended because it is necessary, in foreign language teaching, to provide sufficient opportunities of exposure to the language (see chapters 3 and 4.1). As shown by Byram, Gribkova and Starkey (2002), it is possible to adopt an all-embracing, challenging, intercultural perspective even with material that is not specifically designed for that purpose: one can even, for instance, study grammar exercises to find possible stereotypes (such as in the distribution of roles among men and women). For this, it is especially important to use a broad range of authentic documents that can be integrated into content-based, task-oriented teaching; this trend is also emerging clearly in learning resources. Moreover, this is quite close to education through contact (see chapter 4.2.3), if contacts with speakers of the language-culture(s) in question are integrated into projects and can be prepared and then revisited, thereby offering better chances of effective, durable, learning. Addressing (inter)cultural issues also provides an opportunity for multidisciplinary collaboration with teachers of non-language subjects (such as history, geography, environment, etc.).

Since addressing cultural differences or peculiarities is always threatening to some degree to the student, it is of utmost importance that communication in teaching be conducted respectfully and with mutual understanding. Teachers play a key role in the pursuit of this general educational objective. Likewise, it is essential that intercultural competences be assessed with a certain degree of sensitivity; except for concrete elements of de-

clarative knowledge, intercultural competence is indirectly demonstrated in the ability to carry out tasks or projects, in particular in the area of education through contact. But other competences, such as declarative knowledge (*savoir*) mainly, and attitudes (*savoir-être*) can only be self-assessed (FREPA descriptors) or assessed through reflective tasks (such as describing and analysing important events).

The objective of developing intercultural competences is important to the profile of the teacher, who is no longer only a language model and a cultural ambassador for the culture of the language taught, but also a model of intercultural competence. According to Byram, Gribkova and Starkey (2002), the ability to analyse cultural systems comparatively is paramount and should therefore be an important component of teacher education. As regards mastery of the language, we observe that the desirability of native speakers as teachers no longer applies: «Hence, the «good teacher» is neither the native speaker of the language studied, nor the person who teaches this language as a foreign language: rather, he or she is a teacher who is able to make students grasp the relationship between their own culture and other cultures, to arouse their interest and their curiosity for «otherness», and to make them aware of the way in which other people or individuals perceive them – and their culture.» (Byram, Gribkova and Starkey 2002, 10.) [Translation]

According to this quotation, intercultural competence can be developed not only in the framework of language teaching, but also in the non-language subjects that lend themselves to it.

#### Teaching resources for language and culture: *EOLE/ELBE*

In addition to this intercultural perspective, which underlies the entire field of foreign language teaching, there are a number of teaching resources within the context of *EOLE* (language education and awareness in school) / *ELBE* (language awareness, *Begegnung mit Sprachen, éveil aux langues*) that contribute to the development

of language and culture awareness through a cross-curricular approach – or one that is not connected to a subject; but both emphasise language awareness rather than intercultural competence. The different teaching resources available (such as Perregaux et al. 2003, *EOLE* online<sup>91</sup>, Schader 2004) have been created regionally, whilst being anchored in the European context (cf. the material developed in the framework of the FREPA project). As the concept of these teaching resources is interlinguistic, they also contribute to the development of horizontal coherence (see chapter 4.6.1). The status of this approach varies depending on the different regions of Switzerland: in French-speaking Switzerland these teaching resources exist only for primary school level<sup>92</sup>. However there has not yet been an evaluation of the experiences of teachers using these resources. In the context of the *Passepartout* project conducted in Northwestern Switzerland, detailed learning objectives in the area of language and culture awareness have been defined in the *Passepartout* curriculum, and these objectives make a distinction between declarative knowledge (*savoir*), skills and know-how (*savoir-faire*), and attitudes (*savoir-être*).

### Language, culture and the language of schooling: the local dimension and the linguistic regions

People grow up in a linguistic and cultural community; they are influenced by the language practices of their society and they, in turn, can influence those practices. The *HarmoS* Agreement underlines, in art. 3, the fundamental importance of developing a cultural identity: «During their compulsory education, all students acquire and develop the fundamental knowledge and competences and the cultural identity that will enable them to pursue their education throughout their lives and find their place in social and professional life.» (*EDK* 2007, 2). [Translation]

But today, the development of a cultural identity and the fact of growing up in a linguistic culture are not, in most cases, linear processes limited to a linguistic community and culture. The biographies of many children and adolescents resemble a linguistic and cultural puzzle. Where language and culture are concerned, the documents adopted by the *EDK* in the area of language strategy therefore place more emphasis on the obligations connected to the linguistic and cultural diversity of Switzerland as a whole and of Europe, as undertakings that could potentially coincide with the promotion of the linguistic cultures of the different language regions. «Cultural and linguistic diversity is deeply rooted in the history of Switzerland and of Europe. It is an element of our identity and of the idea we have of our country. Protecting and preserving this diversity is one of the explicit objectives of Swiss (see art. 116 of the Federal Constitution) and European policy.» (General Concept of Language Teaching, 1998) [Translation]

The rapid evolution of society has given rise to heated debate over questions of interculturality and multilingualism, and over the need to broaden linguistic horizons with a view to multiculturalism. In addition to knowing one's own language and culture, it is becoming essential to learn other national languages and cultures, the languages spoken in neighbouring countries and the main languages spoken throughout the world. The General Concept of Language Teaching (1998) points out that the aim is to educate a «mutually supportive, functionally multilingual population that is open to a multicultural society.»

However much this multicultural orientation is needed at the present time, one must nevertheless ask oneself what are the tasks that schools should undertake in order to promote the local linguistic culture? In the Strategy of Language Teaching (*EDK* 2004), point 3.6, entitled «Principles for the development of language teaching» is devoted to the local language. Its main concern

91 Cf. <http://web.mac.com/d.elmiger/iWeb/eoleenligne/bienvenue.html> (22.02.2010).

92 Except for several activities of *EOLE* online.

is the coherent development of the language of schooling starting in the pre-school phase and the promotion of standard language and special support measures for children and adolescents whose first language is not the language of schooling. The linguistic culture is not mentioned; it is only in point 3.7, which deals with the teaching of a second national language, that cultural aspects are addressed: «In Switzerland, at least two foreign languages, at least one of which is a national language, are taught during the early school years and at the latest in the fifth school year. The special function of the latter in a multilingual country is emphasised, particularly in its cultural dimension.» (EDK 2004, 5)

The consultant's report concerning the new curriculum in the German-speaking region also gives priority to functional language skills among the main objectives in the field of languages: «(...) a complete basic education in the local standard language (oral and written proficiency), as well as the fundamentals in a second national language and in at least one other foreign language.» (NW EDK, EDK Ost & BKZ 2009, 6) [Translation]

Admittedly, documents concerning school and language strategy make mention of the central function of language in cultural and political life as well as for the acquisition and transmission of knowledge; but they do not really explicitly define the role of the language of schooling in this process. The two following areas require some clarification:

- **Literary culture** | One of the important tasks of the language of schooling is to introduce students to the written and oral culture (narrative traditions, etc.). The aim of literary socialisation is aesthetic education and awareness of literary traditions – even in a mediatised society. It is a matter of identifying which literary traditions should be transmitted, taking into account rapid social and cultural developments, and to determine whether schools have a role to play in contributing, through examples of local and regional literature that reflect a cultural tradition, to the cultural identity and consequently to the integration and preservation of local and regional culture.

- **The protection of the local language** | The question of the preservation of the local linguistic culture usually arises in linguistic regions where the language used in everyday life is different from its standard version. In Switzerland, this is the case chiefly for the German-speaking region with its diglossia; but other linguistic regions, such as Ticino or the Romansh-speaking region, are also concerned. It was right, in recent years, to insist on the use of the standard language in the schools. Nevertheless, it is also worthwhile asking oneself whether schools do not have a clear-cut mandate to adequately promote the dialect.

#### 4.2.2 Language and content: from content-based to immersive teaching

Although it is true that all teachers use language as a means of communication and learning, one might ask oneself, conversely, what learning content they should use for language subjects. Language teaching should encourage functional communicative action as much as the description of established facts and the expression of personal needs and feelings; to this end, it should be based on content that stimulates such activities. This is a logical consequence of the use-based, action-oriented concept presented in chapters 3.2 and 4.1. The theme of content is also addressed in the multilingually oriented language teaching methodology (see chapter 4.1.2, in particular the presentation of the *Passepartout* project). The preceding chapter 4.1 presented the connection between language and culture. These two elements are closely interwoven and it is not advisable to use cultural content, in the conventional sense of literature or civilisation courses, as simply filler material for language teaching.

In other words, language teaching has a content problem. It suffices to take a look at older text books to realise that, in the field of foreign languages in particular, to present and practise certain linguistic structures, tasks have often been decontextualised orders and affirmations

that are empty of meaning. The following sections show how one can give content to language teaching in such a way that it is both content and container, capable of addressing themes that go beyond the scope of the subjects and are relevant to education more widely (learning across the curriculum).

### Language and content in the teaching of the language of schooling

As seen in chapter 4.3.2, the language of schooling is at the same time the medium and the object of schooling. The topic on which teaching is based contributes to language acquisition and learning, and most students are more highly motivated when the content is stimulating; they develop language capacities through use in contexts that make sense. Compared to the need for stimulating, language-sensitive teaching in non-language subjects, the issue addressed in this chapter – defining the themes that should be dealt with in the language of schooling – plays a secondary role. The present orientation, which is centred on literacy, literacy skills and functional language skills seems to imply that content conveyed by texts cannot be an object of learning per se, but that its function is mainly to serve as an example. Moreover, it may be observed in the latest generations of teaching resources that a great deal of importance has been placed on the motivation of learners. This is evident in the texts and contents chosen, which are interesting and meaningful from an emotional point of view. Take for instance the *Sprachland* method magazines, whose aim is to present exciting topics which are used to develop language competences. Three of the nine magazines are consciously oriented towards topics (inventions, the sea, chocolate) which are addressed with the help of literary and factual texts, linear or not. The other magazines address language-related topics, which is also to a great extent the approach of the *Die Sprachstarken* method (coded messages, *Panama* library, «let's do theatre», fables, etc.).

If one consults the curricula, one observes that knowledge beyond language and literacy is prima-

rily addressed as a complement, without any form of systematic organisation. It is up to the teachers and educational teams to establish more systematic links with other teaching subjects such as history or «world studies».

### Language and content in foreign language teaching

The language of schooling benefits from the fact that non-language subjects provide innumerable opportunities to use and develop language in authentic situations of school life. Conversely, poor language contact is typical of foreign language teaching. Directed learning of foreign languages is placed within the school context; it does not occur in the context of a community that practises the target language as its dominant means of comprehension (which would, for example, be the case for a language school located in the region where that language is practised). When students interact with texts and educational materials, or with their teachers and among themselves, they produce and interpret contents that are meaningful to a greater or lesser degree. Interpreting their meaning signifies seeking to grasp the communicative intent of an oral or written text (the intent of the speaker). To do this, students mobilise their everyday knowledge and new understanding is integrated into the memory's construct.

The goal of individuals who learn a language is to master the foreign language sufficiently to be able to have contact with representatives of the other culture. Since students accumulate knowledge in school that serves them in their extracurricular life, they find themselves as novices, in an intermediary position, with their own rules and practices for the use of language. As underlined by Hutterli et al. (2008, 85), the modern foreign language teacher recognises the school context and the general education process as the effective environment in which learning takes place. The authors also point out that extending factual knowledge within the framework of and through the teaching of foreign languages is not a revolutionary novelty, but that it was already being done,

in other forms (combining the teaching of classical languages with Greek and Roman culture and civilisation).

However, the proposed methods of bilingual teaching and content integration in language teaching go farther. «The fact of combining language and content should allow learners to communicate with each other in their daily school life and to have access to new knowledge through discovery. Besides the content related to knowledge of the country and interculturality, fields of teaching other than language teaching also provide structuring knowledge, contexts and working methods that lend themselves to this type of teaching.» (Hutterli, Stotz and Zappatore 2008, 86) [Translation]

This not only resolves or at least limits the obvious problem of content in language teaching, but also makes optimum use of teaching time. Integrating content into the teaching of a language, as proposed by certain forms of immersive teaching, notably the content and language integrated learning (CLIL), is no simple matter. This has been demonstrated by the experiments carried out within the framework of projects such as *Schulprojekt 21*, which was conducted from 1999 to 2004 in twelve communities in canton Zurich (Büeler et al. 2001; Stebler and Stotz 2004) and provided the necessary foundation for the widespread introduction of an integrative approach to English teaching at primary and secondary levels.

Various forms of this type of teaching are briefly described below, but it must be noted that this is not a definitive categorisation and that it can vary depending on the linguistic region and the methodological tradition.

Preliminary observation: in the reflection process concerning bilingual teaching models in Germany, bilingual teaching of non-language subjects is considered primarily as disciplinary teaching delivered in a foreign language. Some specialists associate this notion with the English acronym CLIL (content and language integrated learning). However, a distinction must be made between the CLIL approach and the bilingual teaching of non-lan-

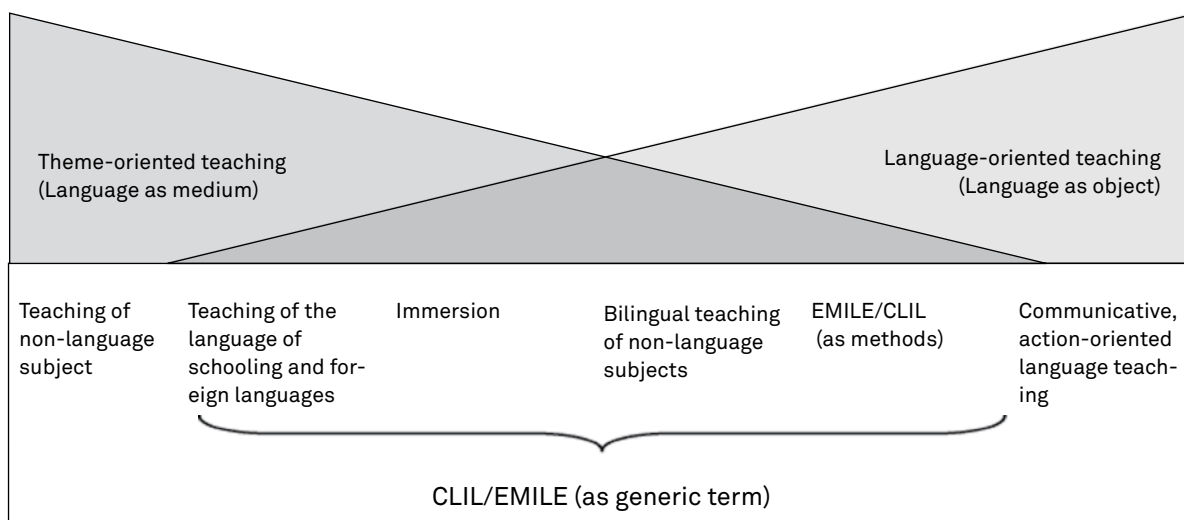
guage subjects, as the latter comes under the traditional understanding of school subjects, whereas the former gives rise to models that allow for real cross-curricular learning (for example, in the framework of projects or extended workshops). At the same time, it is helpful to have the means to distinguish bilingual teaching of non-language subjects from content-based foreign-language teaching. The following sections present more specific aspects of this field. In the reflection process that has been carried out on an international scale, the acronym CLIL is generally used as a generic concept which includes immersion. The following two quotations are significant:

«CLIL is an umbrella term covering a dozen or more educational approaches (e.g. immersive, bilingual education, multilingual education, language showers and enriched language programmes).» (Mehisto et al. 2008, 12)

«CLIL has become a major educational innovation which involves competence-building in languages and communication at the same time as developing acquisition of knowledge and skills. It is not language learning and it is not subject learning. It is a fusion of both.» (Maljers et al. 2007)

Below are some of the types of teaching that integrate language and content, along with a few examples taken from the Swiss context:

- **Curricular teaching in a local second language** | For students whose family linguistic background is different from that of their local school, the language of teaching represents a second language. They are therefore immersed, especially during the first years of schooling, in a linguistic environment which enables them to acquire the CALP aspects of the language of schooling as a second language, and of the school culture. To achieve this, they must have support and must devote extra attention to the study of the language. This can be done in an integrative way, for example in the framework of the teaching of non-language subjects, or additively, through special courses or support in German, French or Italian as second languages.



**Illustration 4b** | The language teaching spectrum

In the framework of the QUIMS project (*Qualität in multikulturellen Schulen*) conducted in canton Zurich, the participating schools place particular emphasis on the promotion of language and literacy. For instance, on the basis of appropriate reading texts, pedagogical adaptation and differentiation is done according to language level; vocabulary is studied with the help of a special textbook. Occasionally, the *DaZ* (German as a second language) teacher is invited to participate in language courses in the regular class. Such measures prove beneficial not only for bilingual students; they are also helpful for German-speaking children (*Bildungsdirektion Kanton Zürich 2008*).

- **Immersion** | In this teaching model, a certain number of non-language subjects are taught in a language other than the local language of schooling. The second language or the foreign language thereby becomes the working language and the language of conversation of part of the everyday school experience (partial immersion) or of the whole during a certain period (total immersion). The school offers a systematic bilingual programme, which generally takes up less than 50% of teaching time.

In the regions close to the linguistic borders or in bilingual regions, two local languages

are used as teaching languages but generally one language is designated for the different subjects during a given period, and/or each teacher speaks only one language, in principle his or her first language (early partial German-Romansh immersion in canton Graubünden, cf. Gurtner and Schork 2005, Serra 2007; bilingual teaching of non-language subjects, i.e. partial French-German immersion in canton Valais, cf. Demierre-Wagner and Schwob 2004). In other cases, where a language that is not a local language, such as English, is used during at least half of the teaching time as the language of schooling and target language, teachers of those subjects have very high language competence or have that language as their mother tongue. In Switzerland, this form of immersion is most often found in schools of upper secondary education (cf. Elmiger 2008; Hollenweger et al. 2005) as well as in private bilingual schools of both primary school level and secondary education.

Immersion means being immersed in the other language. The linguistic immersion that takes place within non-language subjects permits usage-based language acquisition, generally implicit, which can be reinforced by study and reflection focused on the language (terminology, questions of whether a sentence is logical), for instance in the language subject

in question (Romansh as a second language, English as a foreign language, etc.). In contrast to integrated teaching, the teaching methodology used is primarily that of the non-language subject in question, and the performance objectives and their assessment relate to the curricula of those subjects (Le Pape Racine 2005; Brohy 2004). As the number of experiments in these types of educational model increases we are witnessing a crystallisation of immersion methodology, offered by various establishments as continuing education for the teaching staff of baccalaureate schools as well as for other teachers (*Zürcher Hochschulinstitut für Schulpädagogik und Fachdidaktik*, Trilingual Master Multilingualism of the *FHNW*).

- **Bilingual teaching of non-language subjects** | The offer is limited from a quantitative point of view in comparison to immersion teaching. In this context, a non-language subject such as history is entirely, partly or for a certain period or topic, taught in a foreign language. This generally presupposes that students have sufficient knowledge of the language in question and that the teaching materials and interaction are adapted to the partial competences of the learners. Both the foreign language and the local language of schooling play specific roles in this context, and various forms of mediation also have their place. In common with immersion models, it is a matter of participating in multilingual interaction and changing languages; the aim is for students to become conscious of the way in which they manage these phenomena. It frequently happens that a non-language subject is taught in a foreign language in addition to the traditional teaching of the foreign language, but without the two necessarily being coordinated. In Badertscher and Bieri (2009) one finds studies and models of school practice along these lines, which conclude that «students are able to grasp, reproduce and integrate information that is appropriate for their age in an L2 evolution» (2009, 185 [Translation]).

- **The specific CLIL method** (not to be confused with the generic term) | It consists of teaching that integrates different linguistic issues and aspects, independently of the form of teaching that is chosen. In this context the focus is sometimes on the subject being taught, sometimes on the pragmatic level of the language (language activities) or on the linguistic system (grammar, phonology). Emphasis on lexical competence is essential to the integration of language and subjects. This approach was adopted in the context of *Schulprojekt 21* in Zurich (initially called embedding). The units in which English was used as the language of learning alternated with phases focused on language and the teaching of a non-language subject in the language of schooling (cf. Stebler and Stotz 2004). The learning objectives retained for that approach are integrative (for example, content and language aims), and the assessment is also oriented in two different directions, so that it has a bearing not only on linguistic competence aspects, but also on disciplinary aspects. But this form of CLIL, which involves complete integration, is fairly rare (cf. Fehling and Finkbeiner 2002) due to the disciplinary distribution of traditional forms of assessment (grades for each subject in the competence assessments).
- **Content and action-based foreign language teaching** | It refers, according to a definition of the *Passepartout* project, to a methodological and educational concept that allows learners to discover new contents that stimulate linguistic action with the help of the foreign language, in which the foreign language is learned through new contents. In this respect, working on linguistic resources also plays an important role (Sauer and Saudan 2008, 7). In 2004, this model was introduced in all the primary school classes of canton Zurich, following a decision of the *Bildungsrat* (Education Council) concerning the teaching of English. It is being implemented with the help of First Choice and Explorers teaching resources designed for that purpose; themes

taken from the syllabuses of non-language subjects are combined with language learning processes so that learners implicitly and explicitly acquire, in the immediacy of the school environment, foreign language competences in spheres of action that are rich in content. Unlike the bilingual teaching of non-language subjects and immersive teaching, knowledge in the area of content and working methods (such as observation exercises, problem-solving tasks, etc.) is generally not assessed, or only indirectly. Language and communication competences and intercultural competences take precedence. However, consulting look at the teaching resources shows that, in addition to everyday words, specific terms that can be used in a more general way are also integrated into the active vocabulary, and language learning objectives tie in with useful aspects of CALP such as «use passive forms when explaining the food web» (Explorers 3, Teacher's Pack).

For all the approaches that can be grouped under the generic CLIL heading, one observes that a more pronounced orientation towards content than that found in traditional language teaching can greatly encourage the use not only of the first but also of the second or foreign language as a medium of discovery of other subjects. The authenticity of communication in the classroom can be guaranteed: the foreign language becomes the *lingua franca* of learning and creates immediate bases that can be used in a usage-based language methodology. At the same time, this «dual-focused educational approach» (Maljers et al. 2007) is a demanding one, since it elicits the «Konstruktikon» of the learner (see chapter 3.2.4) as regards both content and language.

From a methodological point of view, what is most important is to offer appropriate forms of cooperative support, called scaffolding. Learning by scaffolding directs the attention of learners to important, accessible aspects during the different steps of the learning process (cf. Wode 1976, quoted in Hutterli et al. 2008, 48; and Gibbons 2002). Scaffolding elements are the contextualisation of what is to be learned, language support,

for instance cards, posters or other teaching resources, feedback from teachers or other students, as well as the breaking down of tasks into manageable steps.

As pointed out by Badertscher and Bieri in their conclusions on the relative success of bilingual teaching projects, negotiation of meaning (chapter 4.5.3) plays an essential role in interaction (Badertscher and Bieri 2009, 190). This is due to the fact that in situations that call other languages and cultures into play, either as a means of interaction or as a teaching objective, ambiguities and divergences of interpretation occur more often than in monolingual contexts. For this reason the subjects of the interaction must actively debate meanings, thereby carrying out a situational adaptation process (cf. Hymes 1964, quoted in Marsh 2009; and Gajo 2008, Gajo and Grobet 2008). However, there is a precondition: learners must accept the «fiction» of the foreign teaching language.

In all CLIL teaching methods a zone of interaction is created between a language deficiency, i.e. an as yet imperfectly developed language competence, and the effort to understand relevant facts from the point of view of content. The fact that this tension zone can be productive for language acquisition has been demonstrated by numerous studies.

The potential of teaching that integrates language and content has barely been tapped. In primary school, as we have seen, only a few projects limited to the regional level have been undertaken, and at secondary education projects with a certain scope are reserved for only the highest-attaining students. If one looks at what is happening in the rest of Europe one observes that certain countries and regions (Germany, Spain, Northern Italy, parts of Eastern Europe) are conducting innovative and bold projects in this field (cf. Bonnet and Breidbach 2004, Maljers et al. 2007, Mehisto et al. 2008, Carrió-Pastor 2009). This observation by Marsh aptly concludes: «What CLIL offers is a means by which students can learn about the complexities of culture through experiential learning.» (Marsh 2009, 21)



The conclusion is that the real value of learning that integrates language and subjects resides in the authentic and cultural experiences of learning and competence that students encounter in the context of the teaching they receive.

### 4.2.3 Education through contact

#### Institutional foundations

As mentioned in chapter 4.1, Switzerland, as a multilingual country, adopted in 2007 a Languages Act (LangA)<sup>93</sup> whose aim is to promote understanding and exchange among (national) language communities. This law also provides a basis for exchanges between students and teachers at all school levels and provides for state financial support for the cantons as well as for exchange organisations. Before that, the *EDK*'s Strategy of Language Teaching already asked that «the exchange possibilities offered to students and teachers across linguistic borders [be used] purposely to promote language acquisition» (*EDK*, 2004, art. 3.3); the same document announces the institution of a national agency in charge of promoting exchanges which must be supported by the cantons. This mandate was given to the *ch* Foundation, which already acts as the coordination and promotion hub for teacher, student and class exchanges, and for educational and professional internships (cf. [www.echanges.ch](http://www.echanges.ch)). This national agency also presides over the network of people responsible for exchanges at cantonal level. Starting in 2011, it will be responsible for implementing the European educational and youth programmes for Switzerland.

#### Aspects of teaching and methodology

As early as 1998, the General Concept of Language Teaching (*EDK* 1998) had set out, in point

10, some important principles and objectives for systematic education through contact<sup>94</sup>, with the primary aim of enabling «linguistic and cultural rapprochement»:

- as early a start as possible and repeated contact at different ages
- not only exchanges involving physical mobility, but also contacts through correspondence, internet, and joint projects
- the primary goal: to acquire sociocultural competences; as regards language competences, the concept is based on the principle that these develop later as a result of contacts and motivation
- exchange activities as a complement to teaching and an integral part of language syllabuses
- exchange activities should be prepared, followed up, developed and assessed; they must therefore be part of the teachers' education

The term «education through contact» is closely linked in Switzerland to the declaration of the *CIIP* on Strategy of Language Teaching in French-speaking Switzerland, adopted in 2003. As outlined in the General Concept of Language Teaching, education through contact encompasses all forms of contact with representatives of cultures associated with foreign languages and eschews the notion of reciprocity (which in many situations does not exist). In addition to concrete face-to-face encounters, these can be simultaneous direct contacts, online chat for example (especially video chat), or indirect, non-concurrent communication: e-mail correspondence, filmed letters, joint projects on Wiki platforms, etc. The different possibilities all present specific language requirements in terms of language activities and can therefore be combined.

Both the General Concept of Language Teaching and the *CIIP* declaration give a certain priority

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93 This law came into effect on 1 January 2010; the corresponding ordinance (*SpV*) came into effect on 1 July 2010.

94 In the context of personality development, we prefer to use the term «education» rather than the narrower term of «teaching».

to national languages, in the superior interest of understanding among national language communities. This is aided in Switzerland by short distances, making it possible to conduct short-term projects. For very young learners and when greater distances are involved, current technology enables ideal conditions for the development of intense, rich exchanges with partners of other languages and cultures without the need for physical displacement.

The principles presented in the General Concept of Language Teaching are still relevant today and have not yet been fully implemented. In connection with the objective of developing functional language skills, education through contact represents an important complement to formal teaching situations: in addition to an immediate sociocultural dimension, it offers implicit learning opportunities that take place in the context of successful communication events and can heighten the motivation of learners through the direct contacts that they bring about (see chapter 4.2.1).

If one wants education through contact – which depends on the initiative of particularly motivated teachers – to become an integral part of foreign language learning and teaching and not remain an exception that disrupts the rest of the school activity, it must be anchored in the curriculum and coordinated for the different foreign languages taught.

For the concrete implementation of education through contact the same principles can be applied as those that have been presented in connection with intercultural learning (see chapter 4.2.1). Each contact should be prepared from a cultural and linguistic point of view, its implementation followed up and assessed. This can be done in different ways: a day of schooling can be filmed and then commented on, a comparison can be made of the way in which the other culture is presented in the teaching resources used, or a comparative study can be made of literary texts. Education through contact makes it possible to integrate intercultural competences into language teaching. Contacts by letter or e-mail among students represent a good exchange ac-

tivity when it is not possible to organise a direct contact. This requires some teacher directivity in the choice of topics if one wants to avoid a break down in communication. A long-term teaching strategy of this kind can reinforce the motivation to learn languages.

In education through contact, as in all real multilingual situations, one can be flexible in adapting and differentiating the use of the different languages: it is possible for all students to express themselves in the language of schooling, or for them all to use another language; it is also possible for a particular phase to be conducted entirely in one language, and another phase entirely in the other language; it is even possible to learn both in tandem. These systems reveal a certain kinship with immersive and bilingual teaching; and it is interesting to note that the *CIIP* declaration deals with them jointly. More generally, education through contact can also include contact with the products of the other language and culture, for instance when the opportunity arises of using original documents in non-language subjects (for geography, history or natural sciences); this is yet another example of a content-based process.

And finally, education through contact offers interesting possibilities in the area of languages and cultures of origin, for the students concerned and also for their potential correspondents and «ordinary» students. Here too, one can choose the language to be used, possibly a *lingua franca* such as English, which in principle is a foreign language for all the participants; one can also use mediation in a very realistic context.

### What is required of teachers

Just as they must take into account cultural and intercultural elements in language teaching, teachers must also commit themselves to education through contact. This is why it is designated, both by the General Concept of Language Teaching and by the *CIIP* declaration, as an important element in teacher education for all ages. For the Universities of Teacher Education in Switzerland this also represents an additional challenge in the field of con-

tinuing education. But it appears to be just as important, if not more so, that teachers themselves should have experience of education through contact and that they should have regular contacts with people from the linguistic and cultural communities in question. In common with the intercultural learning approach presented in chapter 4.2.1, personality traits and attitudes (*savoir-être*) take on a great deal of importance here: openness and flexibility, tolerance and curiosity, knowledge of computers and of new communications technology, and a certain organisational expertise.

### 4.3 The language of schooling – essential to integration

The language of schooling<sup>95</sup> plays a key role, in Switzerland as elsewhere, in the coordination of language learning in schools. On the one hand, it represents the local national language, or standard language, and is anchored in the local culture. On the other hand, it usually provides the necessary foundation for language learning in all subjects (language[s] as subject and language[s] for other subjects), it represents the starting point for learning other languages and a necessary element in guaranteeing continuity in subsequent education. The central role of the language of schooling is summarised in the Strategy of Language Teaching (EDK 2004): «The official local language (standard language) is coherently developed from the beginning of schooling (pre-school level) onwards. Learning the official local language is an essential objective of the first years of schooling and retains priority status throughout education. (...) Teaching of the local language of schooling (standard language) is considered a priority from the start of pre-school and throughout compulsory education.» (EDK 2004, 5 and 10) [Translation]

A report published in 2009 by the Council of Europe, entitled «Languages of Schooling and the

Right to Plurilingual and Intercultural Education» (Fleming 2009) emphasises in its title that the language of schooling represents not only a key competence but also a necessity for the development of intercultural competence and plurilingualism. Given the diversity of the school population, in a world in which multimedia communication is more and more prevalent, the language of schooling de facto takes on a key integration function on several levels. The question of integration was addressed ten years previously in the General Concept of Language Teaching: «Proficiency in the local national language, for both the native and the immigrant populations, is essential to social integration and to an active and successful participation in school and in the workplace.» (EDK, 1998, I, 1<sup>st</sup> chapter) [Translation]

The following chapters deal with the issue of the language of schooling from different angles. The chapter 4.3.1 describes the relationship of the language of schooling with itself and with the other languages represented in the school. The chapter 4.3.2 explains the role of the language of schooling as a medium and as a teaching object. The chapter 4.3.3 presents the teaching of the language of schooling and its development up to the present, along with the differences on the regional level, and points out the areas which will undergo changes in the future.

#### 4.3.1 The language of schooling in relation to itself and to the other languages present in the school

The language of schooling must respond to multiple requirements of integration that take several forms. It must not only take into account local linguistic and cultural conditions, such as the diglossia of the German-speaking region of Switzerland, but it must also include the languages of origin / of migration of the immigrant population.

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95 The term «language of schooling» (*langue de scolarisation*, *Schulsprache*) is used in EDK documents, in accordance with the term used by UNESCO and the Council of Europe; it has become the official term (cf. EDK 2010, Educational Standards for the language of schooling). «Language of schooling» designates any language that is used as a first language in school and in which one learns to read and write. The language of schooling is the standard language of the local environment and, for the majority of students, also the first language acquired.

Moreover, it must indicate and contribute to shaping the existing relationship with the foreign languages to be learned. With this in mind, at least four different areas must be addressed:

- **The language of schooling** | A multilingually oriented language teaching methodology is required, and the language of schooling must be open to the teaching of foreign languages and languages of origin. However, the teaching of the language of schooling must not only be open towards the outside; it must also be sensitive to the linguistic phenomena that are inherent in the language of schooling itself. This does not represent a homogenous construct, but a conglomeration of a dynamic diversity of living varieties, registers and styles which all come together in the classroom and must be taken into account, understood and analysed (cf. Neuland 2003). Examples of this diversity can be found in the medial diglossia of the German-speaking region of Switzerland, in specialised languages or in the emerging forms of communication in the new media. In schools of the Romansh-speaking region, a new diglossia is emerging between the standard language and the local dialect: there are five traditional dialects that are used as languages of schooling, together with the more recent standard variant of *Rumantsch Grischun* has been partially introduced and is used as a written language in school. The teaching of the language of schooling has to overcome a dual challenge: within the same classroom it is the first language of some children, and the second or even third language of others (cf. Ahrenholz and Oomen-Welke 2008, see chapter 4.4). This results in a lack of homogeneity in student levels of competence in the language of schooling and requires considerable follow-up and developmental support for individual learners.
- **Languages of origin / of migration** | For many children and adolescents the local language of schooling is not the first language, and many of them have acquired, in addition to their first language, competences in other languages as well. The languages of origin / of migration and the cultures associated with them should be given due recognition so that they retain their value, and in particular their economic value, beyond the period of schooling (see chapter 3.3).
- **Foreign languages** | In accordance with the new guidelines on language strategy, connections must be established between the teaching of the language of schooling and the teaching of foreign languages. As seen in chapter 4.1, the action taken to date in Switzerland in the area of multilingually oriented language teaching methodology has not managed to integrate the language of schooling successfully into concepts and methods of implementation. The debate on multilingualism was launched in Switzerland through the issue of language teaching methodologies, generally without taking into account the teaching methodology of the language of schooling. This has only been marginally coordinated with foreign language teaching methodology, as revealed by recent reference works on the teaching of German (cf. Bredel et al. 2003). Although language learning in the local language of schooling (or in another first language) has many points in common with what is happening with foreign languages, the starting point is always quite different and curricular and extracurricular demands are also very different. However, there are many potential areas of transfer, such as strategies (see chapter 3.2.5) that could be taken advantage of. Opening up the teaching of the language of schooling requires cooperation, taking care to preserve and develop the linguistic and cultural identity specific to each language – something that has not been achieved so far. Even if it is obvious from the point of view of language acquisition theory that connections can be established and synergies put to work, implicitly and explicitly for the learning of several languages, it has not yet been possible, at least from the perspective of language of schooling teaching methodology, to solve the problem of how these processes should and can be stimulated in the teaching context. The theory is confronted with a number of

practical considerations, which partly explains why the demand for a multilingually oriented language teaching methodology has been only partially met up to now.

- **An accent on languages in general** | Concepts related to *ELBE* (language awareness, *Begegnung mit Sprachen, éveil aux langues*) that emerged in the 1990s put an end to the monocultural habitus of the language of schooling. The classroom, as a place of linguistic and cultural diversity, constitutes the starting point of a movement that considers all languages and cultures important, allows synergies to be constructively combined between these languages and cultures and generally fosters a positive attitude towards languages and language learning (see chapter 4.2.1). Approaches such as this, which encompass several languages and allow them to interact have already been integrated into the latest generation of Swiss curricula, as demonstrated for example in the *Plan d'études romand (PER)* (curriculum of French-speaking Switzerland), in *EOLE* (language education and awareness in school, see chapter 4.2.1), and also into teaching resources and materials (cf. Perregaux 1994 and Schader 2004<sup>96</sup>; and chapter 4.2).

### 4.3.2 The language of schooling as medium and as object

In the school context, language is always the **subject** of learning (language as subject) as well as the **medium** through which the teaching is delivered (language across the curriculum). The language of schooling has always only been able to fulfil its role of providing good quality teaching to all with the help of all the other subjects – and this stills seems particularly necessary today, given the constantly growing demands in a diverse, multimedia communication society.

### Language as medium

Language is the principal medium through which learning takes place, the one in which knowledge is built, formed and applied. Language opens the doors of knowledge and is a constituent part of all subjects: speaking and thinking, acting and understanding are closely related and, through interaction, enable the acquisition of new knowledge. Developing competences related to language always involves developing abstract thought (cf. Portmann, 1998, 23), as does the construction of conceptual structures. It is therefore essential, besides teaching the language of schooling as the object, that all other school subjects play their part in developing language competences.

The teaching of the language of schooling (like that of foreign languages) mainly concerns language activity and linguistic knowledge. Teaching the language of schooling does not only transmit linguistic knowledge to the students; its main purpose is to render them capable of conducting language activity in situations that present various difficulties (see BICS and CALP, chapter 3.2.2). This requires the acquisition of certain strategic capacities related to language (learning strategies) and abilities that are directly beneficial to the learning of other school subjects, such as making sure when giving a presentation that the addressees understand the message, when preparing a presentation, summarising a text, taking notes from different sources, studying different types of discourse and *genres*, working on linear and non-linear texts, using dictionaries, etc.

To enhance language competences one needs repetitive, cumulative fields of application in which what has been studied and examined while learning the language of schooling is continuously practised, allowing learners to make the link between what they learn and the knowledge they have already acquired. In order to do so, the other subjects are an ideal training ground. And

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96 Cf. Kaleido, a series of examples of teaching in the French-speaking region of Switzerland available in French at <http://www.educa.ch/dyn/96103.asp> (22.02.2010)

the advantages they bring to language learning are not limited to short-term benefits. In fact, the differentiation that increases throughout the schooling in non-language subjects requires the use of a related specific language along with the development of specific concepts (for example in subjects such as citizenship, history, physics, etc.). But this process cannot be successful if the learner has not achieved a certain basic language level. This proficiency is a prerequisite for further studies or professional training at a higher level. There is also a positive effect on language activity when the motivation for learning changes: indeed, many students learn particularly well when the emphasis is not on the language but on the subject matter.

For language learning to become a part of teaching in all subjects, the linguistic knowledge and expertise of the students, and the capacities and abilities they have acquired in the language of schooling, must be explicitly evaluated. This can only take place if there is a keen awareness of the relevance and purpose of the other subject matter, i.e. through better exchange between the language of schooling and the other subject matter. This must be done with the conviction that the teaching of non-language subjects can also benefit from attention to language. This aspect is even more significant when the teaching of different subjects is delivered by different teachers, which is increasingly the case after lower secondary education. It is necessary to develop regular exchange and comparison of teaching and learning content, students' language level, and the specific terminology to be used. For this, attention is given primarily to students' linguistic progress, but the teacher's language competence is central and must not be neglected either. The interest and behaviour of teachers with regard to language provide an important model of correct usage that serves as a reference for students.

In Switzerland, the relationship between language as the object of teaching and language as teaching medium is not only addressed regarding the language of schooling, but also for foreign

languages, in the context of the different kinds of immersive teaching (see chapter 4.1.2). However, it has often been observed that in everyday school practice, it is still not possible to make a sufficiently detailed assessment of language learning potential and learning requirements in all subjects to be able to respond adequately: «The use of language in school is very often characterised by a dearth of context, especially in the subjects that are crucial to educational success; it requires heightened creative thinking on the part of the learners. Logical language competence is a prerequisite for understanding and expressing complex facts from a linguistic point of view, and is independent from accuracy» (*Sprachprofile* of Basel Stadt 2007, 6). [Translation]

In the matter of the teaching methodology of the language of schooling there must be a critical assessment of the determination to anchor the language of schooling in non-language subjects, in the same way as one assesses the determination to promote integrative language concepts (see above). The long-sought optimisation of language teaching through a more conscious approach to language learning across the curriculum has not as yet been proved empirically. Although isolated studies have been conducted, particularly in the teaching of mathematics and the natural sciences, there is no complete research study available that conclusively proves the advantages of learning the language of schooling in a more conscious manner across the curriculum (cf. Knapp 2003 and Antos 2003). To do this, one would have to demonstrate the present level of effectiveness of implicit language learning outside the teaching of the language of schooling and the potential effect of more explicit teaching and a more conscious approach. Moreover, the requirements would need to be fully implemented in practice, not only partially. Perhaps the regrettable lack of implementation is not only due to a lack of training and awareness on the part of the teachers; reasons related to teaching practice may constitute an obstacle to implementation, such as the complexity of the teaching environment or the lack of teaching resources and materials which would

consciously take into consideration language learning<sup>97</sup>.

In the German-speaking region of Switzerland the teaching of non-language subjects is more complex due to the medial diglossia. Most Swiss-German cantons have enacted binding directives concerning the use of standard German (*Hochdeutsch*) and dialect in all subjects. Children must be encouraged to practise standard German from pre-school onwards. Although the level of encouragement of this early practice of the standard language varies depending on the canton, standard German becomes the language of teaching in all subjects from elementary level (*Grund-/Basisstufe*, generally the third school year) onwards. However, the dialect must also be practised and developed in consciously chosen situations (cf. Neugebauer and Bachmann 2006).

### Language as object

In the teaching of the language of schooling, the language becomes the object. The foundations of this learning are provided by models of competence, like those developed in the framework of the national Educational Standards. The models of competence describe how the body of language competences is structured and what partial competences are to be identified. The model of competence that underlies the Educational Standards of the language of schooling is based on a functional and pragmatic understanding of the language and the language activity (see chapter 3.1.1; cf. Eriksson, Lindauer and Sieber 2009). This model of competences common to all the languages of schooling can be hailed as a major achievement, if one thinks that

the concepts on which language competences are structured are based on different traditions in the various teaching methodologies for languages of schooling in Switzerland. In German teaching methodology for example, the main structuring principle is provided by the language skills (reading, listening, speaking and writing); in French teaching methodology it is texts and text *genres*<sup>98</sup> that are used as the first structuring principle (cf. CIIP 2006). It goes without saying that the model of competences now being developed and the resulting national Educational Standards provide an impetus for the teaching methodologies of languages of schooling. They also provide a framework for the orientation of competence-oriented syllabuses and the teaching resources that they generate, as well as for diagnostic instruments. It is heartening to observe that this development has given rise to an express demand for empirical foundations for knowledge of the teaching methodology of the language of schooling and of language learning. The teaching of the language of schooling must be defined by an approach that takes into account not only the question of the organisation of the teaching, but also its quality and output. Overly dogmatic educational directives and strict normative instructions should be revised in favour of teaching practices that have been empirically proven. However, where the language of schooling is concerned, there is currently a lack – in many partial domains – of relevant research (in particular longitudinal studies) on the fundamentals of teaching, for instance on the effect of teaching written language based on process or on the effects of language activity strategies. Therefore, language learning contents are often taught according to traditional methods that have become entrenched in school

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97 A successful example of a teaching medium that combines language and non-language subject has been developed by Ruf and Gallin *«Ich mache das so! Wie machst du es? Das machen wir ab. Sprache und Mathematik. 1.–6. Schuljahr»*. Zürich: Lehrmittelverlag 1995. The new *Plan d'études romand (PER)* (curriculum of the French-speaking region) deals with this under its «general education» heading and includes education for new media (*MITIC*).

98 «Centrée sur le texte vers lequel convergent les différentes composantes de l'activité langagière, l'organisation du français est basée sur une conception intégrée de l'enseignement de la langue. Dès lors, c'est autour du texte que prennent place les différentes activités qu'on trouvait auparavant dans des sous-disciplines distinctes (grammaire, conjugaison, orthographe, etc.)» (CIIP 2006).

practice and are very hard to change. Take for example the functional and integrative reflexive teaching of grammar and spelling, which has long been requested<sup>99</sup> and which is struggling to gain a foothold in practice. It is to be hoped that a more competence-based, empirically supported teaching methodology of the language of schooling will prove fruitful in the long term, over the next twenty years.

The issues that have dominated the teaching of the language of schooling in the past ten to twenty years, such as literacy or heterogeneity, will remain relevant. A few examples of the language domains that will be the focus of attention are given below.

### Literacy skills

The most significant occurrence in the past ten years with respect to language of schooling teaching was the publication of the eye-opening PISA 2000 study in which the Swiss education system obtained poor results in the reading competences achieved at the end of compulsory education. After PISA, literacy concepts were widely debated and their implementation studied (cf. EDK Action Plan 2003, Bertschi-Kaufmann and Rosebrock 2009), and quality control of schools became the main issue. This resulted in the Education Monitoring and Educational Standards. The promotion of literacy will continue to be one of the key tasks of schools, particularly in the context of rapidly evolving media (cf. Bertschi-Kaufmann et al. 2004) and in relation to learning in all subjects. The importance of this aspect has been underlined by the creation in Switzerland in early 2010 of the *leseforum.ch* platform, designed for an interested audience and individuals who are professionally involved in literacy research and practice.

### The management of heterogeneity

Schools are mandated to treat all children equally, no matter their origin, gender, or ability. The debate surrounding heterogeneity in language teaching has in recent years focused mainly on the following two themes:

- There has long been a goal of teaching the language of schooling in a way that takes into account the needs and the potential of students whose first language is not the local language of schooling. In spite of more than thirty years of theoretical and practical work on the development of schooling, one observes that, as confirmed by the PISA findings and other findings obtained from large scale assessments, these students always face considerable inequality (cf. Reich and Roth 2002, Müller and Dittmann 2007). It is essential to ensure better encouragement of these students in the language of schooling as second language. Moreover, as demonstrated by the Lüdi and Werlen study (2005), Switzerland could use the potential of these plurilingual students much more effectively.
- The second important issue dealt with in the context of the debate on heterogeneity was gender. At the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the debate centred mainly on the question of the appropriate linguistic consideration to be given to the issue of female gender (language and teaching resources respectful of gender, coeducation, as opposed to separation); it has now moved on, allowing girls to successfully complete their schooling, to the point that it has raised the issue of equality of opportunity for boys (cf. Matzner and Tischner 2008). In the teaching of the language of schooling, approaches are needed that provide for a differentiation according to gender, for example in the areas of reading and writing.

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99 *«Il faut entendre par grammaire au sens large, une grammaire qui englobe tout ce qui est mis habituellement sous l'étiquette grammaire [que l'on désigne dès lors par grammaire au sens étroit], mais aussi l'orthographe, la conjugaison et le lexique. [...] elle permet de prendre en compte tout ce qui touche à la réflexion sur la langue en faisant de la grammaire au sens étroit, de l'orthographe, de la conjugaison et du lexique des outils mieux reliés entre eux.» (CIIP 2006, 43).*



## Linguistic encouragement for children from birth until the age of eight

In the reorganisation of school years, the *4bis8* (4 to 8) syllabuses for the teaching of the language of schooling during the first four years (i.e. the two years of elementary school (*Grund-/Basisstufe*) and the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> years of primary school) are differentiated, particularly in view of the early development of literacy (cf. Cornali-Engel 1993; and the final report of the EDK of Eastern Switzerland concerning the *4bis8* project, 2010<sup>100</sup> or the corresponding chapters in the *Plan d'études romand PER* [curriculum of the French-speaking region of Switzerland]). In this context, a new field has recently emerged: the field of elementary education, which involves developing concepts for the linguistic encouragement of children from birth to the age of four. Various surveys in Switzerland and abroad have shown that a great deal of attention must be paid to the early linguistic encouragement of children before they enter school – particularly in relation to the parameters that condition our social life (mobility, family structure, etc.), without forgetting the issue of equal opportunity (cf. Stamm et al. 2009). Now that new language concepts for children aged four to eight have been developed, models of development or school programmes adapted to this early age must still be provided for the teaching of the language of schooling in Switzerland.

### The place of speech

In the models of competence developed in the framework of the national Educational Standards and performance tests the importance of speech is equal to that of written language, which was previously not the case where syllabuses and teaching resources were concerned. Indeed, although oral language competences have always had a place in the teaching of the language of schooling, they were not well defined and had little scientific basis as a result of lack of research

and development. This is why the place of comprehension of the oral language, and of listening in the teaching of the language of schooling is far from clear although, in certain cantons, teachers must now make written assessments of oral comprehension. This lack of clarity is partly due to the fact that it is not easy to grasp the concept of speech and that assessment presents a number of difficulties, particularly because of the volatility of oral language (cf. Weiss and Wirthner 1991; De Pietro et al. [in preparation], Becker-Mrotzek 2009). It is hardly surprising therefore that teachers have difficulty in finding their way in the area of speech. The fact that certain recent teaching resources, such as the *Die Sprachstarken*, are now putting forward methodological concepts for speech, will contribute to giving a better direction in this domain.

The preceding considerations have dealt with the language of schooling as object and medium of schooling. But the language of schooling is also subject to transmission processes that occur outside the school environment. Such daily informal learning is informed by social and cultural values that are those of the society in which the individual moves. It occurs in parallel to schooling and is generally unplanned, unguided, unreadable, and therefore cannot be controlled. But extracurricular language knowledge and experience of the language as it is influenced by daily life – for example by the media – have a considerable impact on the language behaviour of students. Schools must be unceasingly flexible in referring to this language knowledge acquired outside the school by learners, and react to its influence, both positive and negative, through appropriate teaching measures.

### 4.3.3 Developing the teaching of the language of schooling

Teaching methodologies for the languages of schooling in Switzerland – and the teaching of lan-

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100 The final 2010 report of the *4bis8* project of the EDK of Eastern Switzerland (*EDK-Ost*) can be ordered at the following address: <http://www.schulverlag.ch> (30.07.2010)

guages of schooling – developed independently of each other in the different linguistic regions of Switzerland, with a few exceptions. Exchanges regarding teaching subjects with specialists in the neighbouring countries speaking the same language (i.e. France for French-speaking cantons, Germany, Austria and Liechtenstein for German-speaking cantons, and Italy for the Italian-speaking cantons) have always been more dynamic than the marginal exchanges between different teaching methodologies within the country. For its part, the Romansh-speaking region does not have the possibility of exchanges related to teaching subjects with another country and must therefore conduct exchanges with regions that use another language – generally the German-speaking cantons – or conceive and develop its own solutions for the specific issues that arise in Romansh-language schools. The project of national Educational Standards is one of the first national research and development projects to bring together in a reflective process resulting in binding objectives the three teaching methodologies for language of schooling for French, German and Italian – a reflective process, moreover, that brought to light the opportunities and potentials that could result from future exchanges in this area.

The teaching of the language of schooling has developed and continues to develop very differently depending on the linguistic region. The curricula play a central role in the different linguistic regions (see chapter 5.2) and the teaching of the language of schooling is also very much defined by the guiding concepts, the teaching resources,

and the materials used. In the German-speaking region of Switzerland the teaching resources developed at regional level provide an important impetus for developing of teaching, contrary to what is happening in the French-speaking region. Indeed, German-speaking Switzerland has long experience in the development of teaching resources. Every ten or fifteen years, a new generation of teaching resources is published by various editors for the teaching of German in compulsory education. These teaching resources are generally developed by researchers in German teaching methodology, in collaboration with practitioners, which makes it possible on these occasions to assess the progress of research on teaching methodology for German and the degree of progress in educational development, and this directly contributes to the development of teaching<sup>101</sup>. Up to 2000 the French-speaking region of Switzerland, also created its own teaching resources for the teaching of the language of schooling, with the emphasis on teaching resources for structural linguistic domains (grammar, spelling, lexis). This unilateral orientation towards the formal aspects has been greatly criticised (cf. for example De Pietro, Deschenaux and Wirthner 1993), and thereafter teaching materials were developed that enabled more complete, communication-oriented teaching of the language of schooling (cf. Dolz, Noverraz and Schneuwly 2001). Since 2000, the French-speaking region has been using, and adapting, methods published in other French-speaking countries<sup>102</sup>. The Italian-speaking region, as a small linguistic region, has practically no tradition in the production of teaching

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101 The latest teaching resources published include the *Die Sprachstarken* method of the *Klett Verlag* publishing firm (2<sup>nd</sup>–6<sup>th</sup> year, with lower secondary education at the planning stage), the series *Sprachfenster, Sprachland* (at the development stage), published by the school publishing departments of cantons Bern and Zurich, as well as *Sprachwelt* (2<sup>nd</sup>–9<sup>th</sup> years) and the *Pipapo* method for German as a second language, published by the school publishing departments of cantons Aargau, Bern and Zurich.

102 For example, in the teaching resources the terminology that is not the same in the French-speaking region as that used in other French-speaking regions and countries must be adapted. It would, moreover, be highly desirable to align the terminology used in language teaching for all the French-speaking countries. The *Association Internationale pour la Recherche en Didactique du Français (AIRDF)* (International Association for Research in French Teaching Methodology) has created a working group representing several countries, whose mandate is to harmonise the guidelines for terminology as much as possible. In the French-speaking region, the *GREF* working group (*Groupe de référence enseignement du français* – Reference Group for the Teaching of French) has developed bases that should enable the detailed assessment of teaching resources in view of guaranteeing coherence with *CIIP* requirements (the curriculum, inter alia).

resources. In general, the teachers use teaching resources created in Italy; sometimes teaching materials are also produced internally for the canton, particularly for continuing education. French-speaking Switzerland also tends to steer its educational development for the language of schooling through regional conceptual studies and development projects coordinated by the CIIP, such as the publication *Maîtrise du français* (Besson et al. 1979) by the CIIP, which contributed greatly to the teaching of the language of schooling («French renewed»), or the publication *Enseignement / apprentissage du français en Suisse romande – Orientations* (Teaching / learning of French in Western Switzerland) (2006). This latter publication provides a frame of reference for the teaching of the language of schooling throughout the compulsory education period. This frame of reference has been used in teachers' initial and continuing education and it has also been taken as a basis for the creation of teaching materials and assessment instruments<sup>103</sup>. German-speaking Switzerland has no similar frame of reference that would cover several cantons and be enforced for the teaching of the language of schooling. This may be due to the fact that the German-speaking region has not been governed by a single body, but by three regional EDK-secretariats which is not conducive to intercantonal regulation. The regional EDK-secretariats nevertheless regularly establish working groups on various linguistic themes. There was for a long time, for instance, a working group for the teaching of German in the regional EDK-secretariat of Eastern Switzerland, and it is this group that gave rise to the *Forum Deutschdidaktik* which is very active today in German-speaking Switzerland. The *Forum Deutschdidaktik*, a working group of the *Schweizerische Gesellschaft für Lehrerbildung* (the Swiss society for teacher training) that works in close cooperation with the international association *Symposium Deutschdidaktik (SDD)*, is the body that facilitates exchanges on teaching subjects among specialists in German-teaching methodology.

For the Romansh-language schools of canton Graubünden, a new generation of teaching resources for the first language is currently being developed (since 2006, in the framework of the introduction of the standard variant *Rumantsch Grischun* as the language of teaching and writing). This new generation of teaching resources replaces the language textbooks used up to now in the communities that have opted for the introduction of *Rumantsch Grischun*. The old textbooks, written in regional dialects, had been developed based on the concept of the *Schweizer Sprachbuch*.

Concerning the teaching of the language of schooling in Switzerland, and associated teaching methodologies, a harmonisation of the development of schooling and the development of teaching is emerging via the project for national Educational Standards as well as for the curricula of the linguistic regions, and this harmonisation will be beneficial for all regions. The teaching of the language of schooling will thus be essentially characterised, in the coming years, by the national Educational Standards and the orientation of teaching towards the competences that follow on from those standards (see chapters 3.1.2 and 5). Moreover, cooperation will be reinforced at regional and also national level. The Council of Europe has also acknowledged, in its recent work, the key role played by Educational Standards in promoting the right of all learners to an education of good quality, since they clearly define what learners can expect from school and what they can hope to achieve. However, developing Educational Standards will only produce positive outcomes if those Educational Standards are at the service of learning and not an end in themselves.

In the context of Educational Standards, competence-orientation and performance measurement, the debate surrounding the assessment of performance is particularly intense for the language of schooling (see chapter 5.4). The wish to have at one's disposal more objective, transparent, test results must be reconciled with the

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103 For example the sequence entitled *S'exprimer en français* (Dolz, Noverraz and Schneuwly 2001) and *EOLE* (CIIP 2003).

wish to promote performance through an individualised approach and an individual learning portfolio. On the one hand there is a summative assessment according to the social norm, and on the other a formative assessment according to the individual norm. School practice and society do not make sufficient distinction between these two forms of assessment, with their respective functions which are both essential to a complete assessment; they are therefore not correctly used. The hoped-for competence orientation requires the availability of appropriate tools, such as competence grids and diagnostic instruments; it is also important to study and develop a culture of learning and tasks. For this reorientation, school practice must be integrated into the development process and specific continuing education for teachers ensured, particularly with regard to their diagnostic competences (see chapter 5.5.1). Corresponding instruments should also be provided in the language teaching resources.

The debate surrounding the teaching of the language of schooling was launched on a European scale by the Council of Europe. Following the impetus given by this debate and based on trials of international performance measurement and the development of national Educational Standards, the methodology and the teaching of languages of schooling in Switzerland are faced with new challenges. A more empirically substantiated teaching practice could help in dealing with these challenges.

#### 4.4 Languages of origin / of migration

As described in chapter 3.3, a substantial portion of the population is concerned by the subject of languages of origin in Switzerland; 23% of students in compulsory education claim that their first language is not one of the national lan-

guages. In the past ten years we have seen a rise in the proportion of so-called «very heterogeneous» classrooms, i.e. classrooms with a percentage of children with a migrant background of between 30% and 100% and who live mostly, but not only, in densely populated urban areas. The Swiss average for such classrooms is currently at almost 40%. At the same time, the findings of the 2000 census (which are unfortunately no longer entirely recent) show that a distinction must be made, among the foreign population, between first generation immigrants to Switzerland, and second generation foreigners who hold a foreign nationality but who were born in Switzerland: 60% to 80% of foreigners born in Switzerland claim the local language as their main language, while this is the case for only 28% to 40% of foreigners not born in Switzerland<sup>104</sup>. Conversely, this means that almost 70% of foreigners who arrived in Switzerland and a good 30% of second generation foreigners, use their language of origin / of migration as their main language. Whether languages of origin / of migration are used as dominant main languages or not, the findings of the census show that they constitute an element of the plurilingual repertoire of these individuals and must be recognised as such. This necessity is further reinforced by the growing number of very heterogeneous classrooms mentioned above. These children and adolescents grow up with two or more languages and the majority of them belong to the second or third generation. They learn the local language at the same time as the language of origin of their parents or, very often, as a second language, three or four years later, since they usually spend their first years at home. They complete their school career in Switzerland and only a very small portion of these students return to their countries of origin with their parents. Although most of them do not encounter any noticeable difficulties in school in communicating in the local language on a daily basis (BICS, see chapter 3.2.2), many children and adolescents, especially those from underprivileged homes, face major problems when

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104 Not included in these figures: for the German-speaking region, individuals from Germany and Austria; for the French-speaking region, those coming from France; for the Italian-speaking region, those from Italy. It is the French-speaking region that shows the greatest integration contingent with 79.7% (Lüdi and Werlen 2005, 15).

it comes to the more complex aspects of the language of schooling – aspects that unfortunately play an important role in school selection (CALP, see chapter 3.2.2).

#### 4.4.1 The need for promotion of languages of origin / of migration in school

In the context of multilingually oriented language teaching methodology, languages of origin / of migration are classified under «retrospective multilingualism» because in the language biography of the learner they predate the local language of schooling. The need to promote languages of origin / of migration in school also stems from theoretical considerations. As first languages, languages of origin / of migration are part of the plurilingual repertoire of the individual and, since they are part of his/her linguistic and cultural biography, they are also part of his/her identity. As shown by many studies (such as Lüdi 1998; Hamers and Blanc 2000), bilingualism and plurilingualism are associated with cognitive as well as sociocultural dimensions; for individuals to be able to develop themselves fully in both these dimensions they must be able to develop their first language and culture. What is more, the interdependence hypothesis (see chapter 3.3.2), which presupposes a common underlying language proficiency, especially in the area of cognitive-academic competence (CALP), is based on the principal that the fundamental aspects of this competence can be transferred from one language to another. These arguments show that the promotion of languages of origin / of migration in the school context must be considered as a necessary investment in the plurilingual competence of the students concerned – an investment that increases their chances of educational success and which, consequently, will have positive repercussions for society (see chapter 4.1.1).

This social and linguistic evolution has brought about changes in the teaching of the language and culture of origin (LCO) in the past fifteen years, but these changes have not yet been entirely completed. Where before the emphasis was

on the country of origin with a view to a possible return, the LCO courses now increasingly include the bilingual, bicultural environment which these students inhabit in Switzerland. Their objective is not only to reinforce language competences in the languages of origin / of migration but also to help students find their way among the differences they see in the culture here and the culture of origin of their parents, supporting them in the process of finding their identity. The language and culture of origin (LCO) classes thereby fulfil a function of integration (cf. the presentation below of the framework Zurich curriculum of 2003 for language and culture of origin courses, which is applied in many other cantons as well). The function of integration has moreover been recognised by the cantons which have already for some time been contributing, at the very least, premises and material for the LCO teachers.

The General Concept of Language Teaching of 1998 called for the promotion of languages of origin / of migration: The cantons will respect and encourage the languages present in their school population and integrate them into the syllabuses. Therefore, the first concern is to develop and integrate the teaching of languages of origin, which must be much better coordinated with the rest of the curriculum and the teaching, and its content rendered more attractive. This concern is based on the following considerations:

- the importance of possessing solid knowledge of one's first language in order to be able to acquire a second language
- the considerable importance of mastering one's first language to be able to define one's own identity
- the market value of linguistic knowledge and its value for the national economy of Switzerland (language diversity as an economic resource)

The Strategy of Language Teaching adopted in 2004 refers to this need and provides for the promotion of languages of origin / of migration. The *HarmoS* Agreement also recognised the language and culture of origin courses (LCO) by inviting the cantons, in art. 4, para. 4, to «provide organisa-

tional support for the language and culture of origin courses (LCO courses) set up by the countries of origin and the different language communities, while respecting religious and political neutrality». [Translation]

This growing awareness of the integrative function fulfilled by the LCO courses also emerges in the provisions of the ruling on the integration of foreigners (*Verordnung über die Integration von Ausländerinnen und Ausländern [VIntA]*)<sup>105</sup>, which, in art. 7 on teaching and tutorial activities, stipulates that teachers of the LCO courses must possess «knowledge of the national language spoken in the workplace equivalent to level B1 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) enacted by the Council of Europe»; moreover, they «know the Swiss social and legal systems (art. 5, para. 3) and are able to transmit this knowledge to the foreigners they train». [Translation]

#### 4.4.2 Towards integrated language and culture of origin teaching (LCO)

Students with a migrant background grow up in an environment in which (at least) two languages are spoken, and they use these languages daily. This situation may constitute an advantage, which schools have not capitalised on until now. But LCO courses must be rendered attractive to children (and their parents), given that they devote time to them outside of school and that – depending on the language group to which they belong – they have to pay for them<sup>106</sup>. The authors of the recommendations of the EDK of Eastern Switzerland (*EDK-Ost* 2007, 9; [translation]) regarding «the promotion of language competences for a multilingual school population» (*Sprachförderung für eine mehrsprachige Schülerschaft*) observe that the best way of encouraging the linguistic development of these learners is to provide them with

support in both languages: in their second language, German, as well as in their first language. If the promotion of first languages improves in the schools, one can expect to see positive effects on the acquisition of the second language by children and young people with a migrant background, as well as on the development of their personality and their integration. A favourable development in this direction would also have positive repercussions for society.

From the linguistic point of view, LCO teaching should therefore help students to acquire, in their language of origin / of migration, language competences that go beyond everyday use of the spoken language (BICS). They must be able to develop their reading and writing competence, expand their vocabulary and acquire an understanding of the linguistic structure of their first language. LCO teaching must therefore lead to a qualified plurilingualism, which must also be recognised. Studies (Gogolin 2005; Zappatore 2008, 108) show that isolated additional teaching in the language of origin / of migration can indeed lead to improvement, but it will have no repercussions on the second language. Positive outcomes for the development of both languages are observed only when both are promoted in a coordinated manner. One also notes that the length of the effort is a significant factor. Moreover, the fact that the effort is facilitated and supported by the institution as a whole as well as by the family is a determining condition. Other favourable factors, not only for the children but also for their parents, are the fact that the particular linguistic experience of bilingual children is accepted and recognised as a skill (even if the language competences are only partially developed due to the age of the learners), and an encouraging social environment that values languages of origin / of migration with minority status. Therefore, to positively influence children's overall development, their entire social environment must support and encourage their

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105 Cf. [http://www.admin.ch/ch/d/sr/142\\_205/index.html](http://www.admin.ch/ch/d/sr/142_205/index.html) (22.02.2010)

106 For instance, LCO courses for Albanian and Kurdish children are not supported by the embassies of the countries of origin; they are offered by Swiss organisations that deal with migration issues, among other things, and the parents must pay for them.

bilingualism. For schools, this means adopting a fundamentally positive attitude and recognising the individual plurilingualism of children and adolescents with a migrant background. But it also implies a series of concrete measures:

- encouraging attendance at LCO classes
- coordinating LCO courses with the ordinary school curriculum
- integrating LCO teachers into the mainstream teaching body
- integrating the languages of origin / of migration into language teaching
- expanding the curriculum in the area of languages and integrating LCO courses
- funding LCO teachers when they cannot be paid for by the country of origin
- regulating / supporting LCO teaching within the framework of ordinary school supervision

Below, we will look at the first five points in depth.

### Encouraging attendance at LCO classes

Language and culture of origin courses (LCO) are either sponsored by embassies and consulates, or organised by parent associations or by organisations specialised in migration issues. Parents have considerable influence on attendance at LCO classes. On the other hand, attendance also depends on parents being informed. In this regard, the canton and the faculty play a role through their information policy. For the German-speaking region of canton Valais for instance, Kalbermatten (2008) showed that, although a great majority of teachers consider the significance of LCO teaching as being of average to highly significant importance, only about 30% of them actively encourage children and parents to attend these classes. The situation is different in cities with a high concentration of children and adolescents with a migrant background, and an older tradition of encouraging LCO courses, such as Basel, Bern, Geneva or Zurich, where children even sometimes ask their teacher spontaneously about registering for LCO classes.

### Coordinating LCO courses with the ordinary school curriculum

The fact that language and culture of origin courses (LCO) are initiated by embassies and consulates or by parent associations and organisations specialised in migration issues represents a considerable challenge for coordination between the LCO courses and mainstream schooling. LCO teachers must, for instance, follow objectives stipulated in the curricula prescribed by the country of origin and use the recommended teaching resources. LCO courses offered by non-governmental organisations can act more rapidly to fulfil their mandate of integration than can those of government bodies. A first step has been taken towards coordination in canton Zurich, with the development of a framework curriculum (2003) that has been adopted by several other cantons. The curriculum was coordinated with that of Zurich's compulsory education; it involved collaboration with the management of the public schools and the various organisations concerned. Other stages will include exchange platforms between LCO organisations and cantonal authorities, as well as specific continuing education modules designed to familiarise LCO teachers with the educational, methodological and assessment practices of the Swiss system. Participation in exchange sessions and in continuing education may be required in order to be authorised to teach in the different cantons, i.e. to be able to use public school premises or to include the LCO grade in students' school reports. Recognition of the competences of these bilingual, or even plurilingual, children and adolescents will come as a result of including LCO learning achievements in the school report and in the European Language Portfolio (ELP).

### Integrating LCO teachers into the teaching staff

If one wants languages of origin / of migration to be recognised, one must also recognise their representatives as competent teachers. This can be achieved by integrating LCO teachers into the teaching staff. The school management

should, for instance, invite the LCO teachers who teach in their establishment to participate in at least one staff meeting per semester, as well as in the school's continuing education courses in the area of language competence promotion. More opportunity for cooperation should also be encouraged between the teachers of mainstream classes and those of LCO classes, particularly for assessment of students' level of learning, use of the European Language Portfolio (ELP), intercultural and multilingual learning projects, and cooperation with the parents.

### Integrating the languages of origin / of migration into language teaching

It is important that plurilingual learners realise, through the language teaching delivered in the ordinary school curriculum, among other things, that their plurilingualism is a valuable asset and that it is worthwhile investing their (free) time in developing their language of origin / of migration. They must also be aware that this language knowledge that they already possess represents a potential resource for learning new languages. In the field of language awareness it is useful, not only for the acquisition of a second or even a third language, but also for consolidating first languages, establishing links between languages, and discovering and naming their similarities and their differences. Approaches such as *ELBE* and *EOLE* (see chapter 4.1.2) encourage the integration of the languages of origin / of migration of the students in the teaching of the language of schooling and of foreign languages – which coincides perfectly with the multilingually oriented language teaching methodology.

The integration of languages of origin / of migration can be expanded and reinforced if LCO teachers participate, at different levels, in team teaching and help with a follow up of individual students. The value of cultures and languages of origin is emphasised by such personalised integration. The place of bilingualism and multilingualism becomes visible and concrete.

### Expanding the curriculum in the area of languages

The General Concept of Language Teaching of 1998 called for the integration of languages of origin / of migration as did subsequent conferences and articles (for example, *Babylonia* No. 138, October 2004). If one is to take this seriously it means that the teaching of languages of origin / of migration should be associated with the overall promotion of multilingualism in schools. Although this objective is at present, in light of current practices, still wishful thinking, one must not lose sight of it in the long term, in the sense of the General Concept of Language Teaching, in particular.

Steps can be taken in this direction by implementing the measures described above. They could also be developed more fully. One could, for example, make LCO teaching a compulsory option that would be taught during normal school hours and not as now, as an optional supplementary programme followed by highly motivated students in their free time. Learners whose first language is the language of schooling could be offered an alternative, such as the *St. Johann* model of Basel Stadt offered to Swiss children, which is for the Swiss-German dialect and has been successfully applied for years. In order to promote exchanges, it would be good to see LCO teachers more often in staff rooms during official school hours. They should be included, without having to undergo cumbersome formalities, in teaching teams with ordinary Swiss teachers, in individual follow ups and in dealings with the parents. It would be useful to have official school materials available, which would be coordinated with the teaching resources of the other subjects, language and non-language. Moreover, LCO teaching should lead to a form of recognition, such as a certificate for example; this possibility already exists for Spanish and Italian, among other languages.

Moreover, certain demands have been voiced with respect to teacher training in view of the implementation of integrated language teaching methodology: «A basic condition for the creation of a multilingual school is the presence of plurilingual



teachers and trainers in Universities of Teacher Education. A solution must therefore be found on a nationwide Swiss scale for the training of teachers, in order to be able to really take advantage of the asset represented by Switzerland's quadrilingualism (multilingualism). Measures that could be taken include cooperation between Universities of Teacher Education – this is an urgent necessity –, mutual recognition of training, or partial training, and regional, national or international language exchanges. Universities of Teacher Education should include in their programme specific continuing education for (LCO) teachers as well as joint professional and continuing education programmes with Swiss teachers. At the same time, the multiple competences of teachers of language and culture of origin (LCO) should be used in Universities of Teacher Education, and migrant and second and third generation individuals should be particularly encouraged to participate in the training of teachers» (*vpod Bildungspolitik, Interdialogos*, Babylonia, 2004, 62). [Translation]

## 4.5 Foreign language learning within the general context of compulsory education

This chapter deals with the reactions of the school system – teaching staff, students and school authorities – to the compulsory teaching of two foreign languages in addition to the language of schooling, i.e. the second national language and English. To these must be added the languages of origin / of migration, as well as special access to the language of schooling as a second language for the children of immigrants (see chapter 4.4).

It focuses in particular on the introduction of the second foreign language in primary school and the order of learning of languages – questions that have

marked the political debate in this field in recent years. The language of schooling takes its place within this context of growing multilingualism.

In the central portion of the chapter (4.5.3) current methodological and teaching concepts are presented with the help of concrete examples and their potential is studied from the angle of multilingually oriented language teaching methodology.

### 4.5.1 The political decision to introduce two foreign languages

Between 1975 and the mid 1990s, most of the cantons favoured the teaching of a national language as foreign language in primary school (*EDK* 1975). The General Concept of Language Teaching (1998) expressed the will, widely shared by the general public and education policy makers, that English should be introduced in primary school, and some fundamental principles were put forward to that effect (see chapter 2). Since then, based on their common Strategy of Language Teaching (*EDK* 2004), but each in their own way and according to different time scales, the cantons and the regional conferences are implementing the teaching of the second foreign language from 5<sup>th</sup> school year (the 7<sup>th</sup> school year according to the *HarmoS* schedule) onwards and introducing the start of learning of the first language at the 3<sup>rd</sup> school year at the latest (i.e. the 5<sup>th</sup> school year) (see chapter 2.3.2).

In four German-speaking cantons the decision to teach two foreign languages in primary school was put to popular vote<sup>107</sup>. The results, in some cases close but in all cases positive, showed that voters were favourable to extending the learning of languages in compulsory education but that the reservations expressed, notably by teacher associations, must be taken into account<sup>108</sup>.

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107 They are cantons Zurich, Zug, Thurgau and Schaffhausen; in Lucerne, a popular initiative for a single foreign language in primary school was withdrawn.

108 The leading teachers' association of German-speaking Switzerland (*LCH*) published, as early as 2004, a document in which it stated its position and formulated a number of demands that it considers as necessary preconditions for the success of the process: [http://www.lch.ch/dms-static/d0225347-823b-4913-b74d-52b70de9326a/040930\\_gel\\_bed\\_sprachen.pdf](http://www.lch.ch/dms-static/d0225347-823b-4913-b74d-52b70de9326a/040930_gel_bed_sprachen.pdf) (20.02.2010)

The French-speaking region of Switzerland is currently preparing the introduction of English teaching in primary schools; implementation is planned to start in 2013–2014. The situation of Ticino is more complex. Traditionally, the Ticinese have learned French as their first foreign language, and it is in that language that they achieve the highest level of competence. The second foreign language is German and, until recently, English was an optional subject. The teaching of French during compulsory education has been reinforced: a new teaching resource has been introduced and the transition from primary school to secondary level (*scuola media*) improved (see chapter 4.1.2).

Canton Graubünden intends to bring the teaching of the first foreign language forward starting with the 2010–2011 school year, i.e. from the 4<sup>th</sup> to the 3<sup>rd</sup> school year of primary school. The first foreign language is a cantonal language – Italian or Romansh for German language schools, and German for Romansh or Italian language schools. Starting in the 2012–2013 school year, English will be introduced as the second foreign language for all three language groups<sup>109</sup> from the 5<sup>th</sup> school year of primary school. The bilingual schools will introduce English as a foreign language in the 5<sup>th</sup> school year, since two cantonal languages are used side by side as languages of schooling starting in the first school year of primary school.

The following sections will present and develop the strategies and coordination efforts as well as the projects and instruments that exist in this area and which will contribute to creating the best possible conditions for language learning.

## 4.5.2 The order of introduction of languages, the levels to achieve and the curricula

The main goal of the *EDK's* (2004) Strategy of Language Teaching and of the intercantonal *HarmoS* Agreement (2007) is that by the end of their compulsory education (9<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> school years according to the *HarmoS* schedule) students will have achieved equivalent levels of competence in two foreign languages (the second national language and English) (see chapter 3.1.4). The fact of aiming for a comparable level of competence in two foreign languages at the end of compulsory education gives the linguistic regions a certain amount of freedom as to the order of introduction of languages (for the second national language and English) since, by the end of compulsory education, there should no longer be any difference between the languages. The findings from research conducted on language learning seems to indicate that when learning a second foreign language one benefits from the competences already acquired in the first (see chapter 3.3). A longitudinal study by Heinzmann et al. in 2010 demonstrated this, taking as examples the cantons of central Switzerland<sup>110</sup>. The common basis used for all foreign languages is the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). As the main coordinating instrument, it underlies the national Educational Standards, the curricula of the linguistic regions, and current teaching resources.

### Differences in the order of introduction of foreign languages

The order of introduction of languages in the regions is different (see illustration 2a). This raises certain problems, albeit not insoluble ones, especially where interregional mobility is concerned. The time lapse between foreign languages at the

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109 The language teaching concept of canton Graubünden can be consulted at: [http://www.gr.ch/DE/institutionen/verwaltung/ekud/avs/Volksschule/Sprachenangebot\\_uebersicht\\_de.pdf](http://www.gr.ch/DE/institutionen/verwaltung/ekud/avs/Volksschule/Sprachenangebot_uebersicht_de.pdf) (20.02.2010)

110 Cf. [http://www.fe.luzern.phz.ch/fileadmin/media/fe.luzern.phz.ch/Kurzfassung%20des%20Schlussberichts%20Nr.%2023\\_web.pdf](http://www.fe.luzern.phz.ch/fileadmin/media/fe.luzern.phz.ch/Kurzfassung%20des%20Schlussberichts%20Nr.%2023_web.pdf) (26.07.2010)

start of the learning process is generally equivalent to two years (in Zurich, three years). With regard to the annual objectives set in the curricula (for example the *EDK* of Eastern Switzerland [*EDK-Ost*], the *EDK* of Central Switzerland [*BKZ*], the *Passepartout* cantons), the gap between the levels of competence (elementary requirements) in primary school is never greater than one CEFR level. In the model that was developed, the differences in the amount of time allocated were in the order of about a third<sup>111</sup> depending on the canton. In any case, the differences in level that one can expect between those students who have elementary competences (for example, in the Eastern *EDK*'s curriculum [*EDK-Ost*] for English: A2.1 for written and spoken reception) and those who have theoretically acquired broad competences (from B1.2 to B2.1 for reception) are greater than that as a result of discrepancies that might be caused by different orders of introduction of languages.

If one refers to Cummins' interdependence hypothesis (1981, 1991, 2004) and accepts the principle that learners, in addition to their monolingual knowledge, can also mobilise a common underlying proficiency (see chapter 3.3.2), one arrives at the conclusion that as soon as they start to learn a second foreign language they can draw on additional synergies and transfer opportunities. For example, cognitive and metacognitive strategies can be transferred from one language to another and similarities in the linguistic system or lexis can be used to facilitate the learning process, particularly when the languages in question are closely related (for example, German and English, as Germanic languages for «Latin» Switzerland). However, this transfer does not always

occur automatically; it must be specifically encouraged and prepared (Hutterli, Stotz and Zappatore 2008, 123-4) – a premise that also applies to the development of teaching resources and teacher training<sup>112</sup>.

The objective of language teaching is, therefore, not to increase learners' competence in a single given language, but rather to facilitate the transfer of elements of one language to another and thus to encourage the development of a common multilingual competence (cf. Hutterli, Stotz and Zappatore 2008, 112).

As regards the question of whether students can attain comparable competences in the national language and in English, regardless of the order of introduction of the two foreign languages and in spite of variable time allocations, it is practically impossible to answer it without empirical research. It would probably be easier to achieve this objective if better use were made of the synergies produced by the multilingually oriented language teaching methodology and if, moreover, the time allocations in this area were adapted. The question of whether this should be done to reinforce the second foreign or national language concerned (i.e. languages that are more complex from a morphological and in part syntactic point of view, such as German and French) remains open<sup>113</sup>.

### Curricula – a key to planning and coordination

Curricula and learning objectives comprise competence objectives that are formulated for

111 In the *Passepartout* project cantons, 19 week lessons per school year are set aside for French in the year and 13 for English. In canton Zurich, 20 are set aside for English and 13 for French. However, the present situation could change due to the measures being put in place for *Lehrplan 21*.

112 Examples of teaching resources that have been developed: Explorers for English (*Lehrmittelverlag des Kantons Zürich*), *Mille feuilles* for French (*Schulverlag plus*), *New World* for English (*Klett Schweiz*). Teacher training: modules of foreign language teaching methodology for several languages in many Universities of Teacher Education (for instance in Zurich, Lausanne, Locarno).

113 Cf. the consultation report on *Lehrplan 21* (2010, 24), which contains planning hypotheses for the number of hours per teaching subject and training field. The analysis of the present situation, which includes data concerning the large cantons that have English as the first foreign language, shows that the first foreign language (English) takes up 59% of the time, against 41% for the second foreign language (French). The planning hypotheses provide for 53% for the first foreign language and 47% for the second.

each level with the help of can-do statements regarding capacities and the ability to carry out certain language and communication tasks (language activities). As regards teaching resources used to support teaching, their progression is determined by the objectives set for each level in the curricula, which therefore represent a decisive guiding instrument. A distinction can be made between (a) competence-based curricula and (b) what can be called content standards:

a. The curriculum of the *EDK* of Eastern Switzerland (*EDK-Ost*) for English refers first to the checklists that contain can-do statements developed in the context of the European Language Portfolio II, and also the *Lingualevel* project. It supplements them with examples of contents that are presented as essential components of language activities in the learning process.

b. For its part, the curriculum for the teaching of English and French in the cantons that are participating in the *Passepartout* project presents content standards, i.e. it describes what must take place during teaching rather than the performances that should be achieved. This approach endeavours to set out learning activities in language teaching and in the cross-curricular learning of foreign languages, as well as learning opportunities in the framework of extracurricular intercultural encounters. The *Passepartout* curriculum thus focuses on learning and teaching, by showing how communicative (language) competences can be achieved at the different levels. Moreover, it expressly draws on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) and its corresponding definitions of levels, without presenting them in detail, however.

**End of the 9<sup>th</sup> school year (11<sup>th</sup> school year according to *HarmoS*) – basic competence sought A2.2 spoken reception: listening**

The learners: are able to understand accounts on familiar subjects, providing the speaker speaks slowly and clearly.	Examples of contents: news reports about other countries, information about disasters, sports news
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**Table 4b** | Curriculum for the teaching of English *EDK-Ost* 2009, 16

The objectives for the different levels are presented as profiles for certain groups of learners (for basic or broad competences for example), which are differentiated according to ability (higher levels in receptive competences than in productive competences). The teaching resources used in the different cantons are adapted to the objectives for the different levels, which vary slightly according to the language skills. Performance tests such as *Lingualevel* make it possible to test to what point the objectives have been achieved (see chapter 5.5.2).

**Field of competences I, language activity: reading (7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> school years according to the *HarmoS* schedule) level A1.2**

Field of action: Using the foreign language in a group.	Reading and understanding usual, simple working instructions in the foreign language; difficult terms are also explained in the language of schooling.
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**Table 4c** | Curriculum for the teaching of French and English in the *Passepartout* region, project version January 2010, 31

This example shows that certain activities, such as in this case the fact of explaining working instructions, represent an indispensable condition for learning proper, which can then be encouraged through the teaching methodology.

The curriculum for German-speaking Switzerland (*Lehrplan 21*) abstains from developing specific foreign language curricula; it plans to draw on the existing regional curricula, combining and possibly adapting them. According to the consultancy report, the aim is a competence-based curriculum, which however explicitly addresses certain subjects (topics, knowledge) (see chapter 5.2.3).

In any competence orientation the question arises of the progression in the development of suitable linguistic resources, i.e. grammatical structures, syntactic regularities and vocabulary. In this regard, it should be noted that the differences do not only concern corresponding units (words, morphemes, etc.), which vary from one language to another, but also the way in which the grammatical system is constructed (for example, tense system, systematic of the formation of the comparative and superlative form, etc.) Certain curricula include lists of grammatical structures (the curriculum of the *EDK* of Eastern Switzerland [*EDK-Ost*] for the teaching of English); others reveal through the examples they contain how the resources to be used become progressively more complex (the curriculum of the French-speaking region of Switzerland [*PER*], the curriculum of the *EDK* of Central Switzerland [*BKZ*] for the teaching of English). Within the framework of the *Passepartout* project, an attempt has been made to link grammatical progression to can-do statements and to the CEFR levels, while also drawing attention to the difficulties that can arise: «On an abstract level, French and English grammatical phenomena present certain similarities. However, where the development of linguistic resources is concerned, we are forced to accept that there are considerable formal differences (morphology, spelling, syntax).» (A supplement to the curriculum of the *Passepartout* region for the teaching of French and English)

It goes without saying that the development of suitable linguistic resources must be taken into consideration in the progression from one level of competence to the next; however without taking grammar as the structuring component, as is the case in traditional approaches (see chapter 3.2.4). The linking of certain linguistic structures with language activities is highly complex and it is difficult to do in a satisfactory way<sup>114</sup>. In fairly recent curricula using a competence-based language model, linguistic resources are presented as lists of structures (2008 curriculum of the *EDK*

of Eastern Switzerland [*EDK-Ost*] for the teaching of English) or appear in examples for carrying out language activities (2005 curriculum of the *EDK* of Central Switzerland [*BKZ*] for the teaching of English). The curricula do not provide for competence development in terms of structures, sentences and words adapted for communication. The role of teaching resources appears as all the more important, and in particular that of textbooks that cover several years and facilitate the development of language competences by following functional cyclical, spiral principles (see chapter 4.5.3).

Curricula developed so as to be adaptable to the learners to whom they are addressed are a key instrument for the managing and coordinating language teaching. In spite of the efforts that have been made towards harmonisation, there remain hints of regional (linguistic) differences in the way in which language learning is addressed in the curricula. Such tensions can also prove beneficial, since they induce a sharper introspective awareness, particularly among the teachers who, in the framework of their initial and continuing education, can compare the different existing documents among themselves. At the same time, the curricula often propose concrete guidelines as well as aids for the methodological and teaching orientation of teachers' activities (see chapter 4.5.3).

Supporting evaluations and research have made it possible to obtain, in Switzerland and abroad, preliminary results for early foreign language teaching approaches (Haenni Hoti and Heinzmann 2009, Werlen 2005, Heinzmann et al. 2010). According to their conclusions, it appears that a majority of students are able to achieve the objectives set for the end of the primary level, and that some of them even exceed these objectives (Heinzmann et. al 2010). At the same time, according to the report of the Lucerne-based research team led by Heinzmann, synergies are emerging that can be put down to the fact of learning two

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114 The publication *Profile Deutsch* (Glaboniat et al. 2005) is an ingenious instrument which associates communicative speech acts and lexical-grammatical activities.

foreign languages at the same time. Thus, skills acquired in the first foreign language prove to be one of the main reasons why certain skills are more highly developed in the foreign language that is learned subsequently. The researchers suppose that the positive relations between the languages of schooling and the first and second foreign languages could be signs of the presence of a common linguistic competence (Heinzmann et al. 2010, 53)<sup>115</sup>.

The parallel learning in primary school level of two foreign languages that are introduced successively – in accordance with the 3/5 model of the *EDK* – is showing preliminary results that support a holistic view of language learning.

This means that individual progress in linguistic competences should be considered, in the context of a language teaching methodology oriented towards multilingualism, as a lifelong project that can be differentiated but which, in the end, forms a coherent whole.

### 4.5.3 Concepts of methodology and teaching

One also observes effects related to the coordination process regarding methodology and teaching. Although current approaches take different directions, they essentially concentrate on usage, content and cross-curricular learning.

If one wants to implement a language teaching strategy with two foreign languages starting in primary school, and encourage literacy skills and a communicative (language) competence in the language of schooling, what one needs is a well thought out methodological and teaching concept that conforms to a set of principles. Although it is wise to preserve a certain amount of methodological freedom, it is however necessary to take a number of crucial decisions in order to

attain the ambitious objective of an integrated language teaching methodology without wasting energy and effort. The following sections take up some essential points raised in chapter 3, such as language competence and speech act, functional language skills, implicit and explicit learning, or action orientation, and give concrete examples related to real teaching experiences in compulsory education.

### Usage-based approaches

Languages are learned first and foremost to communicate in everyday situations. Functional plurilingualism refers to the ability to make oneself understood in a manner that is adapted to the situation and the desired communicative function (see chapter 3.2.4). The daily reality of school-age children and adolescents is strongly influenced by the school, but also in part by the media. Certain situations, such as shopping or exchanging small talk, are situations that the students will encounter later; while spoken interaction in the classroom and the studying of texts are an integral part of learning and represent a special form of authentic communication. Language is used, depending on the communication opportunities, in the immediate teaching context. Arrangements need to go from the simple to the relatively complex, with both content and language outcomes.

This vision of the school learning environment corresponds to a usage-based linguistic model, such as is presented in chapter 3.2.4. If language learning is understood to be the result of meaningful interactions occurring within social groups, it seems logical that modern, relevant methodological and teaching concepts should be action-based, such as for example task-based language learning (TBL, cf. Willis and Willis 2007, and Hutterli, Stotz and Zappatore 2008, 80–84). The Common European Framework of Reference

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115 These results were obtained in the fields of spoken and written comprehension. According to the authors, the English spoken interaction competence does not significantly help to explain the French spoken interaction competence.

for Languages (CEFR) defines the (communicative) task as «any purposeful action considered by an individual as necessary in order to achieve a given result in the context of a problem to be solved, an obligation to fulfil or an objective to be achieved.» (Council of Europe 2001, 16). Language is thus a social act and, at the same time, a means of discovering new, or partly unknown, content. In the context of the school, content may focus on daily experience, but also on themes relevant to education, such as aesthetic narrative texts, visual or audiovisual products, or pieces of music. There are also topics pertaining to nature- and society-related teaching fields.

Action-based approaches, such as the TBL approach, are particularly suited to the basic conditions of language learning in school. The emphasis is not placed on mastery of certain linguistic rules or of vocabulary, but on the use of the language that is needed to carry out communicative tasks in situated events. At the same time, through the tasks that they must carry out, students discover facts that are interesting and relevant to their education (see chapter 4.1.2). The content- and action-based approach is a pillar of integrated language teaching methodology. The hypothesis underlying the TBL approach, which is well supported empirically (Ellis 2003), is the following: students' linguistic-communicative and cognitive resources are mobilised when they are confronted with learning and problem-solving tasks suitable for their age. In the task cycle, (Willis 1996, 38), it is a question of «negotiating» results such as composing a summary or presenting a report to the class, and the emphasis is primarily placed on sense and meaning rather than on accuracy. This draws on resources related to understanding and making oneself understood, in a process which is described in the literature as «negotiation of meaning» (cf. Gass and Mackey 2006; Long and Doughty 2009; Pica 1994). In this process, the speakers, whether they express themselves in their mother tongue or in a language they are learning, send signals of comprehension or incomprehension and adapt the form and content of their expression. In this sense, task-based

language learning (TBL) corresponds also to the context-sensitive, situated approach of communicative (language) competence described by Pekarek Doehler (2005).

In the TBL approach, learners are first confronted with the topic and the task. In carrying out the task, they put to use the competences they acquired earlier and the language resources they already possess, thereby developing new knowledge. It is only in a third phase, when learners are no longer preoccupied with reception and production of meaning, that emphasis is focused on language.

The teaching resource *Voices*, following the principle of complementarity, combines the development of language competence through task-based learning (TBL) with in-depth thematic content linked to other subjects. The teaching resource used for level A2 activates students' competences with the help of tasks that may be differentiated but are always stimulating. In the following activities, emphasis is placed on a few, selected language resources; students discover, by themselves or with the help of a language guide, certain regularities and practise them in class in various contexts, as well as individually following a set training programme. Thus, the fact of working with topic files, whose main objective is to provide students with new, interesting content, allows them to communicate effectively in the language learned.

Since knowing the rules is but one aspect among many others in language learning, and since, in the levels up to B1 of compulsory education, the emphasis is placed mainly on adapting communication to the addressee and to the situation, it is only at a later stage in the development of language competences that one can expect more accurate and correct language usage (see chapter 4.6.2). However, one must take care to avoid the fossilisation of incorrect language patterns or of a telegraphic style. In order to do this, one can use cyclical, spiral development of grammatical and lexical resources. This means that language regularities such as the plural of nouns, tenses or the pronoun system,

are used first for reception (recognising and understanding language patterns), and then in the framework of tasks carried out with linguistic support (such as the beginnings of sentences in bubbles), spoken or written, before being perhaps thematically presented in a linguistic sequence or used again in a controlled activity or a game<sup>116</sup>.

The fact of repeating and practising elements is not incompatible with a communication-based approach, if the principle objects of learning are integrated into language activity sequences. Students should have the opportunity to manage this element of systematic practice according to their individual needs and to receive immediate, understandable feedback; for this, it is best to work with tools such as exercise books with the solutions, vocabulary cards, or computer exercises (programmes on CD-ROM or Internet, or ways of revising vocabulary using a mobile phone). These methods adapted to individual learning free up valuable time for interactive activities in the classroom.

Practical experiments show that autonomous, self-organised learning (autonomous learning) in the field of foreign languages must be developed very gradually, and that it is useful, at an early stage, to use different social formats, i.e. individual learning, pair learning and learning with the entire classroom (information exchange and class discussions, for instance). Students must have the opportunity to listen and read the language their classmates or those of other classes or schools produce, and give them feedback, so that the teachers are not always the main exchange partners<sup>117</sup>.

### Content orientation: from the thematic teaching of foreign languages to the CLIL concept

In the current concept of language of schooling teaching, all teaching offers learning opportunities to improve language competence in the language of schooling (language of other subjects, see chapter 4.2). For example, accuracy in written and spoken comprehension not only facilitates the learning of non-language elements in subjects such as world studies, environmental studies, or geography, but also, in a very general way, the acquisition of languages and literacy skills (CALP).

Conversely, in the teaching of the language of schooling, foreign languages and languages of origin / of migration (language(s) as subject, see chapter 4.2), learners study content and topics that correspond to their personal everyday experiences as well as to educational objectives. Content and teaching resources must meet multiple requirements in terms of topicality and relevance to the world in which the students live. Practice seems to show that the ideal is a mixed offer composed of relatively timeless cross-disciplinary themes combined with topical subjects that can be introduced by the students or the teachers. The teaching resources and the themes addressed must be adapted to the level and age of the students, and must be presented in an attractive visual form.

The fields of action in the *Passepartout* curriculum include, for instance, horizontal and extra-curricular language encounters:

- acquiring new content and new knowledge of the world in the foreign language

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116 In the development of a language, spiral cyclical processes require repetition, over a suitable time period, of structures and phenomena that have been introduced for a first time, followed by renewed repetition, sometimes in a slightly different form. In English for example, one can consolidate the simple past in the context of the functional thematisation of the past continuous – the description of actions or events in the context of a permanent state.

117 The jigsaw principle is an example in which certain learners / groups repeat or create, each on their own, different pieces of information; they then exchange them in order to reconstitute a complete image.



- discovering and interpreting stories (youth literature) and accounts
- using the foreign language in a group
- trying out and practising the foreign language outside the classroom
- meeting representatives of French or English cultures and keeping in touch with them<sup>118</sup>

Developing linguistic knowledge that can be activated, that is acquired progressively by implicit and explicit means (see chapter 3.2.6), is integrated into the specific tasks; it is reinforced and partly automated through reflection on and awareness of language, as well as through practice and repetition. Different processes can be used.

*Mille feuilles*, is an example of a teaching resource for French at the primary school level. Learning through discovery must be encouraged by means of complex inputs and tasks that are as authentic as possible. The components of learning acquisition encompass the four language skills, vocabulary, structure, phonology, spelling, rules, implicit sentiment, learning strategies, discovery of phenomena, reflection, autonomous learning, language relationships, etc. Students have access to practice in all these learning fields, which is how they learn. This means that understanding a text is as important to learning as playing a game. For some of the learning tasks, various aspects (for instance a grammatical regularity or a study technique, such as looking up words in a reference work) are taken out of their original context, developed, and then reproduced in the learner's own language, with all its complexities.<sup>119</sup>

In foreign language teaching, learning through discovery requires support and the appropriate tools. The resources available on the Internet are supplemented by dictionaries and reference

works adapted to the age of the learners<sup>120</sup>. In the spirit of multilingually oriented language teaching methodology, it is a matter of increasing the use of multilingual instruments (multilingual dictionaries; multilingual online databanks<sup>121</sup>). Some bilingual school dictionaries contain references to identical or similar words in several languages (parallel words) and deceptive cognates (false friends); etymological information also aids multilingual learning.

### Cross-disciplinary learning content

Current teaching resources that were created or adapted for the teaching of foreign languages in Swiss schools offer a wide spectrum of motivating topics. They differ in the degree of integration of cross-disciplinary content and therefore in the opportunities they offer for cross-disciplinary learning. Teaching concepts that follow the CLIL model, content and language integrated learning, (see chapter 4.2.2; cf. also Mehisto et al. 2008) systematically combine language learning with curricular content taken from other fields of teaching. In content- and action-based language teaching, the object is to bring out the thematic aspects of different specialised fields. The link between language and content must allow learners to communicate among themselves in their daily school context and to acquire new knowledge through discovery. In order to do this, in a cross-disciplinary approach one deals with subjects such as the metamorphosis of the butterfly or bridge building, but one also teaches the students to use study methods taken from other fields of teaching than language teaching (for example, observing and describing a biological process presented in a short film sequence; making a plan for a bridge, in a group, then building and testing the model)<sup>122</sup>.

118 Wording for the 9<sup>th</sup>–11<sup>th</sup> school years (according to the *HarmoS* schedule). *Passepartout* curriculum for French and English teaching (2010).

119 Taken from a presentation by Ida Bertschy given on 3 November 2009 in Bern.

120 A current example for English teaching would be the Resource Book for Explorers (*Lehrmittelverlag des Kantons Zürich*).

121 Some examples: <http://www.logos.it>, <http://www.pdictionary.com>, <http://www.babylon.com> (22.02.2010)

122 Cf. Hutterli, Stotz and Zappatore (2008, 85–90).

Learning contents discovered through the content- and action-based teaching of foreign languages do not stem only from fields of teaching such as the natural sciences, music, or visual and applied arts; they may also concern horizontal competences and areas of knowledge relating to intercultural learning. In language teaching, children must learn at an early age to recognise linguistic diversity and show interest in contacts with speakers of other languages. The models that accompany the *Envol* teaching resource encourage this and offer an ongoing thematic access to the life and culture of French-speaking neighbours, i.e. to the presence of the French language in other regions of Switzerland.

Awareness of language and cultures (*ELBE*) constitutes, for example, an important area of competences in the *Passepartout* curriculum; it widens the spectrum to include learning experiences and exciting content (for instance, paying attention to words that sound the same in different languages; reflecting on the origin of words; understanding the differences in meaning between borrowed words in different languages; exploring relationships between languages; discovering language families and their history). The best way to develop many of these skills, attitudes and elements of knowledge is to encourage language contacts, exchange activities (contact pedagogy; see chapter 4.2.3) and the integration of linguistic diversity in the school population including teaching staff. One can find learning tasks and useful leads in various documents and on Internet sites devoted to this field (see chapter 4.6.1).

Content- and theme-based foreign language learning is accompanied by certain constraints; it requires the support of appropriate teaching resources and a personal investment on the part of the teacher. The CLIL approach to foreign language teaching lends itself well, as a springboard, to bilingual teaching of non-language subjects and immersive language learning, i.e. to pro-

grammes in which individual teaching units or entire subjects are taught in a foreign language (see chapter 4.2.2). One point is a subject of debate in this context: should students taught according to this model also be assessed on the knowledge they acquire in the non-language subject? Although this goes without saying where immersive learning and bilingual teaching of non-language subjects are concerned, it is generally not done in current content-based foreign language teaching. One prefers to combine aspects of contents with language activities in communication tests<sup>123</sup>.

## 4.6 Horizontal and vertical coherence in language teaching

Teaching of the language of schooling (also as a second language) and of foreign languages spans the entire duration of compulsory education, and continues beyond it. In this context, there are two aspects of learning which should be supported by the school system in order that this period can be used efficiently and lasting results obtained. The first can be termed horizontal coherence: it guarantees cross-curricular coordination of language learning. In other words, the question is how to take advantage of competences in different languages taught simultaneously, in such a way as to facilitate learning? It is also a matter of including the informal learning processes and language contacts that take place outside the school environment.

The second aspect concerns vertical coherence, which is about planning the individual learning path of each student, taking into account successive school cycles and preparation for lifelong learning. How does language teaching unfold during a student's school career? What strategies and instruments are used, and when? How to avoid efficiency loss – during transition from one phase to another, for instance?

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123 Here is an example taken from the test series *Assessment Pack for Explorers 3* (2009, 9): (previous) knowledge about wild animals that are present in residential areas facilitates comprehension of a radio interview with a researcher who studies foxes.

## 4.6.1 Horizontal coherence

The need to ensure the coherent horizontal organisation of language teaching, i.e. within the same school year, stems from the concept of multilingualism (see chapter 3) which considers that an individual's languages form part of a whole, resting partly on common underlying competences and thus influencing each other; coherent language teaching should make use of these connections in order to optimise the learning process. Students must perceive language teaching as a coherent, coordinated whole – a whole that is organised into different language subjects, certainly, but which are based on a common foundation.

Concretely, horizontal coherence is based on the following four principles:

- coordination of methodology and teaching between language subjects
- coordination of instruments between different language subjects
- coordination between curricular and extra-curricular language learning
- coordination between language and non-language subjects

### Coordination of methodology and teaching between language subjects

The action- and content-based approach that has already been mentioned at several points in this report is gaining an ever wider audience in the field of language teaching. This does not necessarily mean, however, that it is being applied in practice. Common methodological approaches must be carefully studied and coordinated to encompass the different language subjects. If every language subject uses its own specialised terminology and approaches, learners may have the impression that there are gaps or overlaps between the different language subjects. Take the following example: in the French-speaking region of Switzerland where French is the language of schooling, for a time the expression *suite du verbe* was used to refer to a complement that was

not introduced by a preposition, which had previously been called a *complément d'objet direct*. Students in this region, who learn German as their first foreign language, were misled, believing that the complement (or object) is always placed after the verb, which is not necessarily the case in German. In the following sections we present some examples of common processes which reinforce horizontal coherence in the field of methodology and teaching.

- **Cross-linguistic study of strategies** (see chapter 3.2.5) | The acquisition of strategic competences takes place across the curriculum. It would therefore be unnatural to separate the subjects artificially, reintroducing these strategies each time. It is much more motivating and efficient to coordinate them (for example by planning written production in the language of schooling and reading strategies in the first foreign language), and to conceive a strategic approach in all language subjects.
- **Coordinated development of cognitive academic competences** (see chapter 3.2.2) | The acquisition of CALP and of literacy skills is cross-linguistic: these competences are not linked to one language in particular. It is important that the literacy skills acquired in one language can be transferred to other languages and developed. For this, one could also, for example, present thematically in different languages cultural characteristics encountered in text *genres* (such as tales) during classes.
- **Plural, cross-linguistic approaches** (multilingually oriented language teaching methodology / integrated language teaching methodology in the strict sense) | Meaning processes such as intercomprehension (see chapter 3.3.2), as well as *EOLE* and *ELBE* (see chapter 4.2.1). One of the main objectives of this type of approach is to develop students' linguistic awareness in the hope that it will have positive repercussions for their language learning overall: better transfer capacity as well as increased openness and flexibility in their contacts with different languages and cultures. These pluralist approaches make it

possible to acquire declarative knowledge (*savoir*), skills and know-how (*savoir-faire*) and attitudes (*savoir-être*) related to different languages and cultures, taken together and separately (using a comparative approach). FREPA (Framework of Reference for Pluralistic Approaches to Languages and Cultures 2007, see chapter 3.3.4) describes such competences. The latter can in particular serve as a basis for the development of curricula and teaching resources.

### Coordination of instruments between different language subjects

Ideally, to be able to ensure and optimise horizontal coherence, it should be integrated into the curriculum and implemented through coordinated teaching resources. The national Educational Standards presented in chapter 3 and their models of competence can serve as a basis for this.

- **Curricula and teaching resources** | In the framework of the *Passepartout* project, the conception of teaching resources for foreign languages (French and English) was revised based on the teaching principles defined by the curriculum, and a presentation of these teaching resources consolidated into a single curriculum was chosen; this measure makes it much easier for teachers to implement coherent language teaching. This is not the case for all the Swiss regions. The example of the French-speaking region presents a different picture: there, teachers use textbooks that are not specifically designed for the needs of the region; frequently, though, together with the publishers, they adapt these publications and develop additional resources (see chapter 4.1). Consequently, the *Plan d'études romand (PER)* (the curriculum of the French-speaking region) (see chapter 5) takes a fairly general approach and contains fewer concrete guidelines for practical implementation. This situation does not facilitate the implementation of projects such as the harmonisation of terminology across language subjects. In these conditions, the task of ensuring hori-

zontal coherence falls mainly to the teachers and the emphasis on horizontal connection will probably be displaced towards common, or cross-curricular projects, and towards instruments that are not connected to a method, such as the European Language Portfolio (ELP) or to approaches such as *EOLE*.

For its part, the *Passepartout* curriculum presents, for primary school level until the end of lower secondary education, the learning objectives for the areas of competence of language and culture awareness (*ELBE*) as well as learning strategies for the two foreign languages French and English.

However, in the French-speaking region, teaching material for *EOLE*, as printed material, separate from the curriculum, is only available for primary school (mainly in the language of schooling); for secondary education, one can find a few activities in an online version (see chapter 4.2.1). There too, it is up to the teachers to take the initiative and it is they who must decide whether to incorporate these activities into their teaching. The proposals put forward by de Pietro (2002) for a continuing *EOLE* curriculum, from primary school level up to upper secondary education, arranged according to the fields of declarative knowledge (*savoir*), skills and know-how (*savoir-faire*) and attitudes (*savoir-être*), have so far not been implemented and are referred to at most in teacher training. It goes without saying that it is also necessary to coordinate assessment practice (see chapter 5.4). And in the context of horizontal coherence one should also note the central role of initial and continuing teacher training (chapter 5.3).

- **The European Language Portfolio (ELP)** | The Swiss edition of the Portfolio is a relevant instrument for the reinforcement of horizontal and vertical coherence. It ensures vertical coherence (see chapter 4.6.2 and, more generally, chapter 4.1) since the age groups from pre-school to adult are covered without interruption, from ELP I, with the portfolio, up to ELP III. As regards horizontal coherence, the European Language Portfolio serves as an instrument for self-assessment, an aid for

individual learning and a means of documenting language learning in a broad sense. It covers curricular and extracurricular languages and concerns the linguistic and intercultural capacity to communicate as a whole. It makes it possible to take into account linguistic contacts, language learning experiences, and the practice of self- and hetero-assessment of language competences.

This instrument is not connected to a teaching resource; it is always at the learner's disposal and can be used at will for different subjects whenever language and culture are addressed. The aim of the European Language Portfolio is to encourage learners to acquire several languages, to motivate them to widen their linguistic knowledge and their cultural experience, facilitate lifelong learning, and to emphasise the value of multilingualism and contribute to the mutual understanding of the speakers.

However, this cannot be done without co-ordinated management on the part of the teachers, since the students, especially the younger ones, must first acquire autonomy. The Language Passport, which is part of the European Language Portfolio now also takes into account the language of schooling, in addition to the second and foreign languages, which provides a record of language competences according to the levels of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).

Although the European Language Portfolio is destined primarily for learners, teachers can find in the *Lingualevel* project a complete databank of communication- and action-based tests with which to assess the competences of students who are learning French and English as foreign languages ([www.lingualevel.ch](http://www.lingualevel.ch), see chapter 5.4). And the groundwork is being laid to extend this tool to the learning of German as a foreign language. The assessment grids and descriptors (which are identical to those of the European Language Portfolio) can be used for any language, for a cross-linguistic and content- and action-based approach. The proposed tasks are available in two (and soon in three) languages.

## Coordination between curricular and extracurricular language learning

Extracurricular linguistic encounters and their conscious integration into the teaching are motivating for further learning. What is important is that language learning is perceived as a whole that is ever present in daily life, as a meaningful activity, and not as an academic obligation. One of the ways in which extracurricular and curricular learning can be combined is the use of the above-mentioned **European Language Portfolio (ELP)**. Various forms of exchanges (e-mail contact, encounters and student or class exchanges; **contact pedagogy**, see chapter 4.2.3) offer opportunities for language encounters organised by the school system which take place outside the classroom.

## Coordination between language and non-language subjects

The question of the coordination and connection of thematic teaching content arises in the context of action- and content-based teaching, as well as in connection with teaching aids that do not form part of teaching materials. As has been pointed out in chapter 4, this can include content and topics taken from non-language subjects. To guarantee coherence, the content must be coordinated, and two options can generally be envisaged to this effect: **dealing with content or topic in several subjects simultaneously** (including non-language subjects that lend themselves to it), or **dividing different aspects of the content between the different subjects** in such a way as to avoid duplication. We can take as an example the topic of diet and health which, by taking a comparative approach, can address cultural aspects (what do we eat, where, when?) in different language subjects; in geography, one could take the topic of transportation and globalisation, and in natural science one could take health-based topics such as the food pyramid; one could then draw conclusions in the language of schooling, or organise debates on the basis of the information gathered. Taking the same approach, another form of teaching plays a role: **immersive teaching / bilingual teaching of non-language subjects**, which not

only coordinates but combines language learning with a non-language subject (see chapter 4.2.2).

The four areas of coordination mentioned above are, in reality, not so clearly separated; they interact. One finds an example in the *Passepartout* project, which is described in chapter 4.1. In the introduction of the *Passepartout* curriculum<sup>124</sup>, an entire chapter (chapter 5) is devoted to the subject of educational coherence and coordination. Following the concept of multilingually oriented language teaching methodology, *Passepartout* combines the different components of language teaching (language subjects as objects, methodological concepts, resources and instruments) in order to benefit from the resulting synergies. Language and non-language subjects are taken into account, as are curricular and extracurricular learning (see chapters 4.2.1 [Language and culture] and 4.2.3 [Contact pedagogy]). In the *Passepartout* project, coherence is not only achieved through the coordination of the curriculum, the teaching resources and the assessment method; the curriculum also emphasises the need for coordination among the (language) teachers, who must work together, to coordinate content for instance, and must prepare and carry out their teaching and special projects, jointly. This concerns foreign language teachers, teachers of the language of schooling (German) and those who teach language and culture of origin courses (LCO). This requirement also reveals the limits of the curriculum in the area of horizontal coherence, as a curriculum must leave a certain margin of manoeuvre for the adjustments that may be necessary depending on the students, special events, the preferences and creativity of the teachers, the school culture, etc. Moreover, the implementation of a curriculum depends on how the teacher combines the teaching resources and finally, it is he or she who must provide coherence. Teacher training is therefore highly important. And we should point out here the role of the school management who must, in the *Passepartout* project, guarantee the structural framework that is indispensable to optimum coherence, for

example by ensuring that the timetable makes allowance for joint activities, but also by providing teaching staff with the necessary infrastructure for coordination sessions.

## 4.6.2 Vertical coherence

Basically, vertical coherence consists of providing support for students so that they can continue to develop their plurilingual competences throughout their school careers and beyond. For this, the following measures must be taken:

- learning objectives must be adapted to the age and level of the learners
- resources and methodological and teaching modules must be selected that facilitate the achievement of these objectives
- the acquired competences and possible shortcomings or gaps should be assessed by means of a diagnostic procedure

What is needed is transparency in performance objectives and in the description of competences at the moment of the transition between levels, aids to define and record differentiated profiles (for example the different requirements for receptive and productive language ability) as well as comprehensible tools that are adapted to the students and accessible for parents, so that the latter can follow the educational and psycholinguistic development of their child – and, especially, so that they can experience this learning path as a continuing and motivating process.

The development of language competences and their positive application depend essentially on continuity in the process of acquisition and learning throughout the school career and beyond. This includes basic communication competences and cognitive academic competences (BICS and CALP, see chapter 3.2.2). To ensure progression over the years, particular attention must be given to the cyclical form of learning (consolidation of knowledge, repetition and revision, self-assessment).

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124 Cf. <http://www.passepartout-sprachen.ch/de/inhalt/lehrplan.html> (22.07.2010)

It is a matter, on the one hand, of avoiding use-  
less duplication that can be demotivating (the  
impression of «starting all over again») and, on  
the other hand, of taking into account the reality  
of students' heterogeneous knowledge. Moreover,  
in the transition period between primary school  
level and lower secondary education, the passage  
from a comprehensive school system to a selec-  
tive system divided among paths characterised  
by performance levels plays an important role.  
The question therefore arises of how the different  
performance objectives can and should be formu-  
lated in the curricula and the teaching resources.  
The following sections offer concrete examples  
that demonstrate how it is possible to avoid gaps  
in the learning process and reinforce continuity  
in language learning and in the different learning  
programmes.

### Curricula, teaching resources, and instruments such as the European Language Portfolio (ELP)

If one examines the different curricula from the  
perspective of vertical coherence, one observes  
differences, which have their origins in history,  
between the languages of schooling (French, Ger-  
man and Italian in the corresponding regions) and  
foreign languages. Although certain curricula for  
German in the lower secondary education do not  
make a distinction regarding abilities – or only a  
slight one – between the different types of paths  
(cantons Zurich, Basel Landschaft), it is different  
for foreign languages, for which different levels  
of objectives are often set between the required  
minimum and the superior level (cantons Zurich,  
Basel Landschaft, *Plan d'études romand [PER]*,  
the curriculum of the French-speaking region).  
This can be explained by the fact that, during the  
academic development of the subjects, different

instruments were used – which is still the case  
today. Thus, in the field of foreign languages, the  
Common European Framework of Reference for  
Languages (CEFR) (see chapter 3.1) has played  
a dominant role since the end of the 1990s. The  
European Language Portfolio (ELP, see chapters  
4.1 and 4.6.1), which was inspired by the CEFR,  
may therefore be considered as an instrument  
to reinforce the vertical coherence of language  
learning, but with a limitation, since students for  
whom the language of schooling coincides with  
the first language cannot document the progress  
of their capacities in that language<sup>125</sup>.

We are already seeing approaches based on the  
promotion of language competences that include  
the language of schooling, the languages or origin  
and foreign languages in the language profiles in  
use (*Sprachprofile* of ED Basel Stadt 2007), but  
only at the regional level for the time being and  
calibrated according to the years of schooling  
rather than to the level of language competence.  
The language profiles (*Sprachprofile*) are not used  
for self- or hetero-assessment; they are intended  
to help plan the teaching and analyse it. They must  
therefore be considered as a specialised curricu-  
lum that combines content standards and oppor-  
tunity to learn standards and thus contribute to  
cross-curricular transparency where work with  
languages is concerned. One of the main func-  
tions of the language profiles is indeed to create  
connections between levels, allowing teachers  
of one level to address and develop the language  
competences which, according to the language  
profile, have been acquired in the previous level  
(cf. *Sprachprofile* of ED Basel Stadt 2007, 10).

As explained in chapter 4.3, the teaching of the  
language of schooling refers increasingly to  
the advance which a common model of compe-  
tences represents. The latter has been taken up

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125 This results in the following inherent contradiction: a student who uses a language of migration will note his or her competences in the language of schooling as capacities acquired in the second language (for example, in German) and will be able to check them by means of checklists. He or she is different in this from the students for whom the first language coincides with the language of schooling, who will not be able to use the ELP to document their competences in German, even though parts of these competences (such as writing structured texts) were acquired principally in school; see chapter 4.2.1. The language of schooling is one of the languages now taken into account in the new Language Passport.

as a reference for the new national Educational Standards, which should also become an important management tool for vertical coherence. The curricula that apply to an entire linguistic region (*Plan d'études romand [PER], Lehrplan 21*, the curriculum of Ticino) provide transparency regarding expected knowledge levels in terms of output, at the points of transition (the 4<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> school years according to the *HarmoS* schedule). Furthermore, as pointed out in chapter 4.3, the Council of Europe is increasingly taking an interest in the question of languages of schooling and is developing a platform that includes various resources<sup>126</sup>. However, there is still a long way to go before one will be able to create an instrument comparable to the CEFR that would help, among other things, to improve vertical coherence in the teaching of languages of schooling (Coste et al. 2007).

Other considerations regarding the role of curricula and test instruments as means of encouraging coordination and improving coherence are presented in following chapters (5.1 and 5.2). Regarding concrete implementation, the following sections present strategies, resources and initiatives aimed at reinforcing the vertical coherence of language learning. This concerns language teaching, teaching resources, diagnostic instruments and tasks for the transition from one level to the other.

### Continuity in language teaching methodology

The set of conditions that determines teaching and learning in school is not only different for the teaching of the language of schooling and that of foreign languages (see chapter 3.2); it also varies according to the age groups and school levels (primary, secondary, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> cycles). Based on the theoretical considerations presented in chap-

ter 3, one can conclude that during the first years one should focus on implicit learning and on a rich, but controlled input (Edelenbos et al. 2006; Duvander et al. 2009; Mayer and Köhler 2009). Moreover, it is wise to make students aware of learning and communication strategies early on, so that they can use them for the different languages throughout their school career<sup>127</sup>. Strategies that are simple from the cognitive point of view, such as those used for acquiring vocabulary, can also be used by young learners in primary school (cf. Staufer 2008).

As a result, language teaching at primary level, at levels A1 and A2, presents the following characteristics (see chapter 4.5):

- Teaching is content- and meaning-based, as well as action-based.
- The senses and the body (movement) are included in the learning.
- Learners practice simple expressions or stock phrases.
- Emphasis is placed on speech. Reading is developed gradually, writing is used mainly as a learning aid.
- Vocabulary is learned, whenever possible, though short phrases, and with the help of visual and auditory aids.
- Grammatical regularities are primarily learned implicitly or with the help of simple general rules.
- Acquisition and practice of learning and communication strategies are an integral part of the teaching.
- Feedback is used primarily for confirmation, but well-considered corrections can also be effective (Lyster and Ranta 1997).

As the cognitive potential of the students grows, certain aspects become more and more prevalent during the transition to B1, corresponding to upper secondary education:

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126 Cf. Platform of resources and reference for multilingual and intercultural education, accessible at: [http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/schoollang\\_EN.asp](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/schoollang_EN.asp) (22.02.2010)

127 Missler (1999) demonstrates that the more language learning experience learners accumulate, the more they rely on learning strategies, and this is especially true for individuals who learn several languages.



- Attention is directed towards the phenomena of the linguistic system (reflection on language) and students seek to discover by themselves the regularities of the language.
- Grammatical rules are connected to exceptions and previously acquired phrases (chunks).
- Writing competences are consolidated; different *genres* and registers are introduced; opportunities for informal, interactive and relatively formal writing are introduced. Texts are revised and improved.
- Synergies are created, for instance by presenting models of word formation (prefixes and suffixes, similar and borrowed words).
- Strategies for approaching texts are perfected and used for reading information texts and (youth) literature.
- Metalinguistic reflection enriches the teaching and learners are motivated to take an interest in languages.

Even though priorities gradually change, the continuity of language learning is maintained when, as described in chapter 4.5.3, language learning is governed by a content- and action-based approach and by learning objectives, in primary school as well as at lower and upper secondary education.

To contribute to a more durable integration of language learning it is important to plan, whenever possible, more intense working phases during the school career, whether these are language exchanges (half-class exchanges for instance), project weeks (such as an intensive course in the national language, Italian, cf. [www.italianosubito.ch](http://www.italianosubito.ch)) or immersion (bilingual teaching of non-language subjects and CLIL).

We are also observing an evolution of the priorities in the teaching of the language of schooling in the course of the school career, even if this is less obvious, given that the target language is continuously employed as the vehicle of communication. The curricula contain teaching instructions that emphasise the development of reflection and linguistic analysis, as well as metacommunication, at lower and upper secondary education (for exam-

ple, the 2005 curriculum for lower secondary education of canton Zurich, 121). This includes among other things a conscious recourse to norms and to breaches of those norms. Moreover, the emphasis is placed more on the reworking of texts and on linguistic pragmatism (for example, identifying discursive intent) and the function of language in society (writing letters, filling in forms). More complex forms of interaction are developed in the classroom in order to perform certain acts for which several language skills must be combined (for example, participating in a debate; *Sprachprofil* of ED Basel Stadt 2007, *Sprachprofil IV*).

The compulsory education period should allow teachers and learners to establish and reinforce links between certain abilities, skills and competences and to practise them in relatively complex communication situations. In order to do this, more consultation is necessary in cases where several teachers teach languages to the same class and one must make sure that all are aware of the teaching resources used for the other subjects.

### The cohesion of teaching resources

For cohesion among the different components of language teaching, the teaching resources used must cover all the needs of the learners and teachers at different levels as satisfactorily as possible. In this regard, we must point out that the selection of teaching resources is influenced by different traditions: in French-speaking Switzerland textbooks and teaching aids are supplied mainly by large, often foreign, publishing firms (as in the case of French as language of schooling). In the German-speaking region, specialists and experienced teachers are commissioned by cantonal or private publishing firms to jointly develop textbooks, and these projects often also include those responsible for teacher training, who are aware of the evolution of the situation at the regional level and of national policy.

In the field of languages of schooling, teaching resources have generally been designed in recent years as sets of materials destined for specific

levels; and although entire series were created, as in the case of *Sprachfenster / Sprachland / Sprachwelt Deutsch* (*Lehrmittelverlag des Kantons Zürich / Schulverlag plus*), we must point out that they were developed over a period of time and not necessarily according to uniform approaches. These teaching resources share the same basic concept of language learning through language activity in teaching situations, and through the transmission of working techniques and basic, transferrable learning strategies. Reflection on language is conducted through research tasks on linguistic phenomena and linguistic knowledge. The most recent contribution of the series *Sprachland* places a great deal of importance on associating contents and text *genres* to language activities. Moreover, for the primary level, the textbook (*Linguoskop*) enables an assessment of language competences that supports and motivates the learner.

The *Die Sprachstarken* (*Klett Verlag*) teaching resource, which covers several years, is currently available in five yearly volumes for primary school, and a continuation is planned for the lower secondary education according to a continuing concept that goes from the 2<sup>nd</sup> to the 9<sup>th</sup> school year (4<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> school year respectively, according to *HarmoS*).

Although the French-speaking region of Switzerland has a framework of reference and orientation that is applicable to the language of schooling (*CIIP* 2006, see chapter 4.3.3), the situation regarding methods is more heterogeneous, since it uses teaching resources imported from France, which it sometimes adapts. There is an ongoing debate as to whether these textbooks fit in coherently with the guidelines given in the reference document. «(...) Everything is being done as though one had given up trying to construct a homogenous structure in which classroom study would be focused on developing the communicative abilities of the students and the construction in parallel of the language tools and cultural references to support this structure and lend meaning to the learning» [translation] (de Pietro 2007, 16). The author then brings up the question of the selection of the teaching resources, which are not

coordinated, because they reflect different concepts of language teaching methodology: «(...) strong opposition (...) between, on the one hand, expression resources (...) and on the other structuring resources (...)» (de Pietro, *ibidem*) [translation].

In this context of fundamental tensions between teaching methodology based on the use of language and the emphasis on language structure, one must welcome the decision to create a reference work for teachers of primary school level and secondary education which presents the objectives of language of schooling (French) teaching and will enable the transmission of the «broad principles of teaching methodology» (*CIIP* 2006).

The teaching resources, which are planned and conceived as a set covering several years, are intended to accompany learners systematically through the different school levels. In this respect, a structured progression of language development, preferably spiral cyclical, and methodological proposals are invaluable. The *Envol* method (*Lehrmittelverlag des Kantons Zürich*) is an example of a teaching resource that adapts progressively to the programmes of the different levels. The whole set of teaching materials, which includes more than 100 products, covers five years (primary school level and lower secondary education, as well as baccalaureate schools) and offers a wide range of learning aids and modalities (such as vocabulary lists, audio CDs, exercise CD-ROMs, documentary films, comic strips, reference dictionaries, etc.). The development of learning strategies covers the entire method and internal differentiation possibilities are more and more frequent at the secondary education. Once basic language resources are acquired, culturally interesting subjects and contents are broached with the help of different modules. Thus, the spectrum of possibilities for use of the learned language is broadened, which also contributes to implicit acquisition.

The spiral cyclical approach to language development (see chapter 4.5.3) has been adopted by the *Explorers* and *Voices* series of teaching

resources<sup>128</sup>. These resources start by introducing language structures without analysing them, in the form of chunks, which become part of the learners' *Konstruktikon* (cf. Berthele 2008 and chapter 4.6.2). These elements are often partial products that can or should be completed («I don't know...», «This picture shows...»); they therefore offer a preliminary basis for grammatical structuring («I didn't know...»), syntactical combinations («these pictures all show...») or lexical alternatives («I don't like / see...»). Throughout the learning process, which takes several years, most language resources are recycled according to multiple variations and increasing degrees of development; they are used in authentic communication situations in such a way as to reinforce each other through input and usage. Moreover, after transition to the next level, many fundamental structures are repeated and sometimes rethought. (Stotz 2009, 28)

### Diagnostic instruments for the continuity of language learning

The assessment of learning performances is part of language learning in school (see chapter 5.4). To this end, formative assessment is complemented by summative assessment. In most cantons, grades are introduced at the latest in the 6<sup>th</sup> school year (according to *HarmoS*) – for foreign languages as well – sometimes in combination with performance assessment of the different language skills. Competence grids and observation sheets complete the formal assessment modalities and make it possible regularly to record and document the level achieved by the learners and the areas in which they must improve.

In order to reinforce language learning coherence, a degree of transparency must be ensured in the transition periods. The teachers at each level should be clear about the level their students need to have achieved in the previous level (ba-

sic standards, extended competence objectives) as well as about the method and means that will be used for continuation in the next level. The information that is passed on should be more than simply a list of elements of the programme followed or of the chapters dealt with in the textbook; it must also indicate the set learning objectives and whether these have been achieved.

Competence assessments at the point of transition from one level to the next involve more than exams focused on learning objectives. Instruments such as the European Language Portfolio (ELP) and *Lingualevel* in particular (see chapter 5.4) are useful when it comes to students' individual levels. The compiled results of these assessments provide teachers with information on learning results and at the same time a profile of the class for the next school level. It is a matter of recording the key points that are not easily observable (such as detailed competences in spoken comprehension or the ability to give a presentation based on notes).

The European Language Portfolio (ELP) constitutes first and foremost an educational instrument that belongs to the learners. It can, to some degree, be used as a diagnostic tool because it essentially provides information about the learner's intercultural and language learning experience as well as about the progressive development of his or her competences. One of the important objectives of the ELP is attained when students gradually take responsibility for their own learning. The transition from one year to the next is less problematic. The ELP II for instance was expressly created to be introduced in the last year of primary school level and to be carried forward to lower secondary education. It is essential that the portfolio aspect of this instrument be taken seriously by the teachers of the following school level and that the students can use it to present their previous performances in a positive way.

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128 These two teaching resources for English from the 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> school year of learning follow the same action- and content-based approach, but have different names, mainly to indicate to students that they are something new, but in line with what they already know.

## Action and learning scenarios for transition stages

Various studies indicate that learning acquired at primary school level can be rapidly lost at lower secondary education if it is incorrectly perceived or if it is «dumbed down». As much as it is understandable that students be given a soft start when they pass into the next level, experience shows that the less motivated students will then often position themselves in the lower half of the performance spectrum and not make full use of their potential, trying to get by with as little effort as possible.

Teaching resources often contain revision units in which the material that has been learned is repeated and consolidated. Although there is no objection to this practice, one observes that the effort is generally focused, where foreign languages are concerned, on basic vocabulary and grammar. It is more difficult to establish effectively the position of students regarding language skills and competences. For example, it is not possible to make do with a few rapid revision exercises for spoken comprehension and consider the matter closed.

Special learning scenarios have been developed for the transition periods, with the aim of helping students to loosen up and encourage them to use their competences to the fullest: indeed, bridging tasks encourage learners to demonstrate their competences in the school environment by communicating among themselves to achieve a certain objective or develop a product.

The following example of a bridging task is taken from the European Comenius project, which was conducted in seven partner countries including Switzerland<sup>129</sup>.

To summarise, one can retain the following aspects of bridging tasks with transitional value in language teaching, which are to:

- motivate the learners to use the language knowledge they have already acquired
- give access to new knowledge through discovery
- lead to a concrete result: a language product or activity intended for the addressees
- provide intermediary steps to allow for comments and changes
- encourage and require the use of learning and communication strategies
- include recourse to the four language skills and combine them in a functional manner

In addition to these conditions, which are presented in general terms, a central element of most of the bridging tasks is that at the end of one school level the students develop a product that they will present once they have passed onto the next level. This will give the teachers of the secondary education direct insight into the performances of their new students. The bridging tasks also allow the transfer of part of the learning culture of the primary school to the following level. Moreover, thanks to these bridging tasks, the teachers of the two levels can work together on a project that is limited in time and enables them to conduct exchanges regarding the objectives and the level of their students.

In seeking to reinforce the vertical cohesion of language learning, it is worthwhile adopting the standpoint of the learners and checking whether the curricula, the teaching resources and the teaching methodology contribute to continuity and to clearly oriented and defined learning. Among the measures that can be taken are transition programmes and transparent learning objectives, a certain cohesion among the teaching materials, with bridging tasks, as well as formal and informal diagnosis of the learning acquired. One aspect that has not been addressed concerns the occasionally limited opportunities for teachers to gain information about language learning practices at other levels. This can be covered during initial training, continuing in-service education or,

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129 Additional bridging tasks are presented, with filmed examples of teaching, on the website of the PRI-SEC-CO: <http://www.pri-sec-co.eu/en> (22.02.2010)

## «My object, my memories»<sup>130</sup>

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The objective of the task: at the end of primary school, the students prepare a presentation for their future lower secondary level class. They choose an object that has special meaning for them and is connected to a story. The objects are exhibited before the class. The learners can say a few words about what the object will mean to them in the future. Presenting their favourite object allows them, indirectly, to present themselves without having to describe themselves as a person, which eases their apprehension.

The main linguistic-communicative objectives are

- to describe the object and express preferences
- to tell a simple story (past tenses)
- to use adverbs to indicate time and frequency
- optional: to use verb forms that express the future

**Hour(s) of teaching at the end of primary school:** the students bring to school an object connected to a story (for example, a football that once fell into a stream and was retrieved by the student's grandfather). In a group, they exchange information and short stories in the foreign language. With the help of linguistic support, the students prepare a presentation on their object.

**Hour(s) of teaching at the beginning of secondary school:** each student brings to the new class the object that holds special meaning for him or her. All the objects are placed on a table and covered with a cloth. One object is chosen at random. The student to whom it belongs presents the object and its story to the class.

A discussion can then be launched about the future (for instance, one can ask the student whether he expects to play football again in the future).

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**Illustration 4c** | Bridging task taken from the Comenius project «Primary and Secondary Continuity in Foreign Language Teaching»

preferably, in the everyday school context. The effort may sometimes seem daunting, but according to the teachers who have taken the trouble it is certainly worthwhile<sup>131</sup>.

## 4.7 Summary

This chapter introduces several concepts that fall within a multilingually oriented language teaching methodology/integrated language teaching methodology, as well as the status of their implementation in Switzerland. The theme is approached both from the perspective of the language subjects concerned (language of schooling, foreign languages, languages of origin / of migration) and from the perspective of teaching and methodology. Basically, it is a fact that integrated language teaching methodology is not in itself revolution-

ary; what is new is the ambition to bring together in a coherent manner current practices to include all languages, from a horizontal (languages taught simultaneously – horizontal coherence) as well as a vertical perspective (throughout the entire duration of the school career – vertical coherence). In principle, it is also a matter of defining the role of each language and the type of competences targeted in the framework of an integrated language teaching methodology.

A comprehensive concept of multilingually oriented language teaching methodology takes into account functional language skills and socio-cultural aspects. The examples presented show that reflection is generally based on foreign languages, although the approaches that are aimed at encouraging language awareness and intercultural openness (*EOLE / ELBE*) rely mainly on the

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130 An adapted version of this bridging task has been used in the bridging model Explorers 3 Moving on, entitled «It means a lot to me» (Explorers 2009, *Lehrmittelverlag des Kantons Zürich*).

131 For example, for their complementary English teaching qualification, secondary education teachers of canton Zurich must attend a primary school English class and give a report on it.

teaching methodology of the language of schooling, at least in French-speaking Switzerland. The transition to a plurilingual concept of language teaching is a complex task given the different traditions of the linguistic regions, where teaching practices for the language of schooling and for foreign languages vary. This appears clearly in the examples that concern the implementation of these approaches. However, the first steps have been taken in this long-term process and the initial training and continuing education institutions for teachers must play a key role in creating a common culture for language teaching.

The teaching methodology of the language of schooling – which may be the first, second or even third language of the students – has a significant integrative function and covers a wide range of tasks: it must integrate intralinguistic varieties (in particular the constantly evolving diglossia of the German-speaking region), recognise languages and cultures of origin, establish connections with foreign languages, focus on linguistic and cultural diversity, and deliver general language education. The language of schooling is at the same time the vehicle (access to contents and knowledge in all subjects) and the object of teaching; it thus fulfils a double role. In future, where the language of schooling is concerned, the main issues will continue to be the optimum development of literacy skills, the management of the learners' heterogeneity, early support for linguistic development, and the definition of the place of speech. It should be noted that Swiss traditions of teaching and methodology differ considerably depending on the region (where the French and German languages of schooling are concerned, for instance). Hence, developing a common model of competences for the language of schooling in the framework of the Educational Standards is a matter for national consultation, which will have to be stepped up in future.

In Switzerland, there is a high proportion of students who have what is called a language of origin as their first language. The *HarmoS* Agreement and the language strategy of the *EDK* (2004) promote these languages and cultures as resources, as part of a multilingually oriented language teach-

ing methodology. The goal of language and culture of origin teaching (LCO) is to facilitate integration as much as it is to promote students' educational and career success. Since LCO courses are supported by foreign state institutions, organisations of migrants or other associations, coordination with mainstream schooling is very important. An example is the framework curriculum adopted by the canton Zurich in 2003. This type of coordination will have to be reinforced throughout the Swiss regions and LCO courses should be integrated into the wider language curriculum. In this regard, initial and continuing teacher training also play a role.

Just as the language of schooling, as the vehicle, enables access to content in all fields, the question of simultaneous learning of language and content and of language and culture arises in all languages. In foreign language teaching, methodology, action- and content-based processes and dealing with technical or general content in the foreign language are regarded as beneficial as much for language learning as for content learning; this field offers a wide range of teaching methods that range from the occasional focusing on subjects to fully developed bilingual / immersive teaching, general knowledge or cultural studies in the foreign language, as well as the CLIL module. Thus, several cantons already offer bilingual courses for both primary school level and lower and upper secondary education. The connection between language and culture refers to the social and intercultural component of language competence which is an indispensable complement to the language competence primarily defined from the perspective of functionality. Intercultural competence, whose operationalisation in the form of descriptors is also one of the central elements of the European FREPA project, is fundamental to a multicultural, mobile society. This competence can be developed through approaches such as *EOLE* and *ELBE*, through language teaching processes that rely on comparison and observation and, mainly, through contact pedagogy. Literature and art are also part of the relationship between language and culture. The integration of languages and cultures of origin, for its part, contributes to intercultural learning.

Early foreign language teaching (two foreign languages starting in primary school) raises the question of the coordination of this parallel teaching, since the number of hours allotted for each language is often low. The order of introduction of languages (one national language and English) is different depending on the linguistic region. Students are expected to reach the same level of competence in both languages by the end of their compulsory education, and it is expected that transfers and synergies between languages will facilitate the learning of the second and subsequent languages. This approach is supported by several studies (such as the survey conducted by Heinzmann et al. in the cantons of Central Switzerland in 2010). Other empirical surveys will of course be needed. The curricula take on an important function in the coordination of content and the competences targeted in the different languages. Various instruments make it possible to check whether objectives have been reached, such as *Lingualevel*, which has been available for some time in the German-speaking region for French and English as foreign languages, and remains to be developed for German in Ticino and in the French-speaking region.

When language teaching relies on action- and content-based methods, progression can no longer be determined by grammatical structures. The linguistic resources are at the service of language activities. Progression always appears as a cyclical spiral. The increase in the number of languages taught coincides with a relatively lower time allocation per foreign language. However, overall, the allocation for foreign languages is increasing. In this regard, it is important to adopt a holistic approach to language competences, concentrating less on competences in each separate language, and more on the learners' language resources as a whole. As seen in chapter 3, teaching methods emphasise usage-based approaches, encouraging the use of language in carrying out tasks, for instance. Combined with content-based methods, language also becomes a medium in the teaching of foreign languages, thereby facilitating efficient implicit learning processes.

Horizontal and vertical coherence are particularly important for integrative language teaching, since they guarantee the internal cohesion of language learning and thereby optimise learning processes. Horizontal coherence is the result of common (action- and content-based, see above) methodological processes, of coordinated curricula and teaching resources, as well as of interlinguistic resources and instruments. The European Language Portfolio (ELP) in particular serves as an integrative instrument by giving learners an idea of their overall plurilingual competence and of its development. But the *EOLE / ELBE* approaches also create coherence through the cross-disciplinary perspective they provide. Work on several languages, especially in the area of strategies, is also part of this category, since vocabulary learning strategies, for instance, can be developed and practised for several languages at the same time. In this context the national Educational Standards and the models of competence play an important role. The language of schooling is considered as object and as language in other subjects; natural sciences and mathematics also include aspects of language; for foreign languages, aspects of language mediation and of intercultural competence are described. For the development of curricular and teaching resources as regards horizontal (and vertical) coherence, it would be advisable to include these elements. Horizontal coherence is also reinforced through a common basis for the description and assessment of language competences (such as *Lingualevel* and ELP). The wash-back effect of such a basis can on the one hand be to achieve a degree of harmonisation of teaching and, on the other, to show that there is an identical fundamental philosophy for the different foreign languages.

The curricula play a major role in achieving vertical coherence: their function must be to build a continuous learning pathway through the learning levels, avoiding discontinuities at the points of transition from one level to the next. For this, the level descriptions of the CEFR provide useful benchmarks for a transparent formulation of the objectives. Nothing comparable exists for the moment for languages of schooling. In this context one must mention the linguistic profiles (*Sprach-*

*profile*) applied in Basel Stadt and the recent work of the Council of Europe on languages of schooling, which are both based on an interlinguistic approach.

Where foreign language teaching methodology is concerned, using processes specific to the age and level of the learners can provide vertical coherence of methodology and teaching. Thus, transitions are provided by the type of teaching that is chosen: from implicit to explicit, from general exercises to reflexive cognitive exercises and concrete topics that appeal to the senses and the body, to more abstract, general topics. The common points are always an action and content orientation, the fact of integrating exchanges and the awareness of other languages (contact pedagogy), as well as the possibility of intensifying language learning (for instance by using the CLIL modules). In this vertical perspective of the language of schooling one observes that the emphasis is increasingly placed on linguistic reflection (metacognition) and on the types of texts (receptive and productive) that have a certain relevance to life in society.

The search for cohesion among teaching resources has positive effects on vertical coherence. Hence, it is beneficial to use methods based on continuing concepts that evolve over several years. Such concepts are however not generalised, since traditions differ between the Swiss linguistic regions. Although in the German-speaking region teaching resources are often designed and specifically developed to ensure cohesion, this is less often the case in the French-speaking region where some of the teaching resources that are used come from abroad.

One of the central problems for vertical coherence is the transition between school levels, because discontinuity compromises not only learning results but also the motivation of the learners. If transitions are to be managed in a homogenous way, one needs records of competence and standards. For this, the European Language Portfolio (ELP) is very useful. It can be used as a document of transition since its different versions overlap at the points of transition between school levels.

National Educational Standards are also useful. Transition can be facilitated, for both the learners and the teachers, by so-called bridging tasks.

To conclude, we observe that evolution towards a plurilingual approach to language teaching in Switzerland is governed by a complex process – due to the linguistic and cultural differences between the regions – of which the outcome is, as yet, unpredictable. However, there is currently a strong dynamic in this area, indicated by the creation and partial implementation of a multilingually oriented language teaching methodology / integrated language teaching methodology which has been considerably stimulated by work in relation to the *HarmoS* Agreement. It is therefore probable that within a few years Switzerland will have developed more than mere approaches to integrated language teaching.



# 5 THE COHERENCE OF NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS, CURRICULA, ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENTS AND TEACHER TRAINING

The first goal of language teaching is to enable students to acquire the language and (inter)cultural competences they need in order to deal with the communication challenges they encounter and to answer their own needs and the expectations of others. They must be supported by excellent teaching to be able to develop these competences and acquire the necessary knowledge<sup>132</sup>.

Official guidance applies to languages at different levels. The Strategy of Language Teaching (EDK 2004) notes that efforts to provide coordination and quality in the fields of language teaching should not be made only in school, but should also be features of teacher training. National Educational Standards represent a central steering tool. The models of competence and their different levels define the areas in which communicative (language) competence must be developed, and contain guidelines as to the levels that should be reached at the transition points of compulsory education (the end of the elementary level [*Grund-/Basisstufe*], the primary school level and lower secondary education). As regards the content of foreign language teaching, the EDK had already stated in its 2004 Strategy of Language Teaching that all subsequent development must be based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) (Council of Europe 2001). At the present time there is no other comparable reference for languages of schooling.

It is possible to improve the quality of language learning by setting out guidance regarding a certain number of conditions which should be met from the outset. However, these conditions must also be properly implemented in language teaching. To test the success of this undertaking, periodic assessments of the education system's performance will from now on be carried out in order to determine where adjustments have to be made. They will check, with the help of representative samplings of students (as in the PISA system), whether the Educational Standards (fundamental competences) – applicable for all of Switzerland irrespective of the curricula of the linguistic regions – have been reached. This will be done on a national scale, at regular intervals. This component, the Education Monitoring in Switzerland, serves exclusively to inform necessary adjustments and take appropriate measures – to improve language teaching for instance. Surveys conducted in this context are not used to establish student, class or school rankings.

At the level of the linguistic regions, the curricula have a certain influence on coordination: there is one curriculum for the German-speaking region (*Lehrplan 21*), one curriculum for the French-speaking region (*Plan d'études romand – [PER]*), and one curriculum for Ticino. The Educational Standards are observed in these curricula and constitute common points of reference. The national Educational Standards only formulate the basic levels in the fundamental competences

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132 The *HarmoS* Agreement (art. 7) and the Strategy of Language Teaching of the EDK (2004) offer quality assurance: national Educational Standards that provide a framework of reference with basic levels; the curricula of the linguistic regions; portfolios that provide self-assessment and documentation resources as well as resources for planning one's own learning; the improvement of language teaching through the initial training and continuing education of teachers.

that must be attained in the different language subjects, the curricula present a greater differentiation in requirements, in particular cross-disciplinary requirements (which also concern language subjects). They also contain guidelines relating to contents and teaching methods. The curricula play a pivotal role between educational planning, the development of teaching resources and the teaching itself. The curriculum of the French-speaking region (the *Plan d'études romand – [PER]*) has been available since the spring of 2010, the curriculum of the German-speaking region (*Lehrplan 21*) will probably be completed in 2014, and the curriculum of Ticino is being reworked following the adoption of the national Educational Standards. Concerning foreign languages, two curricula have already been developed in connection with the Strategy of Language Teaching and are based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR): these are the curriculum of the *EDK of Eastern Switzerland (EDK-Ost)* for English and the curriculum of the cantons associated with the *Passepartout* project, which has expressly adopted the order of introduction of languages that consists in beginning with the second national language (French), followed by English. These two preliminary projects will be taken into consideration in the curriculum of the German-speaking region, the *Lehrplan 21*.

Another key to success in the reorientation and improvement of language teaching is teacher training. According to the Strategy of Language Teaching (*EDK 2004*), the setting in motion of the change process depends largely on student teachers' stock of language knowledge when they embark on their training and on their language and teaching competences at the end of that training. The issue is to determine whether regular primary school teachers can master these new approaches or if new profiles should be defined that include fewer subjects. Development work is being carried out in Universities of Teacher Education in relation to the language competence of teachers, with the support of *COHEP* (the Swiss Conference of Rectors of Universities of Teacher Education), whose work is particularly directed towards the profession.

It is expected that training teachers in methodology will deliver, in addition to knowledge of language acquisition (chapter 3) and methodological and teaching competences (chapter 4), an essential component: that is diagnostic competence, and the ability to develop in schools a modern culture of assessment. In order to do this, teachers must have the appropriate assessment instruments that make it possible, at very different levels, to diagnose competences (or deficits) and encourage reflection and learning or to check whether objectives have been attained. In many cases these instruments also serve as quality assurance, particularly when they are used to check whether the learning objectives and the levels prescribed by the curriculum (including national Educational Standards) have been achieved. What is important is that the people who use these instruments know when and why they should be used.

Where second languages, and especially foreign languages, are concerned, various service providers offer international language diplomas that are more or less standardised and generally refer to a single level of language competence that is based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). There is growing interest in these diplomas, particularly in compulsory education especially at upper secondary education, in the field of career guidance. The advantage of these diplomas is that generally they are widely, even internationally, recognised. As regards their use in the training of teachers, the examinations leading to these diplomas lack some communication elements specific to the teaching profession, and will therefore have to be adapted accordingly.

This chapter demonstrates the coherence of the efforts that are being made to guarantee quality in this area of language teaching by reinforcing the five following main points:

1. The curricula, Educational Standards and the Education Monitoring as factors of teaching quality (chapter 5.1). The main question is how to ensure this high quality level in the field of language learning.

2. The current evolution of the curricula of the linguistic regions (chapter 5.2). This chapter presents the approach that has been adopted in the new curricula in the field of language teaching and learning.
3. Initial and continuing teacher training (chapter 5.3). The aim of this chapter is to define the initial training and continuing education which teachers should follow in order to prepare for their tasks in relation to the promotion and coordination of language teaching.
4. The different instruments for assessing language competence (chapter 5.4). The main question is defining which instruments are intended for which goal, and what the relationship is between the different instruments available.
5. International language diplomas (chapter 5.5). This chapter addresses the question of the role played by these diplomas in the education system.

## 5.1 Curricula, Educational Standards and Education Monitoring

Curricula, Educational Standards and the Education Monitoring contribute to language teaching coordination. Curricula and Educational Standards serve as reference systems in the Education Monitoring. It is a matter of clearly defining their different functions.

### 5.1.1 The curricula of the linguistic regions and national Educational Standards

The curricula of the linguistic regions prescribe, for the language of schooling and for foreign languages, educational objectives to which the teaching resources and assessment instruments, and hence the teaching itself, are geared. This is a matter as much of vertical coherence as of horizontal coherence (chapter 4.6). The curricula take into account the traditions and culture of the linguistic regions; they observe common Educational Standards that are coordinated on a national basis.

The national Educational Standards are defined as fundamental competences. They describe general language competences equivalent to the minimum level that students must have acquired at the point of transition from one school level to the next (at the end of the fourth school year for languages of schooling, and at the end of primary school and secondary school for foreign languages and languages of schooling). No higher requirement is prescribed, for example for transition into upper secondary education schools. However, the fundamental competences are part of scales of competence that go beyond the levels on which they themselves are positioned and which are therefore also relevant for students who must meet higher requirements. The curricula, which by their nature describe not only the basic levels but also higher levels of proficiency, can consequently refer to these models of competences.

The project for national Educational Standards has produced scales of competence, but not for all the important areas of language teaching. On the one hand, it has concentrated on the central competences and on the other it has only been able to construct empirically verifiable scales and corresponding tasks in those areas in which it has proven practically feasible. For example, it would be possible for writing comprehension and writing competences, but not – or at least not in this context – in areas such as methodological competences (learning strategies, etc.) or intercultural and cultural competences. The Educational Standards for the language of schooling are defined by a cross-disciplinary approach since they include both language as subject and language in other subjects. As regards the Educational Standards for foreign languages, their wording – in the spirit of a multilingually oriented language teaching methodology – does not refer to one language in particular. An annex also gives intercultural and methodological competences, as well as mediation, as central elements for the development of curricula.

Educational Standards for foreign languages are based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), which also serves

as a benchmark for curricula (as well as for the development of teaching resources and instruments). This is important for the world of employment, which refers to it to describe the levels of language competence required for different positions. It will henceforth be possible to establish language profiles for different occupations by referring to the national Educational Standards, the models of competences, and the levels that compose them.

The national Educational Standards refer to the outcomes of learning in school. They do not contain guidelines about the contents of the learning, nor about learning conditions or opportunities.

However, the curricula, in contrast, present learning contents (content standards) and learning conditions (opportunity to learn standards), in addition to the objectives. Moreover, the curricula must cover all the areas that contain learning objectives considered as relevant, and set out bases for teaching irrespective of the level of development of the corresponding models of competences and the possibilities of implementing them in the form of test exercises.

The proposals for national Educational Standards for the different language subjects have been described by consortia and illustrated by tests and test results (see chapter 3.1). The suggestions made by the specialists were the subject of a consultation process during the first semester of 2010. Reworked on the basis of the answers obtained, the Educational Standards were then adopted and will be used in the different curricula. They will be adjusted once again according to additional feedback that will be obtained after their introduction. Chapter 5.2 contains more detailed information on the current state of development of the curricula in the linguistic regions.

### 5.1.2 Education Monitoring

It is not possible to ensure optimum individual development in language learning unless certain preconditions are met at the level of the education system itself. This is why language teaching must also be examined with respect to the edu-

cation system and, if necessary, adapted. An approach similar to PISA is therefore planned, on a national scale, based on the Educational Standards – which apply throughout Switzerland regardless of the curricula of the linguistic regions. It will check, at regular intervals and based on a representative sampling, whether these Educational Standards have been achieved. These data provide an important foundation for Education Monitoring in Switzerland.

In accordance with the articles on education contained in the Federal Constitution (art. 61a and 62), the intercantonal *HarmoS* Agreement (*EDK* 2006) and the message to encourage education, research and innovation (*BFI* 2007), the Confederation and the cantons jointly ensure the Education Monitoring. According to the Swiss Federal Council (*Bundesrat* 2007), this consists in gathering and systematically processing information on the education system and its context. Starting in 2010, the results will be published every four years in an official report entitled «Swiss Education Report». PISA is one of the instruments that have been in use for some time, notably with the aim of comparing the Swiss educational system with that of other countries.

At the Swiss level, the decision to implement national Educational Standards does not provide for their use as a basis for establishing a ranking or individual assessment of schools, teachers, or students. The question of whether the Educational Standards will be used as a benchmark for other quality controls of the educational system at the cantonal level is a decision which is up to the cantonal and regional authorities.

## 5.2 The current evolution of curricula in Switzerland

In accordance with the *HarmoS* Agreement, the harmonisation of the curricula and the coordination of teaching resources are guaranteed at the level of linguistic region (art. 8, al. 1). Some of the conceptual work for the new curricula was initiated before the consortia embarked on their work on Educational Standards. The French-speaking

region of Switzerland, which has played a pioneering role in the development process of the curricula, in 2010 subjected to consultation the *Plan d'études romand (PER)* (the curriculum of the French-speaking region). In the German-speaking region, a common curriculum was developed for the first time, the *Lehrplan 21* (the groundwork was completed in 2009, the content of the curriculum was developed as of autumn 2010, and the work should be completed in 2014). However, in German-speaking Switzerland the situation is more complex for language subjects than for other subjects, because the cantons have opted for two different models of foreign language introduction at the primary school level (French before English or English before French) rather than for a single model. The canton Ticino, for its part, has had a new curriculum since 2004 for lower secondary education, which takes into account specific local structures, particularly in the area of language teaching. A coherent curriculum is planned for all school years once the national Educational Standards have been adopted.

### 5.2.1 French-speaking Switzerland: the *Plan d'études romand (PER)*

With the *Plan d'études romand (PER)* (the curriculum of the French-speaking region) we now have a finalised version of a curriculum. The last adjustments were made at the beginning of 2010, and it can thus come into force as of the beginning of the 2011-2012 school year. These adjustments include a reworking of the curriculum for language subjects that gives more space to integrated language teaching methodology. The *Plan d'études romand (PER)* is based on an agreement between the French-speaking cantons (*Convention scolaire romande, CSR*; the school convention of Western Switzerland), which in turn makes reference to the *HarmoS* Agreement. The *PER* thus contributes to the implementation, at the regional level, of the directives issued at the national level and, at the same time, provides a high degree of coordination within the linguistic region. The *PER* is part of a series of products that has been developed recently by the Intercantonal Conference of Cantonal Ministers of Education of Western

Switzerland and Ticino (*CIIP*). This series includes among other things a brochure presenting the future orientations of French-teaching (*CIIP 2006*) as well as the teaching resources that have been selected or developed by the *CIIP*.

The language of schooling (in this case French), foreign languages (German and English) and language awareness (*EOLE*, language education and awareness in school) together form the field of language in the *PER*, to which are added the classical languages taught in some parts of the French-speaking region, and Italian. Moreover, the «general comments» in the introduction to the section on languages refer to the linguistic diversity present in schools and in everyday usage – a diversity that could lead to a plurilingual approach. The same passage mentions the «creation of a language repertoire» based on the learning of different languages (*CIIP 2010*, 123). In spite of these references and of the fact that *ELBE* (language awareness, *Begegnung mit Sprachen, éveil aux langues*) has been introduced in the French-speaking region through the *EOLE* approach (*CIIP 2003*), it seems that the *PER* also does not really go beyond the boundaries between subjects that have existed until now. Moreover, it is striking to observe that French as a second language (for children of migrants) is not systematically taken into account in the *PER*.

The *PER* sets out the following objectives regarding languages:

- acquisition of functional language skills in several languages (including gathering information and using reference materials)
- reflection on languages / mastering the functioning of languages and their use
- construction of cultural references; use of the media in general, as well as of information and communication technology
- development of positive attitudes towards languages and language learning

The application of these objectives gives us, for French as the language of schooling, the following learning themes, described in greater detail (see table 5a):

Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Cycle 3
L1 11–12 Reading and writing texts (...)	L1 21 Reading texts (...)	L1 31 Reading and analysing texts (...)
	L1 22 Writing texts (...)	L1 32 Writing texts (...)
L1 13–14 Understanding and producing spoken texts (...)	L1 23 Understanding spoken texts (...)	L1 33 Understanding and analysing spoken texts (...)
	L1 24 Producing spoken texts (...)	L1 34 Producing spoken texts (...)
L1 15 Appreciating literary works (...)	L1 25 Practising and appreciating the reading of literary works (...)	L1 35 Appreciating and analysing a range of literary material (...)
L1 16 Observing language functioning (...)	L1 26 Constructing a representation of language to understand and produce texts (...)	L1 36 Analysing language functioning (...)
Sentence grammar Spelling Vocabulary Conjugation From text to sentence and from sentence to word	Sentence grammar Spelling Vocabulary Conjugation From sentence to word	Sentence grammar Spelling Vocabulary Conjugation From sentence to word
L1 17 Identifying the organisation of language through observation and use of other languages (...)	L1 27 Extending language comprehension and practice by establishing connections with a range of different languages (...)	L1 37 Extending language comprehension and practice by establishing connections with a range of different languages (...)
L1 18 Discovering and using writing techniques and communication tools (...)	L1 28 Using writing and communication tools to plan and create documents (...)	L1 38 Using writing and communication tools to plan and create documents (...)

**Table 5a** | Learning themes for French as language of schooling. Cycle 1 covers school years 1 to 4 (according to the *HarmoS* schedule); cycle 2 covers school years 5 to 8 and cycle 3 covers school years 9 to 11. [Translation]

These learning themes are then presented by cycle in great detail in an even more detailed system. This process is illustrated here using a theme related to communicative language use.

The field of objectives «language of schooling L1 11–12 Reading and writing texts» is represented in the *Plan d'études romand (PER)* by the following categories (see table 5b):

The learning progression presents learning content divided by half-cycles of two school years up to the 8<sup>th</sup> school year, and by one school year for lower secondary education.

**Learning progression, fundamental expectations, teaching instructions**

Basic reading and writing
Elements common to all <i>genres</i>
Text that plays with language
Text that narrates
Text that recounts
Text that argues
Text that transmits knowledge
Text that governs behaviours

**Table 5b** | Systematic learning «language of schooling L1 11–12 Reading and writing» texts

Fundamental expectations define the competences that students must acquire during the course, and at latest by the end of the course. Otherwise, according to the authors of the curriculum, there is a risk that they will run into difficulties later on in their schooling (Merkelbach 2007, 54). The curriculum aims to establish a correspondence between these fundamental expectations at the end of each course and the national Educational Standards for the corresponding points of transition (the 4<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> school years). The authors are aware that one cannot simply postulate that fundamental expectations and Educational Standards are comparable, but that this can only be verified through practice (Merkelbach 2007, 56).

In the 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle (lower secondary education), three levels of expectation are formulated in order to take into account the different requirements of lower secondary education courses. Expectations for the lower level of the 11<sup>th</sup> school year correspond to the national Educational Standards.

The national Educational Standards for the language of schooling (French) appear to be compatible with the system chosen in the *Plan d'études romand (PER)*. In the Educational Standards one observes, as primary areas of competence (see chapter 3.1.2): speaking and listening comprehension, writing and reading comprehension, taking part in a conversation, continuous spoken expression, writing, spelling and grammar. For each of these objectives, distinct standards have been defined. Moreover, one finds these same objectives, among others, in the *PER*.

For foreign languages (German and English), the curriculum refers to the categories and competence descriptions of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) (Council of Europe 2001) and to the Swiss edition of the European Language Portfolio (ELP), which includes versions that each cover several years of compulsory education (Portfolino: *EDK* 2008a; PEL I: *EDK* 2008b; PEL II: *EDK* 2005; PEL III: *EDK* 2001/2010). Like the *PER*, the national Educational Standards also refer to the CEFR. And like the national Educational Standards, the *PER*

also approaches the first and second foreign languages mainly from the angle of a single subject; it does not therefore take integrated language teaching methodology as a guideline.

For foreign languages, the curriculum sets out the following general learning themes:

Cycle 2	Cycle 3
L2 21 Reading texts (...)	L2 31 / L3 31 Reading texts autonomously (...)
L2 22 Writing texts (...)	L2 32 / L3 32 Writing texts (...)
L2 23 Understanding spoken texts (...)	L2 33 / L3 33 Understanding spoken texts (...)
L2 24 Production of utterances [spoken texts] (...)	L2 34 / L3 34 Production of utterances [spoken texts] (...)
L2 26 Observing language functioning (...)	L2 36 / L3 36 Observing language functioning (...)

**Table 5c:** Learning themes for the first foreign language (German) and the second foreign language (English) (*CIIP* 2010, 126–127)

Like the European Language Portfolio (ELP) and the national Educational Standards, the *Plan d'études romand (PER)* makes a distinction between spoken production and spoken interaction. The learning theme termed «language functioning» combines objectives and activities taken from the fields of vocabulary and grammar.

Themes L2 21 to L2 34, which are usage-based, are presented according to the following plan: first, one represents the way in which learners understand or produce texts: they identify the main ideas, mobilise their knowledge, adapt to the reactions of their interlocutors, etc. The plan then proposes a selection – indicating the level of reference – of can-do statements that are connected to certain actions and taken from the European Language Portfolio (ELP). Recommendations for teaching activities, including action-based communication tasks, follow under the heading «learning progression». Fundamental expectations for these proposals are mentioned each time, often with the simple

indication «achieves the level...», and teaching recommendations are formulated for the proposed activities. For lower secondary education, the plan also sets expectations corresponding to different levels for the various courses. For German, the plan defines three levels, and for English, two.

### 5.2.2 Ticino

Ticino, which is a member of the Intercantonal Conference of Cantonal Ministers of Education of Western Switzerland and Ticino (*CIIP*), has developed its own solutions regarding curricula. For the foreign languages French, German and English, a new curriculum was introduced in 2004 for the *scuola media* (lower secondary education). The significant innovation of this curriculum is to introduce a common plan for the three foreign languages. On the basis of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), it formulates the same communicative learning objectives for the three languages; but it sets different levels of competence. Furthermore, its aim is to develop an integrated language teaching methodology that will, in particular, make the most of the communicative (language) competences and the learning strategies (methodological competences) connected to language teaching or to previously learned languages.

### 5.2.3 German-speaking Switzerland: the *Lehrplan 21*

The *Lehrplan 21* is the first common regional curriculum for German-speaking and multilingual cantons<sup>133</sup>. It harmonises the language teaching objectives of compulsory education, including pre-school, thereby greatly contributing to the harmonisation of compulsory education as a whole. The *Lehrplan 21* is based on voluntary coordination among the cantons, and not on a le-

gal basis such as the agreement behind the *Plan d'études romand (PER)*. Depending on the curriculum that is adopted, development of the contents of the *Lehrplan 21* should begin in the autumn of 2010 with a view to its introduction in spring 2014. Its contents are defined by teams composed of methodology specialists and teachers familiar with the school system.

In the *Lehrplan 21*, language education includes the language of schooling (German) as well as the first and second foreign languages. As the order of introduction of the languages differs depending on the region, students learn either English or French first. The *HarmoS* Agreement stipulates, moreover, that the cantons offer optional teaching, according to needs, in a third national language. In the German-speaking region this is generally Italian. For this reason, a curriculum is also being developed for Italian as the third foreign language. The cantons are free to offer other foreign languages as well (Spanish for instance), and Latin as a classical language, within the framework of their additional cantonal education.

Language development is coordinated in the spirit of multilingually oriented language teaching methodology. Language awareness, in particular in connection with the languages of origin/ of migration – known in Switzerland under the acronym *ELBE* (language awareness, *Begegnung mit Sprachen, éveil aux langues*) – is included in the contents of the language of schooling and is subsequently included in the other language subjects.

For the teaching of German as a second language (*DaZ*) the objectives of the ordinary curriculum generally apply.

The cantons and regions (the *EDK* of Northwestern Switzerland [*NW EDK*], the *EDK* of Central Switzerland [*BKZ*], and the *EDK* of Eastern Switzerland [*EDK-Ost*]) have recently adapted their

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133 The *Lehrplan 21* is designed for the German-speaking cantons, for the German-speaking regions of the bilingual cantons Bern, Fribourg and Valais, and for canton Graubünden, which is officially trilingual.



curricula to introduce a second foreign language in primary school, as it is needed before the work on *Lehrplan 21* is finalised. The cantons of Central Switzerland finished these adaptations some time ago. The EDK of Eastern Switzerland (EDK-Ost) has extended the curriculum for English teaching at primary school level to lower secondary education.

Since 2006, the cantons of Basel Landschaft, Basel Stadt, Bern, Fribourg, Solothurn and Valais have been coordinating foreign language teaching within the framework of the *Passepartout* project. These six cantons will introduce French in the 3<sup>rd</sup> school year starting with the 2011–2012 school year, and starting in 2013–2014, English will be taught in the 5<sup>th</sup> school year. A curriculum has been designed for French and English in the framework of the *Passepartout* project. Thus, the field of foreign languages has new curricula based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).

The different regional curricula for foreign language teaching are expected to be integrated into the *Lehrplan 21*. This will be carried out by the team in charge of the field of languages, under the direction of the leaders of the project. This will guarantee that the *Lehrplan 21* forms a coherent unit with the integrated foreign language curricula.

For each subject, the curriculum defines the competences that students must acquire during their compulsory schooling. The curriculum sets out, for each competence, the way in which it will be developed. The development of competences is described by levels which correspond to the three cycles of the compulsory education (elementary level [*Grund-/Basisstufe*], primary school level, lower secondary education). In order to take into account the varying progress of students these levels of competence overlap at the end of the cycles.

The *Lehrplan 21* will designate the minimum requirements per cycle. These correspond to the levels of competence that all students (except for those for whom special learning objectives have

been applied) must achieve at the latest by the end of each respective cycle.

In mathematics, foreign languages, language of schooling and natural sciences, the minimum requirements refer to Educational Standards, which cannot be used directly, in their literal form, in the *Lehrplan 21*. It is up to the teams in charge of the different subjects, to translate and adapt them. However, the *Lehrplan 21* must guarantee that the achievement of the minimum requirement and that of the Educational Standards are indeed equivalent.

For the end of the third cycle (of lower secondary education), the *Lehrplan 21* contains a description of contents for transition to upper secondary education. But the curriculum does not contain any instructions regarding selection criteria to be applied for entrance to subsequent schools with higher requirements, such as baccalaureate schools. It is up to the cantons to define the selection process and the applicable criteria. It goes without saying that the cantons can use the development of competences, with its different levels, to create other instruments and, if necessary, set the levels of requirements for the various educational courses.

The schedules for language subjects are not detailed in the *Lehrplan 21*; the curriculum prescribes a framework that leaves some leeway to the different regions.

Basically, the *Lehrplan 21*, like the national Educational Standards, is in keeping with a competence-based teaching approach (*D-EDK* [Conference of German-speaking and bilingual cantons] 2009, 10s). Developing the ability to act is central to this effort. One of the characteristics of this approach is the wide and diverse vision of the different cognitive, personal and social competences that underpin every action (whether it is successful or not) carried out in situations that present certain constraints. This understanding of competence reveals a need for greater autonomy in teaching.

The canton Graubünden has decided to implement the *Lehrplan 21* throughout the canton, i.e. also in

the Romansh and Italian-speaking regions. On the one hand this means that complementary portions of the curricula must be developed for the additional languages taught in Graubünden and, on the other, that the specific situation of this trilingual canton must be taken into account.

One can refer to the curriculum of canton Ticino for the development of the Italian portion. However, due to the differences in school structure between the two cantons, it is not possible to simply apply this curriculum, as it is, for canton Graubünden. Moreover, collaborating with the *Lehrplan 21* offers the advantage of producing a curriculum that is harmonised for the entire canton.

#### 5.2.4 German-speaking Switzerland, cantons at the linguistic border with French: *Passepartout*

The bilingual cantons on the German-French linguistic border, as well as some of the neighbouring German-speaking cantons, decided to collaborate, starting in March 2004, following the EDK's adoption of the Strategy of Language Teaching, because contrary to the majority of German-speaking cantons, they wished to introduce French, a national language, before English. They are the following six cantons: Basel Landschaft, Basel Stadt, Bern, Fribourg, Solothurn and Valais.

The preference for French first was motivated by the following considerations:

- The *Passepartout* cantons lie in the intermediary zone between German-speaking and French-speaking Switzerland; three of these cantons are officially bilingual.
- The *Passepartout* project's specialists feel that an earlier start in French-learning presents advantages:
  - language awareness, immersion and the bilingual teaching of non-language subjects are easier to implement
  - a playful approach, which is only possible with quite young students, is more important for French-teaching since that language

presents greater formal difficulties than does English

- younger children are less influenced by international youth culture, which is marked by English
- from a psycholinguistic point of view, the grammatical transparency and richness of form found in French provide a good foundation for initiating beginners in foreign language learning

The authors also point to the following reasons to justify introducing English after French:

- because of the similarities in English vocabulary to both German and French vocabulary, synergies can be doubly helpful
- English is more present in everyday life and international contacts often take place in English; it is therefore possible to attain the same level in less time within the period of compulsory education

The *Passepartout* project is a comprehensive formula for the implementation of the French-before-English scenario and of the EDK Strategy of Language Teaching, and by no means merely a project for a curriculum. It brings into play the following central elements:

- the development of a methodology for several languages
- the development of a common curriculum for French and English as foreign languages (with performance benchmarks as well as learning content and opportunities)
- the reworking of a French-teaching method from the third school year onwards (*Mille feuilles*) and the development of the English-teaching method from the fifth school year, in accordance with the principles of the *Passepartout* project
- initial and continuing teacher training

Although *Passepartout* does not concern the language of schooling (German), the latter is nevertheless taken into account in the general concept, as is the fact that many students also have knowledge of other languages that they have

generally acquired within the family. Planning of the two foreign languages (French and English) is approached in a combined manner. The *Passepartout* project is presented as a concept of language learning in school in the era of multilingualism. Its primary ambition is therefore to contribute to the development of functional multilingualism (see chapter 4.1.1 regarding the integrated language teaching methodology approach of the *Passepartout* project).

The *Passepartout* project formulates objectives for three areas of competence, i.e.:

- the capacity to act in a communication situation
- language and culture awareness
- learning strategy competences

The *Passepartout* project also offers guidelines in areas that are not governed by national Educational Standards because they are connected more to the process than to the outcome or because they have not been sufficiently measured and tested. The procedure that has been adopted for the *Passepartout* project indeed corresponds to the Educational Standards as the areas mentioned are important to learning and to the general objectives pursued; they must therefore be taken into account in the curriculum, even if it is still difficult to measure and test them (or if this raises fundamental problems).

In the *Passepartout* project it is essentially the levels of the fundamental competences that have been taken as the minimal levels of achievement for the capacity to act in a communication situation. But additional objectives have also been set for the broader requirements. There too, it is a matter of an amplification that is entirely logical in the context of the Strategy of Language Teaching (EDK 2004) and the national Educational Standards.

Trilingual canton Graubünden is the only canton of Eastern Switzerland to have adopted the same order of introduction of foreign languages as the *Passepartout* cantons with, as first foreign language, a cantonal language, and as second foreign

language, English. As a result, there are a number of parallels and synergies in the implementation of the Strategy of Language Teaching.

## 5.3 Initial and continuing teacher training

In the Strategy of Language Teaching (EDK 2004), teacher training is rightly considered as a key factor in the successful reorientation and improvement that are necessary in the area of language teaching.

The Universities of Teacher Education are appointed by the cantons to ensure the initial training of compulsory education teachers. The training of baccalaureate teachers (corresponding to the Bachelor-Master degrees) is carried out in universities or, in the case of art subjects, in Universities of Applied Sciences; to this is added teaching, methodological and practical training delivered by Universities of Teacher Education. In the area of continuing education, the Universities of Teacher Education offer courses on their own initiative or in response to direct instructions from the cantons. Those concerning foreign language teaching should include, as an indispensable element, stays in the different linguistic regions.

### 5.3.1. Initial education

Coordinated groundwork has been carried out for several years on a nationwide scale in the area of initial training for language teachers (foreign languages in particular). The EDK is collaborating with the COHEP (the Conference of Rectors of Universities of Teacher Education) and more specifically with its Professional Group for Teaching of Foreign Languages. Emphasis is being placed on the following points:

- **The description of language competence profiles for primary and secondary language teachers** | The object is to define what is expected of foreign language teachers with respect to language competences in response to specific needs. The requirements are cur-

rently defined differently depending on the language taught and the level (primary or secondary). For the primary school level, the 2009/2010 *EDK* survey shows that as part of their teacher training policy the cantons will, in principle, retain the model of the generalist teacher. On the political level, the model of the teacher who is accredited only to teach a group of subjects does not have a large following at present. However, as regards accreditation for teaching visual arts, music, sports and a second foreign language, students in a number of courses already have the option of developing a profile, in other words, of giving up a subject (for instance the second foreign language). As shown by the results of an audit of the categories of teaching diplomas, the cantons, the training institutions and the professional associations are very interested in the idea of offering accredited teachers the possibility of acquiring accreditation for additional levels or subjects through additional studies. This would allow teachers in the primary school level in particular to expand their profile (subjects, teaching level) and thereby obtain an accreditation to teach a second foreign language, for instance<sup>134</sup>. At lower secondary education, language teachers, by the very nature of their training, are specialised in their chosen subjects. In addition to laying the groundwork for these competence profiles, it is also intended to clarify the question of whether international language diplomas can serve as a certification for the necessary linguistic competences. At the same time, proposals will be developed for assessment instruments to ensure that teachers, even if they are not certified by language diploma examinations, have the competences necessary for the different teaching accreditations. Once the competence profiles are available, recommendations will be formulated for complete language examinations that will be organised by the Universities of Teacher Education.

- **A curricular framework for initial training in language teaching methodology** | The fundamental elements of foreign language teaching methodology must be defined and submitted in the form of recommendations to the Universities of Teacher Education. Certain preliminary European studies are taken into account, in particular the European Portfolio for language teachers in initial training (*EPOSA*) developed by the European Centre for Modern Languages (ECML) in Graz.
- **Language and cultural content in the initial training of language teachers** | Here as well, the fundamental elements must be identified which will subsequently be implemented in the training programmes of the greatest possible number of Universities of Teacher Education.
- **Multilingually oriented language teaching methodology / integrated language teaching methodology** | It is important, first and foremost, to clarify these two notions. The next phases are not yet clearly defined, but the preliminary work and the trials carried out in the course of ongoing projects, in particular the *Passepartout* project, are being taken into account as far as possible.

Some of the abovementioned points have been developed as a result of commissions. In relation to the profiles of competences, important steps have already been taken. A survey was also conducted nationwide to find out which levels of linguistic competence or language diplomas students must hold at the start and at the end of the training (Hunkeler et al. 2009). In practice, a number of aspects have proved quite different. Currently primary school level teachers require competences corresponding to the B2/C1 levels of the CEFR, and teachers of lower secondary education need competences corresponding to levels C1/C2. In order to preserve level C competences over the long term, fairly frequent and demanding language contact would be neces-

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134 **Guidelines for recognition of teaching accreditations for additional subjects or levels at the pre-school and primary school levels as well as for additional subjects at lower secondary education are being developed by the *EDK*.**

sary – a condition that is not easy for teachers to observe.

Certain competences corresponding to level C are not directly relevant or are too general in the context of compulsory education teaching. Moreover, it is essential for teachers to possess extensive competences allowing them to teach competently and with ease (which also implies being a model speaker in the fundamental fields of communication, and mastering correcting and assessment). The Universities of Teacher Education of St. Gallen and of Central Switzerland are currently carrying out a project aimed at describing the relevant language competences<sup>135</sup> with the support of the *EDK* and *COHEP*. The project is not limited to language activity requirements but also integrates cultural and intercultural competences. The work that has been carried out for the project, such as a video study in which authentic teaching situations are filmed, should be finished by 2012. Based on this, the question to be addressed will be whether international language diplomas constitute a sufficient certification of language competences or whether perhaps a language examination should be designed specifically for the teaching profession.

In anticipation of the new teaching scenarios, the *Passepartout* project is conducting pioneering work in the area of teacher training. A concept is already available for primary school level that includes the three areas of competence that will have to be developed by trainees, i.e. the ability to act in communication situations, language and culture awareness and learning strategy competences.

Regarding the ability to act in an ordinary communication situation, the aim is a satisfactory B2 level. From then on, areas of competence are specifically developed that are particularly important for teaching, such as leading classes in the target language, telling stories, etc. These broader competences are connected to a newly defined C1 level.

### 5.3.2 Continuing education

Continuing education of teaching staff plays a particularly important role when innovations have to be introduced into school programmes. The teaching of two foreign languages instead of one at primary school level therefore represents a major challenge, hence the importance of the additional qualifications described above. These will make it possible to acquire the accreditation to teach a second foreign language at a later time during one's employment.

Several German-speaking cantons have already introduced English; the *Passepartout* cantons are currently conducting continuing education for their teaching staff and the French-speaking region is planning teacher training for the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> school years (according to the *HarmoS* schedule).

Continuing education for primary school teachers in a new language is conducted on a voluntary basis. As a rule, knowledge of a foreign language must be certified by a recognised language diploma. Teachers who need to spend time abroad in order to obtain such a diploma often receive support from the canton. Moreover, training is currently being given in Switzerland in foreign language teaching methodology, as well as an introduction to teaching resources. Highly motivated teachers are frequently trained as multipliers to supplement the trainers in charge of continuing education. The *Passepartout* project offers multipliers an interesting option: to train for their new task, both in methodology and in language learning theory, as part of the Certificate of Advanced Studies (CAS), and thus acquire a formal qualification.

The Strategy of Language Teaching of the *EDK* (2004) led to several innovations, particularly in the field of foreign language teaching. The implementation of the multilingually oriented language teaching methodology in the *Lehrplan 21* and the *Plan d'études romand (PER)* could also lead in the

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135 Cf. <http://www.phsg.ch> > *Forschung & Entwicklung* > *Institut für Fachdidaktik Sprachen* > *Projekte* > *Berufsspezifische Sprachkompetenzprofile für Lehrpersonen*.

near future to initiatives in the area of the language of schooling.

For the time being there is no one specifically in charge of questions related to language of schooling teaching methodology in regard to educational policy (*COHEP, EDK*) in Switzerland. The *Forum Deutschdidaktik (FDD)*, a working group of the *Schweizerische Gesellschaft für Lehrerinnen- und Lehrerbildung (SGL)* [the Swiss society for teacher training] drew up in 2010 a summary document on the language competences of future language of schooling teachers. It underscored the need to develop the bases that are still lacking and defines four points to be clarified as a matter of priority:

1. Among those embarking on their studies in Universities of Teacher Education there is a growing number of multilingual students whose first language is not the local language of schooling, or who have acquired two languages simultaneously since early childhood (the language of schooling and another). This must be taken into account in the formulation of the requirements for language of schooling competences.
2. It is necessary to check whether the language of schooling competences acquired as qualifications for entrance into Universities of Teacher Education correspond to those that teachers need in their everyday work with students. If necessary, the admission requirements and the courses of Universities of Teacher Education must be adapted.
3. Promoting the competences in the language of schooling that are specific to this professional field must be systematically integrated as widely as possible into the study schedules of future teachers (the language of schooling as language of other subjects).
4. Greater emphasis must be placed on the language of schooling in the continuing education of teachers.

In many Universities of Teacher Education students are selected on the basis of tests of their competences in the language of schooling, mainly in writing. The selection takes place either during the entrance examination or during the first cy-

cle. However, there is no available overview of this process in the different Universities of Teacher Education, of the underlying theory, or of the legitimation of this selection process. A list should be established of current practices and an overview obtained of the requirements to be met in the various areas of competence in the area of the language of schooling. As there is unfortunately no European benchmark, it is a matter of developing the necessary foundations (competence grids and tools for hetero- and self-assessment, etc.). This task should deal with personal competences as well as with methodological competences.

## 5.4 Assessment instruments

Implementing the Strategy of Language Teaching of the *EDK* (2004) and attaining the language competence objectives set by the national Educational Standards (see chapter 3.1) require not only the instruments needed to attain those objectives but also the instruments to verify that those objectives have been attained. The *EDK* pointed out in its Strategy of Language Teaching that coordination at the national level is supported by the planned development of common instruments (*EDK* 2004, 8). Among those instruments are those, in particular, designed to achieve assessment that is as complete as possible and the development of the language competences to be acquired. What is more, the competence-based approach adopted for the national Educational Standards requires a new culture of assessment and learner development that combines, in particular, formative and summative assessment. Finally, the teachers must have particularly strong diagnostic competences.

The first part of this chapter looks at assessment instruments in the context of the current culture of assessment and learner development (encouragement). It then gives an overview of the diagnostic instruments normally used in Switzerland in the field of languages. The final part of the chapter concentrates on instruments of encouragement-based hetero- and self-assessment in the form of competence grids and assessment checklists.

### 5.4.1 The culture of assessment and encouragement

A good culture of assessment and encouragement is beneficial both to the learners themselves and to their individual learning. Such a culture has the following characteristics:

- It concentrates on the processes and results of learning, and therefore on the competences of the students.
- It is inspired by competence-based curricula and teaching resources that provide indications for subsequent teaching and learning.
- It integrates assessment into daily teaching and learning activities, so that students perceive assessment as an analytical reflection that is constructive and useful for themselves and for their learning, and so that they acquire confidence in themselves and in the abilities that will serve them throughout their lives.
- It takes into account horizontal competences (such as planning, reflection, self-assessment; the ability to take a critical view, for example) in addition to competences in the different subjects.

Student assessment and encouragement must be related to the objectives and competences. In other words, they must provide indications about the degree to which objectives have been attained (in reference to the curriculum) on the one hand and, on the other, about the development of competences (in reference to the student) – a balancing exercise that is not always easy. The need to relate the objectives and the level of learning of the students in a constructive and encouraging way is underscored by Achermann (2009, 24ss) for example, who sets out the following model of encouragement (see illustration 5a).

One of the essential conditions for competence- and encouragement-based teaching relates to the diagnostic competence of the teachers. The latter must have solid basic knowledge of the individual development of the students, of certain theoretical fundamentals, and of the thematic contents and the tasks and processes that make it possible to assess, reinforce and develop the compe-

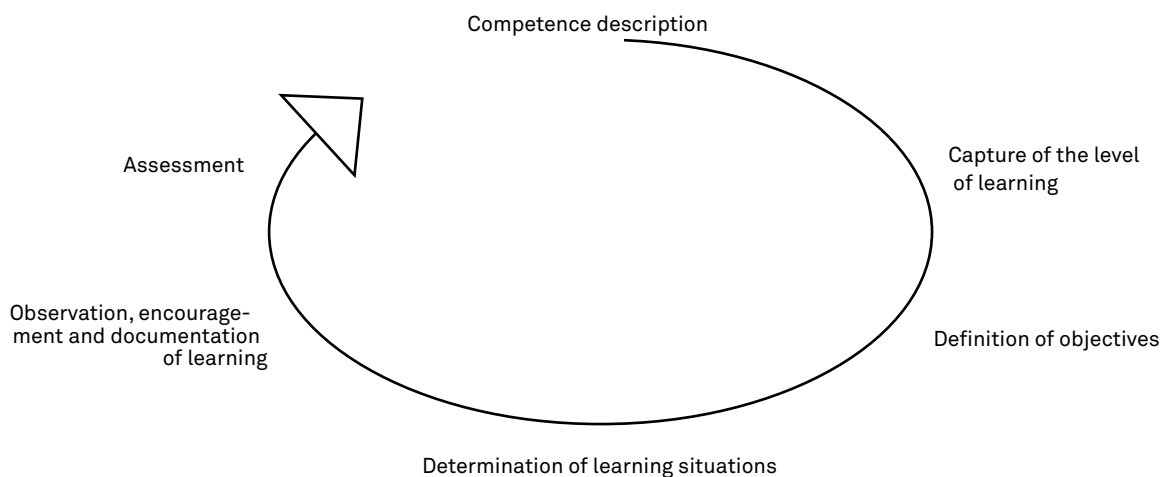
tences of the students in the different subjects. The initial training and continuing education of teachers must also meet high requirements.

In school, three forms of assessment are generally used: formative, summative and prognostic. «Formative assessment» is the term used for processes that make it possible, in the course of teaching, to give each student individual, constructive feedback that is oriented towards the learning objectives regarding the knowledge and abilities acquired. Summative assessment is made after a set period of teaching to check whether the class and the individual students have attained the partial objectives set. Prognostic assessment is based on summative and formative assessment and is used to identify the next learning steps for each student, in particular with a view to transition from one level to another.

A culture of assessment and student encouragement productively combines current developments such as Educational Standards, performance tests, diagnostic instruments and learning tasks that aim at building competences. Moreover, it is one in which the assessment and encouragement of students is not a task that falls solely to the teacher, but one which must be undertaken by an entire team and include the assessments of all those involved: the classroom teachers, the students, special education professionals, speech therapists, educational psychologists, teachers of the language of schooling as a second language, and others.

### 5.4.2 Diagnostic procedures and instruments in the field of languages

A distinction can be made among outcome-based diagnostic procedures between those that primarily pursue an objective related to education policy and those that mainly fulfil an educational function. Policy-motivated diagnostic procedures contribute to the running and quality control of the school (for example, PISA or the measures that will be taken in the framework of the Education Monitoring in Switzerland to check whether Educational Standards are attained). These pro-



**Illustration 5a** | Cyclical model of encouragement (with reference to Achermann 2009, 24ss)

cedures consist of screenings and standardised tests to measure the language performance of large student populations and draw conclusions as to the performance of the school as a system. We will not present them in detail here as they are concerned with the educational system as a whole and do not have a direct role in language teaching, either for the class or for the individual student. Educational diagnostic procedures concentrate on the individual learner and are therefore of interest to teachers and to the students themselves. They provide support for the students in their individual language learning process by counterbalancing the subjective perceptions of teachers and students with objectively gathered data and they provide useful intelligence for promoting individual language competence, based on considerations of subject-matter, teaching and so forth related to developmental psychology.

To understand the language competence of their students, teachers are relying more and more on (semi-)standardised assessment instruments in addition to the traditional tests of learning objectives that are set by most current teaching resources designed for student self-assessment, and by the corresponding textbooks designed for

hetero-assessment by teachers. These instruments are scientifically based; they meet certain methodological criteria related to test theory. They fall into the following categories:

- **(Semi-)standardised assessment instruments that include, inter alia, tests on subjects or languages** | At the present time, several assessment instruments of this type have been developed at the cantonal level and are also used by other cantons. The results serve to establish competence reports and to plan subsequent learning; they are obviously not used for selection. Some examples:
  - Klassencockpit*<sup>136</sup>, an online assessment instrument that measures, three times a year at certain periods, various aspects of competences in the language of schooling (in this case, German) and mathematics, from the 5<sup>th</sup> to the 11<sup>th</sup> school year (according to the *HarmoS* schedule). A web-based platform is available providing test models and the ability to analyse the performance data. The test results are compared using a sample of between 450 and 600 students in a given canton.
  - Stellwerk*<sup>137</sup>, an assessment instrument which may be adapted online, measures, once a year, certain aspects of competences in math-

136 Cf. <http://www.klassencockpit.ch> (22.02.2010)

137 Cf. <http://www.stellwerk-check.ch> (22.02.2010)



ematics, sciences and technology, language of schooling (German) and foreign languages (English and French) during the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> school years (according to the *HarmoS* schedule). A performance profile is established for each test participant by comparison with a sample of students, which provides information about the strengths and weaknesses observed in the areas tested. Several cantons use this instrument in the 10<sup>th</sup> school year to define, together with the students concerned, individual learning objectives to supplement the official objectives (for example, optional subjects).

**Check 5**<sup>138</sup>, an assessment instrument that measures aspects of competences in mathematics and in the language of schooling (German), and which is used for 7<sup>th</sup> school year (according to the *HarmoS* schedule) students in canton Aargau.

- **(Semi-)standardised assessment instruments specifically for languages, such as:**  
**Lingualevel**<sup>139</sup> | This is an instrument that assesses foreign language competences for the 7<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> school years (according to the *HarmoS* schedule). Thanks to an access code, this instrument allows teachers to access online more than 140 action-based (test) tasks for French and for English as foreign languages (additional tasks are planned for German as a foreign language). These tasks refer directly to the descriptors of the European Language Portfolio (ELP) II. Student performances can be analysed with the help of these descriptors and an assessment grid based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). This instrument includes concrete assessment examples of spoken and written production by students to which teachers can refer to assess their students' performance. For the time being, Switzerland has no comparable instrument for the language of schooling. Nevertheless, we should mention in this context the language

of schooling tests presented in the reports of Fried (2004) and Ehlich et al. (2007).

- **Standardised reference tests** | They are used as (semi-)standardised tests of school performance, usually during periods of transition from one level to the next (particularly from primary school level to lower secondary education). Their purpose is to establish an objective assessment of students' performance. Development and use of these tests is generally done at cantonal or regional level. Some examples: the *Prove di fine ciclo*, used in Ticino at the end of lower secondary education (*scuola media*). The tasks in these tests refer to the curriculum as well as to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) and to *Lingualevel*.
- **Hetero-observation and hetero-assessment instruments** | They provide outside observations about student performances (by the teachers or by other students for instance). For example, competence grids, i.e. descriptions of competences in the form of tables, such as *Einschätzungsraster für Deutsch als Schulsprache*, by Bitter Bättig et al. 2006, and *Beurteilungsraster der Orientierungsarbeiten*.
- **Self-observation and assessment instruments** | They allow learners to establish their own performance reports, such as the self-assessment grids and checklists of the European Language Portfolio (ELP) and of *Lingualevel*.

Formal, (semi-)standardised assessment procedures have an advantage over informal observation procedures in that they meet certain methodological standards for measurement (more or less reliably) and therefore provide fairly objective data. But they also have the disadvantage of being used only in isolated situations of language activity, therefore only measuring certain aspects

138 Cf. <http://www.ag.ch/leistungstest/de/pub/check5.php> (22.02.2010)

139 Cf. <http://www.lingualevel.ch> (22.02.2010)

of language competences. This is due notably to the fact that certain language abilities, such as, very generally, spoken and written productive competences, are difficult to pin down from a methodological point of view. Ehlich (2005) and Fried (2004) point out that in order to establish a list of competences that is complete and educationally relevant in the field of languages one should in principle combine several methods and instruments, especially if the aim is to encourage the learners.

In Switzerland, more and more assessment instruments are being used at the intercantonal level. Annex 5 sets out an annotated selection of instruments used at regional and national levels. What is important is that the acquisition of competences and the achievement of language learning objectives should be accompanied by the various instruments in a continuous but also coordinated manner throughout the school career. One of the advantages of the European Language Portfolio (ELP) and of *Lingualevel* is that they are compatible with the national Educational Standards and with the corresponding model of competences for foreign languages. The instruments developed by the cantons, such as *Klassenscockpit* and *Stellwerk* must also adopt this approach in future if they are to be implemented at the linguistic region or Swiss levels.

The European Language Portfolio (ELP) and *Lingualevel* – which are both foreign language learning instruments – have a special place among Swiss educational diagnostic instruments. They have been and are still promoted by the *EDK* and the regional conferences and their application is compulsory in several regions. This is due in particular to the fact that these instruments put into practice fundamental ideas of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). These are, in particular, assessment allied to European reference levels (A1/C2), self-assessment and autonomous learning. They also draw on the European Language Portfolio (ELP), especially concerning individual plurilingualism and the development of intercultural competences. The ELP and *Lingualevel* both offer complete instruments for assessment and encouragement

that allow summative and formative assessment and include other aids to reflection to support the learner. There is no such complete series of instruments for the language of schooling.

Unlike the ELP and *Lingualevel*, which are relatively diversified instruments, most of the instruments used in school are oriented either solely towards summative assessment, or solely towards the formative (self- and hetero-observation) assessment of language competences. In the case of formative assessment, we are increasingly seeing the development of instruments of observation and assessment in competence-based teaching that allow teachers to systematically observe and assess the language competences of their students, or to have them assessed by the students themselves. But the need for instruments to assess, define the level achieved and encourage is especially great for German and French as foreign languages. Chapter 5.4.3 presents this type of observation and assessment instrument (competence grids, checklists) that can be used in the everyday school environment, in greater detail because they offer high potential for the development of encouragement-based competences and because they can cover the whole spectrum of language abilities and skills.

A great number of special diagnostic procedures and instruments are used for the language of schooling, generally for basic aptitude tests or in cases where students are lacking in the local language of schooling. These tests are designed on the one hand for defining the needs in terms of speech therapy and special teaching and, on the other, for establishing a list of language competences and encouraging children who are non-native speakers and who are learning the language of schooling as a second language, or students with weak language competences (cf. Ehlich [2005] and Fried [2004] about the level of learning tests). The introduction of national Educational Standards and of the curricula of the linguistic regions should provide an opportunity to conduct a critical analysis of these tests in order to determine to what degree the competences they outline are really current and relevant (cf. Behrens, Marc and Vermot, currently under publication).

Their use in Swiss schools should be documented and the results verified.

### 5.4.3 Competence grids and checklists – encouragement-based observation and assessment instruments

**Competence grids** and checklists were designed for the daily practice of competence-based teaching. For this, the descriptions of competences must be very detailed, precise and comprehensible in order to minimise a variation margin that could lead to divergent assessments and to provide as accurate an assessment as possible. Thanks to the competence grids and checklists, the learner is able to establish comparisons with his or her previous performances or with those of other learners.

The competence grids describe competences in a matrix: the first field presents the areas of competence («what?»); the second records the different levels («to what degree?»). They allow the orientation and visualisation of the development of the learning and the competences of the students. They contribute to the assessment made by the teacher or the students themselves and lead to better awareness of the competences acquired. By talking with the teachers, students find out about performance criteria and learn to evaluate themselves. Vollstädt's vision for the school of 2020, (2009, 255) describes what can be achieved with competence grids, stating that the competence grid tells students, for the long term and at any time, which competences they need to acquire and what levels they can attain. The grid shows them what they must know and to what degree of proficiency. To give them a better understanding of what is expected of them, different learning tasks have been assigned to each level of competence, among which they can choose. They thereby learn to assess themselves, and can also get an idea of how their competences are assessed by the teacher and of what still needs to be achieved. It gives them an individual competence profile for each subject.

An example of a competence grid that enables teachers to observe and assess the performances of their students is to be found in the assessment grid conceived for the language of schooling of children aged four to eight (*Einschätzungsraster für die Schulsprache der 4- bis 8-Jährigen*) (see table 5d).

This example is an instrument of hetero-observation that helps teachers to accompany their students in their learning. It allows them to supplement the assessments made on the basis of their own observation and on the basis of test and examination results, with more differentiated, targeted observations made in the daily school context, and thereby to widen their diagnostic repertoire. Its purpose is to obtain as complete a picture as possible of the development of the students' competences in order to promote these competences more effectively and give the students and their parents a better understanding of them.

**Checklists** present, in list form, different aspects of the competences or learning objectives related to a given level of competence. They show students what they have already learned and what they still need to acquire. They teach them to assess their own competences, to recognise the progress they have made and to plan the next steps in their learning. An example of a checklist is given below; it is taken from the ELP and used by students to observe and assess their own performances (see illustration 5b).

This example presents an instrument for self-assessment and reflection designed for students. The competences to be attained are described in the form of can-do statements that are relatively easy to understand. Self-assessment repeated at different times evidences the level of learning that has been achieved and makes it possible to plan the next steps.

Competence grids and checklists are important working instruments for teaching. But to use these instruments, teachers must possess specialised knowledge of methodology, education, and psychology, and a certain diagnostic competence. The competence grids and checklists that are cur-

The ability to converse

Level I	Level II	Level III	Level IV
Does not grasp the basic rules of conversation	Begins to follow the basic rules of conversation	Improves in following the basic rules of conversation; integrates the utterances of his/her interlocutor(s)	Follows the basic rules of conversation, listens attentively, seeks to clarify unclear points, argues, clarifies
Makes little contribution to the conversation	Makes little, or disproportionate, contribution to the conversation	Makes increasingly relevant contribution to the conversation	Makes a contribution to the conversation that is relevant and adapted to the situation

**Table 5d** | *Einschätzungsraster für die Schulsprache* (assessment grid for the language of schooling), Jurt Betschart, Theiler and Vogel Wiederkehr (2008), based on Bitter Bättig et al. (2006)

rently available are accompanied by complementary supplements such as commentaries containing information on the subject and methodological instructions for teachers, suitable stimulating tasks that enable accurate observation, or student performances that illustrate the expectations at different levels (cf. *Lingualevel*). The competence grids and checklists refer to scientifically-based models of competence such as those developed for the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) or the national Educational Standards. However, although these instruments, with their different levels, track the learning gains of children and adolescents fairly well, they are often not able to give a satisfactory representation of each function because in many areas the empirical data are still insufficient.

The need has been demonstrated for orientation aids in the area of assessment and promotion of the individual competences of students in the language of schooling. It is now particularly urgent to clarify for those involved the function of the instruments, whether or not their use is compulsory, and the associations that are possible, notably with the aim of coordinating diagnosis and performance training. In addition to conducting in-depth studies of language acquisition in school, to developing the relevant instruments, particularly with regard to the models of competence,

and to providing continuing education to teachers, more attention should be devoted to research into the effects of the instruments in parallel to their implementation.

## 5.5 International language diplomas

This chapter deals with the role and significance of international language diplomas in (compulsory) school and in upper secondary education (baccalaureate and vocational schools).

### 5.5.1 Standardised international language diplomas: what is on offer and how it is used

The standardised international language diploma offer for foreign languages has been growing steadily in the past decades. According to estimates and reports made available by the providers of this type of diploma, the number of individuals having successfully passed their examinations has risen, for certain diplomas, by over 30% between 2004 and 2007. In 2007, most international language diplomas awarded in Switzerland related to English (about 33,000), followed by French (about 20,000), German (about 3,700), Spanish and Italian (less than 1,000 for each of these two languages)<sup>140</sup>.

**140** This information is taken from a survey conducted by the General Secretariat of the EDK of which the results have not yet been published.

## Hören

### Checklisten zur Selbsteinschätzung

Markiere die Felder, die deine Selbsteinschätzung wiedergeben.  
Gib auch an, was du besonders gerne können möchtest.

Name .....  
 Daten  20.3.2004  
 21.3.2005

	Sprache Französisch				Sprache Englisch			
	Kann ich manchmal	Kann ich normalerweise	Kann ich gut und leicht	Möchte ich können	Kann ich manchmal	Kann ich normalerweise	Kann ich gut und leicht	Möchte ich können
<b>A1.1</b> Ich kann in der Schule einfache Anweisungen verstehen wie «Steh bitte auf!», «Komm zu mir!», «Schliess bitte die Tür!».	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wenn jemand diese Sprache spricht, dann kann ich manchmal Wörter heraushören, die ich schon aus anderen Sprachen kenne (z.B. «international», «aktiv»).	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ich kann einfache Fragen verstehen, die mich direkt betreffen; ich verstehe z.B., wenn mich jemand nach dem Namen oder der Adresse fragt.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wenn langsam und deutlich gesprochen wird, kann ich einfache, häufig gebrauchte Ausdrücke verstehen, z.B. «Ja», «Nein», «Hallo», «Guten Tag», «Auf Wiedersehen», «Entschuldige».	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ich kann in einfachen, kurzen Hörtexten, die langsam und deutlich gesprochen werden, Wörter, Namen und Zahlen verstehen, die mir bereits bekannt sind.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wenn sich andere vorstellen, kann ich wichtige, einfache Informationen verstehen, z.B. wie sie heissen, wie alt sie sind und woher sie kommen.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>A1.2</b> Ich kann verstehen, was gesagt wird, wenn langsam und sorgfältig gesprochen wird und wenn es zwischendurch lange Pausen gibt.					<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Ich kann verstehen, wenn jemand langsam und mit einfachen Worten von sich und seiner Familie erzählt.					<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Ich kann in klaren Lautsprecherdurchsagen Zahlen, Preise und Zeiten verstehen, z.B. am Bahnhof oder in einem Geschäft.								
Ich kann z.B. in einem Geschäft verstehen, was etwas kostet, wenn sich der Verkäufer darum bemüht, dass ich ihn verstehe.								
Ich kann einige Wörter und Ausdrücke verstehen, wenn es z.B. um mich selbst, meine Familie, die Schule, die Freizeit oder meine Umgebung geht. Es muss aber langsam und deutlich gesprochen werden.								
Ich kann einfache Rechnungen mit «plus», «minus» und «mal» verstehen.								

Biographie langagière · Language Biography · Biografia linguistica · Biografia linguistica

Sprachbiografie

Formular 12.1



**Illustration 5b** | Checklist for self-assessment, listening, level A1, taken from the Swiss version of the European Language Portfolio for children aged 11 to 15 and for adolescents (EDK 2005)

Although there are no age-specific statistics, one can assume that language diplomas are acquired mainly by adults who follow continuing education courses for professional reasons.

Although most examination providers now refer to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) and its levels (A1 to C2), the offer is extensive and it is not possible to gain an overall picture because each language is offered by several providers (such as, for Italian, the *Società Dante Alighieri* with the *PLIDA* examinations, the *Accademia italiana di lingua* with the *DELI* examinations, and the *Università per Stranieri di Perugia* with the *CELI* examinations) and because some of them offer several language diplomas (for example, *telc GmbH*, with diplomas for nine languages). A list drawn up for the survey conducted by the *EDK* in 2008 (see footnote 140)

shows that for French, for example, there are 20 different language diplomas. Furthermore, a distinction must be made between language diplomas and assessment tests.

Standardised international language diplomas are forms of certification of foreign language competence that are known worldwide and recognised by most educational institutions and by employers. A number of institutions offer general language examinations for different levels that all refer to the CEFR levels. There is generally no time limit on the validity of these language diplomas. Among the well-known language diplomas there are, for English for instance, the First Certificate, the Advanced and Proficiency certificates of Cambridge ESOL. This chapter gives an overview of some of the other language diplomas on offer (see below).

Besides standardised international language diplomas, linguistic knowledge can also be evaluated by means of assessment tests. These tests are generally conducted for universities, colleges, or professional schools and are valid for a fixed period of time (generally two years). Among these widespread assessment tests are the following well-known examinations: IELTS, TOEFEL and TOEIC for English, *TCF* and *TEF* for French, *Testservice Deutsch für den Beruf* or *BULATS* for English, French, German and Spanish.

More and more international language diplomas are offered (up to about level B1) for the specific needs of compulsory education students, from 7 to 16 years of age. There are, for instance DELF Prim and DELF Junior A1–B2, YLE Young Learners English (Starters, Movers and Flyers), KET Key English Test A2, PET Preliminary English Test B1, and *ZDj B1 Zertifikat Deutsch für Jugendliche*. They are characterised by topics adapted to the age of the learners and take into account their system of reference, which is heavily influenced by their schooling. Students who complete a baccalaureate diploma or a Federal VET Diploma (professional baccalaureate school, final apprenticeship examination) can choose from an even wider range. Some international language diplomas relate to specific language competences for certain professions or employment sectors; they are therefore intended for students who are following vocational education and training or for those who want to go beyond general language competences in order to attain specific language objectives (technical, or commercial for example). The following table 5e gives an overview of the international language diplomas corresponding to specific school levels in the three foreign languages most taught in Switzerland.

The empirical data available concerning the use that is made of these diplomas in the context of compulsory education are largely inadequate. However, a case study of the *Zertifikat Deutsch für Jugendliche (ZDj)* is enlightening. Among the tested models of standardised international language diplomas integrated into the Swiss education system there is for instance the Federal VET

Diploma for commercial employees and the Federal Vocational Baccalaureate Certificate.

The pilot project for the *Zertifikat Deutsch für Jugendliche (ZDj)* (German certificate for youth)

The project conducted in 2007 and 2008 by the *Département des sciences du plurilinguisme et des langues étrangères* [the department of the sciences of plurilingualism and foreign languages] (formerly *LeFoZeF: Lern- und Forschungszentrum Fremdsprachen*) of the University of Fribourg with the support of the *EDK*, had a dual objective:

1. to make the *ZDj* (a communication-based language examination corresponding to level B1) available, under licensing, to Swiss public schools through an information and advisory programme, and to have students take this examination at the end of their compulsory education
2. to set up a Swiss *ZDj* examination centre (PSS *ZDj*) to implement this project

The case for the introduction of the *ZDj* as a language diploma for young people was argued as follows in the *ZDj* proposal:

- It provides Swiss schools desiring it with a framework that helps them to become more professional and to distinguish themselves in the field of language assessment.
- It offers Swiss students desiring it the opportunity to acquire a prestigious diploma that provides evidence of their language competences in a form that is motivating, transparent, and can be compared internationally. This is a significant asset for their ongoing school career and for entry into the world of work, in which (language) certificates are widely recognised.

According to the final internal report, it is not possible to give a clear summary of the preliminary results of this initiative (Studer and Wiedenkeller 2009, 2): only a few examinations could be organised during the official period of

Languages	International language diplomas	Providers (nombre of examination centres in Switzerland)
German, French, English, Italian, plus other languages	<i>telc A1</i> <i>telc A1 Online</i> <i>telc A2</i> <i>telc A2 School</i> <i>telc B1</i> <i>telc B1 Business</i> <i>telc B1 Hotel and Restaurant</i> <i>telc B2</i> <i>telc B2 Business</i> <i>telc B2 Technical</i> <i>telc C1</i>	<i>telcGmbH</i> (30)
German	<i>Goethe-Zertifikat A1–C2:</i> <i>Fit 1 A1</i> <i>SD1 A1</i> <i>SD2 A2</i> <i>Fit 2 A2</i> <i>ZDj B1</i> <i>ZD B1</i> <i>ZDfB B2</i> <i>TestDaF B2–C1 (Test DaF-Institut)</i> <i>PWD C1</i> <i>Goethe-Zertifikat C1</i> <i>ZOP C2</i> <i>KDS C2</i> <i>GDS C2+</i>	<i>Goethe-Institut</i> (11)
French	<i>DELF Prim</i> <i>DELF Junior A1–B2</i> <i>DELF A1–B2</i> <i>DELF pro B1 and B2</i> <i>DALF C1–C2</i>  <i>DFP A2–B1</i> <i>DFP AFFAIRES B2–C2</i> <i>DFP scientifique et technique B1</i> <i>DFP tourisme et hôtellerie B1</i> <i>DFP secrétariat B1–B2</i> <i>DFP juridique B2</i> <i>DFP médical B2</i> <i>DFLP A1.2 / A2</i>	Ministry of National Education, in cooperation with the <i>Centre International d'Etudes Pédagogiques (CIEP)</i> (13)  <i>CCIP CELAF</i> (Chamber of Industry and Commerce of Paris/French Language Centre) (10)
	<i>telc A1</i> <i>telc A2</i> <i>telc A2 Ecole</i> <i>telc B1</i> <i>telc B1 Ecole</i> <i>telc B1 pour la Profession</i> <i>telc B2</i>	<i>telcGmbH</i> (30)
English	YLE KET A2 PET B1 FCE B2 CAE C1 CPE C2 BEC B1–C1	CAMBRIDGE ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) in collaboration with the University of Cambridge (13)

Italian	PLIDA Juniores (A1–C1, 15–18 years) PLIDA A1–C2 PLIDA commerciale (B1, B2, C1)	DA ( <i>Società Dante Alighieri</i> ) in cooperation with the <i>Università La Sapienza</i> of Rome (5)
	CELI A1–C2 CIC B1, C1	<i>Università per Stranieri</i> of Perugia (21)
	DELI A1/A2 DILI B1 DILIC B1 DALI B2/C1 DALC B2/C1 ( <i>diploma commerciale</i> )	<i>Accademia italiana di lingua (AIL)</i> of Florence (14)
	CILS A1–C2	<i>Università per Stranieri di Siena</i>
	telc A1–B2	telc GmbH (5)

**Table 5e** | A selection of the most common standardised international language diplomas for German, French, English and Italian<sup>141</sup>

the project (and not in the 9<sup>th</sup> school year as originally planned, but in the 10<sup>th</sup> (i.e. respectively in the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> school years according to the *HarmoS* schedule) and the schools showed little real interest in the license. Yet the *PSS ZDj* (the Swiss *ZDj* examination centre) rapidly emerged – completely unexpectedly – as an authority to which a significant number of teaching institutions referred for advice on all sorts of questions regarding performance assessment. The actual target group was therefore not the compulsory schools, but rather schools of the next level, in particular professional (vocational) schools. The schools generally did not wish to acquire the license themselves to organise the examination, preferring the examination centre to look after this. However, the survey revealed that the initial objective, which was to offer Swiss schools an individualised advisory service and to provide support if the *ZDj* were integrated into the existing school structure (as either an optional or a compulsory element) – which German providers do not offer on the Swiss examination market – responded to a clear need on the part of many teachers and schools and could indeed be considered as a positive result at the end of this pilot project (Studer and Wiedenkeller 2009, 6).

The integration of standardised language diplomas into the Federal VET Diploma examination of commercial employees and into the Federal Vocational Baccalaureate Certificate examination

Young adults who sit the Federal VET Diploma examination for commercial employees may replace exams in the second national language or English with a standardised international diploma. The regulation of 1 / 24 January 2003 stipulates, in section C «Systematics of examination elements», under II «Broader education», «Federal VET Diploma examination»: «The Examination Commission can recognise or prescribe international language certificates in lieu of an examination or part of an examination. Grades will be given according to the accreditation concept in force.» [translation]. This provision has been in force throughout Switzerland since September 2006.

The Swiss Examination Commission sets the rules for the conduct of the examinations: the aim is to test the communication skills of commercial employees on both a personal and a professional level. The description of the written and oral sections of the examination covers partial competences (such as spoken and written com-

<sup>141</sup> The main providers of international language diplomas are generally members of ALTE (Association of Language Testers in Europe). For Italian as a foreign language, they are for example the *Università per Stranieri in Perugia* or the *Accademia italiana di lingua (AIL)* in Florence.



prehension, written production and interaction), the performance objectives (such as written communication in the professional arena) and the requirements of the examination itself (duration, number of points, etc.). The weighing of the different parts of the examination is also stipulated (written examination 70%, oral examination 30%). For international language diplomas, the oral and the written each count for 50%.

The international language diplomas to be considered must be accredited by the Swiss Examination Commission. There is a provision for additional requirements concerning performance objectives specific to a professional area. These requirements are waived if the international language diploma obtained is classed at a higher level according to the CEFR scale. In the case of vocational schools, it is up to the relevant cantonal authority to decide whether they recognise the accredited international language diplomas. Regulation school grades are applicable for the international language diplomas, unless the cantonal authority grants a dispensation on the basis of an international language diploma.

The approach adopted for the Federal Vocational Baccalaureate Certificate examination is comparable. The Federal Commission for the Federal Vocational Baccalaureate Certificate formulates its recommendations in the *Aide-Mémoire IV* (2007) regarding the handling of standardised international language diplomas.

Generally, standardised international language diploma examinations, based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) are highly motivating for students. Their cost however is not negligible (fees ranging from CHF 80 to 450 per participant).

## 5.5.2 The relevance of language diplomas and the need for coordination

The examinations for international accreditation that have been mentioned mainly test the use of language competences, which can be considered as a favourable development, in particular because this can produce positive outcomes in terms of action-based teaching<sup>142</sup>. Nevertheless, the fact that examinations are confined to what is measurable and occasionally to formats which may be limiting (multiple choice answers, etc.) can have negative repercussions. Learners and parents expect courses to be first and foremost devoted to preparing for these tests (teaching for the test), which can be incompatible with the learning objectives set by the curricula.

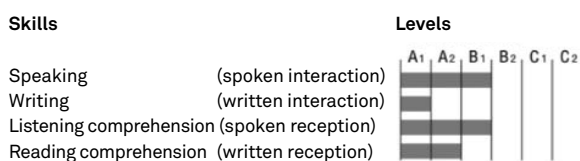
International recognition of these diplomas is one highly valued advantage, to which can be added the guarantee of quality – which is on the rise – and the association with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) and, especially, its levels of reference (A1–C2). Integrating language diplomas based on the CEFR levels into Federal VET Diploma or Federal Vocational Baccalaureate Certificate examinations provides opportunities for comparison – provided all students obtain this type of diploma or that equivalent diplomas on offer are issued by a single establishment or have been developed for a certain region, are professionally organised and assessed, and meet quality criteria similar to those of international examinations (see chapter 5.5.1 on the training of commercial employees).

For most of the standardised international language diplomas, the different sections of the examination that correspond to language skills (such as written comprehension and spoken production) refer to the same level (B1, for example). To determine whether the examination has been passed successfully, a global assessment

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142 However, a clear limiting factor is that, in the examples given, the examinations always test competences in a single language. At the present time, communication in a multilingual situation, for instance, is not a subject of examination.

is generally made (for example, 60 points out of 100)<sup>143</sup>, whereas national Educational Standards and the expectations defined in recent curricula give different requirements for each area of competence, making it possible to establish profiles. Likewise, professional profiles also use differentiated competence profiles depending on the function of various sets of competences as shown in the example below of the *SBB* (Swiss railway system, illustration 5c).



**Illustration 5c** | Linguistic profile of the «Customer relations and Services» staff of the *SBB*<sup>144</sup>.

In such cases, standardised international language diplomas do not really cover the language competences required.

The designers of the *Zertifikat Deutsch für Jugendliche (ZDj)* consider that language diplomas complement the national Educational Standards. This is shown by the following excerpt taken from the project proposal (Studer 2007) (see table 5f):

If one wishes to give students who are finishing their compulsory education the motivation and the opportunity of pursuing further learning throughout their lifetimes, it may be useful to make them aware of the importance of language diplomas. In this respect, the European Language Portfolio (ELP) can play a major role, as it allows students to plan their continued language learning themselves and to set such a certificate as a medium or long term goal.

National Educational Standards	The <i>Zertifikat Deutsch für Jugendliche (ZDj)</i>
Define binding national fundamental competences, in the form of levels of competence in foreign languages that should be attained by practically all students at the end of the 8 <sup>th</sup> and 11 <sup>th</sup> school years according to the <i>HarmoS</i> schedule).	Intended mainly for students (at the end) of lower secondary education who have a particular interest in German as a foreign language, or a certain level of fluency. (The <i>ZDj</i> offers interesting opportunities to rework entry examinations for baccalaureate school and is reasonably applicable for German as a second language.)
Define binding fundamental competences that apply to the entire Swiss school system.	Designed as an additional, optional qualification for learners. It has gained recognition and scope beyond the Swiss school system and of Switzerland.
Contribute to the Education Monitoring.	Offered to schools that choose to professionalise and wish to distinguish themselves in this area.

**Table 5f** | Potential complementarity between national Educational Standards and international language diplomas (according to Studer 2007)

At upper secondary education, the baccalaureate diploma could take inspiration from experience gathered from Federal Vocational Baccalaureate Certificate (see chapter 5.5.1), where the transparency and useability of levels was paramount before accrediting the relevant diplomas. This process also regularly gave rise to intense debates about the areas that the international diploma examinations do not cover, or not sufficiently. The action to be undertaken in this regard concerns in particular the regulations governing the examination for the baccalaureate diploma and more specifically the certificate for the level achieved in foreign languages.

143 Certain examinations use other systems, thereby allowing the establishment of different scales (*TCF, IELTS, TOEFL* or *TestDaF*). Work is in progress to design language diploma examinations that lead to a profile of competences rather than to a single level. The certificate presents in detail the different levels achieved. The examination for German as a second language, *Deutsch für Zuwanderer*, is an example.

144 Taken from the talxx language profile for staff «Customer relations and services»: <http://www.clacnet.ch/docs/talxxprofil.pdf> (22.02.2010)

Moreover, the example of vocational training shows that summative examinations leading to a grade and language diploma examinations can very well complement each other, provided that certain measures are taken (such as offering optional courses to prepare for tests outside the regular classroom schedule) to avoid «teaching for the test», which would be unbalanced and time-consuming<sup>145</sup>.

The General Secretariat of the *EDK* is currently studying the question of the measures to be taken in connection with international language diplomas, together with the federal bureaux concerned<sup>146</sup>, the general secretariats of the three conferences of rectors of Universities of Teacher Education (*CRUS*, *KFH* and *COHEP*), the Swiss Conference of Upper Secondary Education (*SMAK*), as well as the Swiss Conference of Vocational Training Bureaux (*SBBK*).

## 5.6 Summary

The developments presented in chapter 5 show that, leaving aside practical implementation (see chapter 4 on education), the quality of language teaching depends heavily on the way in which it is coordinated, particularly as regards organisation and the instruments used. National Educational Standards, curricula, assessment instruments and, consequently, initial teacher training and continuing education must be coherent if they are to be implemented at the school level. In this regard, the *EDK*'s (2004) Strategy of Language Teaching constitutes an appropriate basis, since it comprises aspects of quality assurance and coordination of language teaching.

The curricula of the linguistic regions that have recently been completed or are still in development (the *Plan d'études romand [PER]*, the *Lehrplan 21* and the curriculum of canton Ticino) will take on

a new function since, in addition to taking into account regional traditions and needs they will, for the first time, comprise national Educational Standards that play the role of greatest common denominator, and since they refer to corresponding models of competence for the language of schooling as well as for foreign languages. These will form the necessary basis for the development of assessment instruments across Switzerland, for example, as is the case for *Lingualevel*, a hetero-assessment instrument for foreign languages that is not associated with any teaching resource. This instrument, which up until now was used in the German-speaking region of Switzerland can, because it is coherent with Educational Standards and their models of competence, be used for the French and Italian-speaking regions. Moreover, when the national Educational Standards were developed, they were designed to correspond to the European Language Portfolio (ELP) and to its descriptions of levels, since this was already a well-established instrument for self-assessment that had achieved recognition throughout Europe.

Henceforth, when instruments are conceived or revised there will be the question of whether they should be offered at the level of the linguistic regions or nationwide. They will therefore refer to the competence descriptions and educational objectives of the curricula or Educational Standards that they cover. The exercises in the tests designed for the national Education Monitoring will be based on the national Educational Standards. For regular recording of individual student learning levels, the tests will be developed on the basis of the educational objectives of the curricula and on the learning objectives of the ensuing teaching resources (for instance, for the testing of the learning objectives contained in the teaching resources). The question will be to define the reference value for the (semi-)standardised tests that periodically (at the end of the school year for ex-

145 See chapter 5.3 regarding the relevance of standardised language diplomas and the debates surrounding this question in the Universities of Teacher Education.

146 I.e., the State Secretariat for Education and Research (SER), The Federal Office for Professional Education and Technology (OPET) and the Federal Office of Culture (FOC).

ample, to plan subsequent learning) provide information regarding the language competence of each student in comparison with other students of the same age, and in relation to a given reference system (language competence descriptors). The *Klassenscockpit*, *Stellwerk* and Check 5 instruments, which are implemented at the level of the linguistic region, have until now been based on their own model of competences, which contains descriptions of levels. If they referred to the models of competence and levels of the national Educational Standards, in addition to the descriptions of competences of the regional curriculum, their relevance would be heightened, especially since the system of reference for assessment corresponds to the one in use in the school system of the region.

Standardised international language diplomas are recognised internationally because they are based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) and can in principle be used together with assessment instruments that are based on national Educational Standards. They represent general language competences, or competences that may be specific to certain professions or occupations; most language diplomas concentrate on a same level (for example B1) in all language skills and therefore do not lead to language profiles. However, the national Educational Standards, the curricula and the professional profiles are based on language profiles that give specific information about different language skills. In the development process of assessment instruments, it will be more and more necessary to reflect on the way in which to deal with the diverse competences of plurilingual individuals (their competences in different communicative language skills in a same language often being unequal) as well as their ability to communicate in a multilingual situation.

Besides the abovementioned reference function for the development of teaching resources and assessment instruments, the new curricula of the linguistic regions also fulfil an interlinguistic coordination function. This is in relation to integrating in the curricula the aspects of multilingual teaching methodology presented in chap-

ter 4. The educational objectives of the second foreign language should be an extension of those set for the first. In parallel, one should take into account the transfers that occur between languages (for instance in strategies or vocabulary). Methodological competences (such as knowing how to use dictionaries) and mediation should be rooted in the educational objectives and must not be reduced to general considerations. Otherwise, they cannot be utilised in the development of teaching resources and instruments used for encouragement-based assessment, nor can they be used for teaching. In the *Plan d'études romand (PER)*, which has just been adopted, foreign languages still tend to appear as isolated languages. It would be good if the *Lehrplan 21* took into consideration aspects linked to transfer and thus to the real learning of students. Preliminary work has already been done in this area as part of the *Passepartout* curriculum which was recently created by the cantons along the linguistic border. Moreover, one must reflect on the way in which exchange projects could be included in the curricula, in order to be more strongly integrated into the teaching and so that they could be used for language learning.

Finally, the curricula should explicitly develop and coordinate the issues of language as subject and language in other subjects. Thus, a description of competence such as, in natural sciences, «describe an experiment as concisely and accurately as possible», contains, in addition to its subject orientation, a linguistic component. On the one hand, the linguistic aspect must be considered in chemistry courses and on the other it must be coordinated so as to develop this competence in the language of schooling as object. In this field, there remains a great deal of development and coordination work to be done and one can hope that the *Lehrplan 21* will provide the opportunity to deal with it.

The teachers are the instigators of the implementation phase and it is therefore essentially they who guarantee the quality of language teaching. The abovementioned developments are being considered in the initial training and continuing education they receive. Universities of Teacher

Education are working, at national level, on issues such as the description of language competence profiles for primary school level and secondary education teachers, the curricular context for language methodology training as well as the development of multilingual teaching methodology. The measures that need to be taken in this regard concern coordination of initial education and training and continuing education in the language of schooling, in the context of plurilingualism as well as in connection with non-language subjects. Moreover, teachers should receive more support in order to be able to develop a positive assessment capability geared towards encouragement.

The cantons wish to keep the generalist model, even with two foreign languages at the primary level. Although this model facilitates transfers among languages in teaching, it makes special demands on teachers in terms of language competence. However, a good number of courses offer trainees the option of choosing their educational profile, giving up a foreign language which they can acquire later through additional training. Guidelines concerning the recognition of teaching accreditation for subjects or additional cycles in pre- and primary schools as well as for additional subjects in lower secondary education are being developed with the *EDK*.

# 6 SUMMARY AND PERSPECTIVES

The coordination of language teaching in Switzerland is progressing in both small and big steps, simultaneously. Chapter 6.1 presents a summary of the main lines of this endeavour. It will remain necessary to continue investing in language learning, to promote and cultivate languages as a means of communication and a door to knowledge and to the riches of our cultural heritage, rather than considering them as an obstacle or a burden. The development of our language potential requires the involvement of every level of our education system. The success of such a mission depends on conditions that are addressed in chapter 6.2. Chapter 6.3 deals with the outlook for the future.

## 6.1 The main lines of coordination

As described in the preceding chapters and in illustration 6a, diverse actors are involved in the coordination of language teaching. They intervene in this ongoing process with the help of the appropriate tools, at several levels whose schedules overlap. For this, on the one hand objectives must be continually adjusted and action taken in the light of the experience gained and the new needs of society, and, on the other continuity must be guaranteed through long term strategies and coherent implementation of changes in several stages. Below is a brief outline of the main lines of coordination of language teaching as it is practised today.

### 6.1.1 The individual

Curricular and extracurricular language learning: Children are born with the ability to acquire several languages. Before they enter school they come

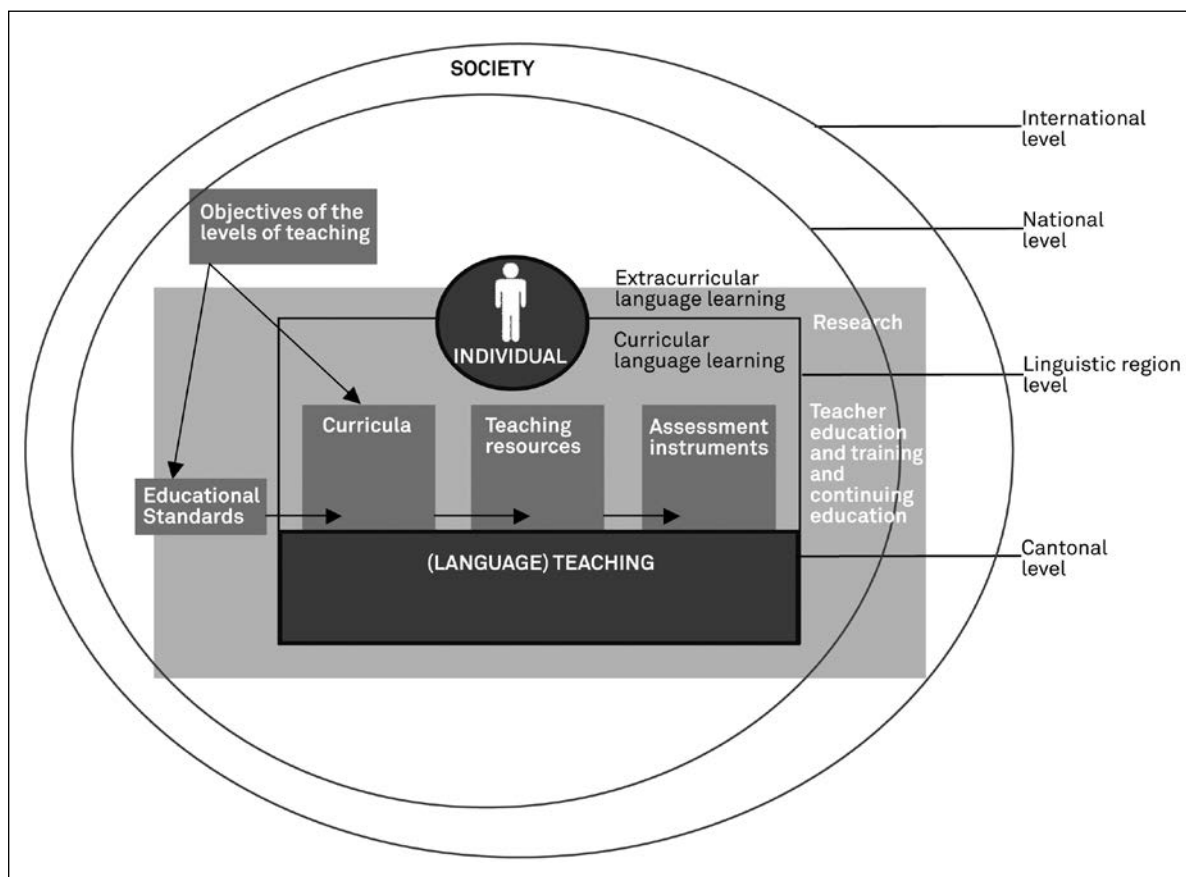
into contact with different languages (in their neighbourhood or via the media, for instance). Moreover, in addition to the local language some acquire a different language at home. Children spontaneously coordinate the languages learned outside the school by calling on their (plurilingual) repertoire and making transfers (see chapters 3.1 and 3.3.3). When they start school, language learning becomes explicit. In other words, the pupil becomes aware of learning and thinks about the linguistic system. At that point, languages are separated into teaching subjects and learning units (lessons). Learning the language of schooling involves all subjects and is the indispensable prerequisite for acquiring knowledge. The language of schooling and foreign languages are learned interdependently through adapted contents and according to precise situations and objectives. Extracurricular learning continues in parallel to curricular learning, either passively (as via the media) or actively (in the family or during leisure activities, for instance)<sup>147</sup>. For language teaching, these different learning contexts must be coordinated (see chapter 3.3.5 on the potential of the different learning contexts).

During their compulsory education, children can acquire not only knowledge of languages but also the competences they will need to pursue life-long learning. These competences are transferable to other situations of everyday life (BICS) and to the learning of a specific subject (CALP)<sup>148</sup>. At upper secondary education, language learning is oriented either towards a specific profession (in vocational schools) or towards general knowledge (in baccalaureate schools). At tertiary and post-graduate levels language learning is increasingly linked to specific situations. Linguistic knowledge, which is a precondition for contact with others both in the private and professional spheres,

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147 See chapter 3 for more detailed information about language acquisition and learning.

148 BICS is the acronym of «basic interpersonal communicative skill» and CALP that of «cognitive academic language proficiency»; see chapter 3.2.2.



**Illustration 6a** | The main lines of language teaching coordination (simplified)

contributes to a better understanding of others and to tolerance and enables active participation in society. Language teaching must reflect these objectives as well as the new needs of society.

### 6.1.2 Language teaching

The essential role of language teachers is to adapt their teaching to the class, to take into account the resources of their students and to adjust the method to different styles of learning. Plurilingualism is on the rise in classrooms: 23% of children under the age of 15 speak a language that is not one of the four national languages. Coordination and cooperation with language teachers (for

language of schooling, foreign languages and languages of origin / of migration) must be reinforced to help students develop a plurilingual repertoire, to establish structured language learning, and to enable transfers (of strategies for instance) between languages. Moreover, harmonisation with teachers of other subjects (such as history, geography) is necessary in order to base the language aspects of those subjects on acquired language competences and thereby consolidate the latter. This mainly concerns the language of schooling, but foreign languages as well in the case of bilingual teaching of non-language subjects<sup>149</sup>. Such harmonisation and cooperation can take very different forms depending on the structures of the individual schools.

149 See chapter 4 for more detailed explanations.

## The cantonal level

The sovereignty of the cantons in the area of education means that the coordination of teaching takes place first at the cantonal level and then, for implementation, at the level of the community.<sup>150</sup> The cantons are responsible for the development of the education system and for the implementation of regional and national strategies. It is they, for example, who set the timetable, decide on the bilingual teaching of non-language subjects, define the teachers' mandates (i.e. whether languages are taught by generalists or by specialists) and select teaching resources and assessment tools. They also organise support for children from a migrant background or those whose families are culturally disadvantaged, and help sponsor language of origin / of migration courses in cooperation with the embassies of the countries involved. Thus, canton Fribourg, for example, integrates certain forms of bilingual teaching into its language promotion programmes during the compulsory education<sup>151</sup>; canton Zurich has introduced a permanent measure that makes it possible to follow a bilingual path in all schools that prepare for the baccalaureate diploma<sup>152</sup>. Finally, canton Basel Stadt emphasises reinforcement of the local language for children from three to four years of age whose families are socially or culturally disadvantaged or speak a foreign language. In order to do so, it intervenes before pre-school and, if necessary, makes it compulsory for the children to attend a play group or a day-care centre that offers qualified language-learning assistance<sup>153</sup>.

Several cantons have coordinated provision of **teaching resources** and **assessment tools** that

are partially available to the other cantons as well. The following are a few examples of the most widely used assessment tools:

- *Klassencockpit*<sup>154</sup> in canton St. Gallen and Check 5<sup>155</sup> in canton Aargau for the assessment of the language of schooling (see chapter 5.4.2)
- *Stellwerk*<sup>156</sup> in canton St. Gallen for assessments in the language of schooling as well as for French and English as foreign languages (see chapter 5.4.2)
- assessment grid for German as a foreign language in the elementary cycle (*Grund-/Basisstufe*) and in the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> school years (3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> school years according to the *HarmoS* schedule)<sup>157</sup> of the *EDK* of Eastern Switzerland, i.e. at the level of the linguistic region (see chapter 5.4.3)
- cantonal examinations in Western Switzerland at the end of the 8<sup>th</sup> school year in the language of schooling and foreign languages (see chapter 5.4.2)
- *Prove di fine ciclo* in canton Ticino at the end of lower secondary education (*scuola media*) as per the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) and the descriptors of the European Language Portfolio (ELP) (see chapter 5.4.2)

## The linguistic region

The needs of society – mobility, transparency and similarity of educational provision – can be addressed by developing coordination at the level of the linguistic regions while observing regional traditions and specificities.

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150 See the main legal foundations of compulsory education in art. 61a and 62 of the Federal Constitution (<http://www.admin.ch/ch/d/sr/101/a61a.html> and <http://www.admin.ch/ch/d/sr/101/a62.html>, 22.02.2010) and, at the cantonal level, in the school laws and ordinances.

151 See [http://admin.fr.ch/www/de/pub/aktuelles.cfm?fuseaction\\_pre=detail&prid=76146&](http://admin.fr.ch/www/de/pub/aktuelles.cfm?fuseaction_pre=detail&prid=76146&) (22.07.2010)

152 See <http://www.bildungsdirektion.zh.ch/internet/bi/de/aktuell/news09/022-2.html> (22.07.2010)

153 See <http://www.ed-bs.ch/bildung/volksschulen/projekte/sprachliche-fruhfoerderung> (22.07.2010)

154 See <http://www.klassencockpit.ch/> (22.07.2010)

155 See <http://www.ag.ch/leistungstest/de/pub/check5.php> (22.07.2010)

156 See <http://www.stellwerk-check.ch> (22.07.2010)

157 See <http://www.edk-ost.ch/Einschaetzungsraster-Erstsprac.110.0.htm> (22.07.2010)



- **The order** in which foreign language learning is introduced is not decided at the national level but at the level of the linguistic region (a second national language and English are compulsory, and a third national language must be offered). The permeability of the education system is guaranteed at the point of transition to upper secondary education, because all students must attain a similar level of competence in both foreign languages by the end of their compulsory education.
- For the first time, the **curricula** are now established by the linguistic region (and no longer by the canton) (see chapter 5.2). The *Plan d'études romand (PER)* will be/was introduced in 2011, the publication of the *Lehrplan 21* for the Swiss-German region is planned for 2014, and a revision of the curriculum of Ticino is also planned. When the proposal was put forward to teach two foreign languages in primary schools, the curricula for foreign languages developed in the educational facilities of Eastern and Central Switzerland already made reference to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). The *Passepartout* curriculum for French and English at the primary school level, and lower secondary education, which is also based on the CEFR but not yet ready, concerns the cantons located along the linguistic border (Basel Landschaft, Basel Stadt, Bern, Fribourg, Solothurn and Valais). *Passepartout* takes a resolutely plurilingual approach in which languages encounters, exchanges, and transfers play a central role. All this preparatory work at the regional level will be taken into consideration in future developments.
- *Lingualevel*<sup>158</sup>, an assessment tool for foreign language competences, was developed for the German-speaking region (see chapter 5.4.2). It is not linked to teaching resources and provides teachers with a series of practical tests to assess the five language skills. These refer to the intermediate levels (A1.1, A1.2, A2.1, A2.2, etc.) developed in Switzer-

land on the basis of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). The corresponding descriptors are identical to those of the Swiss edition of the European Language Portfolio (ELP), which makes it possible to combine hetero-assessment by the teacher with *Lingualevel* and self-assessment by the student with the ELP. Furthermore, examples of assessments are available to the teachers for the productive language skills (speaking and writing). In its introduction, *Lingualevel* mentions various fields of application: «determining learning objectives and illustrating them»; «assessing communication tasks, for instance in textbooks or examinations, and creating them oneself»; establishing links between self-assessment and hetero-assessment». The *Lingualevel* series of tests is available for **assessments**. The latter fulfil two functions: an internal function, showing learners how they are doing and enabling them to plan the continuation of their learning (see chapter 5.4.1 on the outcome-based diagnostic process); an external function, by analysing the language competences of all the students of a canton with a view to providing additional support for, or developing, language teaching. In future, *Lingualevel* will be available throughout Switzerland for German, French and English as foreign languages.

- During the 2014/2015 school year common tests, *épreuves communes romandes (EpRo-Com)*,<sup>159</sup> will be introduced in all the cantons of the French-speaking region; these tests will be used to establish assessments at the end of each cycle and to give an indication of the level of attainment of the objectives of the curriculum (*Plan d'études romand, PER*).

### The national level

The new constitutional articles on education approved by public vote in 2006 and the *HarmoS*

158 See <http://www.lingualevel.ch> (22.07.2010). Access to documents requires purchase of a license.

159 See [http://www.irdp.ch/documentation/indicateurs/theme\\_epreuves.html](http://www.irdp.ch/documentation/indicateurs/theme_epreuves.html) (22.07.2010)

Agreement based on it reinforce cooperation between the cantons as well as between the latter and the federal government, while preserving cantonal sovereignty in this area. At national level, the coordination of language teaching is based mainly on the following texts:

#### a) legal bases and recommendations

- **National Strategy of Language Teaching (EDK 2004)**<sup>160</sup> | It includes recommendations concerning the coordination and improvement of language teaching, of which the most important are the introduction of a second national language and English for all in primary school, at the latest from the 5<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> school years respectively (according to the *HarmoS* schedule), i.e. at 8 and 10 years of age, and the development of language teaching to achieve clearly defined objectives. These national objectives are described in the national Educational Standards that students must attain by the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> school year for the language of schooling, and by the end of the 8<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> school years for the language of schooling and the compulsory foreign languages. These elements of the Strategy of Language Teaching were integrated into the Intercantonal Agreement on the Harmonisation of the Compulsory Education (the *HarmoS* Agreement) and are compulsory for the cantons signing this. Moreover, the language policy sets out recommendations on the following points: the widespread use of the European Language Portfolio (ELP) at all school levels (from pre-school to upper secondary education); teacher training and profile of language competences, assessment of language teaching based on the national Educational Standards, exchanges between schools on either side of the linguistic border (with the support of the centre for exchanges and mobility managed by *ch* Foundation, the Swiss foundation for federal cooperation); the establishment of a National Competence Centre of Multilingualism.
- **The new constitutional articles on education (2006)** | The cantons undertake to cooperate in the harmonisation of certain fundamental parameters of the education system. It is also the task of the Confederation and the cantons to jointly supervise the quality and permeability of the Swiss education system. To achieve this, they share tools, more specifically the national Educational Standards and Swiss Education Monitoring (see Education Monitoring in chapter 5.1). Article 70 of the Constitution of 1999 is thus put into effect.
- **The Intercantonal Agreement on the Harmonisation of Compulsory Education (the *HarmoS* Agreement)**<sup>161</sup> | As a result of signing this agreement, the cantons agree to implement the provisions of the constitutional articles on education concerning the harmonisation of the objectives of the teaching levels and the transition from one to the next. These objectives include: two foreign languages starting in the 5<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> school years (cantons Graubünden and Ticino can be released from this schedule if they provide for the additional compulsory teaching of a third national language); development of language teaching to achieve clearly defined objectives (national Educational Standards for the language of schooling and foreign languages); coordination of the second foreign language (second national language or English) at the regional level; optional teaching of the third national language during compulsory education, and support for the cantons for students from a migrant background (support for the organisation of language and culture of origin (LCO) classes set up by the countries of origin and the different language communities, provided that political and religious neutrality are observed).
- **The Languages Act and the Ordinance on Languages (LangA, SpV 2007)**<sup>162</sup> | With the entry

160 See [http://edudoc.ch/record/30008/files/Sprachen\\_d.pdf](http://edudoc.ch/record/30008/files/Sprachen_d.pdf) (22.07.2010)

161 See <http://www.edk.ch/dyn/14901.php> (22.07.2010)

162 See <http://www.admin.ch/ch/d/ff/2007/6951.pdf> (22.07.2010)

into force on 1 January 2010 of the Languages Act and on 1 July 2010 of the Ordinance on Languages, the Confederation, in agreement with the *EDK*, undertakes to promote and financially support the exchange programmes of *ch* Foundation; support projects for school development and for Italian and Romansh language teaching, and create a national competence centre of multilingualism.

**b) Measures and instruments on the national level:**

The instruments of coordination at national level are:

- The **exchange programmes** of the centre for youth exchanges (*ch* Foundation for federal cooperation, 1993<sup>163</sup>) | At the request of the *EDK* and the Confederation, the centre encourages and supports exchanges of students, classes, vocational training students and teachers between the linguistic regions and internationally. Thanks to the financial support provided for in the Federal Law and Ordinance on Languages (*LangA, SpV* 2007), these exchanges will be increased as of 2011. These programmes make it possible to emphasise intercultural learning as well as the interaction between curricular and extracurricular language learning (see chapters 4.2.3).
- The **Common European Framework of Reference for Languages** (CEFR, 2001)<sup>164</sup> | This is a reference system for action- and communication-based teaching and learning and for assessment. Current curricula and teaching resources refer to it, as do internationally recognised language diplomas (see chapter 5.5). Learning objectives, teaching resources and assessment tools can thus be compared and combined. Language learning is more coherent throughout the school career, transfers

between languages are reinforced and language competences can be more transparently described. All of this promotes lifelong language learning.

- The Swiss edition of the **European Language Portfolio** (ELP I with *Portfolino*, ELP II and III, 2001–2011)<sup>165</sup> | The ELP portfolio series, arranged in order of age and type of learning (from language-awareness to the recognition of actual language competences) makes possible the vertical and horizontal coherence necessary for language learning (see chapter 4.6). The ELP is conceived according to an approach that integrates all languages, including the language of origin / of migration, and takes into consideration intercultural aspects, various learning experiences (such as strategies) and all learning contexts (extracurricular and curricular). The ELP may be used independently of the chosen teaching resources thanks to its links with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). It makes it possible to document the level of language and intercultural competences at the transition from one teaching level to the next and on entering the world of work. The new electronic version of the ELP III is more user-friendly.
- The **national Educational Standards** (2011) for the language of schooling and foreign languages<sup>166</sup> | These describe the fundamental competences that all students should have acquired by the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> school year (only in the language of schooling), the 8<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> school years (the language of schooling and foreign languages, according to the *HarmoS* schedule). The national Educational Standards represent the greatest common denominator of the curricula that contain the different learning objectives according to the linguistic region concerned. The models of competence on which the Educational Standards are based are practice- and communication-based (see

163 See <http://www.chstiftung.ch/exchange-and-mobility> (22.07.2010)

164 See <http://www.goethe.de/Z/50/commeuro/303.htm> (22.07.2010)

165 See <http://www.sprachenportfolio.ch> (22.07.2010)

166 See <http://www.edk.ch/dyn/12930.php> (22.07.2010)

chapter 3.1). They cover the five language skills. The levels to attain in foreign languages correspond to those of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) and to the intermediate levels developed in Switzerland (A1.1, A1.2, A2.1 etc.). The models of competence are subdivided into language of schooling and foreign languages but contain certain elements of the plurilingual approach: in particular, mediation and methodological and intercultural competences (see chapters 3.1.1 and 3.1.3). The models of competence and the Educational Standards for the language of schooling take into account the double role of the latter: language as subject and language in other subjects. Likewise, the models of competence and Educational Standards for natural sciences and mathematics contain elements of language that are a prerequisite for learning in general.

### c) Continuing support and regulation

- **Education Monitoring in Switzerland**<sup>167</sup> | Through Education Monitoring, the levels of attainment of national Educational Standards will be verified by sampling conducted at regular intervals over a probable period of four years. Depending on the results, it will be possible to make adjustments to the school system and take the necessary measures to improve language teaching. No ranking of students, classes or schools will be established. The cantons can decide individually if they wish to make cantonal assessments that would lead to cantonal measures. The *EDK* and the linguistic regions should develop together a database of tasks that will be used for Education Monitoring in Switzerland, and possibly for other surveys. Task development resources and know-how will be pooled (see chapter 5.1). *PISA*<sup>168</sup> makes it possible to survey the literacy skills of students

of lower secondary education for the language of schooling. Comparison on an international scale makes it possible to identify the aspects of the school system that need to be improved and to define the corresponding measures to be taken (see chapter 4.3.2).

- **Teacher education and training and continuing education** | Teachers of the pre-school, primary school, lower secondary education and baccalaureate schools that prepare for the baccalaureate diploma, special educators, speech therapists and psychometricians are trained for bachelor and master's degrees at Universities of Applied Sciences. The management of teacher training is carried out mainly according to the *EDK*'s rules on the recognition of qualifications<sup>169</sup>. All pre-school and primary school courses throughout Switzerland have obtained initial *EDK* recognition, which promotes mobility both nationally and internationally. The rules governing the recognition of teaching qualifications evolve according to the development of the teaching profession. Work is in progress in particular where language teaching is concerned: for example, thanks to the categorisation of teaching diplomas for the pre-school and primary school levels, and of the rules governing the acquisition of additional teaching accreditations, it will be possible to train as teacher of one language first, and then of a second. Moreover, based on the rules of recognition of teaching diplomas for baccalaureate schools preparing for the baccalaureate diploma, the *EDK* can set minimum requirements for the practical training of baccalaureate school teachers in different subjects. For training colleges, meeting these requirements is a prerequisite for nationwide recognition of the teaching diploma. This procedure has already been planned for music, sports and visual arts and could also be applied to foreign language teaching. A profile for additional

167 See <http://www.edk.ch/dyn/11663.php> (22.07.2010)

168 See <http://www.edk.ch/dyn/11664.php> (22.07.2010)

169 See <http://www.edk.ch/dyn/12050.php> (22.07.2010)

training in bilingual and immersion teaching has been developed. If it is accepted by the cantons, this additional training will be recognised by the *EDK*. Specialisation will allow teachers to help improve language teaching. This training profile is intended for language teachers, but also for teachers of non-language subjects who can use it to prepare themselves to teach a language in the context of their subject. (See training and continuing education in chapter 5.3.)

- **Research** | Research in theoretical and applied linguistics is conducted in universities and Universities of Teacher Education. The Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) supports research projects of national interest. The Federal Council determines the research programme themes. One national research programme, NRP 56, concerns language diversity and competences in Switzerland (information on this project and its outcomes are to be found in the annex 6). Another project, NRP 33, which concerns the efficiency of our training systems, has conducted studies of crucial importance for language teaching and learning (for example, the development of descriptors for the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages [CEFR], the development of educational concepts and resources for bilingual teaching at the secondary education or the teaching of a second language during compulsory education)<sup>170</sup>. In 2010/11, for example, empirical research is being conducted on the profile of language competences that language teachers for different levels should possess. This research is supported by the Swiss Conference of Rectors of Universities of Teacher Education (*COHEP*) and by the Swiss Conference of Cantonal Ministers of Education (*EDK*).

#### d) Permanent partners and network

- **Coordination Group for Language Teaching (KOGS)** | This group is composed of represent-

atives of the regional conferences; its mission is implementation in the regions.

- **Professional Group Foreign Languages of COHEP** | It comprises representatives of each of the Universities of Teacher Education and is in charge of the coordinated development of training for teachers of foreign languages.
- **The National Competence Centre of Multilingualism** | The entry into force of the ordinance on languages (*SpV* 2007) was accompanied by the establishment of the National Competence Centre of Multilingualism at Fribourg's University of Teacher Education. The centre conducts applied research on multilingualism, networks with national and international research institutes, and coordinates the work that is done in this field. As of 2011, the National Competence Centre of Multilingualism will be an important partner for the *EDK*.
- **European Centre for Modern Languages (ECML) in Graz** | At the international level there is already cooperation with the European Centre for Modern Languages (ECML) in Graz, of which Switzerland is a founding member. Specialists from Switzerland actively participate in research and development projects for the implementation of multilingualism and the promotion of languages in schools. In addition, Switzerland regularly delegates a specialist from an University of Teacher Education or university, or a practitioner to international workshops.
- **Various foundations and associations** | These are active at national level in the promotion of multilingualism or for a particular type of language (such as languages of origin / of migration). The *EDK* is in regular contact with these foundations and associations.

## 6.2 Success factors

In order to maximize progress, a certain number of factors must be considered. Below are six conditions for success drawn from the presentation in the preceding chapters of the work that

170 See [http://www.snf.ch/SiteCollectionDocuments/NFP33\\_rapports.pdf](http://www.snf.ch/SiteCollectionDocuments/NFP33_rapports.pdf) (22.07.2010)

has been undertaken to coordinate language teaching.

1. **Awareness** | Adopting strategies for the coordination of language teaching does not ensure that they will be applied in schools. School authorities, teachers and parents must be aware that language teaching has to be adapted to the increasingly rapid evolution of the needs of society and of the linguistic context. The statistical surveys carried out each year by the *EDK* in the cantons and the data contained in the report on education (published in 2010) support this observation. As a result of changes in the initial parameters, the *EDK*'s Strategy of Language Teaching (2004) and the corresponding objectives of the programme of activities (2008–2014) have set targeted and coordinated priorities to improve language learning. As each of the partial objectives is attained, the direct link with long term needs should be examined and highlighted for stakeholders in the field of education. It is therefore essential to regularly evaluate the social context on the one hand and, on the other, the objectives of language promotion and their implementation.

2. **Thinking in terms of process** | The coordination of language teaching is a long-term process. Indeed, the partial objectives and the stages of implementation take place within this overall process. This is illustrated by the integration of the national Educational Standards for the language of schooling and foreign languages in the regional curricula: when the first proposal for Educational Standards was published in January 2010, the *Plan d'études romand (PER)* was in the process of being finalized while the *Lehrplan 21* was at the project stage. The curriculum of canton Ticino will be revised only once the *EDK* has adopted the Educational Standards. The coordination process should be flexible, in order to better integrate into an overall process taking place in a constantly changing environment. In this way, the *Plan d'études romand* specifies the degree of conformity between its objectives and the Educational Standards, while the *Lehrplan 21*

integrates the latter into the development phase. Ticino will have the advantage of the experience gained by these curricula.

3. **The qualifications of the participants and the cooperation of all the concerned parties** | Language teachers must acquire the linguistic and methodological qualifications required by their new tasks. Their own language learning history has shaped their teaching methods, which generally do not correspond to current needs. Simply handing down new methodological approaches is not enough. Today, teacher training and continuing education call on greater alternation between practical experience and theory. The learning and teaching experience of language teachers is the starting point. New scientific knowledge will be integrated into this experience and the combination will then be put to the test. The resulting experience will in turn fuel research on teaching and contribute to its development. This type of process is particularly suited to the transmission of new methodological approaches, particularly as many base themselves on subjective theories. Moreover, teachers of several languages (languages of origin / of migration, of schooling, second and foreign languages) and of several levels (primary, lower and upper secondary) receive training or continuing education in the form of common modules. This makes them aware of the need for horizontal and vertical coherence and continuity in teaching methods and approaches that are adapted to the learning conditions of the children. Thanks to the exchanges that take place in these common modules of continuing education, teachers from different backgrounds are more likely to adapt their teaching methods and cooperate – or at least coordinate – and to make better use of the resources available to the students. More concretely, teacher training can take the following forms:

- courses composed of several modules alternating with periods of practical application
- continuing education courses given by teams of methodology specialists and

teachers (for example, the introduction of the European Language Portfolio [ELP])

- language projects in a particular school, linked to research projects, that generate exchanges between teachers and researchers
- on-the-job training that brings together teachers of all levels and languages (focusing on vertical and horizontal coherence)

For this, the cantons and Universities of Teacher Education must take advantage of models developed by others that have proved effective. Although the Strategy of Language Teaching is implemented at the cantonal level, more use could be made of available resources at the intercantonal level.

We welcome the coordinated development of the competence profiles of language teachers. Firstly because language competences at the beginning and the end of training will be harmonized. And secondly because, several Universities of Teacher Education are now defining the specific competence profiles of future language teachers. Some of the universities are actually working together and others are working to coordinate their efforts<sup>171</sup>. Given the many constraints, and with a view to harmonisation, it is important that the language competences that are really necessary should be identified through concrete research and described accordingly. The level of language competence of a teacher is undoubtedly a major quality factor in language teaching. The requisite concrete language competences must therefore be more precisely defined and detailed. Universities of Teacher Education must also improve cooperation among themselves regarding organization.

Finally, as they are developed, new instruments and technical capabilities should be integrated – depending on their relevance – into the initial education and training and continuing education of teachers. In this regard, the new social media have opened up new

horizons in the field of languages and communication that should be explored and assessed with a view to expanding teaching resources and methods. The plethora of innovation constitutes a real challenge: teachers must integrate into their teaching new technologies of which they have little experience but which their students already routinely use in their daily lives.

#### 4. The development of national instruments and of international cooperation | Instruments

must be created to support the implementation of the Strategy of Language Teaching and carry it out. The transition from a foreign language learning strategy designed to teach how to speak a foreign language «correctly» to one designed to teach practical communication in a foreign language, and which includes other languages, represents a change of paradigm. It has taken the form of the *Lingualevel* instrument in the German-speaking region of Switzerland (with competence-based tests) and of the European Language Portfolio (ELP) (with learning strategies and language contacts dealing with several languages). The simultaneous introduction of these two instruments makes it possible to introduce teachers to certain aspects of the new methods that can be put into practice immediately.

The development of teaching instruments must be coordinated, i.e. they must be in harmony with each other and, wherever possible, address all levels and languages. Moreover, their function must be clearly defined, especially for diagnostic and testing instruments. Indeed, the latter can only be of use to teachers and guide students in their learning process if they are transparent as to what they assess and how they arrive at their conclusions. The development and harmonisation of instruments in the foreign language field can be based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) and its approach to language teaching, learning,

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171 See the *PHSG* and *PHZ* projects on professional competence profiles for foreign language teachers <http://www.phsg.ch/desktopdefault.aspx/tabid-1758/> (05.05.2010)

and assessment, and on the intermediate levels (A1.1, A1.2, A2.1, A2.2 etc.) developed by the IEF (*Instrumente zur Evaluation von Fremdsprachenkompetenzen*) on the basis of the CEFR levels. The European Language Portfolio (ELP) and *Lingualevel* conform to these and the national Educational Standards, curricula and corresponding teaching resources refer to them. Naturally, there should continue to be room for new approaches and developments. It is especially important, in this respect, to work at reinforcing an overarching and multilingual understanding of language learning and to develop the relevant instruments, including the language of schooling. Finally, as instruments are developed, local characteristics must be taken into consideration (monolingual, bilingual, or trilingual cantons, for example) as well as the importance of international relevance (for internationally standardized language diplomas, for instance). There is increased cooperation on both national and international levels for development work carried out concerning languages that are used internationally. This is the case in the German-speaking area for instance, where Germany, Austria, and Switzerland are taking part in the development of Educational Standards. There should also be increased cooperation with the Council of Europe, the European Centre for Modern Languages (ECML) and the European Union to improve the quality of language teaching, to exchange know-how and experience and maximize the use of resources.

5. **Taking teaching conditions into consideration** | The implementation phase must take into account the actual teaching conditions and school environment, such as for example the size of classes and the number of hours of group work dedicated to coordination. These constraints and the areas in which there is room for manoeuvre must be well defined so that the wishes and concerns of those involved can be addressed and creative solutions found. Thus, the conditions can be created that allow language teachers (first language, language of schooling and foreign

languages) to exchange their experiences and coordinate the main parameters of their teaching in their schools, and not only during continuing education classes. It is also a matter of facilitating the introduction of new methodological approaches and related instruments into the teaching. The example of the course leading to the *Schulisches Sprachenlernen* (acquisition of languages in school) certificate of Zurich's University of Teacher Education shows that it is essential to combine personal resources with those of the school management and the teaching staff. In each community school system, a language teacher was chosen to receive continuing education in methodological approaches and new instruments as well as in regional and national language teaching strategies. This training, which was financially supported by the cantonal public school department, also included the acquisition of skills in project management within a teaching body. The teachers who were trained were given the responsibility of supporting the school management and the school authorities and especially their colleagues for the implementation of projects involving languages. They also served as contact persons. This kind of organisation makes it possible to plan long-term projects, adapt them to local conditions, and raise the necessary funding. This model worked in situations where the school management considered the teachers as support persons with know-how and provided them with the necessary time allocation, generally in the form of reductions in their teaching load. The community school system thereby gained the opportunity of organising information sessions for parents about language learning and cooperation among teachers of all levels was intensified. Good practice was first defined within small groups and then extended to all the language teachers of the community school system. The coordination of language teaching takes time. There must be sufficient leeway for its implementation in schools. For instance, the introduction of a new instrument requires the following:



- offering those who want it – or who are at least open to the new approach – the opportunity to participate voluntarily in the initial implementation phase (several cantons have successfully introduced the European Language Portfolio in this way)
- planning trial and development periods for teaching resources (this was done when the *Mille feuilles* method was introduced)
- evaluating the implementation (for example, in the framework of research projects of Universities of Teacher Education on the assessment of language competences in school)

When large-scale projects are undertaken such as initiating the teaching of two foreign languages at primary school level, or developing a multilingually oriented language teaching methodology, the time-line involved must be estimated accordingly. The actual impact that these changes will have and how they will facilitate language learning in the long run depend on the success factors described above. They also depend on an awareness of the importance of languages, on the level of qualification of the teachers, on the availability of relevant teaching resources and on appropriate learning and teaching conditions. All this takes time. Moreover, complementary research studies will have to be conducted over the long term which, using data pertaining to the implementation, will establish whether and to what extent bringing language learning forward to the primary school level is worthwhile, what kind of result can be achieved and what the most appropriate methods are. Premature interruption of the implementation projects would have disastrous consequences – it would disappoint all the participants and frustrate teachers. Therefore, it is advisable to think in terms of a process, as mentioned in point 2. This involves defining partial stages, assessing them, making the necessary adjustments, and taking supporting measures. In this way, continuity can be achieved that gives those involved (teachers, school authorities, parents and learners) the assurance that innovations are coordi-

nated and integrated into the daily school schedule.

6. **Stabilising and developing the objectives attained, and ensuring quality** | The national Strategy of Language Teaching (*EDK 2004*) constitutes an important basis for the coordination of language teaching, but its objectives must be developed and stabilized. Teachers should know about the European Language Portfolio (ELP), but it is not an end in itself as it must be integrated into other initiatives. When new teaching resources are developed, the link with the ELP must be ensured. Another example: if a new competence – mediation – is added to the curricula, the language portfolio will acquire an additional function since it will encompass several languages. The objectives, methods and instruments will only be wholly functional and stable if they are coordinated and harmonized. Assessments at regular intervals (during Education Monitoring for instance) will clarify what has been achieved and what remains to be done. It is advisable for research projects to focus more on the implementation process of projects and on measuring their concrete outcomes. For quality assurance, practical examples must be documented and the conditions of success deduced that will guide future progress. The results of these research projects, which should be carried out together with the teachers, must be formulated in way that is practical and accessible for all.

### 6.3 The outlook

Future needs in terms of language teaching coordination are becoming apparent in several areas.

- **Objectives and curricula** | Language learning is no longer considered as the separate acquisition of several languages, but as the development of an integrated plurilingual and intercultural competence. It is an overarching competence that students acquire in the general context of the school, reinforced by being spread among several subjects and teachers.

Consequently, the curricula are being developed along two lines:

Firstly, the objectives that are set for each of the languages must be harmonized in order to establish cross-language learning synergies. In addition, more attention must be given to the language aspects of non-language subjects, by harmonising their objectives with those of the language of schooling for instance. CALP (cognitive academic language proficiency), which is a precondition for the acquisition of knowledge, can be developed in this way. The language of schooling maintains its place in the curricula, with a double role: language as subject and language in other subjects. Here, the contributions of the national Educational Standards and the models of competence in the language of schooling are significant, since they consider the language of schooling both as a subject, and in other subjects. In parallel, the national Educational Standards for the natural sciences and mathematics contain competence descriptions that support the promotion of language learning in the time allocated to those subjects. The language aspects of the models of competence and Educational Standards of different subjects must therefore be analysed and compared, and then harmonised with and integrated into the work that is currently being carried out for the development of curricula and teaching resources.

Secondly, intercultural communication competences must be among the learning objectives on an equal footing with the five language skills. Like the latter, they encompass declarative knowledge, procedural knowledge, and attitude. As they develop neither in a linear way nor in parallel to language competences, their acquisition must be promoted throughout schooling. This is an additional challenge to the development of curricula and teaching resources that will improve intercultural communication competences linked to language learning. Curricula must address the question: what are the language and intercultural competences that students must acquire in order to be successful in their social life?

The answer lies partly in the national Educa-

tional Standards and their models of competence, which include mediation and methodological and intercultural competences.

The *Passepartout* project (see chapter 4.1.2) fosters the acquisition of experience in putting these approaches into practice through curricula, teaching resources and continuing education for teachers. The project aims for integrated language teaching using a cross-language methodology. It deals simultaneously with language learning and with language awareness (*ELBE*). The implementation of the project is based first and foremost on action and communication-based language teaching, on the possibility of bilingual teaching of non-language subjects, and on exchange programmes. The national Educational Standards and the models of competence, as well as the experience gained with *Passepartout*, constitute the basis for significant and important developments in curricula and teaching resources.

In addition to language and intercultural competences, one must consider and take into account in the curricula the transmission of cultural competences in the national languages and make the link with language learning and with the content of the different subjects. The possibility of learning a third national language at lower secondary education (usually Italian) should be reinforced in the curricula and timetables and supported by concrete implementation measures. The *italiano subito* project, which was created in the framework of the NRP 56, is an example: it offers the possibility of acquiring a basic knowledge in Italian in a very short time with the help of a specially designed teaching methodology and a tailor-made approach to previous language learning.

- **Teaching models** | Switzerland, where several languages are spoken, offers ideal conditions for language learning. Bilingual / immersion teaching models and exchange programmes are beneficial to the learning of languages and content and to the motivation, perception and general learning capacity of students. The acquisition of plurilingual and intercultural

competences is facilitated by such teaching models. Today, the implementation of these models depends on the isolated initiatives of teachers and schools. A solution must therefore be found so that each student can benefit from these teaching models at least once during his or her education. For this, it is essential that teachers gain first-hand experience of these models during their initial training or continuing education. By going abroad or participating in intercultural activities they will be better equipped to encourage their students to develop plurilingual and pluricultural competences. Therefore, bilingual or plurilingual training and continuing education options must be made available. The exchange programmes of the *ch* Foundation have been extended by its participation in the European Union's Lifelong Learning project. It is a question of finding solutions so that exchanges between teachers of different linguistic regions are actually possible and that they have the support and recognition of the school authorities.

- **The general context** | The timetable (including time allocation) must ensure that the teaching of each language is really coordinated. This means that the language teachers and the teachers of non-language subjects must get together and jointly plan a portion of their classes. Non-teaching staff who give classes but are not members of the teaching staff *per se* must also be integrated into this team. This is particularly important in the case of those who teach language and culture of origin classes (LCO), as the first language should be learned together with the language of schooling in order to lay the language foundations for further schooling. Moreover, once a link is established with the teaching of foreign languages, the language potential of the students with a migrant background can be effectively and positively used. Teachers need to be given the time to establish this type of coordination.
- **The language competence of the teachers** | The teachers' competences in the language of schooling are of utmost importance regardless

of the subject taught, because language has a fundamental impact on learning. It is therefore necessary that the teachers' language profiles be adapted to the learning context. Specific professional profiles should include intercultural and cultural competences and, for those who teach a foreign language, experience abroad. The language level required by Universities of Teacher Education today differs from one to the other. There must be a consensus in order to ensure the quality of language teaching. Once the language competences required for language teaching have been established, the corresponding binding profiles will have to be defined. These will necessarily include plurilingual and intercultural competences in addition to the competences in the language concerned. In this respect, it would be helpful to determine how to encourage more people from a migrant background to take an interest in the teaching profession, for which they are well-prepared due to their plurilingual experience.

- **Early language teaching and continuity** | Early language teaching takes place in pre-school mainly in the case of children from a migrant background being taught the language of schooling. There is a growing demand for foreign languages to be taught in pre-school and private day care centres. Early teaching of the language of schooling should also be of benefit to Swiss children who present a language deficit before entering school. Moreover, extending to Swiss children early language of schooling teaching destined for children from a migrant background would favour integration. Early foreign language teaching, for its part, should not be limited to children from financially and culturally privileged backgrounds. Multilingual sports associations and bilingual public pre-schools, etc., would give greater access to foreign languages to the largest number. Approaches such as *EOLE / ELBE* or *JALING* ought to be further developed. There is also untapped potential in multilingual and multicultural radio and television programmes, which falls within the mandate of *SRG SSR Idée suisse* (Switzerland's radio

and TV broadcasting corporation). And finally, pre-school teachers – whose role is not explicitly language teaching – could learn to develop language awareness in their pupils during their training or continuing education and to use the corresponding tools (such as the Portfolio of the European Language Portfolio) and teaching resources (such as multilingual picture books and children's books). After compulsory schooling, it is important to continue to develop language and intercultural competences. Likewise, coordination efforts must be pursued at upper secondary education with the European Language Portfolio (ELP), which is an ideally suited support instrument. It fulfils several of the aforementioned conditions: it takes a plurilingual and intercultural approach and contributes to the visibility of language transfers. As it exists in several versions adapted to the age of the learners, it can be used for specific target groups. Moreover, at the time of transition to the next level, the new teachers will have access to it. All of this favours continuity and coordination. And, in relation to teaching and assessment (which cannot be summative) of plurilingual and intercultural competences, the ELP will play a central role as an instrument that encourages learning and at the same time enables a continuous diagnosis of progress. It is therefore advisable to consolidate the use of the ELP at all school levels, and to use it as a link between them. At the transition from compulsory education to vocational training, it would be particularly desirable to link the competences recorded in the ELP to the requirement profiles. Continuity in language learning cannot however be based solely on instruments: it presupposes that language teaching at upper secondary education is built on the foundation laid during compulsory schooling. Progress must be made in that area. The problem has been recognized and will necessitate a joint approach on the part of all those involved. It is therefore important to ensure coordination between the heads of the departments of social services and of public education, as well as between the teaching staff of early childhood institutions and the

teachers of languages of origin / of migration and of schooling. Continuity is an indispensable element of quality in language teaching. All the coordination efforts made at compulsory education level will have only limited results if they are not adequately pursued at higher levels. It is therefore highly desirable that language teaching be developed further at the upper secondary education.

Many bridges have been built between the different languages – the languages of schooling, foreign languages and languages of origin / of migration, national languages and English. This report contributes in several ways: by putting forward methods of coordination, by advancing thinking on this issue, and by asking questions – but without claiming to be absolutely coherent down to the last detail. The coordination of language teaching in Switzerland has not yet been fully implemented. This in no way prejudices the progress that can, and must, be achieved in this field. On the contrary, a lot is being done – with different timetables – and this is encouraging. Let's continue in this direction.

# ANNEX

# A1: GLOSSARY OF LANGUAGE TEACHING

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accuracy

*Korrektheit/formale Korrektheit*  
*précision et exactitude formelles*  
*correttezza formale*  
*correttezza formala*

1. The formal observance of (linguistic) norms.
  2. A field of performance assessment related to observance of the norms (of the different levels of language; spelling for example).
- 

acquisition

*Erwerb*  
*acquisition*  
*acquisizione*  
*acquisiziun*

The learning of a language in a natural context, without teaching or guidance. Most of the time, acquisition processes do not occur consciously and correspond to the communication or cognitive needs of the learner.

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action orientation (see speech act)

*Handlungsorientierung (siehe Sprach-*  
*handlung)*  
*orientation vers l'action (voir acte de*  
*parole)*  
*orientamento all'azione (vedi atto*  
*linguistico)*  
*orientaziun a l'acziun (vesair act*  
*linguistic)*

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assessment

*Beurteilung*  
*évaluation*  
*valutazione*  
*valitaziun*

There are several important types of assessment, including:

- formative assessment (mainly used to enhance the learning process),
- summative assessment (which takes place at the end of a given learning phase and/or in relation to particular learning goals), and
- prognostic assessment (which provides information concerning potential future performance).

Assessment must be transparent and beneficial to the learning process. It provides information on the level of learning, on the planning of subsequent learning, on the educational and professional career, and on individual needs for support. An assessment of language skills should be complete and should cover all areas of language competence.

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assessment instrument  
*Beurteilungsinstrument*  
*instrument d'évaluation*  
*strumento di valutazione*  
*instrument da valitaziun*

An instrument that identifies learners' abilities and skills. The following are several examples of assessment instruments for language learning:

- Self-assessment grids as well as assessment of learning goals and of the lessons given in teaching resources, providing information on the level of achievement regarding content and on aspects of the skills learned with the help of educational material.
- The grids and checklists of the European Language Portfolio (ELP) for self- and hetero-assessment of foreign language skills as well as for the planning of further learning – in line with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).
- *Lingualevel*, with its different instruments for self- and hetero-assessment of foreign language skills – in line with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).
- *Klassencockpit/Stellwerk/Check 5*, online adaptable assessment instruments that are based on various criteria and enable skill assessment by comparison with other students and with a reference group.
- Skill assessment at the cantonal or intercantonal levels, such as the *Epreuves communes romandes (EpRoCom)* or the *Lingualevel* assessments.
- International language tests and certificates that attest to the level of competence achieved in a language – in line with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).

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authentic  
*authentisch*  
*authentique*  
*autentico*  
*autentic*

The adjective «authentic» refers on one hand to linguistic and cultural products developed for an audience of the language and culture in question (and not for teaching purposes); on the other, «authenticity» is characteristic of situations that correspond to a real life speech act (such as concrete instructions in a foreign language class, an exchange of correspondence with a partner class, or situations occurring outside the educational context).

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autonomous learning  
*Lernautonomie*  
*autonomie d'apprentissage*  
*autonomia nell'apprendimento*  
*autonomia d'emprender*

The degree of self-determination and self-guidance of an individual in training; a constructivist concept based on the idea that learners should themselves decide on the goals, contents, methods, working techniques, forms of assessment, as well as the temporal and spatial learning environment.

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autonomy, autonomous  
(see autonomous learning)  
*Autonomie, autonom*  
(siehe *Lernautonomie*)  
*autonomie, autonome*  
(voir *autonomie d'apprentissage*)  
*autonomia, autonomo*  
(vedi *autonomia nell'apprendimento*)  
*autonomia, autonom*  
(vesair *autonomia d'emprender*)

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BICS (basic interpersonal communication skills)  
*situationsgebundene Sprachfertigkeiten*  
*compétence de communication interpersonnelle basique*  
*competenze comunicative interpersonali di base*  
*cumpetenzas da basa per la communicaziun quotidiana*

Communicative language skills that are used in everyday language situations (such as the playground, the school bus, the telephone); they depend heavily on context and are cognitively undemanding. They are characterised by commonly used vocabulary and by simple grammatical structure.

<p>bilingual teaching of a non-language subject  <i>bilingualer Sach-/Fachunterricht</i>  <i>enseignement bilingue d'une discipline non linguistique</i>  <i>insegnamento bilingue di una materia non linguistica</i>  <i>instrucziun bilinguala d'in rom nun-linguistic</i></p>	<p>When a non-language subject, such as history or sport, is taught in a foreign language. The foreign language is not part of the content, it is essentially the means by which the teaching is carried out. In addition to the foreign language the language of schooling is also used, depending on the teaching language. (see also the CLIL/EMILE method)</p>
<p>CALP (cognitive academic language proficiency)  <i>kognitiv-schulische (-akademische) Sprachfertigkeiten</i>  <i>compétence langagière cognitive-académique</i>  <i>competenza linguistica cognitivo-accademica</i>  <i>cumpetenz cognitiva da la lingua academica</i></p>	<p>Cognitive-academic language skills essential to the production and reception of specialised language or texts. They are generally acquired in the context of language teaching through cognitively demanding tasks (such as writing or decoding a text), in which the learners are also confronted with new ideas and concepts. Unlike BICS, these do not depend on context and, once they are acquired in one language, can be transferred to others.</p>
<p>can-do statement  <i>Kann-Beschreibung</i>  <i>descripteur du type «être capable de...»</i>  <i>descrittore del saper fare</i>  <i>descriptur dal tip «savair far»</i></p>	<p>A description of aspects that come under communicative competence; generally linked to a given language level (what is an individual capable of at said level?) and formulated in the first person singular («I can...»). See also descriptor.</p>
<p>checklist (for self-assessment with the ELP)  <i>Checkliste (für die Selbstkontrolle im ESP)</i>  <i>liste de repérage (pour l'auto-évaluation dans le PEL)</i>  <i>lista di controllo (per l'autovalutazione nel PEL)</i>  <i>glistas da controlla (per l'auto-valitaziun en il PEL)</i></p>	<p>Within the framework of the European Language Portfolio, these are specific lists for given skills and levels containing descriptions of skills and can be used by learners (possibly together with others) in order to assess themselves.</p>
<p>chunks  <i>Chunks</i>  <i>chunks (éléments préfabriqués)</i>  <i>chunk</i>  <i>chunks</i></p>	<p>Unanalysed multiword expressions, ready-made utterances and collocations, etc., that form an important part of the lexis of each language. One can facilitate communication in a foreign language by consciously encouraging the use of chunks.</p>
<p>classical languages  <i>alte/klassische Sprachen</i>  <i>langues classiques</i>  <i>lingue classiche</i>  <i>linguas veglias/classicas</i></p>	<p>Foreign languages which, contrary to modern foreign languages, are no longer active national languages. These were the administrative languages of the Roman Empire, Latin and ancient Greek, which form the basis of many European languages and are an integral part of Western culture.</p>



<p>CLIL (content and language integrated learning)  integriertes Fremdsprachen- und Sach-/Fachlernen  EMILE (<i>enseignement d'une matière par l'intégration d'une langue étrangère</i>)  <i>apprendimento integrato di lingua e contenuti</i>  <i>instrucziun integrada da lingua e da cuntegn</i></p>	<p>In this method a foreign language is used as a medium for learning contents of a non-language subject, which, at the same time, enables one to learn the foreign language based on practical contents of every day life (see bilingual teaching of a non-language subject).</p>
<p>code-switching  Code-switching  <i>alternance codique</i>  <i>code-switching</i>  <i>code-switching</i></p>	<p>Switching from one language or variety to another. If necessary, this can be done for certain sequences, either spontaneously or consciously, as for instance in the context of bilingual teaching of a non-language subject.</p>
<p>Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)  <i>Gemeinsamer europäischer Referenzrahmen für Sprachen (GER)</i>  <i>Cadre européen commun de référence pour les langues (CECR)</i>  <i>Quadro comune europeo di riferimento per le lingue (QCER)</i>  <i>Norma europea comunabla per las linguas (NEC)</i></p>	<p>A reference work widely recognised in Europe in the field of foreign language learning and teaching, as well as the assessment of language skills. It was developed between 1991 and 2001 in the framework of a Council of Europe project. Among the key elements of the CEFR are descriptions of different levels (A1–C2) that were essentially developed empirically and formulated as can-do statements. The CEFR also includes many indications for encouragement, planning, implementation and quality assurance in the field of foreign language teaching. The CEFR model of language competences is founded on an action-oriented communicative approach that also takes intercultural elements into account.</p>
<p>communication strategy  <i>Kommunikationsstrategie</i>  <i>stratégie de communication</i>  <i>strategia di comunicazione</i>  <i>strategia da comunicaziun</i></p>	<p>A mental map or the development of an activity in order to mobilise language and communicative resources, or other, that make it possible to carry out a task (such as making a decision) or to guarantee comprehension (such as asking questions to ensure that one has made oneself understood).</p>
<p>communicative competence  <i>kommunikative (Sprach-)Kompetenz</i>  <i>compétence communicative</i>  <i>competenza comunicativa</i>  <i>cumpetenzza comunicativa</i></p>	<p>An individual's language competences, taken as a whole. In the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages certain elements of linguistic, sociolinguistic and pragmatic knowledge and know-how (resources) are described as communicative language competences.</p>
<p>competence description (see descriptor)  <i>Kompetenzbeschreibung (siehe Deskriptor)</i>  <i>description de compétence (voir descripteur)</i>  <i>descrizione della competenza (vedi descrittore)</i>  <i>descripziun da la cumpetenzza (vesair descriptur)</i></p>	
<p>competence grid  <i>Kompetenzraster</i>  <i>grille de compétence</i>  <i>griglia delle competenze</i>  <i>raster da cumpetenzza</i></p>	<p>Competence grids shed light on a specific competence (competence grids relating to written comprehension, for example). These grids contain precise descriptions of specific competences. The descriptions are generally organised in the form of tables that cover 3 to 5 levels of performance. Competence grids are based on models of competence.</p>

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construct  
*Konstrukt*  
construct  
*costrutto*  
construct

This refers to construct in the field of assessment: skills (latent, mentally anchored) that must be identified and verified with the help of test exercises, such as written comprehension skills. These skills are generally recognised as being based on a body of cognitive processes that interact consistently. Together, they constitute a measurable psychometric dimension.

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content standard (see educational standard)  
*Inhaltsstandard (siehe Bildungsstandard)*  
*standard de contenu (voir standard de formation)*  
*standard di contenuto (vedi standard di formazione)*  
*standard da cuntegn (vesair standard da furmaziun)*

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cross-disciplinary learning  
*fächerübergreifendes Lernen*  
*apprentissage interdisciplinaire*  
*apprendimento transdisciplinare*  
*emprender multidisciplinar*

Including knowledge and methods stemming from different language and non-language subjects in order to acquire learning content.

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cross-language competence  
*translinguale Kompetenz*  
*compétence translinguistique*  
*competenza translinguistica*  
*cumpetenzza translinguala*

A general competence that is not linked to one language in particular, which includes for instance the competence to read and knowing different types of texts and their structures, and which can, in principal, be transferred even if it is partially related to a culture.

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culture of assessment  
*Beurteilungskultur*  
*culture d'évaluation*  
*cultura della valutazione*  
*cultura da valutaziun*

The body of assessment measures and the way in which assessment is carried out in an institution; the culture of assessment is influenced by, inter alia, the tension created through encouragement and selection:

- Encouragement (as a culture) is based especially on reciprocal feedback between the different individuals involved in an institution, for instance between the teachers and the learners.
- Selection is based chiefly on summative assessments carried out by teachers or external authorities and facilitates decisions regarding the educational or professional orientation of the individuals assessed (for instance, at the point of transition from one level to another or for orientation to different options).

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curriculum  
(see syllabus/programme of work, *siehe Lehrplan, voir plan d'études, vedi piano di studi, vesair plan d'instrucziun*)

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<p>declarative knowledge  (see explicit knowledge)  <i>deklaratives Wissen/savoir</i>  (siehe explizites Wissen)  <i>savoir déclaratif</i>  (voir savoir explicite)  <i>sapere dichiarativo</i>  (vedi sapere esplicito)  <i>savoir declarativ</i>  (vesair savair explicit)</p>	
<p>descriptor  <i>Deskriptor</i>  <i>descripteur</i>  <i>descrittore</i>  <i>descriptur</i></p>	<p>An element used to describe skills, for instance in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, using can-do statements.</p>
<p>diagnostic competence  <i>diagnostische Kompetenz</i>  <i>compétence diagnostique</i>  <i>competenza diagnostica</i>  <i>cumpetenzia diagnostica</i></p>	<p>The ability of teachers to assess learners and their abilities and skills. For this, they may use various diagnostic procedures, such as observing the learning, tests and examinations on the subject and on skills, as well as self- and hetero-assessment grids.</p>
<p>diagnostic instrument (see also diagnostic procedure)  <i>diagnostisches Instrument (siehe auch Diagnoseverfahren)</i>  <i>instrument diagnostique (voir également procédé diagnostique)</i>  <i>strumento diagnostico (vedi anche processo diagnostico)</i>  <i>instrument diagnostic (vesair era procedura da diagnosa)</i></p>	<p>A standardised test, observation form or checklist designed for teachers or learners, to determine the level of learning and plan ways of encouraging it.</p>
<p>diagnostic procedure (see also diagnostic instrument)  <i>Diagnoseverfahren (siehe auch diagnostisches Instrument)</i>  <i>procédé diagnostique (voir également instrument diagnostique)</i>  <i>procedura diagnostica (vedi anche strumento diagnostico)</i>  <i>procedura da diagnosa (vesair era instrument diagnostic)</i></p>	<p>Diagnostic procedures are among the means used by teachers to evaluate learners. In addition to standardised tests one can use various observation procedures as well as lists that enable self- and hetero-assessment.</p>
<p>dialect  <i>Dialekt</i>  <i>dialecte</i>  <i>dialetto</i>  <i>dialect</i></p>	<p>A non-standard language variety that differs from the standard language on several levels (such as vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar). Every dialect has strong local or regional roots and therefore a limited communicative reach.</p>

<p>differentiation (internal differentiation)  <i>Binnendifferenzierung</i>  <i>différenciation interne</i>  <i>differenzaziacione interna</i>  <i>differeenziaziun interna</i></p>	<p>Adaptation of tasks and working methods to take into account the different needs, performance potential, learning styles, etc. of the learners.</p>
<p>diglossia  <i>Diglossie (mediale Diglossie)</i>  <i>diglossie</i>  <i>diglossia</i>  <i>diglossie</i></p>	<p>The situation of a society in which two different language varieties cohabit that are used alternately according to the context (such as the Swiss-German and standard German used in the German-speaking region of Switzerland). The term «medial diglossia» refers to a language situation in which the choice between one or the other variety depends largely on the means of communication (spoken or written).</p>
<p>eclectic approach (see integrated language teaching methodology)  <i>Methodenmix (siehe integrative [bzw. integrierte] Sprachendidaktik)</i>  <i>approche éclectique (voir didactique intégrative [ou intégrée] des langues)</i>  <i>ecllettismo metodologico (vedi didattica integrata delle lingue)</i>  <i>maschaida da metodas (vesair didactica integrada da linguas)</i></p>	
<p>education monitoring  <i>Bildungsmonitoring</i>  <i>monitorage du système d'éducation</i>  <i>monitoraggio del sistema educativo</i>  <i>monitoring dal sistem d'educaziun</i></p>	<p>The long-term collection and systematic treatment of information on a system of education and its context. This task serves as a basis for planning, supports policy decisions, reports on the situation and clarifies public debate. Through Education Monitoring, the government and the cantons gather complete information on the Swiss educational system. A Swiss Education Report which serves as a basis for management decisions is published every four years. In the framework of Education Monitoring a check will henceforth be carried out to determine whether students in compulsory education attain the Educational Standards.</p>
<p>educational standard (see also fundamental competence)  <i>Bildungsstandard (siehe auch Grundkompetenz)</i>  <i>standard de formation (voir également compétence fondamentale)</i>  <i>standard di formazione (vedi anche competenza fondamentale)</i>  <i>standard da furmaziun (vesair era cumpetenzza fundamentala)</i></p>	<p>Requirements that students must meet at given times in their school career. A distinction is made between:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Content standards – the description of content</li> <li>• Opportunity-to-learn standards – the description of situations that provide a learning opportunity, and</li> <li>• Performance standards – the description of performance</li> </ul> <p>Performance standards focus on the outcome of the learning.</p>
<p><i>ELBE</i> (language awareness, <i>Begegnung mit Sprachen, éveil aux langues</i>)  <i>Begegnung mit Sprachen</i>  <i>éveil aux langues</i>  <i>consapevolezza linguistica</i>  <i>inscunter cun linguas</i></p>	<p>An approach that is not oriented towards acquisition but aims at reflection about language in a multilingual context. The goal is to develop cross-language competence that could accelerate the learning of other languages; cultural differences may be concerned as well. <i>ELBE</i> and <i>EOLE</i> are among what are known as «pluralistic approaches.»</p>

<p><i>EMILE (enseignement d'une matière par l'intégration d'une langue étrangère)</i> (see/siehe/voir/vedi/vesair CLIL)</p>	
<p><i>EOLE (éducation et ouverture aux langues à l'école)</i> (see/siehe/voir/vedi/vesair ELBE)</p>	
<p>error tolerance <i>Fehlertoleranz</i> tolérance aux erreurs tolleranza verso gli errori toleranza da sbagls</p>	<p>The extent to which errors are tolerated or corrected. In this instance, «error» generally applies only to forms that depart from the grammatical and lexical norms of the target language. When errors are considered as an inevitable phenomenon in language learning error tolerance is fairly high at the lower levels and decreases as the learners' mastery of the language increases – this principle is to be found in the levels of reference of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.</p>
<p>European Language Portfolio (ELP) <i>Europäisches Sprachenportfolio (ESP)</i> <i>Portfolio européen des langues (PEL)</i> <i>Portfolio europeo delle lingue (PEL)</i> <i>Portfolio europeic da linguas (PEL)</i></p>	<p>A learning companion and source of documentation for learners, designed on the basis of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. This instrument makes it possible to document and present the sum of linguistic knowledge acquired, be it in the school context or extracurricular, as well as (inter)cultural experiences. As the learning companion, it contains instruments that enable self-assessment of language skills (grids, checklists), planning further learning and reviewing linguistic and (inter)cultural learning experiences. It is a documentation instrument that helps to establish a transparent description of the user's skills and thereby facilitates mobility. As a companion learning, it promotes development of the learner's autonomy and encourages lifelong learning.</p>
<p>exchange programme/education through contact <i>Austausch/Kontaktpädagogik</i> <i>échange/pédagogie des contacts</i> <i>scambi/pedagogia degli scambi</i> <i>barat/pedagogia da barat</i></p>	<p>An approach that allows simultaneous language and intercultural learning, in a real or virtual target language location. Using a language in a region where it is spoken or by means of communication media makes it possible for learners to experience authentic communicative language activities and develop an affective relationship with the language and culture being learned.</p>
<p>existential knowledge/competence <i>Persönlichkeitswissen/-kompetenz</i> (savoir-être) <i>savoir-être</i> <i>atteggiamenti (saper essere)</i> <i>savair/cumpetenzza da la persunalitad</i> (savoir-être)</p>	<p>Knowledge or competence linked to the personality. Designates the combination of individual qualities and aptitudes of a human being, such as the ability to relate to others; these are influenced by cultural factors and can be developed and therefore encouraged in the teaching context. See also declarative knowledge (explicit knowledge) and procedural knowledge (know-how).</p>
<p>explicit knowledge/learning <i>explizites Wissen/Lernen</i> <i>savoir/apprentissage explicite</i> <i>sapere/apprendimento esplicito</i> <i>savair/emprender explicit</i></p>	<p>Knowledge that can be verbalised, i.e. a learning process by which learners are conscious of what they are learning (knowledge). See also procedural knowledge (know-how) and existential competence.</p>

<p>first language (L1)  <i>Erstsprache (L1)</i>  <i>langue première (L1)</i>  <i>prima lingua (L1)</i>  <i>emprima lingua (L1)</i></p>	<p>In the present report, this designates the first language acquired in chronological order. It can remain an individual's main language when it coincides with the language of schooling. But it can also, generally due to the phenomenon of migration, be supplanted by a second language (usually the language used in the social environment) that is often acquired at a later stage. See also language of origin / of migration.</p>
<p>foreign language  <i>Fremdsprache</i>  <i>langue étrangère</i>  <i>lingua straniera</i>  <i>lingua estra</i></p>	<p>A language that is learned in school or during a limited stay in a region where it is spoken.</p>
<p>formal vs informal learning  <i>formelles vs informelles Lernen</i>  <i>apprentissage formel vs informel</i>  <i>apprendimento formale vs informale</i>  <i>emprender da maniera formala vs nunformala</i></p>	<p>Learning in an institutional environment (such as school) vs learning in a natural environment (such as everyday life). The pedagogy of contact and exchange makes it possible to create informal learning opportunities even in an institutional context.</p>
<p>fossilisation  <i>Fossilierung</i>  <i>fossilisation</i>  <i>fossilizzazione</i>  <i>fossilisaziun</i></p>	<p>The level of competence attained in the second language or in the foreign language, i.e. the interlanguage stage, although the speaker may continue to apply incorrect rules. This occurs frequently in spite of rectifications made by others because the speaker is able to make him/herself understood anyway. Fossilisation occurs very frequently, which is why it is often found at very high levels in some linguistic fields.</p>
<p>functional language skills  <i>funktionale Sprach(en)kompetenz</i>  <i>compétence langagière fonctionnelle</i>  <i>competenza linguistica funzionale</i>  <i>cumpetenz da lingua(s) funcziunala</i></p>	<p>The ability to carry out appropriate speech acts in diverse situations. See also functional plurilingualism.</p>
<p>functional plurilingualism  <i>funktionale Mehrsprachigkeit</i>  <i>plurilinguisme fonctionnel</i>  <i>plurilinguismo funzionale</i>  <i>plurilinguissem funcziunal</i></p>	<p>Plurilingual individuals' ability to make the most of their languages for communication by using their language and cultural skills. Emphasis is placed on adaptation and on the appropriateness of language activities and interactions with other speakers. Functional plurilingualism is often opposed to what is considered as perfect bilingualism (double mother tongue).</p>
<p>fundamental competence (see also educational standard)  <i>Grundkompetenz (siehe auch Bildungsstandard)</i>  <i>compétence fondamentale (voir également standard de formation)</i>  <i>competenza fondamentale (vedi anche standard di formazione)</i>  <i>cumpetenz fundamentala (vesair era standard da furmaziun)</i></p>	<p>A competence profile of the minimum level that must be attained by all learners, provided that their learning took place in satisfactory conditions. Fundamental competences differ from average standards (which describe the average level required) and maximum standards (which describe the ideal level of achievement).</p>

<p><i>HarmoS agreement</i> (intercantonal agreement on the harmonisation of compulsory education) <i>HarmoS-Konkordat</i> (<i>Konkordat über die Harmonisierung der obligatorischen Schule</i>) <i>concordat HarmoS</i> (<i>concordat sur l'harmonisation de la scolarité obligatoire</i>) <i>concordato HarmoS</i> (<i>concordato sull'armonizzazione della scuola obbligatoria</i>) <i>concordat HarmoS</i> (<i>concordat davart l'armonisaziun da la scola obligatorica</i>)</p>	<p>The Intercantonal Agreement on the Harmonisation of Compulsory Education (the <i>HarmoS</i> Agreement, which came into effect on 1 August 2009) is a Swiss agreement on education coordination. It harmonises, for the first time, at the national level, the duration of teaching levels, their main goals, and the transition from one to the next.</p> <p>The <i>HarmoS</i> Agreement contributes to the implementation of the new constitutional articles on education (which were accepted by the Swiss people and by the cantons, by a majority of 86%, on 21 May 2006). The main contents of the Strategy of Language Teaching (<i>EDK</i> 2004) were incorporated into the Intercantonal Agreement on the Harmonisation of Compulsory Education (art. 4 of the <i>HarmoS</i> Agreement) and will therefore be legally binding for the cantons that adhere to the agreement. These include: two foreign languages starting at primary school level, the option of a third national language starting at lower secondary education, the national Educational Standards as well as the language and culture of origin courses (LCO).</p>
<p>hetero-assessment instrument <i>Fremdbeobachtungs- und Fremdbeurteilungsinstrument</i> <i>instrument d'observation et d'évaluation par autrui</i> <i>strumento di etero-osservazione e di etero-valutazione</i> <i>instrument d'observaziun e da valitaziun externa</i></p>	<p>An instrument of observation and assessment that provides feedback on learners' performances from an external viewpoint – it is generally the teachers' viewpoint but may also come from other students (observation grids and examinations for example).</p>
<p>horizontal coherence <i>horizontale Kohärenz</i> <i>cohérence horizontale</i> <i>coerenza orizzontale</i> <i>coerenza orizzontala</i></p>	<p>The coordination of language learning, including all languages learned simultaneously at one school level (coordination of teaching in particular).</p>
<p>identity <i>Identität</i> <i>identité</i> <i>identità</i> <i>identitad</i></p>	<p>The collective set of characteristics that characterise a human being and set him or her apart from others; these are the characteristics that make up an individual, differentiating between individual identity (the characteristics specific to a person) and community identity (common characteristics of a group). Among these are languages and cultures, with their use and its valorisation, which mark the individual.</p>
<p>immersion, immersive <i>Immersion, immersiv</i> <i>immersion, immersif</i> <i>immersione, immersivo</i> <i>immersiun, immersiv</i></p>	<p>A bilingual education situation in which the bulk or the entirety of the teaching is given in a foreign or second language. In German, this is often referred to as a «language bath» (<i>Sprachbad</i>), since learners are «plunged» into the target language through non linguistic contents.</p>
<p>implicit knowledge/learning <i>implizites Wissen/Lernen</i> <i>savoir/apprentissage implicite</i> <i>sapere/apprendimento implicito</i> <i>savoir/emprender implicit</i></p>	<p>Knowledge that cannot be verbalised but is expressed in activity, i.e. a learning process in which learners are not conscious of what they are learning (know-how).</p>

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<p>input <i>Input</i> <i>input/donnée</i> <i>input</i> <i>input</i></p>	<p>Spoken or written language with which learners are confronted when they learn or use a language. Depending on the methodological approach chosen, input can be rich and authentic to a greater or lesser degree.</p>
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<p>integrated language teaching methodology (see also multilingually oriented language teaching methodology) <i>integrative (bzw. integrierte) Sprachendidaktik (siehe auch Mehrsprachigkeitsdidaktik)</i> <i>didactique intégrative (ou intégrée) des langues (voir aussi didactique du plurilinguisme)</i> <i>didattica integrata delle lingue (vedi anche didattica plurilingue)</i> <i>didactica integrada da linguas (vesair era didactica dal plurilinguisssem)</i></p>	<p>An approach in which teaching is coordinated among the different language subjects using common processes, and in which general foundations of language acquisition and teaching are transmitted in order to promote multilingualism. In its broadest sense, this term is synonymous with multilingually oriented language teaching methodology. In a narrower sense, it refers only to the cross-language aspect.</p>
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<p>interaction <i>Interaktion</i> <i>interaction</i> <i>interazione</i> <i>interacziun</i></p>	<p>A process in which written or spoken exchanges take place between two or more persons. In these exchanges, the alternation of roles between production and reception operates either according to given rules or is negotiated, with some improvisation.</p>
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<p>intercomprehension <i>Interkomprehension</i> <i>intercompréhension</i> <i>intercomprensione</i> <i>intercomprehensiun</i></p>	<p>The comprehension of or ability to decipher a neighbouring language (Spanish and Italian for instance); in order to do this the speaker compares the languages and puts forward theories on the meaning of a word or a sentence, for example, and reflects on how to express a given notion. This approach to teaching and learning encourages the linguistic and language learning awareness, as well as the flexibility of the plurilingual individual (see <i>ELBE</i>).</p>
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<p>intercomprehension approach <i>Interkomprehensionsdidaktik</i> <i>didactique de l'intercompréhension</i> <i>didattica dell'intercomprensione</i> <i>didactica da l'intercomprehensiun</i></p>	<p>Transversal teaching that combines different language teaching methods for a cross-disciplinary and cross-language approach to learning. The intercomprehension approach focuses solely on receptive plurilingualism, and particularly on the understanding of the written as well as the spoken language.</p>
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<p>intercultural competence <i>interkulturelle Kompetenz</i> <i>compétence interculturelle</i> <i>competenza interculturale</i> <i>cumpetenza intercultural</i></p>	<p>Referring to the ability: it is the ability to communicate in a satisfactory and appropriate manner in a foreign cultural environment or with persons of other cultures.</p>
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intercultural learning (see  
intercultural competence)  
*interkulturelles Lernen (siehe  
interkulturelle Kompetenz)*  
*apprentissage interculturel (voir  
compétence interculturelle)*  
*apprendimento interculturale (vedi  
competenza interculturale)*  
*emprender intercultural (vesair  
cumpetenzza intercultural)*

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interdependence hypothesis  
*Interdependenzhypothese*  
*hypothèse de l'interdépendance*  
*ipotesi di interdipendenza*  
*ipotesa da l'interdipendenza*

According to this theory an individual's linguistic knowledge includes both (all) languages. Even if the languages are clearly distinct from one another in their superficial characteristics, i.e. pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar, the existence of a common underlying proficiency enables the transfer of different aspects of language competence from one language to another.

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interference  
*Interferenz*  
*interférence*  
*interferenza*  
*interferenza*

The transfer of linguistic resources to a new language, which can cause errors or confusion (false friends such as the German «bekommen» and the English «become» [see transfer]). The influence of a (better mastered) language on another (less well mastered) language.

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interlingual competence  
*interlinguale Kompetenz*  
*compétence interlinguistique*  
*competenza interlinguistica*  
*cumpetenzza interlinguala*

The competence to build bridges between languages by utilising lexical, syntactical, morphological and phonological regularities, thereby facilitating the comprehension and learning processes. Interlingual competence is a transversal competence.

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language acquisition (see acquisition)  
*Spracherwerb (siehe Erwerb)*  
*acquisition langagière (voir acquisition)*  
*acquisizione della lingua (vedi  
acquisizione)*  
*acquisiziun da lingua (vesair acquisiziun)*

language activity  
*Sprachaktivität*  
*activité langagière*  
*attività linguistica*  
*actividad linguistica*

The use of language, in action-oriented communicative situations, for example. The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages defines the following language activities: reception, production, interaction, mediation (see also language skills).

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language as subject  
*Sprache als Fach*  
*langue comme matière*  
*lingua come materia*  
*lingua sco rom*

The language is taught as an aim and content of a teaching unit.

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<p>language awareness (see <i>ELBE</i>) <i>Sprachbegegnung/ Sprach(en)-bewusstsein</i> (siehe <i>ELBE</i>) <i>éveil aux langues</i> (voir <i>ELBE</i>) <i>consapevolezza linguistica</i> (vedi <i>ELBE</i>) <i>inscunter cun linguas</i> (vesair <i>ELBE</i>)</p>	
<p>language certificate/examination <i>Sprachdiplom/-prüfung</i> <i>certificat/examen de langue</i> <i>certificato/esame di lingua</i> <i>certificat/examen da lingua</i></p>	<p>Language measurement, indicating the current level of competence in a foreign language. There are various internationally recognised language certificates which refer to the levels of the Common European Framework of References.</p>
<p>language competence <i>Sprach(en)kompetenz</i> <i>compétence langagière</i> <i>competenza linguistica</i> <i>cumpetenzza linguistic</i></p>	<p>The ability to use language in the context of communicative activities.</p>
<p>language learning biography <i>Sprachlernbiografie</i> <i>biographie langagière</i> <i>biografia linguistica</i> <i>biografia linguistica</i></p>	<p>A teaching instrument that contains the individual's history of language learning and the entire range of learning to which it corresponds (in-school and extracurricular language learning, as well as linguistic encounters, for example); it is part of the European Language Portfolio.</p>
<p>language of migration (see language of origin) <i>Migrationssprache</i> (siehe <i>Herkunftssprache</i>) <i>langue de la migration</i> (voir <i>langue d'origine</i>) <i>lingua della migrazione</i> (vedi <i>lingua d'origine</i>) <i>lingua da migrasiun</i> (vesair <i>lingua d'origin</i>)</p>	
<p>language of origin/of migration <i>Herkunfts-/Migrationssprache</i> <i>langue d'origine/de la migration</i> <i>lingua d'origine/di migrazione</i> <i>lingua d'origin/da migrasiun</i></p>	<p>In most cases this is the first language acquired (see first language) by children with a migrant background. As to whether speakers have developed, in the language of origin, only communicative language skills for everyday use (BICS) or if they also possess cognitive-academic language proficiency skills (CALP), this depends primarily on the moment of migration, and therefore on their age.</p>

<p>language of schooling (see also local language)  <i>Schulsprache (siehe auch Lokalsprache)</i>  <i>langue de scolarisation (voir également langue locale)</i>  <i>lingua di scolarizzazione (vedi anche lingua locale)</i>  <i>lingua da scola, da scolarisaziun (vesair era lingua locala)</i></p>	<p>The language in which content is transmitted in schools and universities. In the German-speaking region of Switzerland standard German (<i>Hochdeutsch</i>) is the preferred language of communication, whereas in everyday life the local dialect is generally used. The language(s) of schooling is (are) taught as subject(s) in itself (themselves) as well as in the context of other subjects; see language as subject, as opposed to language(s) in other subjects.</p>
<p>language skills  <i>Sprachfertigkeiten</i>  <i>aptitudes langagières</i>  <i>abilità linguistiche</i>  <i>abilitads linguisticas</i></p>	<p>A traditional method of grouping language activities according to the form and medium used: spoken and written comprehension, spoken expression (production and interaction), and written expression.</p>
<p>language(s) in other subjects  <i>Sprache(n) in andern Fächern</i>  <i>langue(s) des autres matières</i>  <i>lingua nelle altre materie</i>  <i>lingua(s) en auters roms</i></p>	<p>The teaching of non-language contents (such as history or natural science), in which certain linguistic aspects are consciously addressed (writing a short description of a diagram, for example).</p>
<p>languages act (LangA)  <i>Sprachengesetz (SpG)</i>  <i>loi sur les langues (LLC)</i>  <i>legge sulle lingue (LLing)</i>  <i>lescha da linguas (LLing)</i></p>	<p>Swiss federal act governing the use of national languages and the understanding between the linguistic communities (act of 2007, in force since 2010; <a href="http://www.admin.ch/ch/d/ff/2007/6951.pdf">http://www.admin.ch/ch/d/ff/2007/6951.pdf</a>)</p>
<p>LCO, course in the language and culture of origin  <i>HSK, Unterricht in heimatlicher Sprache und Kultur</i>  <i>LCO, enseignement de la langue et de la culture d'origine</i>  <i>LCO, corsi di lingua e di cultura dei paesi d'origine</i>  <i>LCO, istruzziun da la lingua e da la cultura d'origin</i></p>	<p>Classes intended for children and teenagers from a country where another language is spoken and who want to develop their competences in their language of origin; increasingly, an effort is being made to integrate the bilingual and bicultural world in which these learners live.</p>
<p>learning  <i>Lernen</i>  <i>apprentissage</i>  <i>apprendimento</i>  <i>emprender</i></p>	<p>Appropriation (of a language for example) in the school context, accompanied insofar as possible, for educational purposes, by teaching guided by a set of rules.</p>
<p>learning/knowing how to learn  <i>Methodenkompetenz</i>  <i>compétence méthodologique</i>  <i>competenza metodologica</i>  <i>cumpetenzza metodica</i></p>	<p>Knowledge and know-how in the field of learning (but also the learning to learn area of competence). For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the ability to use auxiliary means to verify knowledge and to learn;</li> <li>• knowing learning strategies and techniques; the will and ability to apply them;</li> <li>• the ability to compare languages and cultures.</li> </ul>

<p>learning strategy  <i>Lernstrategie</i>  <i>stratégie d'apprentissage</i>  <i>strategia di apprendimento</i>  <i>strategia d'emprender</i></p>	<p>A mental map or the development of an activity for the guidance of the individual's own learning which can be referred to according to the situation. The implementation of learning strategies can be done consciously or unconsciously and depends on the learning method of the student. Learning strategies are oriented towards an educational goal and the requirements of the learning process; they help to support the learning process and to achieve the best possible result.</p>
<p>level of competence  <i>Kompetenzniveau</i>  <i>niveau de compétence</i>  <i>livello di competenza</i>  <i>nivel da cumpetenzza</i></p>	<p>The ability, of a given functional range and quality, to act in terms of language and communication. The descriptions of levels of competence for languages in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages use a reference system with a total of 6 main levels (A1–C2). The A1 and A2 levels correspond to an elementary use of the language, levels B1 and B2 to a largely autonomous use of the language and levels C1 and C2 to a competent use of the language.</p>
<p>lingua franca  <i>Verkehrssprache, lingua franca</i>  <i>langue véhiculaire, lingua franca</i>  <i>lingua franca</i>  <i>lingua franca</i></p>	<p>A language that is used mainly when the speakers have no first or second language in common.</p>
<p>linguistic knowledge  <i>Sprachwissen</i>  <i>savoir langagier</i>  <i>sapere linguistico</i>  <i>savoir linguistic</i></p>	<p>The body of knowledge recorded in the long-term memory on acceptable language structure and lexis, as well as on sociocultural conditions of use and norms.</p>
<p>linguistic resources  <i>sprachliche Mittel</i>  <i>moyens linguistiques</i>  <i>strumenti linguistici</i>  <i>elements linguistics</i></p>	<p>Elements of language that are used in language activities (morphological, grammatical, or lexical units for example).</p>
<p>linguistic system  <i>Sprachsystem</i>  <i>système langagier</i>  <i>sistema linguistico</i>  <i>sistem linguistic</i></p>	<p>Construction of the language as an element of a scientific description. This is done based on partial, interdependent systems of phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics and, to a certain degree, pragmatics. Recent linguistic theory increasingly questions the systemic character of language.</p>
<p>literacy  <i>Literalität</i>  <i>littératie</i>  <i>literacy</i>  <i>litteralitat</i></p>	<p>Ability to read and write. It is one of the key-competences to participate at social life.</p>
<p>literacy skills  <i>Textkompetenz</i>  <i>compétence textuelle</i>  <i>competenza testuale</i>  <i>cumpetenzza da text</i></p>	<p>The ability to understand texts in an autonomous manner and establish links between the information received and one's own knowledge in order to use them for one's own reflection and actions, i.e. also to produce texts destined for others (see also CALP).</p>

<p>local language (see also language of schooling)  <i>Lokalsprache (siehe auch Schulsprache)</i>  <i>langue locale (voir également langue de scolarisation)</i>  <i>lingua locale (vedi anche lingua di scolarizzazione)</i>  <i>lingua locala (vesair era lingua da scola, da scolarisaziun)</i></p>	<p>The language spoken by the majority of the population of a given location.</p>
<p>mediation (linguistic mediation)  <i>Sprachmittlung/Mediation</i>  <i>médiation (linguistique)</i>  <i>mediazione (linguistica)</i>  <i>mediaziun (linguistica)</i></p>	<p>A type of language activity in which the goal is primarily to transmit, by speech or in writing, messages heard or read in one language (or language variety) to another language (or variety) for a person who does not understand the source language (or variety). Personal opinion or intent are secondary.  Mediation activities include translation and interpretation, but also the reproduction of textual content, by communicating them in another manner or by summarising them.</p>
<p>metacognition  <i>Metakognition</i>  <i>métacognition</i>  <i>metacognizione</i>  <i>metacogniziun</i></p>	<p>Second class cognitions: i.e. knowledge about one's own knowledge and cognitive functioning; analysis and management of one's own cognitive efforts, such as learning processes.</p>
<p>metalinguistic awareness  <i>metalinguistisches Bewusstsein</i>  <i>conscience métalinguistique</i>  <i>consapevolezza metalinguistica</i>  <i>conscienza metalinguistica</i></p>	<p>The ability to reflect consciously on the sonority or construction of words, sentences and texts, as well as on the best way to express a given meaning and the ability to verbalise one's reflections. See also metacognition.</p>
<p>model of competence  <i>Kompetenzmodell</i>  <i>modèle de compétence</i>  <i>modello di competenza</i>  <i>model da cumpetenz</i></p>	<p>For the comprehension of action-oriented language competence: the description of the essential knowledge and know-how that determine the extent and quality of the ability to act, and the connections between these elements. Models of competence often comprise different degrees of competence (model by degrees).</p>
<p>multilingualism (see plurilingualism)  <i>Vielsprachigkeit (siehe Mehrsprachigkeit)</i>  <i>multilinguisme (voir plurilinguisme)</i>  <i>multilinguismo (vedi plurilinguismo)</i>  <i>multilinguissem (vesair plurilinguissem)</i></p>	

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<p>multilingually oriented language teaching methodology (see also integrated language teaching methodology) <i>Mehrsprachigkeitsdidaktik (Didaktik der Mehrsprachigkeit; siehe auch integrative [bzw. integrierte] Sprachendidaktik)</i> <i>didactique du plurilinguisme (voir aussi didactique intégrative [ou intégrée] des langues)</i> <i>didattica plurilingue (vedi anche didattica integrata delle lingue)</i> <i>didactica dal plurilinguism (vesair era didactica integrada da linguas)</i></p>	<p>Multilingually oriented language teaching methodology offers teaching concepts aiming to promote multilingualism through a combined and coordinated approach to language teaching and learning, both within and outside the school system. Multilingually oriented language teaching methodology proposes on one hand the integration into language teaching of several different languages in order to encourage transfers between languages; on the other hand, it implies integration of languages and foreign language learning into the teaching of non-language subjects.</p>
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<p>native speaker competence <i>muttersprachliche Kompetenz</i> <i>compétence d'un locuteur natif</i> <i>competenza nella lingua madre</i> <i>cumpetenzza da lingua materna</i></p>	<p>In the acceptance initially developed by N. Chomsky this is hypothetical grammatical competence in the first language, fully developed as the mother tongue, which is abstract and neutral from a socio-cultural point of view. Nowadays one often includes the socio-cultural component.</p>
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opportunity-to-learn-standard (see educational standard)  
*Standard für Lehr- und Lernbedingungen (siehe Bildungsstandard)*  
*standard relatif aux conditions favorables à l'apprentissage (voir standard de formation)*  
*standard relativi alle condizioni di istruzione e di apprendimento (vedi standard di formazione)*  
*standard per cundiziuns d'instruir e d'emprender (vesair standard da furmaziun)*

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<p>outcome <i>Outcome</i> <i>outcome</i> <i>risultato del processo di apprendimento</i> <i>resultat d'emprender</i></p>	<p>The results of learning; competences that result from education efforts.</p>
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<p>output <i>Output</i> <i>output</i> <i>output</i> <i>output</i></p>	<p>Spoken or written texts produced by language users (see input).</p>
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performance standard (see educational standard)  
*Leistungsstandard/Performance-Standard (siehe Bildungsstandard)*  
*standard de performance (voir standard de formation)*  
*standard di prestazione (vedi standard di formazione)*  
*standard da prestaziun (versair standard da furmaziun)*

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<p>performance test (see standardised test instrument)  <i>Leistungstest (siehe standardisiertes Testinstrument)</i>  <i>test de performance (voir instrument d'évaluation standardisé)</i>  <i>test di prestazione (vedi strumento di valutazione standardizzato)</i>  <i>test da prestaziun (vesair instrument da valitaziun standardisà)</i></p>	
<p>plurilingual repertoire/competence  <i>mehrsprachige(s) Repertoire/Kompetenz</i>  <i>répertoire/compétence plurilingue</i>  <i>repertorio/competenza plurilingue</i>  <i>repertori/cumpetenzia plurilingua</i></p>	<p>The body of language resources that an individual can mobilise in a manner appropriate to the situation.</p>
<p>plurilingualism/multilingualism  <i>Mehrsprachigkeit/Vielsprachigkeit</i>  <i>plurilinguisme/multilinguisme</i>  <i>plurilinguismo/multilinguismo</i>  <i>plurilinguissim/multilinguissim</i></p>	<p>Increasingly, a distinction is made between multilingualism, which relates to the linguistic diversity of a given region or society, and plurilingualism, which characterises individuals who master several different languages. A multilingual region can be inhabited by monolingual individuals, and plurilingual individuals can live in a (theoretically) monolingual region. However, the distinction is not always made at all levels concerned and cannot be translated into all European languages (in German, the term <i>Mehrsprachigkeit</i> is often applied for both the territorial and the individual case).</p>
<p>procedural knowledge (know-how)  <i>prozedurales Wissen (savoir-faire)</i>  <i>savoir procédural (savoir-faire)</i>  <i>sapere procedurale (saper fare)</i>  <i>savair procedural (savair far)</i></p>	<p>Elements of knowledge that are usually unconscious and essential, for instance to articulation and automatic written comprehension, and which constitute the foundation necessary to the fluent use of language. See also declarative knowledge (explicit knowledge) and existential competence.</p>
<p>production, productive  <i>Produktion, produktiv</i>  <i>production, productif</i>  <i>produzione, produttivo</i>  <i>producziun, productiv</i></p>	<p>Communicative language activity in which framework language users express themselves (often having prepared beforehand) either orally or in writing (for instance in the form of a presentation or report).</p>
<p>progression  <i>Progression</i>  <i>progression</i>  <i>progressione</i>  <i>progressiun</i></p>	<p>The principle governing the learning process, i.e. the improvement of language mastery.  Various parameters can be envisaged: the linguistic resources (grammatical forms, vocabulary), contents, themes, as well as tasks to be carried out that become increasingly complex and abstract. If progression is approached too narrowly, particularly regarding grammar, it may limit the possibilities of language use. Whereas teaching resources formerly focused solely on grammatical progression, current teaching resources follow a progression of language skills and opportunities for language use that are increasingly complex and flexible, combined with the necessary linguistic resources.</p>

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reception, receptive  
*Rezeption, rezeptiv*  
*réception, réceptif*  
*ricezione, ricettivo*  
*recepziun, receptiv*

A communicative language activity in which spoken or written information is recorded and understood (when one reads a text for oneself, listens to a radio broadcast or watches a television show, for example).

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reflection about language (see metacognition)  
*Sprachreflexion (siehe Metakognition)*  
*réflexion linguistique (voir métacognition)*  
*riflessione linguistica (vedi metacognizione)*  
*reflexiun linguistica (vesair metacogniziun)*

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register  
*Register*  
*registre*  
*registro*  
*register*

A manner of speaking and writing that is conditioned by social factors; for instance a familiar, formal, or literary register. This manner of speaking and writing, characteristic of a specific field of communication, is often the linguistic reflection of the speaker's social relations.

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scaffolding  
*Scaffolding*  
*étayage*  
*scaffolding*  
*scaffolding*

Support that implies a form of cooperation in which the learners' attention is guided towards important aspects of language and the learning process progresses as they are encouraged to take the next steps, with the help of mentoring and support. This concept is initially based on observation of parent-child interaction in the acquisition of the first language. According to sociocultural studies on first language acquisition learners need the help of such scaffolding to construct, support and further the learning process.

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second language (L2)  
*Zweitsprache (L2)*  
*langue seconde (L2)*  
*lingua seconda (L2)*  
*segunda lingua (L2)*

In the present report this designates the second language acquired in chronological order and which, ideally, was learned in school; it generally corresponds to the language of the social environment. Depending on the situation it is this language or the first language that is dominant.

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self-assessment instrument  
*Selbstbeobachtungs- und Selbstbeurteilungsinstrument*  
*instrument d'auto-observation et d'auto-évaluation*  
*strumento di auto-osservazione e di autovalutazione*  
*instrument d'auto-observaziun e d'auto-valitaziun*

An instrument that enables learners to observe and assess themselves (checklists, for example).



<p>self-directed learning (see autonomous learning)  <i>eigenständiges Lernen (siehe Lernautonomie)</i>  <i>apprentissage autonome (voir autonomie d'apprentissage)</i>  <i>studio autonomo (vedi autonomia nell'apprendimento)</i>  <i>emprender da maniera autonoma (vesair autonomia d'emprender)</i></p>	
<p>self-guidance  <i>Selbststeuerung</i>  <i>autorégulation</i>  <i>autoregolazione</i>  <i>autoregulaziun</i></p>	<p>The ability of the learner to select the appropriate learning texts and contexts, for example, without the intervention of teachers, as well as to define the learning rhythm and its objectives.</p>
<p>speech act  <i>Sprachhandlung</i>  <i>acte de parole</i>  <i>atto linguistico</i>  <i>act linguistic</i></p>	<p>The use of language for communication purposes in a specific situation and in concrete contextual conditions, with a defined intent. This term designates a functional micro-element of language use (such as expressing consent).</p>
<p>spiral cyclical  <i>spiralzyklisch</i>  <i>cyclique, en spirale</i>  <i>progressione ciclica, a spirale</i>  <i>ciclic, en spirala</i></p>	<p>Specific linguistic resources are repeated several times, each time at a higher degree of difficulty; this concept of grammatical progression is typical of an action-oriented communicative approach; although previously only linguistic material (the audiolingual method for instance) corresponding to the learners' level was used (and taught by repetition), today learners are put into realistic communication situations and given texts that they do not need to translate in detail, but of which they must get the gist. Moreover, the assumption is that there are more understood linguistic resources than actively produced ones. This is why the linguistic phenomena to be learned are presented to learners several times (cyclically) in a spiral of increasingly complexity.</p>
<p>standard language  <i>Standardsprache</i>  <i>langue standard</i>  <i>lingua standard</i>  <i>lingua da standard</i></p>	<p>The dominant form of language, both written and spoken (in German these are called <i>Schriftsprache</i> or <i>Hochsprache</i>). The characteristic elements of this standardised form of language come from the linguistic rules set down in grammar text books and dictionaries.</p>
<p>standardised reference test  <i>Vergleichsarbeit/Vergleichstest</i>  <i>travail/test de référence</i>  <i>lavori/test comparativi di riferimento</i>  <i>lavor/test da referenza</i></p>	<p>Reference tests are (standardised) tests used to compare the performances of school classes, generally at the time of transition from the primary level to secondary education. They are often conceived and used only at the cantonal, or even regional, level.</p>
<p>standardised test (instrument)  <i>standardisiertes Testinstrument</i>  <i>instrument d'évaluation standardisé</i>  <i>strumento di valutazione standardizzato</i>  <i>instrument da valitaziun standardisà</i></p>	<p>Instruments that meet specific theoretical and pedagogical criteria of quality. They are developed and standardised through scientific studies and fulfil specific quality criteria. They are used as routine procedures.</p>

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strategy (see learning strategy)  
*Strategie (siehe Lernstrategie)*  
*stratégie (voir stratégie d'apprentissage)*  
*strategia (vedi strategia di apprendimento)*  
*strategia (vesair strategia d'emprender)*

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strategy of language teaching  
*Sprachenstrategie*  
*stratégie pour l'enseignement des langues*  
*strategia per l'insegnamento delle lingue*  
*strategia da linguas*

An element of education planning. Its goal is to promote language learning and linguistic diversity, and to enable coordination of the relevant provisions that apply for all cantons and also other countries. This strategy defines the age from which students learn a given language in school, for example. Switzerland has a national Strategy of Language Teaching since 2004; its implementation is incumbent on the cantons. Work is currently underway to achieve continuity in coordination at upper secondary education.

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syllabus/programme of work  
*Lehrplan*  
*plan d'études*  
*piano di studi*  
*plan d'instrucziun*

The recommendations defined at the political level that cover the educational goals, both disciplinary and cross-disciplinary, as well as the organisation of learning and the assessment of school processes of a given school level. Conversely, a curriculum defines all the learning goals along with contents, methods and teaching resources; it therefore rather refers to closer definitions.

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task (communicative task)  
*Aufgabe (kommunikative Aufgabe)*  
*tâche (communicative)*  
*compito (comunicativo)*  
*pensum (communicativ)*

A task requiring targeted communicative language activity, with special emphasis on content. Communication tasks often serve as learning tasks in action-oriented language teaching.

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task-based language learning (see TBL)  
*aufgabenbasiertes Sprachenlernen (siehe TBL)*  
*apprentissage des langues basé sur les tâches (voir TBL)*  
*approccio basato sui compiti (vedi TBL)*  
*emprender linguas sin basa d'activitads (vesair TBL)*

TBL (task-based language learning)  
*aufgabenbasiertes Sprachenlernen*  
*apprentissage des langues basé sur des tâches*  
*apprendimento basato sui compiti*  
*emprender linguas sin basa d'activitads*

A methodological approach to teaching in which learners acquire language and communicative competence by being confronted, cyclically, to exercises that are as close to reality as possible and by reflecting on the linguistic resources they have had to use; the assessment process is based mainly on the result that the learner must achieve in carrying out the learning task.

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teaching for/to the test  
teaching for/to the test  
*enseignement en vue de l'examen*  
*insegnamento in funzione dell'esame*  
*instruir per il test*

Teaching oriented towards a specific test or examination. A distinction must be made between teaching to the test – which does not pose any particular problem when it means the test is matched to the teaching (i.e. the assessment is based on objectives that have been set in the teaching). Conversely, teaching for the test poses a problem as the teaching is primarily oriented according to certain tests.

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<p>threshold theory/hypothesis  <i>Schwelleyenhypothese</i>  <i>hypothèse du seuil</i>  <i>ipotesi del livello soglia</i>  <i>ipotesa da la sava</i></p>	<p>According to the threshold theory developed by Cummins (1976) in regard to bilingualism, there is a critical threshold in language competence, in both languages, which learners must attain in order to exclude negative cognitive repercussions. Moreover, another, higher, threshold must be attained in order for linguistic and cognitive benefits to be realised.</p>
<p>transfer  <i>Transfer</i>  <i>transfert</i>  <i>transfer</i>  <i>transfer</i></p>	<p>Transposing formal similarities and differences from one language into another. Besides purely linguistic transfers there are also, from a plurilingual point of view in particular, the transfer of cross-language competences (the competence to learn a language or the competence to read, for example) and experience (specific experience gained while learning a foreign language, such as knowing that one does not understand everything right away, or intercultural experience).</p>
<p>variety  <i>Varietät</i>  <i>variété</i>  <i>varietà</i>  <i>varietad</i></p>	<p>More or less stable variations of a language which are characterised by obvious linguistic similarities relating for example to geographic and social factors (dialects), to certain social groups (the language of young people, popular expressions) or that develop as a result of certain situations (technical language). See also register.</p>
<p>vertical coherence  <i>vertikale Kohärenz</i>  <i>cohérence verticale</i>  <i>coerenza verticale</i>  <i>coerenza verticala</i></p>	<p>The continuous development of language learning at all school levels.</p>

## A2: THE *EDK*'S LANGUAGE ACTIVITIES

The language activities of the *EDK* are presented below, in chronological order. The *EDK*'s programme of activities is established annually based on these strategies. ([http://www.edudoc.ch/static/web/edk/tgpro\\_d.pdf](http://www.edudoc.ch/static/web/edk/tgpro_d.pdf)). In accordance with the principle of subsidiarity, the cantons undertake to promote a high level of quality, permeability and mobility within the Swiss education and training system. The *EDK* intervenes whenever cooperation or coordination is required on a national scale.

### **Recommendations concerning the schooling of foreign language children (24 October 1991)**

[http://edudoc.ch/record/24317/files/EDK-Empfehlungen\\_d.pdf](http://edudoc.ch/record/24317/files/EDK-Empfehlungen_d.pdf)

In compliance with the non-discrimination principle, it is recommended that the cantons integrate all foreign language children residing in Switzerland into the public school system. They must be encouraged to learn the language of schooling, from pre-school age and throughout their compulsory schooling, and this must be made possible for them, free of charge.

Moreover, the right of children to preserve their language and culture of origin must be respected. This is generally accomplished through language and culture of origin (LCO) classes for at least two hours per week that should, ideally, be integrated into the school timetable.

Attendance at LCO classes and the results obtained must be recorded in the school report. Moreover, the competences acquired in the first language must be considered when making decisions about promotion and selection.

It is recommended that teachers be prepared during their initial training and continuing education to teach heterogeneous classes, and that they be encouraged to cooperate with foreign LCO teachers.

The needs of foreign language children must be taken into account for the development of teaching resources and curricula, and for the establishment of the school schedule.

### **The *EDK*'s PISA Action Plan (12 June 2003)**

[http://www.edudoc.ch/static/web/arbeiten/pisa2000\\_aktplan\\_d.pdf](http://www.edudoc.ch/static/web/arbeiten/pisa2000_aktplan_d.pdf)

The *EDK*'s PISA Action Plan is based on the findings of the PISA 2003 survey, and indicates that there are already clear points of agreement among the cantons, and even at the supraregional level, as to learning contents.

Nonetheless, the differences observed between the cantons as highlighted by PISA confirm that national Educational Standards are instrumental in guaranteeing and developing quality.

The following fields of action are planned:

- promotion of reading for all
- promotion of language competence for students in difficult learning situations
- pre-school education and schooling
- management; promotion of school quality
- extracurricular support

**National Strategy of  
Language Teaching  
(25 March 2004)**

[http://edudoc.ch/  
record/30008/files/  
Sprachen\\_d.pdf](http://edudoc.ch/record/30008/files/Sprachen_d.pdf)

The object of this strategy is to coordinate and encourage the development of language teaching in Switzerland, a multilingual country. It is comparable with other efforts that have been made throughout Europe, particularly within the framework of the European Commission's action plans on language learning and linguistic diversity of 2004–2006. The two texts stipulate that in the course of their compulsory schooling students must be encouraged in all language-related areas.

Language learning is a fundamental learning objective:

- as a key to identity, communication, and social integration
- as a determining basis for all learning processes, for participation in school and in the professional arena, and for lifelong learning

This strategy proposes language promotion with common objectives:

- promoting the language of schooling through consistent measures from the beginning of schooling onwards
- developing skills in a second national language, at the least, and in English (starting at the latest in the 5<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> school years, according to the *HarmoS* schedule)
- developing and expanding skills in the students' first language when it is different from the local language (with pre-school and extracurricular language promotion)

The implementation of this strategy requires:

- setting a common, fixed schedule for the achievement of objectives during compulsory schooling and adapting the schedules of the cantons (see illustration A2)
- establishing a common starting situation for language learning harmonising across the cantons (two foreign languages starting in the 5<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> school years at the latest, as well as English for all types of schools)
- developing national Educational Standards for the language of schooling (4<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> school years) and foreign languages (8<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> school years)
- coordinating curricula and teaching resources among the linguistic regions
- using common instruments (such as the European Language Portfolio, ELP) for the coordination and development of language teaching
- referring to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) where foreign languages are concerned
- capitalising on Switzerland's advantage as a multilingual country (the experience gained through projects of the bilingual cantons, for example)
- coordinating the framework conditions that govern teacher training
- supporting the Swiss foundation for federal cooperation (*ch* Foundation) which facilitates school exchanges
- establishing a National Competence Centre of Multilingualism

WORK PROGRAMME OF 25 MARCH 2004 FOR NATIONAL COORDINATION

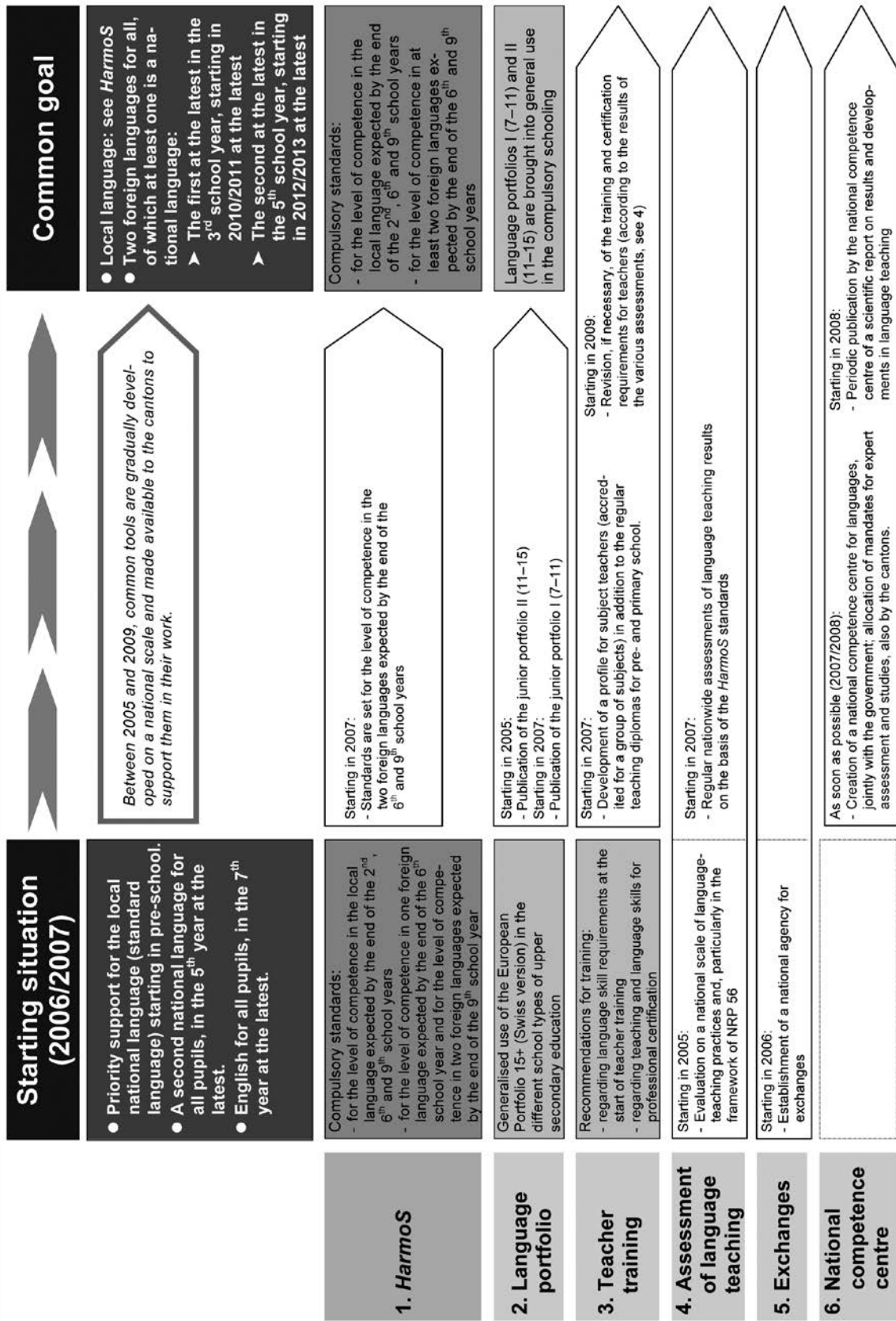


Illustration A2 | Plan for EDK's 2004 Strategy of Language Teaching (data updated since 2004)

**Coordination of foreign language teaching at upper secondary education (2004)**

<http://www.edk.ch/dyn/12498.php>

Following the decisions made by the *EDK* in 2001/2002 and the unanimous decision of 25 March 2004 concerning the Strategy of Language Teaching, efforts have been made to coordinate language teaching for the different types of training at upper secondary education – at the end of compulsory schooling. The will to coordinate and optimise language teaching beyond the primary school level and lower and upper secondary education is very important for the lifelong learning process and to take advantage of the opportunity that Switzerland offers all students to obtain a diploma at the upper secondary education. Moreover, the need for foreign language has increased in the professional and educational spheres.

It is not a matter of developing a general concept of language teaching at upper secondary education but rather:

- of establishing a coherent strategy
- of preparing instruments so that the cantons can implement this strategy.

**Art. 4 of the Inter-cantonal Agreement on the Harmonisation of Compulsory Education (*HarmoS Agreement*) (14 June 2007)**

[http://edudoc.ch/record/24711/files/HarmoS\\_d.pdf](http://edudoc.ch/record/24711/files/HarmoS_d.pdf)

The main objectives of the 2004 Strategy of Language Teaching were integrated into the *HarmoS Agreement* and are therefore binding for all cantons which signed it. These objectives are the following:

- learning of two foreign languages (a second national language and English) from the 5<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> school years (according to the *HarmoS* schedule) at the latest; the order of introduction of the two languages is set at the regional level
- optional teaching, according to needs, in the third national language
- national Educational Standards for the language of schooling (4<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> school years) and foreign languages (8<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> school years); the level of competence attained each of the foreign languages should be comparable at the end of the compulsory schooling
- language and culture of origin (LCO) classes should be made available with the organisational support of the cantons and should respect religious and political neutrality

**Federal Act on the National Languages and Understanding between the Linguistic Communities (*LangA*) and Ordinance on Languages (*SpV*) (5 October 2007)**

[http://www.bak.admin.ch/themen/sprachen\\_und\\_kulturelle\\_minderheiten/00506/00616/index.html?lang=de](http://www.bak.admin.ch/themen/sprachen_und_kulturelle_minderheiten/00506/00616/index.html?lang=de)

On 4 June 2010, the Federal Council, based on the Languages Act (*LangA*), approved the ordinance on national languages and understanding among linguistic communities (the Ordinance on Languages, *SpV*). The ordinance came into effect on 1 July 2010 and regulates four spheres:

- the use of Switzerland's official languages and the promotion of plurilingualism in public services
- measures to promote understanding and exchange
- support for multilingual cantons
- safeguarding and promotion of the Romansh and Italian languages and cultures

Support for a National Competence Centre of Multilingualism is also included (see point A3: collaboration and cooperations)

## International cooperation

<http://www.edk.ch/dyn/15386.php>

The *EDK* participates in the activities of the Council of Europe and in the projects of the European Union in the field of language teaching.

The Council of Europe, founded in 1949, is an intergovernmental organisation with 44 member states. It cooperates on the following projects:

- the European Language Portfolio (see point A6 of the Annex)
- the European Centre for Modern Languages (ECML) in Graz, an institution founded in 1994 by the Council of Europe, with 33 member states. Switzerland is a founding member of this institution and is represented in its steering committee by the General Secretariat of the *EDK*. ECML's task is to introduce innovations in the field of learning and teaching of modern languages. For this, it supports international research projects and also organises workshops that always include the participation of a Swiss specialist. The projects are published in a series of ECML publications (see the programme at <http://www.ecml.at/activities/programme.asp>)
- the European Day of Languages: since 2001, 26 September has been officially designated by the Council of Europe as the European Day of Languages. Each state is free, if it so wishes, to organise and decide on activities at the state level.

Within the framework of the European Union, the *EDK* currently participates as a representative of Switzerland and its cantons in the Early Language Learning (ELL) project. The latter is an integral part of the Lifelong Learning project and its purpose is to develop recommendations for early language learning.



# A3: COLLABORATION AND COOPERATIONS

In the field of language teaching coordination, the *EDK* cooperates with specialised groups, and bodies:

## **Coordination Group for Language Teaching (KOGS)**

<http://www.edk.ch/dyn/11943.php>

Delegates from the regional *EDKs*, cantons Ticino and Graubünden. Its tasks comprise the coordination and the implementation of the Strategie of Language Teaching in the different regions.

## **Professional Group Foreign Languages of the Conference of Rectors of Universities of Teacher Education (COHEP)**

<http://www.cohep.ch/>

Foreign language educationalists from Swiss Universities of Teacher Education. They contribute to an exchange between education policy and teacher training as well as to a coordinated development of teachers' initial training and further education in languages.

Since the Ordinance on Languages (*SpV* 2007; see Annex 2) came into effect, cooperation with the following institutions has been strengthened or developed:

## **Youth Exchanges (an institution of the *ch* Foundation)**

<http://www.ch-go.ch/programme>

(<http://www.chstiftung.ch/cms.php>)

The *EDK* and the Swiss Confederation have entrusted the *ch* Foundation for federal cooperation, in Solothurn, with the promotion and coordination of language exchanges and with maintaining relations between the different language communities in the field of education. For this, the *ch* Foundation draws on the recommendations concerning the promotion of educational and training exchanges in Switzerland and abroad that were approved by the *EDK* on 18 February 1993. With the entry into force of the Federal Act on the National Languages and Understanding between the Linguistic Communities (*LangA* 2007) on 1 January 2010, and of the Ordinance on Languages (*SpV* 2007) on 1 July 2010, Switzerland has further strengthened the commitment of *ch* Foundation and supports it financially. In view of Switzerland's participation as of 2011 in the EU's Lifelong Learning and Youth in Action programmes, the *ch* Foundation has set up a Federal Agency which will support the European programmes for education and youth.

The Youth Exchange programme of the *ch* Foundation, which has been in existence since 1976, has built up a network of cantonal contacts for exchange projects. Such projects ideally complement language teaching. Students and teachers are thus offered a wide variety of opportunities to make direct contact with partner classes in other linguistic regions.

In its Strategy of Language Teaching (2004) the *EDK* stipulates that in order to develop both language teaching and language learning, better use should be made of the multilingual potential of our country and exchanges across linguistic borders should be facilitated both for students and for teachers (art. 3.3).

**National Competence Centre of Multilingualism, University and University of Teacher Education of Fribourg**

<http://www.institut-mehrsprachigkeit.ch/de/>

Following the entry into effect of the Ordinance on Languages (*SpV* 2007), the National Competence Centre of Multilingualism was officially constituted on 1 June 2010. As a scientific centre, it will encompass a network of research institutions of the different linguistic regions and will focus on the development of multilingualism. Its task is to carry out projects commissioned by the government, the cantons and third parties.

Language-related issues, in particular those concerning the upper secondary education and the tertiary level, are dealt with by the *EDK* in cooperation with various federal offices:

**Federal Office of Culture (FOC)**

<http://www.edi.admin.ch/org/00344/00353/00355/index.html?lang=en>

FOC is responsible for language policy (see point A2 of the Annex, the Federal Act on the National Languages and Understanding between the Linguistic Communities, and the Ordinance on Languages 2007). Together with the cantons, the government has the task of promoting understanding and exchange between the linguistic communities.

**Federal Office for Professional Education and Technology (OPET)**

<http://www.bbt.admin.ch/bbt/portraet/index.html?lang=en>

As Switzerland's centre of competence for professional education, OPET actively participates, together with the cantons, in the setting up of bilingual training courses for the Federal Vocational Baccalaureate Certificate.

**Federal Office for Migration (FOM)**

<http://www.bfm.admin.ch/bfm/en/home.html>

Pursuant to its mandate for integration, FOM, together with the cantons, is committed to promoting language competence for adults.

**State Secretariat for Education and Research (SER)**

[http://www.sbf.admin.ch/htm/index\\_en.php](http://www.sbf.admin.ch/htm/index_en.php)

SER is in charge of supervising the recognition of cantonal and foreign baccalaureate diplomas, as well as of conducting the examinations for the Swiss baccalaureate diploma. Together with the cantons, it supports the bilingual baccalaureate diploma.

Various groups of specialists or interested circles are not explicitly mentioned here as they are active at the level of the linguistic regions and do not have a mandate as organs of the *EDK*. In future, the debate surrounding multilingualism will be its scope to become more broad-based.

#### **Language Forum**

The *EDK*'s General Secretariat plans to initiate an informal yearly meeting on current topics related to language teaching and learning and to the coordination of developments in the field of multilingualism, with the aim of creating a network for all languages (languages of schooling, languages of origin / of migration, foreign languages) and coordinating at the different levels of the education system (cantons, universities and Universities of Teacher Education).

# A4: OVERVIEW OF SOME CURRENT STUDIES ON LANGUAGE LEARNING FINANCED BY THE SWISS NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION (SNSF)

## Two foreign languages starting in primary school

Haenni Hoti and Werlen E. (2009): *Der Einfluss von Englisch auf das Französisch lernen*

This study supports the model of two foreign languages starting at primary school level: teaching a first foreign language (English, in this case) for two years already has a positive impact on the learning of a second foreign language (French). Moreover, the students' competence in the language of schooling and in the languages of origin / of migration has a positive influence on their ability to learn a second foreign language in school. Previous language knowledge, metalinguistic competences and experience of language learning are resources for learning other languages. The benefits derived from these resources are proportional to the quality of the knowledge acquired in the previously learned language.

## The third national language as an option

Moretti and Rigotti (2009): *Per una nuova posizione dell'italiano nel contesto elvetico. Strumenti e strategie per l'elaborazione di un curriculum minimo di italiano*

This report presents a concrete proposal for an optional Italian course. A programme aimed at developing minimum communication competence in the third national language has enabled students 12 to 14 years of age to acquire basic skills in Italian during one-week courses by capitalizing on the language and learning resources they already possess. Two factors in particular have a motivating influence: concentrating on the language for a whole week (as opposed to learning that is segmented into two or three periods a week) and emphasising oral teaching, which places the accent on communication rather than on accuracy. Given this positive motivational influence, the authors suggest using the model of the week of intensive learning as a springboard for tackling the learning of the other foreign languages.

## Bilingual teaching

Näf and Elmiger (2009): *Die zweisprachige Maturität in der Schweiz – Evaluation der Chancen und Risiken einer bildungspolitischen Innovation*

The authors underline the importance of creating working and continuing education conditions that strengthen the bilingual teaching of non-language subjects, because it is the teachers who are the real promoters of bilingual teaching of non-language subjects. This is especially true since the students surveyed for this report, who have received bilingual teaching, show signifi-

cantly higher language competences than those in ordinary classes (there are no data available as to real improvement).

Gajo and Berthoud (2009): *Construction intégrée des savoirs linguistiques et disciplinaires dans l'enseignement bilingue au secondaire et au tertiaire*

The authors advocate bilingual teaching at upper secondary and tertiary education, as a complementary form of ordinary teaching. Based on their analyses of units of immersion teaching, they recommend targeted and situational use of the language of schooling and of the foreign language, with language mediation as a determining competence. They show that this form of teaching, besides its impact on foreign language proficiency, also has a positive effect for the language of schooling.

#### The development of language competence

Pekarek Doehler and de Pietro (2009): *L'organisation du discours dans l'interaction en langue première et seconde: acquisition, enseignement, évaluation*

This study contributes to the research on language acquisition. The authors examine oral interaction in French as the language of schooling or as a foreign language for learners of lower and upper secondary education, focusing on the linguistic, discursive and interactive resources that learners acquire in that language. The ideal development of these resources is achieved in a context of varied teaching methods and balanced interaction of the activities of teachers and learners (in contrast to the interaction often managed primarily by the teacher).

Moser and Werlen I. (2009): *Entwicklung der Sprachkompetenzen in der Erst- und Zweitsprache von Migrantenkindern*

In their study, the authors advocate encouragement of the first language of children where this is not a national language as early as pre-school. A series of targeted interventions (LCO courses, raising the awareness of families, coordination of the encouragement of language competence in school and within the family) significantly reinforces language competence in the first language and raises interest for the second language, German in this case, as the language of schooling. Although the study did not reveal a fundamental improvement in language competence in the language of schooling, it did note certain transfers of phonological awareness, of knowledge of the alphabet and in the area of reading.

Schneider, Häcki Buhofer, Bertschi, Kassis and Kronig (2009): *Literale Kompetenzen und literale Sozialisation von Jugendlichen aus schriftfernen Lebenswelten – Faktoren der Resilienz oder: Wenn Schriftaneignung trotzdem gelingt*

This study reports on the support measures designed for learners with a linguistic disadvantage. From it, the researchers deduce the conditions that lead some children against all expectations to develop good reading and writing skills even though they come from an environment that does not share the written culture. The development of writing is positively influenced by the development of the personality of the individual who reads and writes if, for example, the teaching includes the daily written activities of the pupil and emphasises the social functions of writing in everyday and professional life (studying all kinds of texts rather than confining it to one variety of writing).

#### Plurilingualism

Stotz: *Mehrsprachigkeit, Identität und Sprachenlernen in Schweizer Schulgemeinden*

Sometimes it is the first language that shapes identity and sometimes it is plurilingualism, which is generally the case among the children of migrants. This study examines how foreign language learning influences the development of the child's identity in the light of the interaction between education policy and individual factors. In so doing it documents the implementation of foreign language teaching reform projects in two cantons, identifying as positive factors the quality of the networks, the close cooperation between authorities and teaching staff and the coincidence of views regarding the benefits of the reforms. The rapid creation of the necessary structure (such as the schedule) makes it possible to focus on the philosophy of the new educational resources and on innovations in methodology and teaching (for example the evolution of structural-lexical language learning towards the Content – Form – Me triangle, and thus towards action-based teaching).

NRP 56 also includes other projects without a direct connection to school:

Language and identity ([http://www.nfp56.ch/d\\_projekt.cfm?kati=5](http://www.nfp56.ch/d_projekt.cfm?kati=5))

- Cattacin (2009): Welche Dynamik bringt Mehrsprachigkeit in der Schweiz?
- Coray (2009): Die Bedeutung des Rätoromanischen für die romanischsprachige Bevölkerung
- Fibbi and Matthey (2009): Zur Rolle der Herkunftssprache für die Identität von Migranten
- Kreis and Lüdi (2009): Wie funktioniert Mehrsprachigkeit beim Militär?
- Perrin and Wyss (2008): Wie erfüllt die SRG SSR ihren sprachpolitischen Auftrag?
- Singy and Mileti (2008): Ist eine soziale Kluft beim Sprachgebrauch in der Romandie erkennbar?

**Language and the economy ([http://www.nfp56.ch/d\\_projekt.cfm?kati=4](http://www.nfp56.ch/d_projekt.cfm?kati=4))**

- Grin and Vaillancourt (2009): Wie steht es um Fremdsprachenkompetenz in Unternehmen?
- Piller and Duchêne (2009): Über die Schweiz hinaus: Sprachliche Praktiken im nationalen und internationalen Tourismus
- Steyaert (2008): Wie wirkt sich Mehrsprachigkeit einer Firma auf den Alltag aus? Hat die Firmensprache Einfluss auf die Karriere?

**The language competence of adults ([http://www.nfp56.ch/d\\_projekt.cfm?kati=2](http://www.nfp56.ch/d_projekt.cfm?kati=2))**

- Christen (2008): Wann sprechen Deutschschweizer Hochdeutsch – und wie gut?
- Notter (2008): Wie verlernt man mit steigendem Lebensalter das Lesen?
- Poggia and Berger (2009): Welchen Einfluss haben Fremdsprachenkenntnisse auf die Berufswahl und kulturelle Identität bei Italienischschweizern?
- Werlen I. (2008): Welche Bedingungen fördern oder hemmen die Mehrsprachigkeit?

**Language, law, and politics ([http://www.nfp56.ch/d\\_projekt.cfm?kati=3](http://www.nfp56.ch/d_projekt.cfm?kati=3)):**

- Achermann and Künzli (2009): Zum Umgang mit den neuen Sprachminderheiten
- Kübler, Papadopoulos and Mazzoleni (2009): Wie wird Mehrsprachigkeit in der Bundesverwaltung gelebt?
- Schweizer and Burr (2008): Zur Gleichwertigkeit von Rechtstexten in verschiedenen Sprachen
- Skenderovic and Späti (2009): Welche Positionen nehmen Parteien in sprachpolitischen Debatten in der Schweiz ein?
- Hungerbühler (2009): Medien und sprachregionale Unterschiede bei Abstimmungen

# A5: OVERVIEW OF CURRENT INSTRUMENTS, AS OF JANUARY 2011

## **Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) (Council of Europe 2001)**

D: <http://www.goethe.de/Z/50/commeuro/i0.htm>

F: <http://www.coe.int/T/DG4/Portfolio/documents/cadrecommun.pdf>

The goal of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), developed on the initiative of the Council of Europe, is to achieve greater coherence and transparency in language learning and teaching and in the assessment of acquired knowledge. It provides a basis for mutual recognition of language diplomas, thereby facilitating mobility within the member states and cooperation among educational institutions. Applicable for any language, the CEFR is based on a communicative, action-oriented approach and describes language competence according to procedural knowledge, resources, and language activities. It defines common levels of reference (A1 to C2) with which language skills can be classified. Moreover, the CEFR contains suggestions pertaining to language teaching and learning.

The foundations of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages were laid in 1991, at the Council of Europe symposium in Rüşchlikon (ZH). B. North and G. Schneider made a considerable contribution to the development, description and classification of skills in the common levels of reference within the context of the Swiss National Fund for Scientific Research (SNF).

## **Descriptors for the intermediate levels of foreign language competence**

<http://www.coe.int/T/DG4/Portfolio/documents/lingualevel.html>




The reference level descriptors of the Common European Framework of Reference have proved to be too general, or the level encompasses too wide a spectrum for students who are starting to learn a foreign language. This is why intermediate levels have been developed and empirically validated (A1.1, A1.2, A2.1, A2.2, B1.1, B1.2) for the Swiss-German *IEF* (*Instrumente für die Evaluation von Fremdsprachen*, Lenz and Studer 2004) project. These descriptors are included in the Swiss editions of the European Language Portfolio and thus constitute the basis for *Lingualevel* (see below). Additionally, they have been put at the disposal of the Council of Europe in four languages (German, French, Italian, and English – see link in margin).

## **European Language Portfolio**

[http://edudoc.ch/record/24268/files/Erkl\\_Portf\\_d.pdf](http://edudoc.ch/record/24268/files/Erkl_Portf_d.pdf)

The European Language Portfolio (ELP) contributes to the coherent promotion of plurilingualism at all school levels and for all languages. Its use in compulsory schooling is part of the *EDK's* Strategy of Language Teaching (2004). In its article 9, the *HarmoS* Agreement also provides for the use of individual portfolios for languages as well as for other subject matters:



Edition		Contents
	<b>Edition for young people and adults (ELP III)</b> <b>Age group:</b> 15 years and over (15+) <b>Level:</b> upper secondary, continuing education	<div> <b>Language passport</b>            Overview of current language skills         </div> <div> <b>Language biography</b>            Instruments for self-assessment, planning of learning, etc.         </div> <div> <b>Dossier</b>            Documentation on the learning process, collection of personal work, assignments, etc.         </div>
	<b>Edition for children and young people (ELP II)</b> <b>Age group:</b> 12–15 years <b>Level:</b> lower secondary	<div> <b>Language passport</b>            Overview of current language skills         </div> <div> <b>Language biography</b>            Instruments for self-assessment, planning of learning, etc.         </div> <div> <b>Dossier</b>            Documentation on the learning process, collection of personal work, assignments, etc.         </div>
	<b>Edition for children (ELP I)</b> <b>Age group:</b> 7–11 years <b>Level:</b> primary  + Portfolino <b>Age group:</b> 4–7 years <b>Level:</b> pre-school, first years of primary school	<div> <b>Language passport</b>            Overview of current language skills         </div> <div> <b>Language biography</b>            Instruments for self-assessment, planning of learning, etc.         </div> <div> <b>Dossier</b>            Documentation on the learning process, collection of personal work, assignments, etc.         </div> <div>           Raising language awareness            Sensitisation for languages         </div>

«The cantons party to the agreement will see to it that students can demonstrate their knowledge and skills by means of the national or international portfolios recommended by the EDK.» [Translation]

In Switzerland, three versions of the European Language Portfolio can be obtained from *schulverlag plus Bern*. Developed at the request of the EDK, they have been validated by the Council of Europe. The first language portfolio was issued to coincide with the European Year of Languages, on 1 March 2001. That edition was accompanied by a declaration of the EDK signed by several partners from the education community and from economic circles. All three portfolios reflect the natural language learning process: language awareness ⇒ awareness of language learning ⇒ considerations regarding language.

The different versions of the ELP according to age category are designed as tools for the learner which accompany them on the path towards plurilingualism. Each of these versions may contain very different instruments for assessment. In addition to the instruments for reflection (relating for example to cross-cultural experiences or to individual learning and text production experiences), it is relevant to mention the «can do» type descriptors that allow self-assessment and planning and refer to the levels of the Common European Framework of Reference. Moreover, the ELP instruments are not designed only for individual, but also for cooperative learning.

The use of the ELP throughout Switzerland is a central element of the Strategy of Language Teaching (EDK 2004). Each of the 26 cantons is responsible for its introduction. It is therefore the cantons which must each develop their own approach and schedule, on the basis of the EDK's Strategy of Language Teaching. In most cases, introduction to the portfolio is in keeping with the spirit of the instrument, i.e. for several languages and several school years. Continuing education on a regional and national scale, as well as exchange days devoted to the introduction and implementation of the ELP are offered to the teachers of the vocational training colleges and to cantonal multipliers.

### **Lingualevel**

<http://www.lingualevel.ch>

Financed by the Swiss-German cantons, *Lingualevel* is an instrument designed for the summative and formative hetero-assessment of certain foreign language competence of students from 7<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> school years. *Lingualevel* is currently available for French and English and will also be extended to German and Italian as foreign languages. This instrument can be used at any time as it reflects skills rather than learning objectives. One uses a filter to select one of the five language skills and one of the levels of the Common European Framework of Reference, including the intermediate levels. As *Lingualevel* uses the same descriptors as the three Swiss editions of the European Language Portfolio, it is possible – and worthwhile – to link the two instruments.

*Lingualevel* refers to the levels of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) and includes, in addition to self-assessment instruments, tests, assessment grids and videos showing benchmark performances, as well as recommendations for series of tasks for the planning of learning in the last year of schooling.

### **Stellwerk**

<http://www.stellwerk-check.ch/>

*Stellwerk* is an adaptable task system that allows the assessment of individual foreign language skills according to intercantonal reference values. The tests have their own reference system which partly overlaps with the level descriptors of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), including the intermediate levels (see intermediate levels). Students take the test on a computer at a given time during the school year, under teacher supervision. In some cantons, the results are an element in the year-end assessment of the students' potential (for instance, for the choice of subjects in the 11<sup>th</sup> school year [according to the *HarmoS* schedule]).

### **Klassenscockpit**

<http://www.klassenscockpit.ch/>

*Klassenscockpit* is a quality assurance instrument for German and mathematics for the 5<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> school years. It is used by students three times a year under the supervision of a teacher for the purpose of making an assessment. The tests use their own system of reference made up of «can

do» type descriptors, some of which are linked to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) and to the intermediate levels (see above under A5: descriptors for the intermediate levels).

### Check 5

<http://www.ag.ch/leistungstest/de/pub/check5.php>

Check 5 is a performance test which is given on a voluntary basis at the start of the 5<sup>th</sup> school year (7<sup>th</sup> school year according to the *HarmoS* schedule) in canton Aargau. It is used to make an independent assessment of student performance. It contains tasks in German and mathematics and tasks to assess the students' problem-solving skills. Additionally, Check 5 includes questions about self-regulated learning and how students perceive the teaching they receive.

### *Prove di fine ciclo* (Tessin)

The *Prove di fine ciclo* end-of-cycle tests are adapted to the objectives of the curriculum of the end of the *scuola media*. They are used to assess the school system (periodic teaching survey).

Developed in recent years, the *Prove di fine ciclo* refer to the Common European Framework of Reference. These tests, in particular those concerning oral skills, have a positive impact (washback effect) on teaching.

### *Epreuves cantonales en Suisse romande*

All the cantons of the French-speaking region, except one, have jointly developed summative assessments (*Epreuves cantonales en Suisse romande*) for the orientation of students at the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> school year (8<sup>th</sup> school year according to the *HarmoS* schedule). French is still included in these examinations. As for foreign languages, German is tested in the primary cantonal examinations, whereas German and English are tested in the upper secondary education examinations. The *Convention scolaire romande (CSR)* (2007) provides for the development of common examinations, of which the binding modalities have not yet been defined. The *Institut de recherche et de documentation pédagogique (IRDPP)* has begun work to this end.

### LCO Data Bank

<http://www.edk.ch/dyn/18777.php>

The data bank of the teaching of language of origin and culture (LCO) in the Swiss cantons and Liechtenstein gives information on the following themes/areas/aspects, based on a yearly survey of the cantons:

- LCO courses
- integrated promotion of languages
- legal basis
- accreditation
- general conditions
- registration
- first language skills
- continuing education

- contact points
- documentation
- links
- sources

**Learning by and for linguistic diversity: *Jaling Suisse***

***Studien + Berichte***

**(Hrsg. EDK)**

**(Saudan et al. 2005)**

<http://edudoc.ch/record/463/files/Stub22.pdf>

The *Jaling Suisse* (*Janua Linguarum* – the gate to and between languages) project describes educational and teaching approaches for efficient promotion of language learning for all learners. It is part of the Council of Europe's *Jaling* project. It is based on two fundamental premises:

- multilingualism must be viewed as a great potential and as a challenge for our education system
- the development of language competence must include all the languages present in the classroom and apply to all the subjects taught

The focus is on:

- comparing and reflecting on languages in pre-school and primary school
- opportunities to pursue these activities throughout the schooling
- the questions and reactions of students, teachers and parents regarding these activities

# A6: OVERVIEW OF CURRENT PROJECTS, AS OF JANUARY 2011

## **HarmoS**

[http://www.edk.ch/  
dyn/11659.php](http://www.edk.ch/dyn/11659.php)

The Intercantonal Agreement on the Harmonisation of Compulsory Education (*HarmoS* Agreement) came into effect in 2009 and harmonises the duration of the school levels, their main objectives, and the passage from one level to the next. In 2006, new constitutional articles on education were accepted by 86% of Swiss voters and by all the cantons. The cantons are henceforth required to regulate certain fundamental parameters of the education system uniformly throughout Switzerland. The cantons signing the *HarmoS* Agreement observe this obligation.

## **National Educational Standards**

[http://www.edk.ch/  
dyn/20692.php](http://www.edk.ch/dyn/20692.php)

The national Educational Standards describe the fundamental competences that students must acquire in the language of schooling, foreign languages, mathematics, and natural sciences. These competences must be achieved by as many students as possible by the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> (except in foreign languages), and of the 8<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> school years (2<sup>nd</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, and 9<sup>th</sup> school years according the current schedule). This is why they are also known as fundamental competences. The national Educational Standards constitute the common educational objectives (the greatest common denominator) of the regional curricula, which each have their own specific features (the *Plan d'études romand*, *Lehrplan 21* and the curriculum of Ticino).

## **Plan d'études romand**

[http://www.ciip.ch/index.  
php?m=2&sm=2&page=230](http://www.ciip.ch/index.php?m=2&sm=2&page=230)

The *Plan d'études romand* (*PER*) was officially adopted on 27 May 2010 by the Intercantonal Conference Cantonal Ministers of Education of Western Switzerland and Ticino (*CIIP*). Teachers will receive one year of training, following which the *PER* will be gradually introduced in the classrooms of Western Switzerland from the beginning of the 2011–2012 school year. This document, which is a central element of the school convention of the French-speaking cantons (*Convention scolaire romande*), represents a major step forward in the harmonisation process.

## **Lehrplan 21**

<http://www.lehrplan.ch/>

The development of the Swiss-German *Lehrplan 21* curriculum has begun in autumn of 2010. The main points of this plan circulated among the interested parties and were adapted according to the feedback received. All 21 cantons concerned have already approved the development of a common Swiss-German curriculum. The common curriculum is the result of the harmonisation of schools provided for by article 62 of the Federal Constitution.

In recent years the curricula of the linguistic regions have been modified following the introduction of two foreign languages at the primary school level:

- In 2004, the Conference of Cantonal Ministres of Education of Central Switzerland (*BKZ*) adopted a curriculum for English for the 3<sup>rd</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> school years (5<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> school years according to the *HarmoS* schedule).
- In 2006, the Conference of Cantonal Ministres of Education of Eastern Switzerland adopted a curriculum for English for the primary school level; and, in 2009, the continuation of the curriculum for lower secondary education.
- At present, the cantons on the linguistic border between the German and French-speaking regions are developing a curriculum for French as the first foreign language, and for English as the second foreign language. There is a strong focus on the links between languages. Teaching resources and continuing education for teaching staff are integrated into the project. The *Passepartout* project actively contributes to the development of plurilingualism. (<http://www.passepartout-sprachen.ch/de.html>).

All of this preparatory work will contribute to the development of the Swiss-German *Lehrplan 21* curriculum.

#### **Ticino's curriculum**

[http://www.scuoladecs.ti.ch/ordini\\_scuola/scarica\\_riforma\\_SM/Piano\\_di\\_formazione\\_SM.pdf](http://www.scuoladecs.ti.ch/ordini_scuola/scarica_riforma_SM/Piano_di_formazione_SM.pdf)

Ticino's curriculum: *Piano di formazione della scuola media*, which was adopted in 2004, includes the educational objectives for the language of schooling as well as for the three foreign languages in *scuola media*. Following the adoption by the *EDK* of the national Educational Standards, Ticino plans to develop a curriculum for the entire compulsory schooling that will take these national Educational Standards into account.

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