



Language and Languages in the Primary School

Some guidelines for teachers

by David Little and Déirdre Kirwan



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To primary school principals and teachers: These guidelines are designed to help you respond to the challenges of the Primary Language Curriculum, include the home languages of EAL pupils in the activities of your classrooms, and develop your pupils' intercultural learning. They are produced under Languages Connect: Ireland's Foreign Languages in Education Strategy. It is our hope that you will find these guidelines useful in the context of positive attitudes and appreciation of cultural diversity in the classroom and beyond, as well as fostering an interest and curiosity in learning further languages and intercultural communication. The first part of the guidelines provides a rationale for doing this, and in the second part you will find practical suggestions for including Irish and home languages in everyday classroom communication.

We are grateful to Professor David Little, and Dr Déirdre Kirwan for writing the guidelines. Professor Little was formerly Director of the Centre for Language and Communication Studies and Head of the School of Linguistic, Speech and Communication Sciences at Trinity College Dublin, Ireland. For the past fifteen years, he has played a leading role in the Council of Europe's work on the language education of migrants. Dr Kirwan is best known for the approach to linguistic diversity and language education that she and her colleagues developed at Scoil Bhríde (Cailíni), Blanchardstown, converting extreme linguistic diversity – more than 50 home languages in a school of 320 pupils – into educational capital.

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Executive summary

This document is a response to goal 2.E.2 of the Languages Connect implementation plan: “Guidelines will be developed for teaching children whose home language is a language other than Irish or English.” The document also addresses the integrated approach to the teaching of Irish and English recommended in the new Primary Language Curriculum and the intercultural dimension of language education at primary level (goal 2.E.3).

Part I is concerned with issues of general principle:

- The “plurilingual approach” to language education and its pedagogical implications
- Language development in the pre-school years
- The linguistic demands made by primary schooling
- An integrated approach to teaching Irish and English that includes immigrant languages in classroom communication
- The intercultural dimension of primary education

Part II illustrates some of the features of a fully integrated approach to language education inspired by Part I:

- The general pedagogical approach
- The supports that the school should provide: a language policy; a well-stocked library; affirmation of pupils’ efforts; documentation of language learning and use; language support classes
- Some activities that work
 - › Using familiar routines and themes to support language learning in junior classes: greetings; counting and addition; colours; days of the week; food; music; events in the environment; games; telling the time
 - › Including Irish and home languages in the delivery of curriculum content: Irish; home languages; a plurilingual approach to classroom discussion; language awareness
 - › Producing parallel texts in two or more languages: first steps; producing longer texts; using poetry to support plurilingual literacy; a class diary; texts in three languages; preparing to write in two or three languages; functional writing; creative writing; identity texts; mixing languages in one text
 - › Consolidating plurilingual learning: inter-class interaction; senior pupils read stories to juniors; autonomous language learning; encouraging pupils to improve their home language proficiency

My Identity And Language poem

My name is Kidist

I speak English in my school, with my Dad and his family
and everyone else in Ireland.

Em dic Kidist

I speak Catalan to my Mom, her family and friends
and when I go to Catalonia on holidays

Kidist is aním don

I learn Irish in my school,
Is maith liom mo chlann

Me llamo Kidist

I learn Spanish by watching the TVs
in my Avias house in Catalonia,

Amharic is the language I hear in Ethiopia,

the country where I was born,

I communicate in ISL (Irish Sign Language)

when my COCHLEAR IMPLANTS are OFF as I am deaf.

I am the only deaf girl in my school. I am unique because I was born in Ethiopia

But really everyone who knows me

know that I am unique in so many ways

I love my languages because when I go to a place

I can speak to the people in that country

Introduction

The vision of Languages Connect is that “Ireland’s education system will promote a society where the ability to learn and use at least one foreign language is taken for granted, because of its inherent value for individuals, society and the economy”.¹ The Language Education Policy Profile developed collaboratively by the Department of Education and Skills and the Council of Europe and published in 2008 offered a similar vision: that Ireland should “move away from ‘an official but lame bilingualism’ to become a truly multilingual society, where the ability to learn and use two and more languages is taken for granted and fostered at every stage of the education system and through lifelong education”.² Immigrant communities “are providing Ireland with a rich and diverse source of new languages”,³ in society at large but also in our schools, and the success of the Languages Connect strategy depends in part on ensuring that immigrant languages flourish, to the benefit of those who speak them and to the enrichment of our society and culture.

“ Ireland’s education system will promote a society where the ability to learn and use at least one foreign language is taken for granted, because of its inherent value for individuals, society and the economy ”

The principal focus of Languages Connect is foreign language learning, which is not obligatory at primary level. The primary sector nevertheless has an essential role to play in the national strategy, for two reasons. First, the successful learning of Irish at primary school provides fertile ground for the learning of foreign languages at post-primary level and beyond; and second, Languages Connect is committed to the development of immigrant languages as a national resource, and this is a process that should begin in primary school:

The Primary Language Curriculum recognizes that ‘most schools and classrooms include children whose home language is a language other than English or Irish’. Proficiency in their home language contributes to these children’s development of proficiency in the language of instruction.⁴

Success of the Languages Connect strategy depends in part on ensuring that immigrant languages flourish, to the benefit of those who speak them and to the enrichment of our society and culture.

It is important to add that respect for and affirmation of home languages is a precondition for social cohesion. If home languages are disrespected or denied, the identity of the individual is also disrespected or denied. This is likely to give rise to resentment that in future years will come back to haunt Irish society.

In their practical dimension these guidelines draw on classroom practice developed by Scoil Bhríde (Cailíní), Blanchardstown. The school received its first immigrant pupil in 1993, after which the diversity of its pupil cohort increased steadily. By 2015, 80 per cent of the school’s 320 pupils spoke a language other than English or Irish at home, and most of them had little or no English when they started school in Junior Infants.

¹ *Languages Connect. Ireland’s Strategy for Foreign Languages in Education, 2017–2026, Dublin: Department of Education and Skills, 2017, p. 7.*

² *Language Education Policy Profile: Ireland, p. 51.*

Available at <https://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Education-Reports/Council-of-Europe-Language-Education-Policy-Profile.pdf>

³ *Languages Connect, p. 14.*

⁴ *Languages Connect, p. 30. The Primary Language Curriculum, Dublin: Department of Education and Skills, 2019, is available at https://curriculumonline.ie/getmedia/2a6e5f79-6f29-4d68-b850-379510805656/PLC-Document_English.pdf*

According to the consultation that informed Languages Connect, “It is difficult for students from immigrant communities to maintain their languages without additional supports including qualified teachers [of immigrant languages] who are registered with the Teaching Council”.⁵ The experience that informs these guidelines shows, however, that it is possible for pupils from immigrant families to transfer the literacy skills they develop in English and Irish to their home languages with support but without the benefit of explicit instruction.⁶

The guidelines are divided into two parts. Part one deals with issues of general principle, while Part two outlines an approach to language education in primary schools that is informed by those issues.

It is important to add that respect for and affirmation of home languages is a precondition for social cohesion

Pupils' reflections on the many benefits of including home languages in their education

Victoria told me that in her former school you were not allowed to speak your own language. I found that very shocking

Don't hide away from your own language because it's what makes you you, and it's special and it's, ... it's like having an arm or a leg, you can't take it away from you

A child without a language is a child without a soul

Using our home languages helps us to get personal into each other's cultures and languages; it's very useful for friendship, for knowledge, so in many ways we're all expanding... it makes you feel closer because you have a perspective on that person's point of view

When I use my home language in class, I have a smile on my face, I feel excited, I feel like I really want to do it

Sometimes when we learn a language it's easier to learn other ones; sometimes it's not really about which language you're learning, it's how to learn a language

It's great because at a very young age you can ... learn from each other ... and just to be able to say that I went to a school that supports all different languages and cultures is a great thing to have.

When two people speak the same language there's a kind of bond between both of them

⁵ Languages Connect, p. 17.

⁶ Scoil Bhríde's version of plurilingual education is fully documented in *Engaging with Linguistic Diversity: A Study of Educational Inclusion in an Irish Primary School*, by David Little and Déirdre Kirwan, London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2019; paperback edition, 2021



Part One

Language, identity, learning and
culture in the primary school

1.1 The plurilingual approach to language education and the Primary Language Curriculum

The Council of Europe’s Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) ⁷ advocates a “plurilingual approach” to language education. The CEFR distinguishes between plurilingual individuals, who are able to communicate in two or more languages, and multilingual societies, in which two or more languages are present. This distinction accommodates two facts: plurilingual individuals do not necessarily live in multilingual communities, and multilingual communities are not necessarily made up of plurilingual individuals. The CEFR also distinguishes between multilingual and plurilingual approaches to language education.

A multilingual approach provides for the teaching of second and foreign languages in isolation from one another, “with the ‘ideal native speaker’ as the ultimate model”, ⁸ whereas a plurilingual approach seeks to develop “a communicative competence to which all knowledge and experience of language contributes and in which languages interrelate and interact”. ⁹

If this latter approach is to become a reality, each language taught at school must be a fully integrated part of each pupil’s communicative experience from the very beginning.

As the CEFR acknowledges, the adoption of a plurilingual approach entails a significant modification of the aim of language education, which is now “to develop a linguistic repertory in which all linguistic abilities have a place”. ¹⁰ This is the goal of the new Primary Language Curriculum, which provides for an integrated approach to the teaching of English and Irish while taking account of immigrant pupils’ home languages. ¹¹

An integrated approach to language education is recommended by the research report that Pádraig Ó Duibhir and Jim Cummins wrote for the NCCA in 2012. ¹²

The pedagogical implications of the plurilingual approach can be summarized in four principles, to which we shall return from time to time in the following sections:

1. Teaching and learning should be grounded in language use that is spontaneous and authentic: spontaneous in the sense that it arises naturally from the minute-to-minute activities of the classroom; authentic in the sense that it reflects the concerns of the learners both in the immediate context of learning and in their lives more generally. An integrated plurilingual repertoire helps to shape and define the individual’s identity, so teaching and learning should also be organized in ways that engage learners’ existing identities in the fullest possible way.

⁷ *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001. Available at <https://rm.coe.int/1680459f97>

⁸ CEFR, p. 5.

⁹ CEFR, p. 4.

¹⁰ CEFR, p. 5.

¹¹ *Primary Language Curriculum*, Dublin: Department of Education and Skills, 2019, p. 23.

¹² P. Ó Duibhir & J. Cummins, *Towards an Integrated Language Curriculum in Early Childhood and Primary Education*, Dublin: National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, 2012. p.45.

2. Teaching and learning should draw on all the linguistic resources available to learners: their proficiency in other languages and their explicit and intuitive knowledge of linguistic structures and the pragmatic and sociolinguistic conventions of language use.
3. Teaching and learning should acknowledge that languages are discrete. Although a plurilingual repertoire makes it possible to switch between languages in order to facilitate communication, the CEFR describes proficiency in relation to particular languages. In other words, it respects the fact – confirmed by a large body of psycholinguistic research¹³ – that languages are separable in the mind and separate from one another in most contexts of use. The goal of a plurilingual approach to language education should be to enable learners to achieve the highest possible level of literate proficiency in each of the languages they are learning.
4. Plurilingual repertoires are necessarily provisional: at any time in life, a change in our circumstances may require us to learn a new language; it may also mean that we have less reason to use one or more of the languages in our repertoire. With this possibility in mind, teaching should help learners to develop language learning skills that they can deploy in later life. These include skills of self-management and the ability to reflect on the process of language learning and evaluate its outcomes. We return to the issue of self-management on p.23 below.

1.2 Language development in the pre-school years

Children’s acquisition of the language of the home in early childhood is closely bound up with their cognitive development, primary socialization and enculturation. As they learn to speak, they learn to think; by speaking they also assert membership of the family into which they have been born; and family membership introduces them to the routines, attitudes and beliefs that define family culture. From birth, typically developing children are proactive in developing relationships and engaging with their immediate environment; by nature, they are autonomous agents, eager to take initiatives both in conversation and in their exploration of the physical world. At the same time, of course, they depend on parents, siblings and other caregivers to engage with them in the dialogue that gradually provides them with knowledge and the language with which to talk about it.

“ Children from immigrant families who speak a language other than English or Irish at home bring additional diversity that extends far beyond differences between languages. ”



When children from English-speaking families start school at the age of four and a half, they have passed through closely similar processes of linguistic, cognitive and social development. But those processes have been fed by a potentially infinite diversity of experience as a result of differences in domestic routine, family structure and dynamic, the stories they are familiar with, the television programmes they watch, the apps they play with on their parents’ phones, the toys they have acquired, the wider family and social networks their parents have introduced them to, the places

¹³ See, for example, D. Singleton, “A critical reaction from second language research”, in V. Cook & Li Wei (eds), *The Cambridge Handbook of Linguistic Multi-competence*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 502–520.

they have been to on holiday ... the list is endless. This diversity of experience is reflected in the diversity of their interests, which in turn is reflected in the diversity of the words they know. Pre-school children also differ in their communication skills, depending on the frequency and style of conversation they have experienced inside and outside the home. As any Junior Infants teacher knows only too well, this means that when they start school pupils are dizzyingly diverse linguistically, socially and culturally, even if they all speak what counts as the same language at home.

Children from immigrant families who speak a language other than English or Irish at home bring additional diversity that extends far beyond differences between languages. Some immigrant parents come from communities in Africa and India where multilingualism is widespread and fluid; others come from countries that identify the nation state with a national language. Some are in close contact with their country of origin and may return there regularly, while others have lost contact, whether from choice or necessity. Some are members of immigrant communities that have well-established networks of social support, while others have little or no contact with other speakers of their language. And as with their Irish counterparts, the socio-economic diversity of immigrant families reflects great diversity of educational background, experience and achievement.

1.3 The linguistic demands of primary schooling

The 1999 Primary School Curriculum assumes that new knowledge is successfully acquired only on the basis of what the learner already knows: *“the child’s existing knowledge and experience form the base for learning.”*¹⁴ The knowledge that pupils bring with them to primary school has been called their *“action knowledge”* because it is the *“inner map of reality”* on which their actions are based.¹⁵ The pedagogical challenge is to present and process *“school knowledge”* (curriculum content) in ways that are accessible to pupils from the perspective of their action knowledge; and the pedagogical goal is to help them to absorb school knowledge into an ever-expanding and increasingly sophisticated store of action knowledge. It is generally agreed that the most reliable means of achieving this goal is classroom communication that allows pupils to take initiatives and encourages them to think aloud – communication, in other words, that is dialogic and exploratory. This coincides with the first of the pedagogical principles that underpin the plurilingual approach (section 1.1 above). As the Primary School Curriculum further notes, *“language is central to the learning process”* and *“the child is an active agent in his or her learning.”*¹⁶ One of the curriculum’s general aims is *“to enable children to learn how to learn,”*¹⁷ and this is achieved by engaging them in problem-solving that requires them to *“observe, collate and evaluate evidence, to ask relevant questions, to identify essential information, to recognize the essence of a problem, to suggest solutions, and to make informed judgements”* (cf. the fourth of the pedagogical principles summarized in section 1.1).¹⁸

The process of teaching and learning at primary school is many times more complex than a brief summary can easily convey, and it is made more complex still by the need to develop pupils’ literacy skills. To begin with, this is a matter of teaching them how to represent the spoken word in writing, but from a relatively early stage learning to read and write also means learning to communicate in ways that differ significantly from the oral communication that has shaped

¹⁴ Primary School Curriculum, Introduction, Dublin: The Stationery Office, 1999, p. 8.

¹⁵ D. Barnes, *From Communication to Curriculum*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976, p. 80.

¹⁶ Primary School Curriculum, Introduction, p. 8.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

pupils' lives so far. Oral communication is context-dependent: the comprehension and production of meaning are supported by paralinguistic cues (intonation, gesture, eye contact, feedback, etc.) and by features of the physical situation (persons and objects in focus, the sunshine that is pleasantly warm or uncomfortably hot, the rain that is making you wet, etc.).

Communication of this kind is a precondition for child language acquisition and the so-called naturalistic acquisition of second and foreign languages; children develop conversational language as they acquire their action knowledge. Academic language, on the other hand, tends to be context-reduced: cues to meaning are provided entirely by the spoken or written text we are seeking to understand or produce. No child has academic language as his or her home language; it develops with the acquisition of school knowledge.

It is important to make four things clear regarding the distinction between conversational and academic language.

- 1 From a cognitive point of view the distinction is not absolute and boundaries are often blurred. For example, chat among friends is cognitively undemanding, but if in the course of such chat you try to persuade others of your point of view, the task may quickly become cognitively challenging. Conversely, classroom talk routinely includes passages of conversational as well as academic language; only thus, after all, is it possible to bring pupils' action knowledge into fruitful engagement with school knowledge.
- 2 Although academic language develops with the acquisition of literacy, some writing tasks use conversational language (e.g., e-mail, text-messaging), while academic language includes much of the spoken communication that occurs in classrooms and other academic contexts.
- 3 Academic language occurs in all contexts of formal learning: children in kindergarten encounter it in a primitive form as soon as the focus shifts from "here and now" to "there and then".
- 4 Academic language is by no means confined to formal educational environments; it also has value and validity in a multitude of contexts outside the classroom or lecture hall. In other words, mastery of academic language is an overarching educational goal.



When children from English-speaking homes attend an English-medium primary school in Ireland, the conversion of school knowledge into action knowledge requires them gradually to extend their linguistic repertoire in their first language, adding literacy skills, acquiring the words and phrases that embody key curriculum concepts, and in due course mastering the registers and genres characteristic of the different curriculum subjects. The task facing children from families who do not speak English at home is altogether more challenging because they have not acquired their action knowledge in a version of the language of schooling. There is thus no easy way of promoting a fruitful interaction between school knowledge and their action knowledge.

It is often assumed, in Ireland as in other countries, that children from immigrant families will progress most rapidly if they try to forget their home language and concentrate all their energies on mastering the language of schooling. This leads some schools to forbid the use of home languages anywhere on their premises. Such a policy is cruel because, as was pointed out in section 1.2, the language first acquired in early childhood is central to the pupil's identity and it is the medium in which his or her action knowledge has been acquired. To require pupils to shed their identity and action knowledge as they come through the school gate is hardly to provide them with the secure and nurturing environment that the Primary School Curriculum argues is necessary for effective learning. To forbid the use of home languages is also foolish. The language that has shaped pupils' identity and action knowledge is necessarily the default medium of their discursive thinking and is thus their primary cognitive tool; instead of blocking it, we must find ways of helping them to use it. Finally, the policy of forbidding the use of home languages in school is doomed to failure, because it is impossible to suppress them in the never-ending but unspoken stream of pupils' consciousness.

So, what is to be done? Recognizing that a truly inclusive school must find ways of exploiting all pupils' action knowledge, Scoil Bhríde (Cailíní) adopted the policy of encouraging pupils from immigrant families to use their home language for whatever purposes seem to them appropriate, inside as well as outside the classroom. This prepares the way for implementing the second of the pedagogical principles that underpin the plurilingual approach: Teaching and learning should draw on all the linguistic resources available to learners (*section 1.1 above*). Junior Infants quickly discover which of their peers speak their own or a closely related language, which helps them when working in pairs or small groups. Learning to count and matching colours and shapes are treated as multilingual activities – they are carried out in English, Irish and home languages.

In this way, pupils' home language proficiency contributes to their learning both of curriculum content and of English as the principal language of instruction. This is what Languages Connect is getting at when it argues that immigrant pupils' proficiency in their home language contributes to the development of their proficiency in English.¹⁹

Teachers in Scoil Bhríde routinely ask pupils from immigrant families to tell the rest of the class how they express key words and concepts in their home language, and from an early age they encourage pupils to make comparisons between the various languages present in the class, including English and Irish. This helps all pupils to develop an unusually high level of language awareness; it also encourages discussion of the why and how of language learning, in accordance with the fourth of the principles that underpin the plurilingual approach (*section 1.1 above*).

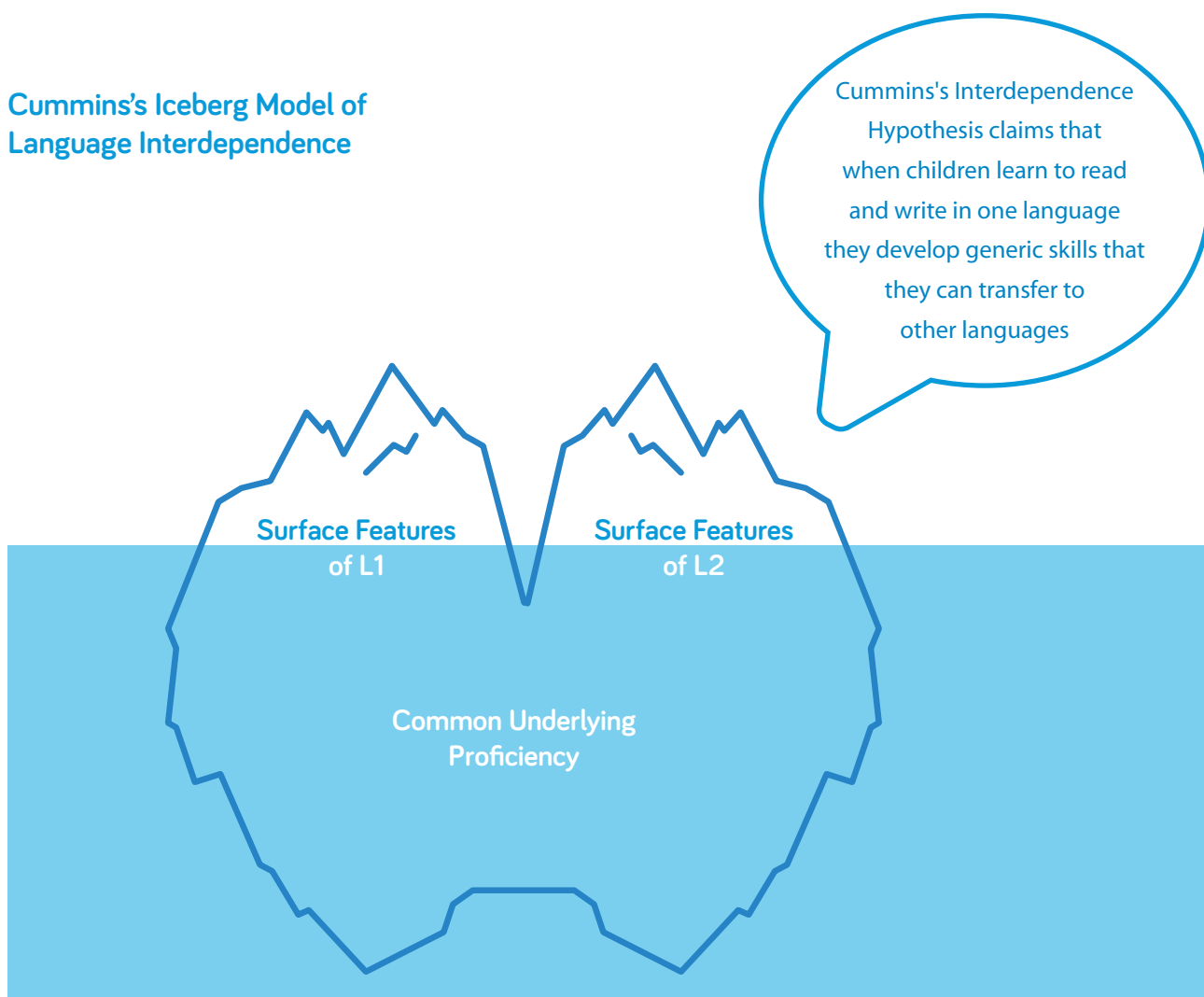
But perhaps most important, pupils from immigrant families become literate in their home language by transferring the skills they are developing in English and Irish. In this they receive help from their parents, older siblings and other family members, and in some cases from weekend classes organized by their community.

¹⁹ *Languages Connect*, p. 30.

But there is ample evidence to suggest that the high levels of motivation generated by the school's language policy enable pupils to make a great deal of progress under their own steam.

By doing so, they confirm Cummins's Interdependence Hypothesis, according to which skills developed in one language can be transferred to another language provided there is adequate exposure to that language and sufficient motivation.²⁰ The key procedure adopted by Scoil Bhríde is the production of parallel texts – that is, texts with the same structure and thematic content – in English, Irish and home languages. To begin with, in Senior Infants, the texts are very simple: “My name is ..., my teacher is ...”. But as pupils gradually learn to write longer and more complex texts in English and Irish, so the texts they produce in their home language become correspondingly longer and more complex.²¹ Transfer of skills between languages is fundamental to the Primary Language Curriculum, to which we now turn.

Cummins's Iceberg Model of Language Interdependence



²⁰ P. Ó Duibhir & J. Cummins, *Towards an Integrated Language Curriculum in Early Childhood and Primary Education*, Dublin: National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, 2012, pp. 31–36.

²¹ For examples from all classes, see Chapter 4 of D. Little & D. Kirwan, *Engaging with Linguistic Diversity*.

1.4 An integrated approach to the teaching and learning of Irish and English

As we pointed out in section 1.1, the Primary Language Curriculum embodies a version of the plurilingual approach because it aims to provide pupils with a learning experience in which English and Irish support one another. It also acknowledges in its core curriculum document and its support materials the role of EAL pupils' home languages and includes the use of "other languages" in its learning outcomes (see section 1.1).

The rationale for the curriculum recognizes that language is "central to how and what we learn" and "our chief means of intrapersonal and interpersonal communication", noting that language "develops through communicating – by giving, receiving and making sense of information".²² The rationale defines language learning as an "integrated process" that is the product of "meaningful interactions and conversations" and entails the transfer of skills between languages.²³ To adapt a key formulation from the CEFR, the Primary Language Curriculum aims to help pupils to develop a communicative competence to which all knowledge and experience of English, Irish and other languages contributes and in which English, Irish and other languages interrelate and interact.

The pedagogical principles implied by the CEFR's plurilingual approach (see section 1.1) are thus directly relevant to the Primary Language Curriculum:

- The teaching and learning of Irish and English should be grounded in language use that is spontaneous and authentic; this ensures that both languages are an integral part of pupils' daily communicative experience.
- Teaching and learning should draw on all the linguistic resources available to learners, whether or not the class includes pupils with a home language other than English or Irish.
- Teaching and learning should acknowledge that English and Irish are discrete entities that differ greatly as regards vocabulary, morphology, syntax and phonology.
- By encouraging reflection on the similarities and differences between the two languages, teaching should help pupils to develop language awareness and understand what it means to learn how to learn a language.



²² Primary Language Curriculum, p. 7.

²³ Primary Language Curriculum, p. 8.

The classroom activities presented in Part II of these guidelines embody three general principles:

1. When English is the language of instruction and Irish the second language of the curriculum, teachers should use Irish for interactive routines with which pupils are already familiar in English, especially in the early stages. Obvious examples in Junior Infants are learning to count and learning to match shapes and colours (already referred to in section 1.3). Action games can also be played bilingually, and stories with which pupils are already familiar in English can be read to them in Irish. In this way, pupils' proficiency in English scaffolds the development of their proficiency in Irish.
2. In the presentation of curriculum content, teachers should as a matter of course give pupils the Irish equivalent for key words and concepts. As pupils' proficiency grows, it should be possible for Irish to replace English for parts of each lesson in a version of CLIL (content and language integrated learning).
3. The production of parallel texts of the kind described in section 1.3 should play a central role in the development of pupils' writing skills. It is not necessary for texts always to be produced first in English. If the teacher and pupils collaborate in writing a story in Irish during class, pupils should find it easy enough to rewrite the story in English for homework; rewriting a comparable English text in Irish, on the other hand, might well be beyond them. It goes without saying that teachers should sometimes use Irish informally when communicating with pupils outside the classroom.

Whether they come from Irish or immigrant families, pupils at Scoil Bhríde encounter Irish for the first time when they start school. Junior Infants teachers have reported that home languages tend to be used when the focus switches from English to Irish: the second language of the curriculum evidently licenses multilingual communication. This has two important consequences. Irish pupils are strongly motivated to learn Irish because they too want a "home language"; and pupils from immigrant families are no less keen on learning Irish than their native-born peers, which in turn motivates some Irish pupils to learn another language with help from a family member or on their own.

Whether English and Irish are the only two languages in play or they are supplemented by a variety of home languages, the plurilingual approach lends itself to intercultural education; indeed, the Council of Europe binds plurilingualism and interculturality together in a single concept: plurilingual and intercultural education. This prompts the question: how exactly does the development of plurilingual repertoires lead to intercultural learning?



1.5 Converting linguistic and cultural diversity into educational capital

The Council of Europe uses “pluricultural” to refer to individuals who belong to two or more cultural groups and “intercultural” to denote a complex of cognitive, affective and behavioural competences that include:

- knowledge about other cultural groups, their products and practices, and the ways in which people of different cultures interact;
- attitudes such as curiosity, openness, respect for otherness, and empathy;
- skills of interpreting and relating, for example, interpreting a practice from another culture, and relating it to practices within one’s own culture;
- skills of discovery such as the ability to search out and acquire new knowledge about a culture and its practices and products;
- critical cultural awareness, that is, the ability to evaluate critically the practices and products of one’s own and other cultures.²⁴

In considering how we can bring interculturality into the primary classroom, it is important to avoid the cultural essentialism that characterizes much popular discourse. Cultural essentialism associates the nation state with a national language and national culture that are assumed to be shared by all citizens. Trivially, it produces cultural stereotypes – every French family has croissants and café au lait for breakfast; every Swiss house contains a cuckoo clock. Non-trivially, it can be deployed as a powerful tool of social exclusion – those who do not share the language, beliefs and practices of the nation have no place in its territory.

People who live together develop common attitudes, beliefs and patterns of behaviour; over time they come to share a common history; and their common history produces cultural artefacts of many different kinds – works of art in various media, but also institutions and systems of administration, government and law. At the same time, however, each of us belongs to multiple sub-cultures, some of them overlapping and others distinct. In section 1.2 we saw how pre-school children’s action knowledge is shaped by the culture of the home; when they start school, they are exposed to the cultural practices that shape primary education in Ireland, which may be similar to or different from what they have already experienced; and in due course they will become members of other cultures – societies, sports clubs, professions and so on. There is nothing new about cultural diversity, even within apparently homogeneous societies; what is new is our recognition that education should equip children, adolescents and young adults to recognize, understand and respect diversity and difference.

This is the message of Intercultural Education in the Primary School, published by the NCCA in 2005:

Intercultural education “*respects, celebrates and recognizes the normality of diversity in all areas of human life*” and “*promotes equality and human rights, challenges unfair discrimination, and promotes the values upon which equality is built*”.

²⁴ Adapted from M. Byram, *Multicultural societies, pluricultural people and the project of intercultural education*, Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2009, pp. 6–7. Available at <https://rm.coe.int/multicultural-societies-pluricultural-people-and-the-project-of-interc/16805a223c>

The same document points out that the term “interculturalism” implies that different cultural groups live together in harmony, whereas “multiculturalism” has been used to refer to multiple cultural groups sharing the same space without having much contact with one another, especially if they speak different languages.²⁵

In practical terms, intercultural education is a matter of learning to recognize, interpret and tolerate diversity and difference in all their forms. An integrated approach to the teaching and learning of English and Irish provides a powerful stimulus for this kind of educational practice, and it is made more powerful still by including in the daily life of the classroom immigrant languages and the action knowledge they embody. Again, however, it is important not to fall into the trap of cultural essentialism. Some 200 languages are spoken in Ireland today, and the adult speakers of those languages have brought with them great diversity of cultural experience, practice, attitudes and beliefs. But the extent to which the children of immigrants share in their parents’ cultural heritage varies greatly. Some children regularly visit their parents’ country of origin, perhaps spending their summer holidays with grandparents and participating in the life of the extended family and local community; they become pluricultural in the Council of Europe’s sense. Other children have no more contact with their parents’ culture of origin than the parents themselves can provide by teaching them traditional songs and stories and sharing reminiscences.

Teachers’ insights into the benefits of including home languages in curriculum delivery

I think that awareness of Irish as a language of communication is much more heightened in the Irish children because of the children who’ve come from other countries and who quite openly speak about their language and in their language

Irish lessons are a good way to include pupils’ home languages, and it has a knock-on effect on the Irish children. They begin to see Irish as their second language

When you bring in the home languages the lights come on!

While a number of years ago ... I would have said ‘Oh written work, no. The oral is the most important’ I think that if they form their thoughts with pen and paper first, it gives them the confidence then to go and speak.

Children are responding very positively to the open language policy – even their body language and demeanour within class; the speed and accuracy with which they answer questions when their own language is involved. Regardless of subject, their interest increases if it is something to do with home or their own language or their own experience; therefore when they respond it is with much more developed thought ... equally in writing.

The work that the children have produced gives evidence of how successful it has been. The open language policy has permeated through the whole school.

In any class the children are open to learning all languages and greet you in several different languages and it has almost become a matter of fact it’s just integrated into daily school life

²⁵ *Intercultural Education in the Primary School, Dublin: National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, 2005, p. 3.*

The dialogic and exploratory talk that mediates between school knowledge and pupils' action knowledge allows pupils to contribute fragments of their home cultures to the ever-expanding knowledge of the class. Some of those fragments will be broadly familiar to many pupils, while others are startlingly different; in many cases difference will be linguistic as well as cultural. But the adoption of the plurilingual approach advocated by the Primary Language Curriculum and explained in these guidelines should help pupils to accept novelty and difference with interest and respect, welcoming all forms of diversity for the enrichment they bring.

Parents' appreciation of the benefits of a plurilingual approach

Our children see these other girls and boys in their class speaking this other language with fluency and with confidence and I think they say, 'Why can't I do that with my Irish?' It makes them want to speak the Irish more at home. I think it spurs them on

We like the school's interest in our language. Before, my daughter was ashamed to hear us speaking it. Now she wants to read and write in it

I really think because it is so much encouraged in this school, how to speak and to find the similarities between your own home native language and English, Irish and French, it definitely speeds up the learning of English

When my child came home and told me that the teacher asked her to say something in [our home language] I sat down and cried because I thought, 'Someone wants to know about our language.'

A weight was lifted off my shoulders when I heard that it was alright to speak my language at home.

²⁴ Adapted from M. Byram, *Multicultural societies, pluricultural people and the project of intercultural education*, Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2009, pp. 6–7. Available at <https://rm.coe.int/multicultural-societies-pluricultural-people-and-the-project-of-interc/16805a223c>



Part Two

Implementing a plurilingual
approach to language education
in the primary school

2.1 Some pedagogical preliminaries

These guidelines address two educational challenges, to make Irish part of each pupil's "everyday lived language" (the Primary Language Curriculum) and to support the languages of the new Irish to the benefit of themselves and Irish society (Languages Connect). As we explained in Part I, taken together these two challenges imply the adoption of a "plurilingual" approach to language education, which is shaped by four pedagogical principles:

1. The teaching and learning of languages should be grounded in spontaneous and authentic language use: languages are "lived" only when they are used for communicative and reflective purposes.
2. Teaching and learning should draw on all the linguistic resources available to learners.
3. Teaching and learning should acknowledge that languages are discrete entities.
4. Teaching should help pupils to develop awareness of language and of what language learning entails, e.g. by drawing on their plurilingual repertoires to make connections between different languages.

The first of these four principles requires that Irish as well as English should be fully integrated in everyday classroom communication; the second acknowledges that the home language of each pupil is his or her primary cognitive tool and a valuable resource for the class as a whole; the third principle reminds us that the goal of all language education should be to develop the highest possible level of age-appropriate literate proficiency in the languages in each pupil's repertoire; and the fourth reminds us of the importance of developing pupils' reflective and metacognitive skills.

Current theories of second language acquisition differ in their understanding of the cognitive mechanisms that produce proficiency, but they agree that those mechanisms are driven by spontaneous and authentic language use.²⁶ They agree, in other words, that it is impossible to teach languages in the traditional sense; the best we can do is create the conditions that enable pupils to learn their target language by attempting to use it.

Our first priority must always be to involve pupils in genuine communication. This means providing them with the words and phrases that enable them to participate, supporting their efforts to speak (and in due course write), and ensuring that classroom talk is dialogic and exploratory (cf. section 1.3), so that it encourages them to take initiatives.

The more initiatives pupils take, the more likely it is that teachers will be diverted from their lesson plans. This is not something to worry about, however: if language proficiency arises from language use, all pupil-initiated discourse will lead to learning. Its effect may not be immediately apparent, but it will inevitably play its part in the hidden processes of language growth.

In order to meet the challenges of the Primary Language Curriculum and Languages Connect, we need to find ways of scaffolding pupils' attempts to use Irish (and English in the case of EAL pupils).²⁷

²⁶ See, for example, two chapters in J. W. Schwieter and A. Benati (eds.), *The Cambridge Handbook of Language Learning*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019: N. C. Ellis and S. Wulff, "Cognitive approaches to second language acquisition" (pp. 41–61) and J. Truscott and M. Sharwood Smith, "Theoretical frameworks in L2 acquisition" (pp. 84–107).

²⁷ The term "EAL (English as an Additional Language) pupil" is used to refer to all pupils whose home language is neither English nor Irish and who are thus entitled to receive English Language Support.

We also need to include home languages in classroom communication and in due course support pupils' literacy development in those languages. Teachers who are new to this approach may worry that because they do not know EAL pupils' home languages, they cannot understand when they speak and write them and thus cannot provide correction. This fear is, however, misplaced. When, with help from their parents and other family members, EAL pupils transfer their emerging literacy skills from English and Irish to their home language, they produce texts which native speakers of the languages in question judged to be no less correct than texts written by their peers in the country they or their parents came from.

2.2 What supports should the school provide?

A school language policy

The Primary Language Curriculum is a matter not just for the individual teacher but for the school as a whole. It is thus important to develop a school language policy that is endorsed by the Board of Management, shared with parents, and regularly reviewed and updated. We recommend that a language policy document should include:

- a mission statement that acknowledges the central role played by language in education, accords equal status to all languages present in the school, and emphasizes the importance of helping pupils to develop integrated plurilingual repertoires;
- a statement of guiding pedagogical principles similar to those at the beginning of section 2.1 and a summary of their practical implications;
- a commitment to regular review and (if necessary) revision in the light of experience and to accommodate changes in the linguistic and cultural profile of the pupil cohort.

In this way, the language policy document provides an important reference point as a statement of the school's interpretation of the Primary Language Curriculum.

A well-stocked library

Reading plays a central role in children's language development, so schools should provide them with a rich array of age-appropriate books (fiction and non-fiction) in English but also in Irish and EAL pupils' home languages.²⁸ From an early stage in their literacy development, pupils should have access to age-appropriate bilingual dictionaries in English and Irish/home languages.

²⁸ Grants are available from Post-Primary Languages Ireland to buy books in home languages.



Affirmation

It is important that the principal and all staff members (including non-teaching staff) show an interest in pupils' linguistic efforts and achievements: regular affirmation is empowering and motivating.

Initiatives that involve the whole school community are likely to have a greater impact than those undertaken by individual teachers without support.

Documentation of language learning and use

All languages present in the school should be seen on the walls of classrooms and corridors and heard in readings, recitations and performances of various kinds. We recommend that teachers maintain an archive of particularly interesting pupil work – stories and poems, projects of all kinds, portfolios, vocabulary notebooks, personal dictionaries. These can be drawn on for displays and exhibitions and used at staff meetings to inform discussion of school language policy and its implementation. A well-maintained archive can also provide research data for teachers who undertake postgraduate study. There are various ways of organizing a class archive – teachers will have their own preferences – but it is motivating for pupils to be involved in the construction and maintenance of the archive, especially in senior classes. Individual learning also benefits from documentation: there is a sense in which what pupils write in their copybooks *is* their learning. Teachers may find that documentation of learning is easier to manage if pupils use different copybooks for different aspects of their language work, e.g. homework and classwork in one copy, insights into similarities and differences between languages in another, a personal multilingual dictionary in a third. Teachers have also found it useful to keep their own log, recording classroom exchanges and pupil contributions of special interest as well as words and phrases that they learn in EAL pupils' home languages.

Language support classes

It is in keeping with the approach recommended in these guidelines to include all pupils in language support classes: native speakers of English benefit from an intensive focus on language, and they can help to scaffold EAL pupils' communication. Mixed ability groups benefit all learners: pupils with well-developed skills provide a model for those



Using templates of flower petals to create a welcoming recognition of all languages in the school. The empty petals are waiting for new languages.

whose proficiency is less well-developed, and the help they give enhances their own understanding of language. It should go without saying that effective language support classes require close cooperation between language support and class teachers. Especially in the early stages, classes should begin with an undemanding focus on the learners as individuals. If someone has a new coat or shoes or a new soft toy, that may provide a useful starting point for engaging everyone. EAL pupils can be asked the word for coat and shoes in their home language – the teacher should repeat the words and ask whether she has pronounced them correctly. When EAL pupils have begun to read and write, it is a good idea to write down what they say in English and Irish so that their learning is focused on their own attempts to communicate. In due course classes can deal with whatever topics are current in the pupils' mainstream class.

The importance of involving parents

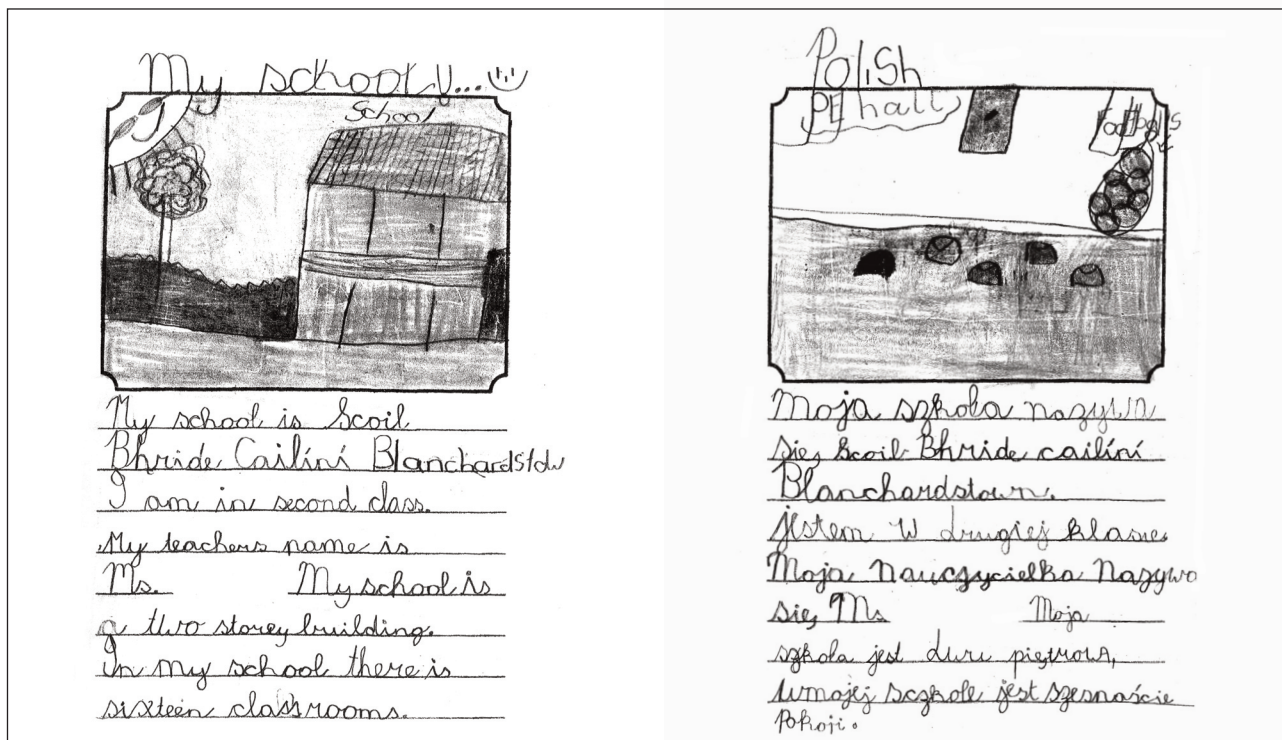
Parents of EAL pupils play an essential role in maintaining and developing their children's proficiency in the language of the home, especially when it comes to reading and writing. They should be encouraged to engage in the same literacy-supporting activities that teachers recommend to English-speaking parents, but in their home language: reading to their children every day, engaging in shared reading and writing activities, encouraging their children to communicate electronically with family members in other countries, and so on. It is important to make clear to them that their home language, in which they are expert, has an essential role to play in their children's development and education. When immigrant parents are unable to provide literacy support of this kind, the school may be able to help, for example by putting the family in touch with literate speakers of the same home language. Parents should be kept informed of the progress of their children's language learning; regular teacher–parent liaison is vital if EAL pupils are to develop literacy in their home language. One way of facilitating communication with parents who are not fluent in English is to create multilingual templates for frequently used messages; other parents are usually willing to help with translations.

2.3 Some activities that work

The plurilingual approach to language education is not a new method that teachers should follow slavishly. Rather, it is a general approach to teaching, learning and classroom communication that is shaped by the four principles summarized at the beginning of section 2.1. By emphasizing dialogic and exploratory classroom talk and encouraging pupils to take initiatives, the approach fosters reflective learning. It is never too early to make pupils aware of what they are learning and why. Even in the Infant classes it's possible to stimulate reflection on learning, its processes and outcomes by regularly asking five questions: What are we doing? Why? How? With what results? What next?²⁹ In senior classes, some teachers have used the WALT ("We are learning to ...") and WILF ("What I'm looking for ...") technique to develop their pupils' reflective skills. At all levels of the school, learning that pupils undertake on their own initiative should always be encouraged and applauded. It is natural that they learn fragments of one another's home languages; they may also teach one another the same song in all the languages of the classroom, or songs from the countries their parents came from.

As we explained in section 1.4, a plurilingual approach to the learning of Irish means providing pupils with three kinds of support: (i) especially in the early stages, interactive routines whose structure and meaning are already familiar to

²⁹ Cf. L. Dam, *Learner Autonomy 3: From theory to classroom practice*, Dublin: Authentik, 1995, p. 1.



Second Class: A description of 'Our School' in English and Polish

them in English; (ii) the regular use of Irish in the delivery and processing of curriculum content; and (iii) the transfer of developing literacy skills from English to Irish via the production of parallel texts in the two languages. A pedagogical dynamic based on these three kinds of support also accommodates EAL pupils' home languages and fosters the development of home language literacy. The dynamic of linguistic interdependence³⁰ supports the gradual development of academic language across the individual pupil's plurilingual repertoire. The next three sub-sections provide examples of activities for each of these support types, and a fourth sub-section briefly describes four ways of consolidating plurilingual learning. All the activities we describe were devised and successfully implemented by teachers in Scoil Bhríde (Cailíní), Blanchardstown.³¹

2.3.1 Using familiar routines and themes to support language learning in junior classes

Greetings

One of the earliest and most natural ways of introducing Irish into an English-medium school is by teaching pupils how to greet one another in Irish using the salutation *Dia dhuit*. This can be extended to all the languages of the classroom by asking if anyone knows a different way of saying *Hello*. The question can be put in context for very young children by asking them to think about what their parents say when they come to collect them from school. Very soon pupils learn that while one child says *Dobri den*, another says *Salut*, a third says *Ciao*, and so on. Pupils are encouraged to tell their parents the different ways in which classmates greet one another. In this way all pupils' languages are acknowledged and children are exposed to a new and important fact: that there are many different ways of performing simple communicative acts. To begin with, some EAL pupils may feel self-conscious when encouraged to speak their home language or volunteer information about it. Needless to say, their reticence should be handled sensitively.

³⁰ P. Ó Duibhir & J. Cummins, *Towards an Integrated Language Curriculum in Early Childhood and Primary Education*, Dublin: National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, 2012, pp. 31–36.

³¹ Many more examples are provided by D. Little and D. Kirwan, *Engaging with Linguistic Diversity: A study of educational inclusion in an Irish primary school*, London: Bloomsbury Academic, paperback edition, 2021.

Counting and addition

Pupils in Junior Infants are expected to be able to count in sequence from 1 to 10 in the language of schooling. They are also expected to be able to identify the various numerals involved and put them in the correct order. Some pupils will already know how to do this while others will not. In an English-medium school, counting will first be taught in English. When pupils can confidently count from 1 to 5 in English, they can be taught how to do so in Irish, and EAL pupils can tell the class how they count from 1 to 5 in their home language. Repeating the task in different languages reinforces basic curriculum learning. It also presents early opportunities to identify cross-linguistic similarities, e.g., *a dó, deux, duo, and trois, three, a trí*.



The same approach can be adopted when teaching addition. Teachers should not be surprised or worried if pupils mix languages when they perform simple additions, e.g., *a two agus a two sin a four*. In time and with practice, they will learn not to mix languages.

Colours

Discussion of colours in English can include words for colours in Irish, and EAL pupils can be invited to tell the class the words for colours in their home languages. One way of teaching basic colours is to arrange mats of different colours in a circle and invite individual pupils to jump onto each mat in turn, calling out the word for its colour in their preferred language. The rest of the class repeats what each pupil says.

Days of the week

When pupils have learned the days of the week and their sequence in English, they can be taught their Irish equivalents. After that, they can learn the days of the week in whatever home languages are present in the classroom (parents are usually happy to write down the necessary words in their home language). Experience shows that children enjoy performing simple learning activities multilingually; they find it motivating to learn the languages of their classmates at the same time as they learn curriculum content in English and Irish. Regularly performing simple learning activities multilingually lays essential foundations for the increasingly complex processes of plurilingual learning in later years. Even at this early stage it is a good idea to support oral learning with print; for example, the days of the week should be written in each of the languages of the classroom and displayed on the classroom wall.

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
An Luan	An Mháirt	An Chéadaoin	An Déardaoin	An Aoine	An Satharn	An Domhnach
lunes	martes	miércoles	viernes	jueves	sábado	domingo
lundi	mardi	mercredi	jeudi	vendredi	samedi	dimanche

Senior Infants: Days of the week in English, Irish, Polish, Spanish and French

Food

Snack and lunch breaks provide daily opportunities to discuss food. They are also an ideal time to discuss likes and dislikes in Irish, e.g., *An maith leat _____? Is maith liom/ Ní maith liom*, and to compare the words for various items of food in different languages. When pupils are drawn into this kind of interaction, they very often begin to initiate such conversations among themselves. More formal discussion of food can be reinforced using pictures with labels in English, Irish and home languages. The teacher writes the English and Irish words for different types of food on the whiteboard. Pupils are asked to choose the foods they like, draw them and write the appropriate names beside them. EAL pupils then ask their parents to add the appropriate words in their home language. It is important that work of this kind is always read aloud to the rest of the class: by publishing it in this way the teacher signals the equal importance of all languages and reinforces pupils' interest in languages and their motivation to learn.

Music

Music provides numerous opportunities for pupils to practise their Irish and learn fragments of EAL pupils' home languages. Using topics with which the children are familiar, simple tunes can be used, e.g. "The Farmer in the Dell", to incorporate all the languages of the classroom. Starting with Irish, continuing with home languages and finishing with English, children can repeat the same phrase in different languages all through the song.

When Christmas is approaching, the song might begin:

Verse 1:

Tá Daidí na Nollag ag teacht (x 2)
Hé hó mo dhaidio
Tá Daidí na Nollag ag teacht.

Verse 2:

Le féiríní do chách (x 2)
Hé hó mo dhaidio
Le féiríní do chách.

Verse 3:

Santa's on his way (x 2)
Hé hó mo dhaidio
Santa's on his way.

The words in the second verse are translated by EAL pupils or their parents into their home language. The first verse is repeated and sung, this time in English. Simply by imitating their classmates, all pupils in the class can learn to sing the second verse in everyone's language.

Events in the environment

An important task in the Infant classes is to develop observational skills that contribute to all aspects of pupils' development, education and language learning. Both in the classroom and in the immediate environment, teachers can use pupils' observational capacity to support language learning; using Irish as the language of communication in these situations encourages pupils to associate the language with interesting events. For example, on a walk around the school grounds, the teacher stops and signals to everyone to be very quiet and listen to and/or look at the object of her attention. *Éistigí! Ar chuala sibh é sin? or Féach ar sin! Cad é?* Using body language to indicate what she is listening to or looking at, the teacher waits for a response from the children, who use whatever language they know to answer the question. Their answers are confirmed by the teacher in Irish: *Is éan é. Ta sé ag canadh.* Back in the classroom this event can be used to reinforce the language that has been learned. The teacher asks: *Cad a chuala tú? Cad a chonaic tú?* With her help the children answer: *Chuala mé... Chonaic mé....* Phrases like these can be reinforced until they are a fully embedded part of each child's linguistic repertoire and can be used as the basis for further language development. Encouraging children to draw a picture of the bird and telling the class: *Is éan é*, helps to further reinforce the language involved. Over the course of a week or longer, pupils can create similar pages with drawings of different animals or objects of interest. Stapled together, the pages make a book. Children can then use their books as prompts to recall the Irish they have learnt.

Draw pictures of food.
Write the names in Irish
and English

Butter / Milt
Apple / Ull
Orange / Orláste
Carrot / Cairéad
Cheese / Cáis

Blood / Afán
Cereal / Gránach
Egg / Ubh

Sugar / Spúicín
Milk / Bainne
Chocolate / Seachúid

Senior Infants: Drawings of food labelled in two languages

About Food


Food is what we eat.
Food is apples, peas, carrots, bananas, peppers and more. Healthy food is peas, apples, oranges, tomatoes. My favourite is apples, strawberries, peas, watermelon. Vegetables are carrots, peas, peas, corn, and the cobs. Pev ēdiens. Ēdiens ir tas ko mēs ēdam. Ēdiens ir āboli, zirņi, burkāni, banāni, ēdiens ir zirņi, āboli, speķi, tomāti. Mans mīļākais ēdiens ir āboli, zemenes, zirņi, aubūrs. Dārzeņi ir burkāni, zirņi, kukurūza.

Second Class: Text about food in English and Latvian written unaided in class


There are sixteen classrooms in the school. Our teacher is called Mrs. [redacted]. There are lots of activities in our school. Hurling, arts, Music, Gaelic, Scól Bhríde.

is ainm do m' scoil. Tógadh an sean scoil i 1956. Tógadh an scoil nua i 2012. Is foirgneamh dhá urlár é. Tá 19 múinteoir sa scoil. Tá 16 seomra mangama sa scoil. Ms. [redacted] is aurrebhulmór mhúinteoir.

Second Class: Description of our school in two languages illustrating the transfer of developing literacy skills from English to Irish

<p>有一天在一个很漂亮的小区住着二位小孩子，一个叫蛇沙和可摸私。有一天，一个不好的事情发生在这个美丽的小区上，一个巨大的火龙烧着了，他们又害怕又惊讶！但是，他们要打到大火龙，他们是有信心的！</p>	 <p>Once upon time there lived a girl and the boy in Westerd Village. Their names were Sasra and James. One day a terrible thing happened. A big fierce dragon burned down the village. They were very sad and shocked but they</p>
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Third Class: Dual language storybook written in Chinese (unaided) and English

<p>Na ishte një herë, një vajzë e vogël që quhej Lucy dhe një djalë që quhej Tom dhe kishin një gjyshe që quhej Amber. Ata jetonin në një kasolle në qytetin Waterfall. Një ditë gjyshja e tyre ishte e sëmurë. Amber i tha Lucy dhe Tom që të shkonin në dyqan për të blenë bukë. Dhe ata shkuan. Gjatë rrugës ata dëgjuan një sirenë që këndonte. Ata shkuan tek ajo. Dhe e pyetën "Si quhesh?" Dhe sirena tha "unë quhem Katie".</p>	 <p>Once upon a time there was a girl called Lucy and a boy called Tom with a grandma called Amber. They lived in a cottage at Waterfall Town. One day their grandma was ill. Amber told Lucy and Tom to go to the store for some bread. So off they went. On their way they heard a mermaid singing. They went to her. They asked "what is your name?" The mermaid said "I am Katie</p>
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Third Class: Dual language storybook written in Albanian (with help at home) and English

The spiral nature of the Primary School Curriculum helps to ensure that the language learned at this early stage will develop to become a natural part of each pupil’s linguistic repertoire that can be expanded further with regular use.

Games

Irish and EAL pupils’ home languages can be used to perform action games like “Hand to hand,” “Toe to toe” and “Head, shoulders, knees and toes.” Irish can be used to play other familiar games. Bingo is one possibility; another is a guessing game in which one pupil hides an object behind her back and the pupil who correctly guesses what the object is takes the next turn. Almost without effort pupils learn the language specific to each game – for the guessing game, *Cad atá i bhfolach agam? Cad atá i bhfolach sa bhosca agam? Cad atá i bhfolach faoin bhoird agam? Is ____ é.*

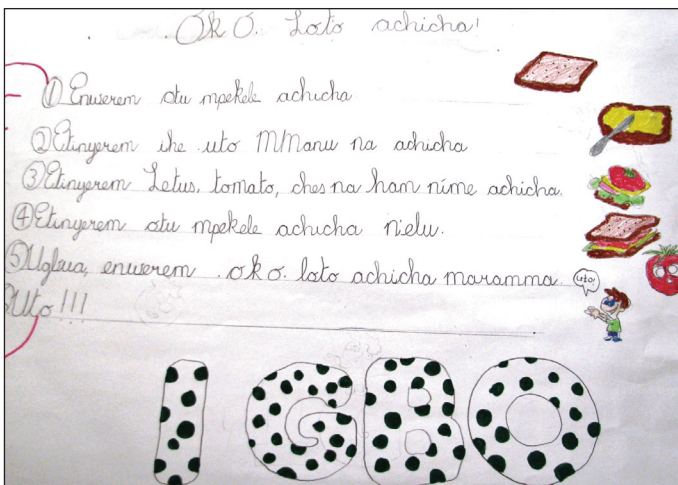
Telling the time

When pupils learn to tell the time they should do so in English and Irish. EAL pupils can teach the rest of the class how to tell the time in their home language.

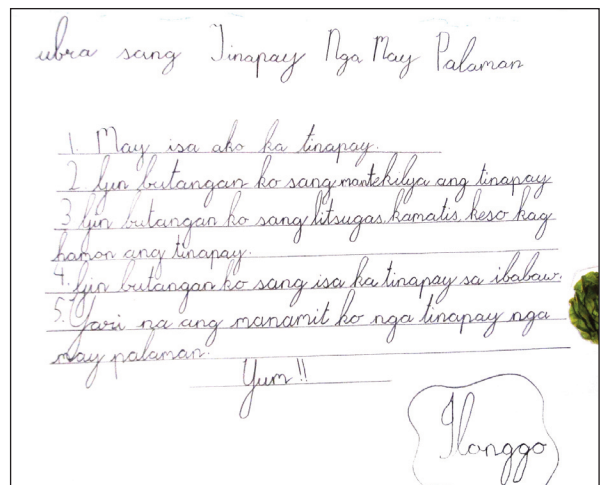
2.3.2 Including Irish and home languages in the delivery of curriculum content ³²

Irish

The use of Irish for classroom management and to reinforce the communication of curriculum content ensures that the language is not confined to the Irish lesson pupils have each morning but becomes part of their everyday reality. This effect is strengthened by spending a few minutes each day getting pupils to share their news in Irish – perhaps something they heard or saw on the way to school (*chonaic mé.../chuala mé ... bhí timpist ar an mbóthar/is é seo mo bhreithlá/ etc.*) or some other event that has made an impression on them: language that has personal relevance is easy to retain.



Fourth Class: Lesson in Irish on how to make a sandwich; procedure translated into home language (Igbo) for homework



Fourth class: Lesson in Irish on how to make a sandwich; procedure translated into home language (Ilango) for homework

Allow pupils to use English words to fill gaps in their knowledge but write the missing Irish words on the whiteboard. Correct grammar and pronunciation, but without comment. Pupils should always write new words and phrases in their copybooks; in junior classes they may draw matching pictures. Alternatively, they can write the words and phrases on slips of paper that are kept in a box and referred to when needed. By the time pupils are in First Class it should be

³² See also *Primary Language Curriculum, Support Material for Teachers, Dublin: Department of Education and Skills, 2019, pp. 113–122: The place of Irish in a Multilingual Environment.*
Available at https://curriculumonline.ie/getmedia/3ac44a69-57f9-49ea-80db-ebec76831111/PLC-Support-Materials_All-Strands-Final.pdf

possible to introduce individual lessons and topics in Irish, using the whiteboard to model correct language use. The Irish that pupils write in their copy books can then be translated into English and/or home languages for homework.

Home languages

By encouraging EAL pupils to volunteer words and phrases in their home language, the teacher ensures that those languages are always activated to support pupils' learning. EAL pupils know that the teacher and their classmates do not know their home language, which means that they can contribute information that would otherwise not be available to the class. This is empowering and fosters self-esteem. The teacher may tell the class that a small orange is called a mandarin and ask EAL pupils what it is called in their language. Always accept whatever they offer – e.g. *mandarinka* in Polish – even though you may have no way of knowing whether it is right or wrong: experience suggests that in the great majority of cases it will be right. Contributions from EAL pupils are almost guaranteed to produce interesting insights. For example, *cold* is *fiar* in Irish; in Romanian it is *frieg*, which sounds a bit like *fridge*, which is *cold*.

A plurilingual approach to classroom discussion

Make the translation of key words and phrases into Irish and EAL pupils' home languages a regular feature of classroom interaction. Write the translations on the whiteboard and have pupils write them in their copybooks. If EAL pupils do not know how to spell the words and phrases they offer, get them to ask their parents to write them down so that they can share them with the class the next day. The following activities have been used successfully in various classes:

- Writing a single text in two or more languages
- Writing a text in one language and summarizing it in another
- Providing a list of key vocabulary for a text written in a language of the pupil's choice
- Writing a factual text using a sequence of different languages
- Writing a dialogue between two or more characters, each of whom speaks a different language
- The countries of origin of EAL pupils' families are located on a map. The pupils tell the class which languages are spoken in these countries. Sometimes they can provide more information than the teacher; for example, Filipino pupils may be able to give the class examples of the many loan words from Spanish that entered Tagalog as a result of Spanish colonisation of the Philippines.
- Clothes and weather: the teacher elicits from the class a list of the clothes worn in different countries and in different seasons, using English, Irish and all the languages of the classroom.
- On any topic the teacher can ask questions in Irish that pupils answer in English and/or their home language. Answers given in home languages are translated into English for the benefit of classmates.
- Discussion of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child leads pupils to consider how they could make newcomers feel welcome in their class. This prompts them to make a multilingual poster to advertise the school's language policy and show newcomers that all languages are "at home" in their classroom.
- A lesson on clothes draws on all languages present in the class. Pupils compile a multilingual list of items of clothing and footwear, looking for similarities and differences in pronunciation and spelling. Cultural differences are also explored. The results of this work are captured on posters that can be used as a point of reference in future work.
- In a lesson on food, pupils discuss the ingredients required for making a particular dish, e.g. pasta, before making the dish and tasting it. Pupils then make a multilingual table listing the ingredients and summarizing the steps in cooking the dish in English, Irish and all the home languages present in the class.

Russian English 3rd

The snowman

СНИГОВИК

E One day early in morning a boy called James was sleep
 R ОДИН РАЗА УТРО МАЛЧИК ЗАВЫТ James он спал.

E He quickly woke up and saw snow. He quick^{ly} ran down stairs.
 R он очин быстрого стал и пашил вниз.

E He dress^{ed} up and went outside to build a snowman.
 R он пашил атеца и пашил делать СНИГОВИК.

E Then it was night. He had to go to bed,
 R потом он пашил спать.

E It was 12 o'clock in the night.
 R было 12 часов ночью. он стал

E James woke up and looked ^{out} in the window
 R он стал и пасмотрел в окно.

E the snowman ^{came} got alive.
 R СНИГОВИК был живое шас.

E Then the snowman went inside the house with James
 R потом СНИГОВИК пашил нутри дом с мальчи.

E They went ^{to} the living room together
 R они пашли в комнату вместе.

R ^{сидя} мальики мальчике приаляжыл сест.
 E James said so you could ^{sit} sit. He sat. clothes
 E They went to the bedroom then they put ^{clothes} clothes
 R они пашли в комнату и примерили одежду.
 и вышли.

E They found a motor ^{cycle} side they were riding it.
 R они увидали мотоцикле и начели вазить его

E Then they had ^{enough} enough of riding it then ^{so} they flew up in the
 R ^{sky} потом они прыгательсь и палетале.

E Then they came and they saw lots of snowman. ^{Conclude}

Third Class: Story in English and Russian about a snowman

all about me

My year is _____

My Name is _____

I am _____ years old

I have _____ hair

I have _____ eyes

I come from _____

I am _____

Wall

gan

briste pantalon

seaicéad

gnabhar fós é!

amhainní gants

cóta un manteau

Clothes

Language Connections

Wardrobe (English)

Garderobe (Normans)

Garderoba (Polish)

Garderobă (Romanian)

Pantalon (French)

Pantalon (Tagalog)

Pantalon (Spanish)

Pantaloons (Pirates Trousers)

Pantalony (Polish)

Pantaloni (Romanian)

Pants / Pant suit (USA)

Sandals (English)

Sandały (Polish)

Sandalky (Ukrainian)

Sandale (Lithuanian)

Sandale (Romanian)

Blouse (English)

Bluza (Polish)

Blūs (Irish)

Blucka (Ukrainian)

Bluska (Lithuanian)

Bluska (Polish: A top)

Blusă (Romanian)

Blouson (French: A

Second Class: Identity text in English and Bosnian written unaided in class

Cuairt ar an Meánscoil

Chuaigh mé agus mo chlann go dtí Pobal Scoil Mhin. Talagang yumao sa gabí. Nous avons vu beaucoup filles e garçons. Thosaigh an phríomhoide ag caint. The whole room started to quiet down. We were told that all the sixth class children were to make their way to the door. Ensuite, une fille a amenée nous dans une piece. Thosaigh said ag scoilt ar na páistí. Si Rabia, si Duska, at si Ana at ako nag paghati-hatiin sa isang grupo. We went into one of the English Classes and we did a Volcano Quiz. Une femme a demandé une question difficile et facile a propos de volcan sur le tableau. We also saw a bit of Romeo and Juliet. Four of my neighbours were part of the play.

Sixth Class: Report on visit to post-primary school in Irish, Tagalog, French and English. Written unaided in class

Sixth Class: Extract from list of words to do with clothes

age 8 chinese

1. Stamp Out poverty and hunger.
2. Educate Every Child.
教育每个孩子
3. Make sure there are equal chances for women and girls.
肯定他们运气相等.
4. Reduce the numbers of children and babies who die.
减少孩子们死亡的数量
5. Improve the Health of mothers.
提高母亲的健康
6. Fight infectious diseases.
打仗影响疾病.
7. clean up the environment,
打扫周围环境
8. Work together to make the world a better place.
一起工作让世界成为好地方

♀

3

Make sure there are equal chances for women and girls:

E fun obinrin ati omo obinrin ni aaye.
(Yoruba)

Lati xi wipe aye wa fun gbogbo obirin.
(Yoruba)

Siguradhing parehas ang karapatan ng mga babae.
(Tagalog)

vanhwangon ni va la sati va kuma etichace.

age 9 (Benn)

Dare gli stessi diritti a donne e bambine (Italian).

What can we do ?
We can show respect for women and girls.

Third Class: Millennium goals in English, Chinese, Yoruba, Tagalog, French and Italian

lish

Language Wall

Verbs:

- to clothe
- to dress up /in/as
- to attire
- to wear
- to put on
- to fit on/out

Nouns

clothes	wardrobe
clothing	outfit
garments	finery
attire	costume
garb	raiment
dress	rigout
gear	wear
uniform	workwear
	ragtrade



cairdeagan



brí pantá



bríste géine des jeans

You cannot make a silk purse out of a sow's ear!

+
=

Cuir síoda ar ghabhar - ach is gabhar fós é!

Sixth Class: 'Language wall' on the theme of clothes and fashion, created in real-time discussion led by teacher

How to make a pasta dish/ Conas a dhéantar pasta /Comment faire la pâte

English	Gaeilge	Français	Mother tongue
Vocabulary: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flour Boil Eggs Chop Salt Dice Pepper Tomatoes Drain Onions Heat Courgettes Stir Bacon Add Garlic Cook Oil Cheese 	Foclóir: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plúr Uibheacha Salann Piobar Trátaí Oininiúin Cúirséid Bágún Gairleog Ola Cáis 	Vocabulaire: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> La farine Les oeufs Le sel Le poivre Les tomates Les oignons Les courgettes Le porc L'ail L'huile Le fromage 	Wortschatz/Vokabular <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Öl Mehl - Koch bunt Eier - zerhacke Salz - Würfeln Pfeffer Tomaten - abtropfen Zwiebeln - Wärme Zucchini - rühren Schinkenspeck Knoblauch • Käse
Method: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Boil the pasta in a saucepan for 10 mins. Heat the olive oil Dice the garlic and onions. Chop the courgettes/ bacon. Fry the veg./ meat on a medium heat for approximately 5 mins. For the tomato sauce, add the tinned tomatoes. Bring to the boil and simmer. Season with salt and 	Modh: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Béirigh an phasta ar feadh 10 nóiméad. Téigh an ola Gearr an ghairleog agus na hoinniúin. Gearr na cúirséid / an bágún. Frioch na glasraí/ an feoil ar feadh cúig nóiméad. Cuir isteach na trátaí agus béirigh iad. Suanbhruith iad. Cuir isteach salann agus 	La méthode: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bouillez la pâte pour 10 minutes. Chauffez l'huile. Coupez l'ail et les oignons. Coupez les courgettes/ le porc. Faites frire les légumes/ la viande pour environs 5 minutes. Pour la sauce de tomate, ajoutez les tomates. Bouillez la sauce et mijotez-la. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> kochen Sie die Nudeln in einem Topf für 10 Minuten. Olivenöl erhitzen Deister Knoblauch und Zwiebeln. Zerhacke die Zucchini/ Schinkenspeck Braten Gemüse/ Fleisch bei mittlerer Hitze nach etwa fünf Minuten

Sixth Class: Procedure for making a pasta dish in four languages (English, Irish, French and Malayalam)

Zoe is ainm don mhainicín. Ba mhaith léi bheith in múinteoir. Tá gruaig fhada fhiann aici agus súil donn. Tá Zoe ag caithneamb T-Léine dubh "NIKE" agus briste reatha dubh "Nike" chomh maith. Is fearr léi an dath bán-dearg. Is maith léi Ealain.

My models name is Zoe. Her dream is to be a teacher. She has Long brown hair and brown eyes. Zoe is wearing a black Nike shirt and pink Nike bottom. Her favre colour is pink. She likes to do crafts.

Mon mannequin s'appelle Zoe. Son rêve est de devenir professeur. Elle a les cheveux longs et châains et les yeux marrons. Elle porte un T-shirt noir "Nike" et un pantalon rose. Sa couleur préférée est rose. Elle aime les arts plastiques

Az én modellm neve Zoe. Tánr nő szeretne lenni. Hosszú barna haja és szeme van. Rózsaszín nadrág és fekete póló van rajta. Rózsaszín a kedvenc színe. Szeret kézműveskedni.

Sixth Class: Profile of a model in four languages (English, Irish, French and Hungarian) produced as part of the project on clothes and fashion

Language awareness ³³

The inclusion of Irish and home languages in classroom communication inevitably develops pupils' language awareness. It is a good idea to consolidate what they learn incidentally by regularly spending a few minutes focusing on language as such. Pupils can compare the position of verbs and adjectives in English, Irish and the other languages available to the class; they can explore the relation between orthography and pronunciation and the impact of diacritics on pronunciation and meaning; and they can consider whether two or more of the languages present in the class are closely related to one another. When they are, speakers of those languages can create a role play by way of illustration. Senior pupils can carry out a survey of their classmates to discover, for example, in which languages present in the class the adjective comes before the noun and in which languages it comes after. It is a good idea to have regular discussions about language learning. Which languages in their developing plurilingual repertoire do pupils find easiest to understand, speak, read and write? What helps them to learn a language – to understand what people say to them, to speak, to read and to write? Present senior pupils with a short newspaper report in a language they don't know but on a topic they are already familiar with, e.g. a sporting event. Read the report aloud and write key words and phrases on the whiteboard. Discovering that they can work out the meaning of these words and phrases and thus understand the general gist of the report provides a boost to pupils' confidence in their linguistic ability; it also invites further discussion of what is involved in learning a new language. Teachers whose class includes EAL pupils cannot be expected to know all the home languages present in the classroom. But by encouraging the use of those languages they provide themselves with daily opportunities to learn, and by presenting themselves as learners they create possibilities for co-learning that can be inspirational for pupils' education.

2.3.3 Producing parallel texts in two or more languages

The development of fully integrated plurilingual repertoires entails that learners develop literacy skills in each of their languages. It is widely assumed that this means teaching them to read and write in each language separately, which is impossible when multiple home languages are present in the class. However, as we explained in section 1.3, it is possible for skills in one language to be transferred to another language provided there is adequate exposure to that language and sufficient motivation on the learner's part. With help from their parents and older brothers and sisters, EAL pupils can transfer their emerging literacy skills in English and Irish to their home languages. They learn to do this by producing parallel texts in English, Irish and their home language – parallel in the sense that the texts are as far as possible identical in structure and content.

First steps

When pupils are first learning to write, the teacher can produce simple worksheets for them to complete in English, Irish and (in the case of EAL pupils) their home language. The worksheet might focus on different kinds of fruit or different items of clothing, or it might provide basic information about the pupil – name, age, class, name of school, where they live, which languages they speak, likes and dislikes. In the very early stages, EAL pupils will certainly need help with their home language. A parent or older sibling may write words for the pupil to copy or dictate the spelling. When parents' English language skills are less well developed than those of their child, they can nevertheless help if the child provides an oral translation of words and phrases he or she needs to write.

³³ See also *Primary Language Curriculum, Support Material for Teachers*, Dublin: Department of Education and Skills, 2019, pp. 107–122: *Language awareness*.

Available at https://curriculumonline.ie/getmedia/3ac44a69-57f9-49ea-80db-ebec76831111/PLC-Support-Materials_All-Strands-Final.pdf

<p>Map of France</p>	<p>4/1/11</p> <h3>Le temps</h3> <p>An nórd il pleut Sa tuisceart tá sé plúch In north it is raining ✓ In nórd plouá</p> <p>A l'ouest il y a du vent San iarthair tá sé gaofar In ^{the} west it is windy ✓ In west este vânt</p> <p>Au sud il fait beau Sa deisceart tá an ghrian go taitneach In ^{the} south it is sunny and cloudy ✓ In sud este inorat cu soare</p> <p>A l'est ^{il} est nuggoux San oirthear tá sé sg/ scamallach</p>
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Fifth Class: The weather in France in French, Irish, English and Romanian

My school is Scoil Bhríde (C).

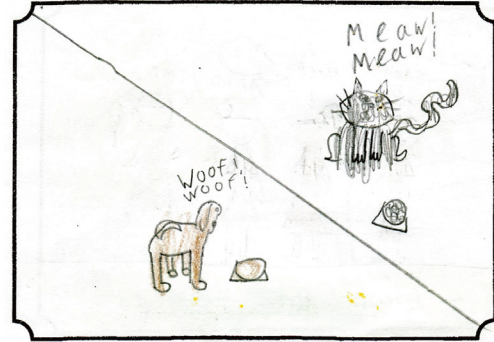
Ang aking Paavalan ay
 Scoil Bhríde (C).

My teacher is MS.

Ang aking guro ay si
 MS.

Senior Infants: Identity text in English and Tagalog

My life



I like dogs and cats
 Me gustan los perros y los gatos.
 I like to sing
 Me gusta cantar.
 I have pet fish
 Yo tengo peces

I like to play.
 Me gusta jugar
 I like my sister.
 Yo quiero a mi hermana
 I like to go to the zoo
 Me gusta ir al zoológico

This is the last page
 Esto es la última página.
 I am going to get a dog
 yo voy a tener un perro.
 If it is a boy I will call it Jobbi.
 Si es macho se llamará Jobbi.
 If it is a girl I'll call her Crystall.
 Si es una hembra se llamará Crystall.

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Second Class: 'My Life' in English and Spanish, written unaided (four of six pages)

Producing longer texts

In First and Second Class, as pupils gradually develop the ability to write longer texts, the production of parallel texts can start with Irish rather than English. For example, Irish versions of stories pupils are already familiar with can be written collaboratively by the whole class, or they can invent stories based on events they themselves have experienced, like having a fall and injuring themselves. The teacher scaffolds their contributions to the story, which she writes on the whiteboard as it takes shape, correcting pupils' errors without comment. The pupils write the story in their copybooks and for homework rewrite it in English and/or their home language. If the original story were written in English it would be beyond most pupils at this level to produce an Irish version, whereas producing an English translation reinforces their learning of Irish.

Pupils can write and illustrate small dual-language books about themselves and their family, the school and its garden, their favourite animal, hobbies, weather and so on. Two sheets of A4 folded twice, cut and stapled make a book of eight pages. Such books can be read aloud to the rest of the class and displayed at events in school, when video recordings of pupils reading their work may also be shown.

Using poetry to support plurilingual literacy

Irish and home languages should be included in the discussion of poems. For example, when introducing "The Night before Christmas" make sure that pupils know what Christmas is in Irish and ask EAL pupils how they say "Happy Christmas" in their home language – *Nollaig shona dhuit; Joyeux Noel; Buon natale; linksmy Kalèdy; feliz Navidad*. The class can then make a poster that combines these greetings with festive images (some EAL pupils will know how to write the greetings in their home language, others will need to ask their parents). A poster can also be made with the various names for Santa Claus and pronunciations can be compared.

A class diary

One way of giving the whole class ownership of texts in two or more languages is to keep a class diary in a hardback A4 notebook. Each day a different pupil takes the diary home. Excused other homework, the pupil writes on a topic of her choice in English and Irish/home language – what she ate for dinner, how she spent the evening, whether or not her family had visitors, and so on. The next morning, she reads what she has written in the diary to her classmates. Keeping a class diary in this way has proved to be among pupils' favourite activities, and it engages parents in their children's learning – it has stimulated some Irish parents to begin re-learning the Irish language so that they can help their children with their diary entries.

Texts in three languages

Sooner or later EAL pupils begin to produce parallel texts in English, Irish and their home language. At this stage it is a good idea to encourage pupils not always to begin with the same language so that they learn how to move freely among the languages in their repertoire. In Third and Fourth Class, it is not unusual for pupils to produce parallel texts that run to several pages. Not to be outdone by their EAL peers, some Irish pupils may produce text in English, Irish and a language that is not taught at school – an older sister may be learning Spanish at secondary school or a neighbour may be a native speaker of Italian. It is important to recognize that with appropriate help pupils can produce well-formed text in a language of which they know little besides the text they have written. Even if they have no further contact with the language, performing such a task is a worthwhile learning experience, to be set beside the learning of fragments of EAL pupils' home languages when playing in the school yard.


After school I went to 'Little Stars
 and I ate. Then [NAME] and I did
 homework. [NAME] and I played fuzball
 and I won. I played with my sister
 [NAME] - and I had fun. I read a book
 and it was called tick tack crocodiles
 back. Then I sat down and did art.
 After art I played and I was playing
 with animals. My sister [NAME]
 was under a table with a boy and doing
 silly things. Some girls were playing
 music and it was nice. I played with
 my sister and I was a dog and it
 was so fun. Then we had something little
 to eat. and after I went home. I had
 dinner and watched some tv, brushed
 my teeth and went to bed

Ionú chuaigh mé go Little Stars. Rinne
 mé agus [NAME] ár obair bhail. D'innir mé
 le [NAME]. Ansin rinne mé ealaín, bhí
 faoin mbord. Bhí cailíní ag slint ceoil, bhí
 si go deas. Ansin d'ith mé sneac beag.
 D'innir mé le [NAME] arís. Chuaigh mé
 abair. Iyhlán mé ma fiada. Chuaigh mé go
 dtí an leaba.

Second Class: Dual language diary in English and Irish

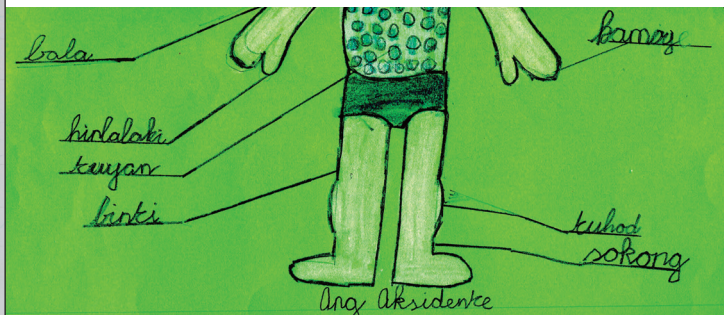
Iris na písta	An Acentent
<p>Bhí mé sa pháirc. Bhí mé ag scáitíl. I fuil go tobann, thit mé ar an talamh. bhloaigh mé Mammaí 'Mammaí' arsa mé 'Go bhfoire dia orain' arsa Mammaí. Tá pain i mo cheann agus tá pain i mo bholg' arsa mé. bhloaigh Mammaí ar an ospidéal. Thainig an t-otharcharr ar a trí a chlog. Chuaigh mé agus Mammaí isteach san otharcharr. Bhí mé agus Mammaí san ospidéal. Dfheach an doctúir ar cheann mé. Chuir an banaltra bíndealán ar cheann mé. Chuaigh beirt abailé.</p>	<p>I was at the park. I was skating. A few minutes later, I fell down on the ground. I called Mummy 'Mummy'! I said 'God save us' My Mummy said 'My head is sore and my tummy is sore too' I said My Mummy called the hospital. The ambulance came at three o'clock. We went inside the ambulance. We were at the hospital. The doctor checked my head. The nurse put a bandage on my head. The two of us went home.</p>

Ciao il Mio Nome é ----.
 Il mio Colore Preferito é il ----.
 Ho due cani e un gatto, amo la Scuola. Il mio Soggetto Preferito é ----.
 I miei amici sono --- e ----.
 Mi Piace anche la mia insegnante, lei é bella. Mi piace anche la mia Preside.
 Saluto tutti!



Sixth Class: Autonomous work by native speaker of English who wanted to learn Italian

Third Class: Writing in three languages (Irish, English and Tagalog)



Ng ako ay nasa parke. Ako ay nag skateing. Mga ilang minuto, ako ay bumaksak sa bata. Inauwagan ko Mommy ko Sabi ko 'Diyos ko po kulunga po nyo ako!' 'Ang sakit ng ulo ko at ang tuyag ko ay masakit din'. Ang Mommy ko tumawag sa hospital. Maya Maya ang ambulansya. Pumasok kami sa ambulansya. Maya mayaya nasa hospital kami. Tiningnan ang manggaganiot ang ulo ko. Ang nurse dia ay nilagyan ng bandage ang ulo.

Preparing to write in two or three languages

Pupils should be encouraged to collect information on the topic or person they want to write about and to compile their own word lists in English, Irish and their home language. If this becomes a normal part of the way they work, they will gradually accumulate a personal multilingual dictionary that reflects their language development as well as their interests. Especially in the senior school, some pupils get interested in a language that is far from their experience and certainly not taught at school – Korean, for example – and use the internet to add to their multilingual word lists. Especially when it is pursued autonomously, interest in a language far removed from the pupil's experience may not seem to lead anywhere, but it is evidence of the pupil's reflective engagement with language and certainly coincides with the purposes of the Primary Language Curriculum.

Functional writing

Writing that describes familiar procedures, like how to make a sandwich or how to bake a cake, gives further scope for trilingual work. For example, an Irish lesson may focus on the successive steps in making a sandwich, captured by the teacher on the whiteboard and written by the pupils in their copybooks. The pupils then translate the Irish text into English for homework. In a multilingual classroom, EAL pupils are also encouraged to translate the Irish text into their home language. The next day, pupils read their work aloud to their classmates. Like all other multilingual activities, functional writing presents opportunities to develop pupils' language awareness. For example, whatever the content of the sandwich, the word for *bread* is sure to be used at least once, in the same part of the procedure. Asking pupils to identify the word for *bread* when the steps are being read aloud in an EAL pupil's home language is a good way of fostering their listening skills and encouraging them to find connections between words and phrases in different languages.

Creative writing

Already in Third and Fourth class, pupils often write for their own enjoyment. They may

- decide to translate the words of a Christmas carol or poem into their home language or write a new Christmas poem in English and Irish;
- write stories in which the characters speak different languages;
- make a picture dictionary of words and phrases associated with Christmas in Irish, English and their home language;
- write in English and Spanish after spending a holiday in Spain;
- write a story about how a pupil who spoke only Irish might feel if he found himself in a country where no one knew the language;
- write a dialogue in Irish about buying something in a shop;
- write a letter in Irish and English to an uncle in Australia thanking him for the money he sent at Christmas and saying how it has been spent;
- write about a visit to the park in Irish;
- write a diary in Irish.

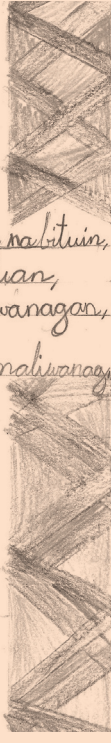
Christmas Poems

Once a lovely shining star,
 Seen by shepherds from afar,
 Gently moved until its light,
 Made a manger's cradle bright.

Minsan isang kailig-ibig nagniningning ng bituin,
 Nakita ng mga pastor mula sa kalayuan,
 Mahimangay nilipat hanggang sa luanagan,
 Nito,
 Ginawa ng isang sabsaban duyan malinangay.

There a darling baby lay,
 Pillowed soft upon the hay,
 And its mother sung and smiled
 'This is Christ the holy Child'

Mayroon bang siya sanggol itali,
 Malilot na unan sa mga sayami,
 At ina nito kumanta at ngumiti
 Sa ay si Kristo ang banal sa bata

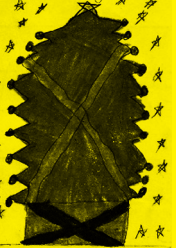


Fourth Class: Translation of Christmas poem from English to Tagalog

Fourth Class: Story in which characters speak different languages (English and Romanian) – first of six pages


The Christmas investigations

In Christmas day two little girls went down stairs to check if there were any presents. They did see presents but its not what they wanted. So they started to speak in a weird language = trebur sa mergem la puidora. Noastra si sa o intrubam daca a prinit cu wort de Craciun. Ca a spus cu deci toate trei trebur sa mergem la un strain si sa al intrubam ceva. The tree girls asked the man something but he didnt understand this is what they said = dumavastrea santeti mon Craciun pentru ca nu am prinit ceam wort de Craciun. Nobody understood them but I think they asked him if he is Santa Claus. Today the tree girls had a sleepover the girls invited her mom because they said that they saw Santa Claus so the tree girls started to investigate the Christmas tree




1. A Friend For Christmas

There once was a girl named Aoife who was from Ireland and spoke Irish. She went to England with her family to live their so she had to move school. But like I said she only speaks Irish. When Lotty came over to her because the teacher said she should take care of her. all Aoife said was ca bhull an leithris? But because Lotty didnt know what she said Aoife had an accident. Lotty felt bad. Aoife wasnt fitting in infact she got bullied four times in one day. When Lotty went to bed a voice said to her do not be afraid. Aoife isnt fitting in well so give her a gift this Christmas... perhaps a friend? So the next day she learned how to say Merry...



2. Christmas in Irish

So she went to Aoife and said Nollaig shona duit. And Aoife had a big smile on her face. They sang English and Irish songs all day. And every christmas they celebrate together. The End.



Fourth Class: Christmas story about a girl who spoke only Irish and went to live in England

6.2.2015

Oliver 🐾 🐾

Oliver
 <)
 Bhí Oliver sa pháirc.
 Bhí an cat sa pháirc, freisin.
 Thosaigh Oliver agus an cat ag
 siocradh, agus tith Oliver sa
 chéill.
 'Déan deifir!' arsa Oliver.
 'Ag teacht!' arsa an cat.
 Tar éis tamaill, chonaic an
 cat an peist ar an talamh.
 'Mama tá ceas orm' arsa an
 cat.
 Bhí Oliver fada gearr, agus chonaic
 se iora tuá, agus chonaic an iora tuá
 Oliver, Thosaigh Oliver ag tith.
 'Stop, stop!' arsa an cat.
 Fein an iora tuá ar an gearr.
 Thosaigh Oliver ag tafann.
 Tar éis tamaill bhí tuisle ar
 Oliver agus an cat, agus bhí siad
 ina codlata.

Third Class: The diary of 'My dog Oliver' written in Irish, autonomously and unaided, by a speaker of Tagalog – first of five pages

In Fifth and Sixth Class creative writing in multiple languages undergoes further development. The increasing sophistication of pupils' language skills is reflected in their interest in writing; the expressive quality of that writing; the length of the stories they write; their choice of language(s) in which to write; the way in which all their linguistic knowledge is brought to bear on their writing; and the support this knowledge provides for their further language development. The texts they write are informed by all aspects of the curriculum and by the innovative ways in which, with support from their teachers, they present those topics, for example:

- A description of the weather from the four points of the compass of whatever country is in focus can be written in all the languages the pupils know – *In the north it is cold* can be written in English, Irish, home languages and any other languages the pupils know; similarly for south, east and west.
- Descriptions of pupils' homes or their ideal house can be written in as many languages as possible.
- Pupils can keep a diary of Christmas, Eid and other celebrations in multiple languages and can design multilingual greetings cards for their teacher and peers.
- A lesson on a Christmas carol or hymn in Latin, e.g., *Dormi Jesu, Adeste Fideles*, gives pupils an opportunity to draw on their collective linguistic resources to arrive at an English translation. This is a highly motivating activity that pupils engage in with enthusiasm; it is empowering for them to realize that working with your peers you can understand a language that you have not learned.
- Multilingual posters can be created on various topics: healthy eating, exercise, anti-smoking, climate change, etc.
- Pupils can work collaboratively to produce versions of folktales from Ireland and EAL pupils' countries of origin in two or more languages.

Mixing languages in one text

Pupils enjoy using all the languages in their repertoire in a single text, for example, a report on a visit to their prospective post-primary school. The rule is that each sentence must be written in a different language from the sentence that immediately precedes it.

2.3.4 Consolidating plurilingual learning

When a plurilingual approach to language education is implemented across the school, teachers will think of many different ways of consolidating language learning. Here are just four examples; teachers will think of many other possibilities.

Inter-class interaction

EAL pupils from senior classes (Third–Sixth) can visit junior classes and interact with pupils in Irish and their home languages. Senior pupils can also teach juniors songs in their home language. These activities benefit senior pupils as well as juniors because they acknowledge and affirm their linguistic identity and promote self-esteem.

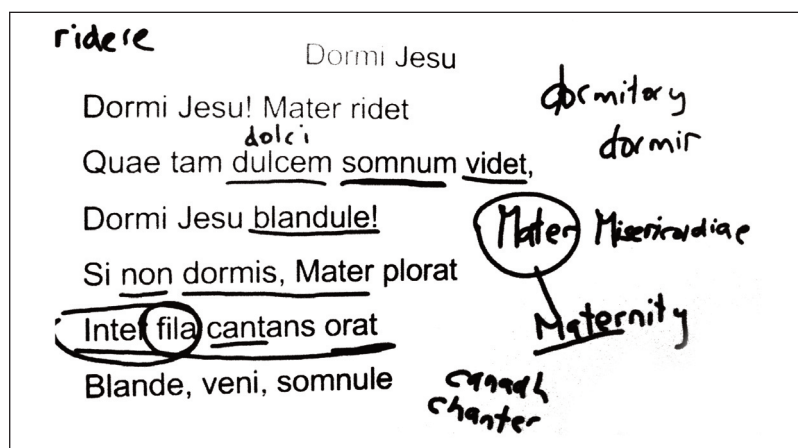
Senior pupils read stories to juniors

In Fifth and Sixth Class pupils may regard fairy tales as suitable for much younger children. However, having pupils at this level read Irish versions of stories such as Little Red Riding Hood and Goldilocks and the Three Bears to Junior and Senior Infants is a good way of boosting the language skills of all involved. Similarly, EAL pupils in Fifth and Sixth Class can read stories in their home language to Junior and Senior Infants who have the same home language; and they can repeat the exercise for their classmates, who try to identify and understand key words and phrases.

Dormi Jesu

A teacher of Sixth Class told her pupils that she was learning a Latin carol in her local choir. She was interested to know if they would be able to decipher its meaning. Knowing that carols are associated with Christmas, a Romanian pupil suggested that the sound of Crăciun, in her language, was like Christian, and Christmas is a Christian festival. Another pupil pointed out that the French Noël reminded her of Nollaig in Irish. The teacher then told the pupils the name of the carol 'Dormi Jesu' and putting the text on the whiteboard asked them to listen carefully to the words as she read them. What followed was a stimulating interaction where the children used their combined plurilingual expertise to work out the meaning of the words.

Dormi Jesu! Mater ridet
Quae tam dulcem somnum videt,
Dormi Jesu blandule!
Si non dormis, Mater plorat
Inter fila cantans orat
Blande, veni, somnule



Bubbling under the surface of Irish life is a great polyglot stew, a profusion of tongues unlike anything in our history. And here's the thing we need to grasp – this is a fabulous resource for indigenous culture. It is turning a monochrome screen of words to a glorious technicolour.

And instead of creating the tower of Babel that is often feared, this policy simply made all the kids better at languages. They became a great resource for each other, adding insights from their own linguistic worlds. Imagine a classroom in which half a dozen children are retelling an Irish legend in half a dozen other languages, translating, inquiring, playing with the infinite diversity of words. What a fabulous educational experience that must be – working-class kids getting a daily course in applied linguistics that would be hard to match at university.

And one of the beneficiaries of this approach is, rather wonderfully, the Irish language. Kids who are comfortably polylingual are much more at ease with Irish than those who live in a monolingual English world... "the presence of other languages in the classroom helps them to accept Irish as one more medium of communication".

These quotations are taken from Fintan O'Toole's article in *The Irish Times*, 26 November 2019, entitled 'Schools with immigrants producing tomorrow's Irish speakers'

<https://bit.ly/irishspeakers>

Autonomous language learning

One way of encouraging autonomous learning is to introduce a Language Box to which pupils voluntarily contribute texts of various kinds: favourite recipes written in various languages, free writing in languages of their choice, personal profiles, etc. This provides an opportunity for pupils to write in languages they know while providing support for pupils who are learning a language already spoken by one or more of their classmates.

In addition:

- Pupils from a variety of language backgrounds may choose to learn the home language of a friend (often a reciprocal arrangement).
- Individual pupils use a variety of methods to teach themselves new languages – CDs, course books, language quizzes, language videos, keeping language notebooks, etc.
- Two or more pupils form a language learning partnership.

Encouraging pupils to improve their home language proficiency

When grandparents or other family members phone or pupils visit their parents' country of origin, they may realize that they cannot converse as easily as they would like in their home language. This is quite normal: growing up in an English-speaking environment will influence children's home language development to varying degrees. They should be praised for what they can do and given every encouragement to continue to use and learn their home language, perhaps by practising it with other speakers of the language during break. Plurilingual development is not a matter of instantly achieving "native speaker" proficiency in the language of the home but of gradually acquiring a linguistic repertoire of which the home language is a fully integrated part.

