

Plurilingual and **intercultural** competences

–

two elements of a single European
language policy

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Overview

1. Foreign Language Teaching (FLT) as social/political activity
2. European FLT policy and its meaning
3. FLT = plurilingual and intercultural competence

1. FLT as socio-political action

Education policy = ‘what we want our children to **be** and **become**’

1. effective ‘human capital’

2. good (active/contented) citizens of the (=our) state

[3. critical/independent lifelong learners]

1. FLT as socio-political action

Contribution of FLT:

1 Human capital = use FL for trade

2. citizenship = 'international' citizens with 'national' identity e.g. 'Japanese with English abilities'

[3. critical... learners = 'see ourselves as others see us']

2. European FLT policy and its meaning

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European = supra-national (but same structure) –

‘White Paper’ (1995)

1. Human capital

“Proficiency in **several (...) languages** has become a precondition if citizens of the European Union are to benefit from the occupational and personal opportunities open to them in **the border-free single market.**”

This language proficiency must be **backed up** by the ability to **adapt to working and living environments characterised by different cultures.**”

2. European FLT policy and its meaning

2. 'Good citizens'

“Languages are also the key to knowing other people. Proficiency in languages helps to **build up the feeling of being European** with all its cultural wealth and diversity and of **understanding between the citizens** of Europe.”

[3. Critical ...learners – no reference!]

2. European FLT policy and its meaning

- Language proficiency ('several languages' / 'MT + 2')

AND

- Cultural competence – 'living and working together' / White Paper on 'intercultural dialogue' (www.coe.int)
- Described in *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*
“**plurilingual** and **intercultural competence**”

3. FLT = plurilingual and intercultural
competence

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Plurilingualism

does not keep languages and cultures in strictly separated mental compartments, but rather builds up a **communicative competence to which all knowledge and experience of language contributes** and in which languages interrelate and interact. In different situations, a person can **call flexibly upon different parts of this competence** to achieve effective communication with a particular interlocutor.”
(CEFR p.4)

3. FLT = plurilingual and intercultural competence

in a person's cultural competence, the various cultures (national, regional, social) to which that person has gained access do not simply co-exist side by side;

they are compared, contrasted and actively interact to produce an enriched, integrated pluricultural (= intercultural) competence, of which plurilingual competence is one component, again interacting with other components. (CEFR: p.6)

Intercultural competence > plurilingual competence

3. FLT = plurilingual and intercultural competence

Describing intercultural competence (CEFR and Byram 1997):

Attitudes (savoir être): curiosity and openness, readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures and belief about one's own

Knowledge (savoirs): of social groups and their products and practices in one's own and in one's interlocutor's country, and of the general processes of societal and individual interaction

Skills of interpreting and relating (savoir comprendre): ability to interpret a document or event from another culture, to explain it and relate it to documents or events from one's own

3. FLT = plurilingual and intercultural competence

- **Skills of discovery and interaction** (savoir apprendre/faire): ability to acquire new knowledge of a culture and cultural practices and the ability to operate knowledge, attitudes and skills under the constraints of real-time communication and interaction

AND – **NOT IN CEFR:**

- **Critical cultural awareness** (savoir s'engager): an ability to evaluate, critically and on the basis of explicit criteria, perspectives, practices and products in one's own and other cultures and countries

3. FLT = plurilingual and intercultural competence

Describing **communicative language competences** (CEFR):

Linguistic competences:

lexical, grammatical, semantic, phonological, orthographic, orthoepic

Sociolinguistic competences:

markers of social relations, politeness conventions, register differences, dialect and accent

Pragmatic competences:

discourse (inc. text design), functional (schemata)

Conclusion

European perspective:

Replace 'communication' (= exchanging information / "bridging information gap")

with 'interaction / dialogue' (= living and working together / tolerance and understanding)

= teaching plurilingual and intercultural competences

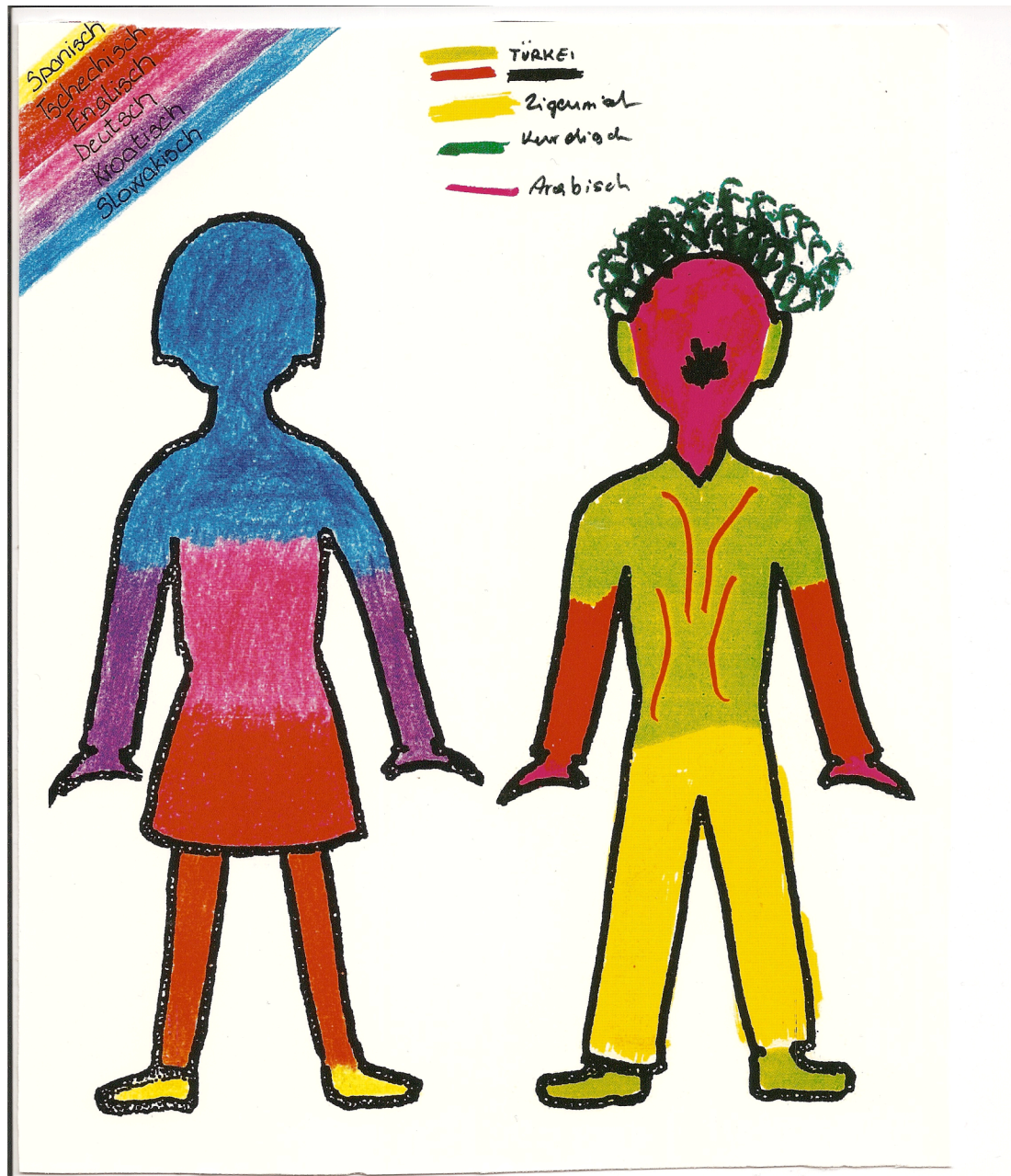
East Asian /Japanese perspective?????

Appendix – policy for Second Language Teaching

- New development focused not only on Second Language Learners but including them as ‘vulnerable learners’
- Also on all language learners and their languages in schools : ‘mother tongue’ ; ‘second language’ ; ‘foreign language’ ; ‘minority language’ etc etc

Anna
and
Mustafa

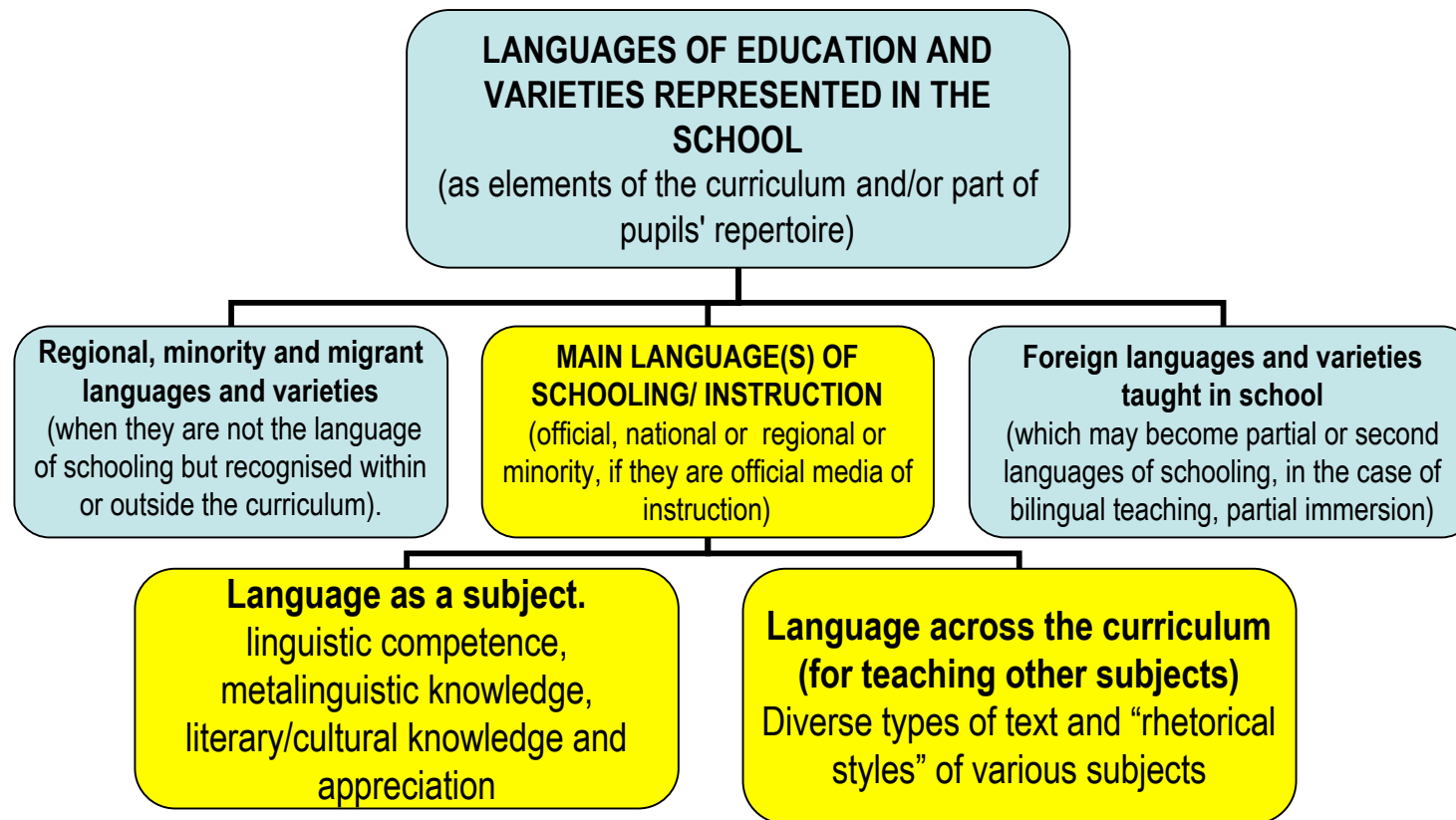
and **all**
their
languages



Implications of plurilingualism

- Anna and Mustafa: no ‘mother tongue’, no ‘foreign language’ – only ‘dominant language’ for different contexts/domains
- Language education should be ‘holistic’
 - to respond to needs of **existing** plurilingual pupils
 - to create **new** (potential for) plurilingualism in monolingual pupils i.e. NOT just one foreign language

Languages in / for education



Languages in /for education

- Not all languages (present) in school are languages for schooling/instruction
- Languages in school: different categories, different status, but change is possible
- Language(s) for schooling/instruction: keystone of all languages of school: achieving school's objectives and pupils' successes.
- Concern: The relationship between main language(s) of school/instruction and languages of pupils

The needs of 'vulnerable learners' for whom language of instruction is L2/FL

Cognitive-Academic Language Proficiency (CALP)

Basic interpersonal Communicative Skills (BICS) (Cummins)

- The language of school and of science (CALP) demands the performance of other speech acts and discourse functions than in communicating about common topics (BICS). Transition from everyday language use to academic language use requires precision, explicitness, rationality and argumentative structures
- (For immigrant children) **Conversational fluency** is often acquired to a functional level **within about two years** of initial exposure to the second language whereas at least **five years is usually required** to catch up to native speakers in **academic aspects** of the second language

(Cummins)

‘Language across the Curriculum’ for Anna and Mustafa AND monolinguals

Example from Chemistry: Developing the notion of *Reaction*

- Starting with **everyday concepts**/ understandings
“reaction” = “emotion”, “response”
- Setting up experimental conditions for own observations and recordings
- Summarising + interpreting the *data*,
- Formulating *possible rules or regularities*
- Developing and testing own hypotheses
- Defining REACTION in **subject-specific terms**