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Educational Policies that Address Social Inequality

Thematic Report: Linguistic Minorities

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Introduction

In this report, we try to understand the ways in which minority language issues emerge in educational agendas – both in policy and practice - and to consider the impact these diverse perspectives have on policy and practice outcomes for minority language groups. In this report, we are interested in focusing on situations where perspectives and associated policies potentially create a disadvantage for the minority language group or, on the contrary, situations of 'successful practice' wherein discourse and practice are principally cohesive. We use the country reports and case studies of the wider study of inequalities of education, along with secondary sources, as the base of our work.

Section 1: What is meant by language minority groups and educational disadvantage?

1.1 European perceptions of language minority groups

There are inherent tensions in the different European perceptions of minority language groups. (There are many differing definitions of language minority, including a separation between national and ethnic minority language groups. This will be dealt with in the next section). At the European (administrative) level, linguistic diversity is seen as a patrimony that must be protected, thus leading to the promotion of the teaching of European languages (the focus tends to be on the major European languages such as English, French, German, etc.), with specific policies and organisations established to promote them (eg European Council of Modern Languages). Concomitantly, the maintenance of minority languages is also seen as a priority on the European level although specific policy measures on how to accomplish this are not usually given; instead there is more emphasis on periodic project proposals (eg European Council's "Promoting Language Learning and Linguistic Diversity: An Action Plan 2004–2006").

This implies that inevitably policies and practices exist on different levels and with sometimes conflicting agendas. There are international policies (eg UNESCO Declaration of Linguistic Rights), European policies (eg European Charter of Regional Languages) and national policies (constitutions, education laws) relative to the education of minority language groups. Added to this, at national levels there may be varying power of legislation, for instance in Sweden the municipalities are in charge of legislating minority language policies.

On more local levels it is often the minority language groups themselves who promote a positive image of minority language use and try to focus on the underlying importance of language maintenance. These groups often categorise themselves as a cohesive, united community, linking language and cultural identity in order to gain political recognition and autonomy. This can be seen, for instance, in the German-speaking communities in Denmark, the Arabic-speaking community in Malta, the Basque and Catalan communities in Spain, the Sami speaking community in Sweden and the Hungarian, Ukrainian, German or Ruthenian communities in Slovakia. However, some of these communities can be differentiated by 'territorial' features. There are communities who speak a language closely similar or identical to the official or majority language of a neighbouring State (different from the territorial State they are located in), for example Gallego in Spain; while in other cases, there are language communities with traditional cultural and historical ties that are different from the National language, such as Breton in France. In either case, there exists a perception of 'language community' amongst its speakers and/or people outside of the community.

The concept of language community is not contingent upon the number of language speakers, however. There are several minority language groups that are not necessarily perceived as a community (and the positive connotations this can carry). This is often directly linked to public

discourse concerning the idea of multilingualism. Multilingualism is frequently categorised as result of globalisation (mobility of populations; flow of goods; capital, etc.) which is in turn linked to the common perception that certain language groups – and subsequent linguistic diversity - is a secondary component of immigration (Heller 2007). In other words, globalised population movements are seen as bringing 'new' languages into a homogeneous, principally monolingual nation-state (*ibid.*).

In fact, the monolingual European nation is a myth. Minority languages are spoken in all of the European countries[1]; rough estimates place minority language speakers at approximately 55 million people. Nonetheless, some languages are commonly afforded more legitimacy than others through their unquestioned connection to 'symbolic power' (Bourdieu 1977a, Bourdieu 1977b, Bourdieu and Passeron 1977). Historically, one official national language - in a standardised form - has been taken on as the 'legitimate' language, (although some variations and different languages may have received public recognition). In contrast, minority language groups may be perceived negatively and seen as direct threats to a supposed national cohesion; a concept closely tied to the idea of one state equals one language.

This idea of one official language per nation-state is an important factor in many language policies in education. There are considerable differences in policy and practice between the countries in this report as far as the position of minority languages in education, in particular in relationship with the national language. In some countries, the minority language/s has played a central role in the struggle of regional minorities revindicating differentiated identity, political and economical autonomy and so forth. The degree of success in this struggle is reflected in the education policies of the country. Cases where the language is the language of instruction (LoI) can be considered highly successful, such as the Catalans and Basques in Spain, Irish speakers in Ireland, regional languages in France, the Sami, Finnish-Swedish and Finnish in Sweden and different language communities in Belgium. Significantly, the minority language may be an instrument of re-affirming 'ethnicity' and 'culture' in contrast to the nation-state while at the same time promoted to immigrant groups coming into the minority language community as a means of solidarity and to construct a more just, pluralistic society.

There is another significant conceptualisation which comes into play in the educational policies concerning minority language groups: 'linguistic competence'. This underscores the role of the individual as the language speaker (in contrast to the membership into a wider community). Inevitably, the judgement of being a competent speaker is not based strictly on use or 'form' of the language in question. There are many other dimensions which come into play – judgement of how someone talks, eg cognitive abilities, judgement of moral worth, social membership, etc. (Gumperz 1982). Linguistic competence tends to be measured in reference to an 'idealised' native speaker (of the national language), while transcodic cues (switching between languages) are often seen as 'errors' (Nussbaum and Unamuno 2006) or deficient and in need of 'official intervention' (eg language classes for second generation immigrants).

It can be argued that a hidden assimilationist perception underlies this idea of competence levels in the majority language (usually the official language of the nation-state) and that this has led, in many cases to an understanding that different (usually minority) language groups should be evaluated for 'diagnostic purposes'. The association of deficient competency in the majority language (language of the school) also allows for linguistic minority groups and special education groups to be linked in the same category, as occurs in some of the country reports included in the EPASI study and which will be discussed in detail further on. In such cases, the policy perspectives tend to place the final responsibility of the language-learning (national language) process on the

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[1] Statistics on minority languages were found in the regional reports published by Mercator-Education (European Network for Regional or Minority Languages and Education).

minority language group since it is conceptualised as a 'home factor' deficiency in education (see EPASI final report for more detail on this concept).

1.2 An emerging working definition

Defining a language minority group is not an easy task. According to Thornberry *et al.* in their report on minority languages in Europe (2004), the term 'minority language' refers to "languages that are traditionally used within a given territory of a state by nationals of that state who form a group numerically smaller than the rest of the state's population and which is different from the official language(s) of that state" (p 141). These same authors make a distinction between language minority groups and 'non-territorial languages' which are, according to their definition, "Languages used by nationals of the state which differ from the language or languages used by the rest of the state's population but which traditionally were used within the territory of the state" (*ibid.*).

Therein lies one of the difficulties of defining language minorities – must they be languages which were spoken *before* the creation of the nation-state? This effectively puts Breton – with a community of 200,000 speakers but with historical ties to France – in a different category from Portuguese speakers in France – who now number 850,000. The fact that some languages have official (or co-official) status in some countries and do not have the same status in other countries further exacerbates the difficulties of defining language minority groups. Nor does taking into account the number of language speakers help resolve the quandary. It is estimated that there are between 1.5 million and 2.2 million Arabic speakers in France alone, while there are only 100,000 Irish speakers in Ireland and yet Irish is an official EU language and Arabic is not an official language in France or any other EU country (in other words, it is not included as an 'operative' language of the EU). Moreover, languages may have different status between nations. To give an interesting example, Malta does not officially claim to have any minority language groups, although some argue that Maltese, with 400,000 speakers, is actually an endangered language (Badía 2004).

It can be pointed out that there have been many different ways to define and classify minority language groups: territorial or non-territorial (which would include, for instance Roma people), national or trans-national (Catalan, Basque, Breton), historical or new (immigrant languages, sometimes called heritage languages). Given the diversity of factors in defining 'minority language groups' in each country, our working definition focuses on how these language groups are positioned in education and in which ways each language group are at an advantage or disadvantage within the education system. Also, different from the definition of minority language which is used in the *European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages*, languages of immigrant populations are included here as a minority language group since they are often positioned at a disadvantage in educational policies and practices. *En bref,* our definition is contingent upon disadvantages manifested towards any minority language group, whether they are traditionally linked to the nation-state, non-territorial languages, or 'newly arrived' language groups associated with immigration.

1.3. Analytical Approach

Our analytical approach stems from the premise that discourse (in this case policies and project descriptions) can be understood as a conceptualisation of reality at a particular point in time. Social actors will centre their reasoning, construct further discourse, and act according to seemingly logical, socially and culturally formed discursive practices (Bakhtin 1981, Chouliaraki and Fairclough 1999, Fairclough 1989, 1992, 2005, Foucault 1972, 1980). Of course, as Risse-Kappen (1994) aptly puts it, ideas do not float freely – they cannot exist without agents – but at the same time, these agents are not simply 'carriers' of these ideas, they are social actors engaged in a complex interaction between many different – and sometimes conflictive – discourses and practices.

This is why it is important to situate perspectives of minority language groups within the nexus of educational policy and practice. Because different agents are involved in the production, reproduction and interpretation (practice) of the available discourses (policies), this implies that we must look at who is involved in the writing and implementation of these discursive influences – are they policy-makers, are they educators, are they evaluators, or are they members of the minority language group? Inevitably, social discourses are constantly in tension and struggling to become "hegemonic"[2] (Foucault 1972, Laclau and Mouffe 1985) and this can have a direct impact on the policies and practices aimed at disadvantaged groups, especially concerning their roles as agents (or non-agents) in policies and practices. Taking Brodschöll's (2005) framework for examining policies within their wider social context, we see different discursive debates, practices and policies as "contestations over the meaning of a nodal discourse[3]" (…) that weave together the discourses that are invoked in these debates. So, within the social and educational context, discourses about language minority groups may become stabilised and create hegemonic discourses, and subsequent "authoritative narratives" (Hajer 1995:56), but, at the same time, these narratives can be challenged by other discourses, especially those stemming from the language minority group itself.

Thus, in our approach to practice, the idea of agency is especially relevant to the way this report was undertaken. As Lareau and Horvat (in Monkman *et al.* 2005) have pointed out, social reproduction of prevalent ideologies is not a smoothly flowing process; it is a process of constant tension, challenges and negotiation between social actors. By highlighting the 'dialogue' between policy and practice, we not only foreground the way in which ideologised notions or categories become linked and "naturalised" (Blommaert and Verschueren 1998) so that they become recursive "commonsense" background to other instances of discourse (Schutz 1962, Garfinkel 1967, Shotter 1984, 1993a, 1993b), we also identify and underline practices that work to legitimise and/or challenge different discourses of inclusion and exclusion of minority language groups in the educational context.

Section 2: The effects of disadvantage of minority language groups and strategies that address these disadvantages

2.1 An indication of the extent of/effects of the disadvantage of minority language groups in Europe

Allocation of 'blame' for inequality in education is not the aim of this report. However it is relevant to establish 'markers' for inequality. Key areas that can signify inequality in education may be: functional literacy levels, exclusion and/or expulsion rates, rates of continuing education in post-compulsory leaving age and participation in higher education, employment rates after education, institutional segregation and evidence of social exclusion. However, inevitably these factors cannot be isolated; these factors are interrelated and co-exist as factors attributing to inequality.

> Fifty percent of the world's out-of-school children live in communities where the language of schooling is rarely, if ever, used at home. This underscores the biggest challenge to achieving Education for All (EFA): a legacy of non-productive practices that lead to low levels of learning and high levels of dropout and repetition. In these circumstances, an increase in resources, although necessary, would not be sufficient to produce universal completion of a good-quality primary school programme (World Bank 2005).

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[2]Hegemonic discourse is understood here as discourse that "has become so embedded in a culture that it appears silly to ask 'Why?' about its assumptions" (Atherton para. 9: 2002).
[3]Nodal discourse is used here as described by Fairclough (2005) – as the influential and widespread discourse that articulate a great many other discourses and thereby organise other, related discursive fields.

Given this grim outlook, examining institutionally discriminating practices that affect minority language groups in education is imperative. Of course, the manner in which these affect different language groups varies, as well as the extent of disadvantage. While acknowledging this variability, in our analysis of the policies and practices found in the larger EPASI database (see http://www.epasi.eu) we seek to find some commonalities that help give a larger, overall perspective of the type of educational disadvantages faced by minority language groups. Whenever possible, we have given a broad heading to indicate the disadvantage; however these are hermeneutic devices only and should not be taken as definite categories[4]. Bearing in mind the 'markers' of inequality outlined in the opening paragraph of this section, there appear to be the following axes of frequent cause for inequity for this group. The issue of **functional literacy levels** often comes up in the issue of language assessment (type, placement, access to educational opportunities, etc.). Social exclusion in the form of lack of voice (disempowerment), problems of identity and self-esteem, and discriminatory attitudes can easily lead to other inequalities such as **early school leaving, lack of representation in higher education** (which is directly tied to **employment rates** following **post-compulsory education**). Unequal distribution of resources, inequitable education systems, and the effects of different language teaching models (especially language of instruction to immigrants) are examples of how institutional discrimination occurs. Each point is discussed in relation to the effect these factors have on minority language groups and how they may create points of educational disadvantage.

2.2 Functional literacy levels, educational opportunities in subjects and higher education (Language assessment)

In the case of minority language groups (see previous working definition), a common axis of disadvantage lies in the concept of evaluation, whether for placement purposes, diagnostic purposes or for academic purposes. Indeed, these underlying propositions quite often overlap. An EU funded report entitled "Child Immigration Project" (2001) summarises the educational disadvantages faced by immigrant students. While the report focused on immigrant students, in many cases these same disadvantages can be found in the educational contexts of other minority language groups. Significantly, the report points out that these students are usually assessed in the school's language of instruction, not their mother tongue[5], often leading to lower placement and difficulties in the acquisition of other subject content (this will be discussed in more detail further on).

Placement practices (whether to decide the level of school entry for newly arrived immigrants or for access to academic-track courses) can result in uneven representation of language minority students in lower level courses and lack of access to academic content courses. Those students who are considered to have 'limited language proficiency' are frequently placed into lower level content courses (this is especially prevalent in science and maths courses) that are intended for students with learning disabilities or placed in language courses during content course hours. Studies have demonstrated that track placement is often inappropriate and minority language students are systematically placed in lower-level courses regardless of their academic ability. Subsequently, these students are less likely to take later courses required for higher education admission (Zuniga *et al.* 2005). They also suffer a higher drop out and expulsion rate than majority language speakers and achieve lower overall educational results than other populations (Walters 2007).

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[4]The disadvantages discussed here are based on a recompilation of individual research and case studies that mainly focus sample groups of minority language speakers. Transversal, large-scale statistics of disadvantages related to minority language groups could not be found, probably due to the diversity of characteristics and socio-historic, geographic contextual factors.

[5] It is recognised that defining mother tongue is not as straightforward as it may seem since many individuals and even societies use two or more languages in different contexts. Taking a pragmatic perspective, mother tongue education might be defined as the language that the child is familiar enough with to be able to use it to develop conceptual understanding and independent thinking.

Other studies support the findings that language minority students have a higher representation in vocational courses or special education courses or a higher rate of school drop-out (Cuenca 1991, McNeil and Valenzuela 2001, Heilig and Darling-Hammond 2008). This last effect has been directly related to lack of access to core curriculum areas and/or high percentage of school learning time spent on learning the vehicular language at the expense of their grade level curricular areas (Oakes *et al.* 1992, García and Gopal 2003). The tracking system of remedial language courses can lead to a considerable narrowing of curriculum and academic offerings for these students (elective courses that are included in track courses for access to higher education) effectively serving as a filtering device for what Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) refer to as cultural capital. Also, when language minority students have to repeat grade levels and fail exit exams, they are at increased risk of becoming de-motivated and less confident that they will ever pass, eventually dropping out of school and lowering possibilities of any post-secondary plans or opportunities (See King 2007).

Apart from placement, assessment of general academic progress can also lead to educational inequality for minority language students. Teachers generally use assessment practices designed for the *majority language* group to monitor overall language development. Furthermore, teachers track the quality of students' day-to-day development in other subject matter through competences directly related to language, such as vocabulary tests or reports (August and Hakuta 1998). Likewise, standardised testing (with a focus on formal language competences) has been signalled as rendering students' prior knowledge and experience in making sense of written texts practically invisible. Standardised testing is rooted in an objectivist tradition and ignores the essentially social and dialogic nature of language, putting linguistic and culturally diverse groups at a disadvantage. This issue of validity of testing becomes critical, especially considering that test scores are used as part of the basis for minority language students' placement, selection, certification, and promotion; all of which have significant long-term consequences for these students (Murphy 2007).

Initial assessment of very young members of minority language groups is also a critical question facing educational policy makers and practitioners. Perhaps one of the basic questions is how diverse groups of children can be assessed equitably and whether minority languages should be used for an initial assessment of a student's readiness to participate successfully in the formal school culture. As Prince (1992:51) pointed out, the potential risk exists that normal developmental differences among diverse groups of children may be misinterpreted as 'evidence' that minority language children are not ready for school or for participating in mainstream classes.

We must add to this other diagnostic problems, for instance the issue of selective mutism (SM)[6]. It has been shown that selective mutism is more prevalent than initially thought and at least three times higher in immigrant language minority children (Toppelberg *et al.* 2005) and specific diagnostic boundaries still need to be clarified. The difficulties of assessing the speech and language of culturally and linguistically diverse students has been discussed thoroughly in Crowley's (2003) *Diagnosing Communication Disorders in Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students.*

Inherent to the idea of language assessment lies the question of how to measure linguistic competence and which competences are to be measured. Embedded assumptions about language and literacy development can influence local practices and discourses of minority language students' abilities – and concepts of accountability for language and literacy learning (Black 2006). It is becoming increasingly more common for researchers and practitioners working with language minority children to underline the need for development of a variety of teaching and testing approaches and tools for language proficiencies. This includes explicit opportunity to acquire academic language and competences required by academic interactions. If, on the other hand, the

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[6] Selective mutism is characterized by a child's inability to speak in certain social situations, although the child is developmentally advanced to the point that speech is possible. The child is able to speak proficiently in at least one setting, most often at home with one or both parents, and sometimes with siblings or extended family members.

underlying assumption is that minority language students will eventually 'pick up these skills', there will be continued segregation of linguistic minority children, even after they have reached an apparently stable level of language competence in the majority language (Valdes 2004).

Research evidence provides a nuanced understanding of both informal language acquisition processes (in the home and local community) and as well as the more structured processes which occur in and are expected in the formal language acquisition. Informal oral language development of children (conversational skills which come fairly quickly and easily) has been shown to be different from the learning of language(s) necessary for the educational challenges of school curricula, which is cognitively demanding, decontextualised language. This type of language and literacy proficiency takes longer to learn than language for informal conversational purposes although it is often this second type of language that is tested in language competency tests.

These concepts of competence levels in the majority language (usually the official language of the nation-state) are fairly wide-spread and have been transferred into educational policies that evaluate different language groups for 'diagnostic purposes'. Diagnostic testing may be used for the distribution of economic resources and measures to schools or communities; however, diagnostic testing is usually based on a conceptualisation of native speaker competence. Firth and Wagner (1997) question the dichotomy of native and non-native speaker, claiming that it reflects a bias toward innate cognition and language acquisition rather than focusing on language performance strategies, situational resources, and social negotiations in interactional communicative contexts. If language proficiency is seen as practice-based and adaptive rather than as a 'native-like' competence based on form (Canagarajah 2007) then diagnostic testing for minority language groups will have to be revised. As it stands now, lack of proficiency (with native-like criteria) in the majority language may be grounds for schools to refuse enrolling a child, or may cause the child to experience feelings of exclusion.

If we add to this the common misconception concerning children's acquisition of second (or third languages) that holds that very young children are better and faster language learners than older children and adults - despite research evidence to the contrary (eg Ervin-Tripp 1974, Snow and Hoefnagel-Hohle 1977, Snow 1978, Genesee 1981, 1987) - then educational policies for minority language students can actually prove to be detrimental to these students' overall educational development. Children learn a second language at very different, individual rates and there are multiple factors such as age, strength of native language skills, amount of exposure to the second language, attitude, and language aptitude which must be taken into account (see Hakuta 1986). Through different types of social mediation, a language minority student may have considerable communicative competence in one area of knowledge (for instance a child may be quite competent in discussing statistics through exposure to debates about soccer league results) and not have enough language skills for another knowledge area (eg explaining the process for resolving a maths problem). Assessments that do not uncover these different areas of competence may result in misplacement in school levels and may eventually hinder the student's overall educational development.

2.3. Social exclusion (Lack of voice and identity leading to disempowerment)

The importance of access to the majority language for minority language students is not an issue here. The development of majority-language proficiency is critical in facilitating social contacts and in enhancing employment and educational opportunities for minority language groups. In that sense, however, there has been considerable research that documents the advantages of socially-mediated language learning, rather than language teaching approaches that focus on structure and form (Sano 1990, Ward *et al*. 1999, Tarone 2007) Expanded available learning networks that help integrate culturally and linguistically diverse groups with majority language speakers are important.

However, programmes for majority language learning must be based on the assumption that there can be alternative cultural spaces in which multiple identities are a positive, enriching element to society, otherwise there is the risk of an 'assimilationist' premise to language learning programmes for immigrants. The argument that the acquisition of host languages and world languages is a key variable in accumulating cultural capital and should be equally accessible to all is not questioned but at the same time, the maintenance of linguistic diversity is a key element to sustaining cohesive identities and should not be ignored (Rassool 2004).

In this sense, there is a dearth of general awareness within existent educational policies concerning the minority language groups' perceptions of their needs as minority language speakers. Most policies and programmes are written with little input from the minority language communities and few try to elicit suggestions on ways in which language provision for them might be improved. Policies are often based on studies that oversimplify the relationship between background variables of language minority groups and academic achievement (Rumberger 1991, García and Gopal 2003) as well as an overemphasis on a homogeneity of experiences of these groups when, in fact, research shows that there is a diverse range of educational experiences of language minority groups (Ogbu 1987, 1988, Salazar 1997). One ethnographic case study, describing how the identities of immigrant minority pupils are constructed in a multicultural classroom in a Flemish primary school, shows the discrepancies between the class teacher's discourse and the minority language pupils' self-perceptions (Spotti 2008). While the teacher constructed immigrant minority pupils as a homogeneous, socio-linguistically disadvantaged group, the pupils constructed themselves as multilingual and multicultural 'language brokers', in other words, the minority languages members see themselves as having resources that are not recognised by the teachers.

This contrasts a common concept that members of minority language group are somehow 'deficient' through transmitted deprivation. Through nodal discourse - directly or indirectly - some languages are valued as worthy of promoting and reproducing (eg major European languages) while others (for example, languages introduced into societies through immigration; lesser-used minority languages) are categorised as problematic. Priven (2008) argues that one of the root causes of the resistance of mainstream European educational institutions to implement minority language programmes is because of differential treatment of minority languages in the mainstream educational discourse. According to this author some minority languages are treated as more legitimate than others in contrast to mainstream curricular practices. In most of the countries included in this report, minority languages which are directly linked to immigration tend to be seen as more problematic than minority languages with historical ties to the country. Thus there is a dichotomy between the concept of problems stemming from immigrant minority language students and students belonging to minority language groups with established recognition (politically, socio-economically and/or culturally). This is highlighted by a fairly recent UNESCO report which asks:

> As regional minority languages gain increasing recognition and better treatment in Europe, what is the condition of the languages spoken by immigrant communities in the continent? Is their use encouraged, or are these languages seen as obstacles to the integration of these newcomers? Can they, should they, be taught in school to the children of these immigrant families? (UNESCO 2003a:1)

Often, members of minority language communities who do not have social and political recognition (eg immigrant language minorities, Romani speakers) are faced with seemingly implacable social, political, and economic pressures to acquire the language of their host countries. In most cases these minority language groups do not argue against the need to learn their host country's language, although immigrants also request the opportunity to keep and use their own language. Nonetheless they are frequently forced to choose between one or the other (Hornberger 1998), with a strong emphasis on prestige (major) European languages. This nodal discourse of prestige languages is clearly hegemonic in most of the countries in this study wherein second language teaching focuses

on the major foreign languages and there is an abundance of private schools offering language immersion in French, English or German but not in minority languages.

Indirectly associated to the promotion for foreign language teaching in the EU, the push for 'Europeanization' of some countries can be detrimental to minority language rights (Brown 2005). In a recent study of the educational environment in Estonian schools, Brown discusses how government-supported initiatives use education to cultivate a strong national identity while promoting European integration and fostering a European identity. Consequently, regional identity and minority language groups are marginalised. The importance of minority language maintenance for the construction of individual identity can be crucial in helping these students develop their self-esteem, acquire positive personal qualities, and support the belief that they can excel academically, in accordance with his/her ability (including their multilingual competences). Indeed, language attitudes, language choice and perceptions of how these fit into cultural capital can shape the educational process and career aspirations of minority language speakers (Rassool 2004).

The perceptions of professional educators have an important effect on minority language students. According to a study of Spanish teachers' attitudes, most of the teachers interviewed share the democratic values espoused by laws aimed at regulating 'attention to diversity' but struggle to reconcile these values with traditional pedagogical positions concerning the necessary inculcation of pan-European, traditional academic knowledge and skills (Harry *et al.* 2008). This results in a commonly held posture that the only way to include 'outsiders' is to require a high level of linguistic and cultural assimilation and a tendency to place the onus for adaptation on the minorities. These findings are supported in studies by Arnaiz *et al.* (2005) and Harry (2005). As the authors rightly point out, it is important to be wary of:

> studies that focus only on correlating indicators of poverty with educational outcomes (eg, Blair and Scott 2000) since these often fail to include the "structural correlates of poverty" (Artiles 2003:173), such as the low quality of the teaching force and other educational resources (Harry *et al.* 2008).

The same caution must be applied to assumed correlation between language competence and educational outcomes since they also contain a hidden agenda based on assimilationist beliefs that attribute **school failure** to linguistic and cultural mismatch rather than recognising that schools do not always build on children's "funds of knowledge" (Gonzalez and Moll 2002).

2.4. Institutional segregation (Distribution of resources, equitable education systems)

Even in the case of minority language groups with established recognition and support, educational advantages or disadvantages are contingent upon other factors. For instance, if the member of the linguistic minority group is within a geographic area officially associated with the linguistic group, they may have access to diverse educational resources in their language. To give an example, according to the Slovak Constitution national minorities have the right to be educated in their mother tongue, however this is susceptible to the student's access to specific schools and available resources in that language. Interestingly, students in Slovakia opting for access to university are allowed to take part of their entrance exams in the language used during their basic schooling, which is a policy that comes closer to recognising individual plurilingualism than do most of the other policies studied in this report.

In many cases, education in the minority language is often the initiative of private and/or community enterprises which is then acknowledged by the national educational policies but not necessarily supported; although some subsidies or 'cooperative agreements' may be in place. This can be seen with the German-speaking communities in Denmark, the Arabic-speaking communities in Malta and Spain, Asian communities in Spain, Irish schools in Ireland, private bilingual schools

in Denmark and the Hungarian, Ukrainian, German or Ruthenian communities in Slovakia. The depth and scope of minority language teaching is varied: it ranges from extracurricular language lessons for a few hours during the week or at the weekend to full-immersion bi- or tri-lingual scholastic programmes.

In situations where bilingual education exists, its pattern of policy and practice is not consistent across the countries or even intra-country. In a recent report dealing with bilingual education in the Basque Autonomous region in Spain, the authors concluded that, different from other autonomous regions in the country, Basque as the language of instruction continues to be a "small language", despite significant achievements in the educational context (Zalbide and Cenoz 2008). Other countries are also looking to provide more support for their recognised language minority groups. The United Kingdom has local, regional and national policies that support a wide range of linguistic minorities. There are several different types of bilingual education, although the most widely supported institutional programme is bilingual education for the promotion of Welsh, and increasing numbers of areas of Wales now teach primarily in Welsh, particularly at primary level. In the United Kingdom, other minority languages are less well catered for and the dynamics of institutionalisation of minority language education have been very different in the culturally distinct territories such as Brittany and Scotland (Rogers and McLeod 2006).

2.4.1 Institutional segregation: Balance of education subjects (Attitudes towards minority language education)
The establishment and institutionalisation of minority language-medium education (dual language education) in Spain and The United Kingdom have had a significant influence on the revitalisation of the minority languages. Research into these processes highlight the struggle for minority language speakers for official recognition, teaching resources and the need for accommodation and acceptance within the majority language society in order to achieve immersion education. Research, planning and teacher training are also listed as ongoing challenges for minority language immersion schools (O'Baoill 2007). The success of such programmes is important since evidence shows that these programmes provide a high degree of exposure to the minority language, and this cannot be disassociated from the broader sociolinguistic context. This is significant for both minority and majority populations as it can lead to accommodation and mutual respect of both languages (Torres-Guzman and Etxeberria 2005). Popular acceptance of these programmes can also have an effect on the long-term results of language learning considering that there is a direct association between out-of-school use and gradual proficiency. In a recent study that measured levels of proficiency and use of Irish among different learners, the study indicated that immersion students benefited from greater access to Irish-speaking networks outside of school compared to their mainstream peers, principally due to instructional time, quality and personal investment (Murtagh 2007).

It can be argued that the attitude of the majority language population and the nodal discourse (see footnote 3, page 6) of the educational policy has repercussions on official and popular support for bilingual programmes. In Greece, a bilingual curriculum (Greek and Turkish) is applied in minority schools in Thrace (where most people are either Turkish or Greek native speakers), however, despite the multicultural character of the Greek school population in the last years, the mainstream school curriculum remains strongly nationally oriented and monolingual. Established minority groups often opt for parallel systems of education which includes education in their own language and, to some extent, a separate curriculum. This can help boost the level of recognition of the language but, at the same time, can create completely separate, parallel systems that lead to situations where cultural and linguistic heritage of such groups is filtered into specialised schools rather than integrated into a national curriculum. To a large degree, whether this happens or not may depend upon the cooperation between the minority language community and the national government. By providing support for lesser used languages, the government can ameliorate common perceptions of separatism often associated with minority language groups.

As mentioned earlier, not all minority language education programmes receive public support in private schools or community associations (Arabic in Malta). In these cases, it is often a community initiative, or may be a part of a cooperative agreement between national governments (eg the Moroccan government trains and sends Arabic teachers to work in extracurricular language courses in Spain). These programmes are usually arranged through immigrant associations or Non Profit Organisations. They are, however, often understaffed and unable to meet the minority language groups' needs. To give an example, in past years, the Arab language and Moroccan culture program (Spain) had ten Moroccan teachers to attend 379 students in Madrid and seven Moroccan professors attending 401 students in fourteen public schools in Barcelona (Garcia Castaño and Barragán Ruiz-Matas unpublished).

It has been noted that these programmes help the (new) minority language students maintain contact with their cultural heritage and gain elementary-level formal training in their language and enhance their self-esteem. Nonetheless, there are drawbacks. The language taught tends to be official languages of the country of origin and may not be appropriate to the needs of students who speak dialects or other languages than the official language of their country of origin (eg Berber in Morocco). This may even perpetuate the low status of these languages and dialects within the host country (López and Mijares 2001).

> There is a long history in certain western societies of people actually "looking down" on those who are bilingual. We give prestige only to a certain few "classical" languages (eg, Greek and Latin) or modern languages of "high" culture (eg, English, French, Italian, and German). You generally get little credit for speaking Swahili and, until recently at least, not much more for speaking Russian, Japanese, Arabic, or Chinese. Bilingualism is actually sometimes regarded as a "problem" in that many bilingual individuals tend to occupy rather low positions in society and knowledge of another language becomes associated with "inferiority". "Bilingualism" is seen as a personal and social problem, not something that has strong positive connotations. (Wardhaugh 1992:101)

Another potential risk is that the agreements and community initiatives replace government responsibility (in terms of payment, time and space), creating a public discourse that puts the onus of heritage language teaching and learning solely on the minority language community outside of regular school hours.

2.4.2. Institutional Segregation: Vocational and academic routes (Effect of different dual/multiple language teaching models)
Over the past two decades, there have been several initiatives and policies that relate the use of mother tongue in education to the more general *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* and the charter of *Linguistic Human Rights*. At the same time, these documents largely ignore problems of implementation such as adequate resources and funding. While these initiatives highlight non-discrimination and pluralism in language use and development, there is little follow-up policy to ensure that equal rights for languages are upheld. This implies that the role of different language teaching models which integrate equal language policy and their effect on the diverse stakeholders must be examined. It is imperative to be clear on what the policies and initiatives are trying to achieve through the language models (assimilation, accommodation, proficiency in several languages, etc.) and which models offer students meaningful access to quality education. The underlying purpose for the models and policies may vary. In some cases the purpose may be to maintain the minority language, in other cases to improve the learning of a second national language (in officially bilingual communities) or additive bilingualism (officially supported foreign language education). The efficacy of these policies will depend on the target population, available resources, along with other factors.

Many commissions and reports on minority and immigrant language groups in the educational system have advocated the use of initial mother tongue education (MTE) followed by the addition of the language of instruction (LoI) of the school. On the whole, there is consensus about a need for better provision of and teaching of both MTE and LoI, however, there is not yet consensus about the exact point at which the medium of instruction should change from the initial mother tongue to the vehicular school language. The concept of 'equality of opportunity' in the case of minority language students (who are not enrolled in dual education system such as those discussed in the previous section) has often been interpreted in official policies as mainstreaming of these students *as quickly as possible*, in parallel with some additional language provision, especially since the 1990s (Chen 2007).

Of course, there are many variants to the language teaching models, depending on their context of implementation. However, there are some transversal traits that allow for a hermeneutic list of the more common features of immersion or dual language programme for students whose most familiar language is not the language of instruction[7]. These models and their main features are described below. Although there are always variations, the names are the most generally applied worldwide in the language disciplines and these types of dual-language teaching (school language and minority language) are the most commonplace. We are not suggesting that these models are not adaptable to the needs of different minority language groups; however, there are certain inherent disadvantages for the language minority group linked to some of these features which must be interrogated.

The Subtractive/submersion: The objective of this model is to move the learners into the language of instruction as early as possible. This may involve immediate immersion from very low grades, with provision for remedial work in the language of instruction. This model is sometimes referred to as the submersion or immersion model. In submersion programmes where learners are from minority or immigrant language communities, statistics show that the students are more likely to come from lower socio-economic backgrounds and their parents do not necessarily have high levels of formal literacy (Aarts and Verhoeven 1999; Gonzalez 2001). Students in these circumstances do not typically succeed in complete immersion programmes, part of which has been contributed to the lack of support factors (ADEA 2006). It should also be pointed out that the core features of a successful immersion programme as outlined by Baker (2002) are not usually met, namely, the students entering the program do not have similar levels of proficiency in the target language and the first language is not respected and developed.

Recent critical voices highlight in particular the problems associated with too rapid inclusion in the mainstream classroom, calling into question the immediate mainstreaming and remedial language courses, suggesting that emergent bilingual children can be best served by dual language education, but only if they are given substantial language support in all their languages. The teaching of content area in both the school's language of instruction and the student's mother tongue have been put forth, based on the argument that instruction in the mother tongue or a familiar language contributes far more to the cultural, affective, cognitive and socio-psychological development of the child than instruction in the school language (when it is a foreign language for them) (see Akinnaso 1993, UNESCO 2003b, Monaghan 2007). Criticism related to assessment for placement, exit and content have also been directed at this model (see previous section on assessment).

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[7]We are focusing on minority languages considered to be at an educational disadvantage because of the language's lack of social 'capital' (Bourdieu 1977a) and thus its lack of prestige as a LoI. These models do not include other minority language models such as the Basque trilingual programme (which has linked Basque with English and Spanish to raise its 'capital') or other programmes wherein the minority language is the LoI (such as schools in Wales with curricula designed for Welsh speakers). There are, of course, inherent complexities to these state models, especially when the students are minority language speakers (eg Berber) within a classroom with a minority language as LoI (eg Catalan schools) however this goes beyond the scope of this study.

The Transition Model: This model aims at the use of a single target language (language of instruction) at the end of the compulsory school period. In the case of students whose strongest tongue is not the LoI, the learner begins instruction in their mother tongue (or one of them, in the case of having more than one) and then gradually moves to the language of instruction. In this model, there are two sub-models: early exit transition (when the transition takes place within 1 to 3 years) and late exit transition (the transition to the language of instruction is delayed until after 6 years of schooling). Research indicates that late exit transition leads to better results in the long run (Krashen 1996, Thomas and Collier 1997, 2002, Bamgbose 2000, 2004, 2005; Heugh 2003).

The Additive Model: This model involves dual language of instruction until the end of the schooling period with a target of high proficiency in both languages. Advocates of this model base their arguments on combined research into successful multiple language learning (see ADEA 2006, Baker 2002). This research indicates that a child's first language (or a predominant one) needs to be reinforced and developed for at least 12 years in order for successful L2 learning and academic success to take place. This implies using the first language as the medium for learning for at least 6 years of formal schooling (similar to the late exit transition in the above model).

Research indicates that under optimal conditions it takes 6-8 years to learn a second language well enough to use it as a medium of instruction. Optimal conditions imply well-resourced conditions with adequately trained teachers. In less optimal conditions, it can be assumed that this period is not enough to provide equal learning opportunities to these students (Liddicoat 1991, Cummins 1984, 2000, Krashen 1996, Baker 2002). These programmes can have very different results, according to context in which they are implemented. In private institutions where the target languages are usually one or more major EU languages, the student profile is usually middle class, coming from households where the parents are professional. It is more likely that they grew up within a context of high level of literacy (eg ample reading materials in the home, etc.). In such situations the immersion programmes have been documented as mostly successful (Genesee 1987, Swain and Johnson 1997, Baker 2002, Brown 2003).

This model is not very frequently used with less-used minority languages or with immigrant languages. Most critics of this model consider it to be high-cost, low gain, although language economists have argued differently (Heugh 2006, Grin 2006). While complete dual-system education opportunities are rare, some policies seek to offer more learning opportunities in languages that the students feel most comfortable with. In the UK, for instance, the languages of children and families from minority ethnic backgrounds are now more widely recognised and valued than was the case twenty or thirty years ago. Schools in some areas will offer examination courses in Urdu, Punjabi or Turkish. Pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL) are identified, and additional resources channelled to schools - particularly primary schools - where there are significant numbers (Leathwood *et al.* 2008:7).

2.4.3. Brief discussion of varying results of dual/multiple language teaching models
The promotion of minority languages (especially 'new' immigrant languages) is not a main priority in many of the educational policies covered in the report. In some countries some measures have been taken, but they are rarely integrated into the mainstream education system and the policies implicitly position immigrant minorities' languages outside of the realm of cultural and linguistic heritage of the host country (the amount of time the linguistic group has been a part of the society is not relevant to this positioning). In other cases, the minority languages, and especially immigrant minority languages, are incorporated into the more general approach of intercultural education in schools rather than specific language teaching with qualified language teachers.

Teaching 'new' languages and minority languages is frequently viewed as a second class occupation compared to teaching in high-prestige languages. Inevitably, this attitude affects both

teachers and students' morale and influences the distribution of resources towards foreign language teaching and resources for language teaching in the LoI instead of minority languages. At the same time immersion education in international language bilingualism in European languages is encouraged, both in public and private schools and this discrepancy, combined with the elitist and prestigious image of such programmes may lead to an undermining of status of minority language groups. This factor, combined with prevalent negative attitudes towards code-switching between the LoI and minority language in mainstream education can be devastating for the minority language speaker. Observation of children of preschool and primary school age in multilingual settings testifies to multilingualism as a natural behavioural pattern in which code-switching is used as highly effective communication strategies (Khamis 1994, Nussbaum and Unamuno 2006). This stands in sharp contrast to a widespread negative attitude towards early childhood multilingualism, especially in the case of lesser-used minority languages.

Section 3. What strategies are used to address educational disadvantages of minority language groups? Analysis of policies and practices from the EPASI database and country reports[8]

3.1 What strategies are used to address the general population?

As has already been discussed, self-esteem and self-confidence are important factors for minority students' identity. The affective factor (feeling comfortable and secure in the classroom environment) are also central elements to academic success. The Dutch project *Laat je zien* (Show yourself, NL80) is intended for students who have a low self-image and are not open to education. The project has an important axis of language use and aims to demonstrate to students how much they can achieve and communicate, using music and lyrics, in other words, to engage the students with language in a positive way. The students are guided by a project leader in the process of developing a script and making a short documentary, accompanied with appropriate music. The students are expected to work intensively together, forming a warm and safe group and, at the same time learn to co-operate. The project outcomes are also important products that serve as evidence of the minority language students' communicative abilities and help build a bridge of understanding between minority and majority language populations.

Just as the previous project highlights, getting the parents involved in the minority language students' education process is a key factor to academic success because it helps build links for collaborative support between school and home and as well as improving the perception of the minority language. The Greek project called Working together - Quality Education for all: The 132nd School-based actions through subsidised programmes (GR113) applies these principles by ensuring that notifications and school information is given to the parents in their native tongue, providing parent workshops and Greek language courses while, at the same time, providing native language teaching to the students and ensuring that the individual personality and culture of each student is respected. Workshops are also given to the students for improvement of personal and social skills. Teachers are expected to attend inservice-training to learn about alternative teaching models. It should be noted, however, that this project is no longer being implemented although the Greek government has recently designed policies and measures aimed to improve the L2 skills (in this case Greek) of the minority language to try help ensure their chances for inclusion in Greek society. The multiphase Educating Muslim Children's Programme states that one of its objectives is the enhancement of the minority children's Greek language skills (Spinthourakis *et al*. 2008: 10).

The Ministry of Education in Slovakia, in conjunction with the European Commission has been involved in a programme aimed at promoting tolerance towards minorities. Goals within this

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[8] The projects described here have links directly to the EPASI database at http://www.epasi.eu/ . All the projects in the database may be consulted at this same website.

project include: improvement of the position of ethnic minorities in the educational system, especially Roma people; better conditions for teaching and learning process at schools through minority language instruction; more support (material and technical) for minority languages in schools and universities and mutual understanding to minimise social and racial discrimination in the society (See project summary SK201: Reintegration of socially disadvantaged children).

It is not uncommon for non-governmental organisations to offer language courses in minority languages outside of school hours. While the majority of students are usually drawn from heritage language communities (primarily the children and grandchildren of immigrant populations who have not grown up literate in the target language), these courses are open to other populations. To cite an example, the Muslim community - mainly through the Islamic Cultural Centre - and the Resource Centre for the teaching of Arabic language from the Maltese Education Division has set up an Arabic teaching programme (MT244). It is their aim to encourage more students to opt for Arabic language learning, including students from outside the Arabic community and to foster a climate of tolerance between children from diverse origins. Rona Blackwood, the Refugee Director for Save the Children (Malta) comments that "schools (in the host country) play a vital role in giving foreign children a sense of hope and security. It is also a place where children can learn first hand about each other's countries and cultures" (evaluation summary sent to the EPASI Spanish team).

On a much smaller scale, a local school in France (FR257: Let us compare our languages) designed and implemented a project that compares the diverse languages in the school. Both students and teachers participated in describing and explaining their language to other pupils and teachers, making comparisons between syntax, lexicon and pronunciation. This helped the participants become more aware and proud of their culture, language and other cultures and languages. It also helped minority language groups develop more awareness and knowledge of (and to use) French as the language of instruction. Similarly, the European project EVLANG (FR258) aimed to raise metalinguistic awareness of similarity between languages.

In order to stimulate contacts between children from ethnic and language minority groups and the ethnic and language majority group in Denmark, the *Mangfoldighed i Koebenhavns Dagtilbud* (DK140: Diversity in the Copenhagen Daycare) is working to change the student profile of children enrolled in different daycare institutions to ensure greater diversity within each institution. A goal is that the number of bilingual children in each crèche and kindergarten is equal across the city. This will help strengthen integration, develop the inter-cultural competence of all children in the city, and reinforce the Danish language, social competence, and subject knowledge among children of language minorities in order to facilitate their future success at school.

3.2 What strategies are used to address this in educational policies with the specific population?

3.2.1 Full bilingual education in minority languages
There are noticeably more policies promoting bilingual or trilingual education in minority languages in recent years. One case in point is the development of multilingual education in Spain in the last twenty years. That fact that bilingual education has developed so rapidly can be largely contributed to the current legal and institutional situation, with multilingualism and multiculturalism openly acknowledged in the Spanish Constitution. This socio-political environment has given rise to Catalonia and the Basque Country now organising their education on the basis of fully bilingual criteria (Huguet 2007). Consequently, through the medium of Basque in the schools, a significant influence on the social consideration of the language is being exerted and augurs positively for further development in minority language education in the future. Research shows that the attitudes of the Basque population towards bi- or trilingual education are generally positive and the linguistic immersion model used in the bilingual education system is becoming an

important reference for other minority language groups (Breton and Ruiz 2008). In this case, the model deployed by the minority language groups is to include a 'prestige' language (usually English) as a third language, along with the minority language. This gives the schools prestige and has a positive impact on the way the families in the community perceive the trilingual education proposal. The position which seems to work is education in minority languages equals innovation which in turn leads to quality in education.

In the UK, Scots is listed by the European Bureau for Lesser Used Languages as one of the UK's minority languages, however, it has been noted that the general perception of this is language is that it is a non-standard dialect of English, rather than a language in its own right (McPake and Arthur 2006). Current educational policy affecting Scots indicates that there is need for more effective educational policy and practice, just as in the case of France where linguistic minorities are not recognised, only regional languages that co-exist with the French national language are included in official policy. So, although there are provisions for regional language use at all school levels, there is a problem with a drastic shortage of regional language teachers that overshadows the future of teaching these languages.

3.2.2 Transition language model
In the case of immigrant languages (several pertaining to groups that have been historically settled in the countries for several decades), some of the countries in the EPASI study promote the development of the mother tongue both as educational and cultural instruments and in order to help the students maintain and improve their links with their culture of origin. In such cases, the policies see the development of multilingual competences (in the language of the nation-state and in the minority language) as a means of achieving more complete social integration. There are also cases where the promotion and maintenance of the mother tongue of immigrants is seen as a positive element for the overall development of the child, as is the case in Sweden whose national policy states that official human and material resources are to be destined for providing support for mother tongue teaching and learning - in both Swedish and the students' mother tongue. Citing the numbers from an example of a project school gives an idea of the impetus given to this effort (see Modersmål Språklärarna 2008). In the school year 2007/2008 there were five project classes at the school (2 classes year 1, 1 class year 2 and 2 classes year 3). In each one of these five classes there was one Swedish teacher (full time) and one mother tongue teacher (part time: 75 percent) and the children were taught part of their curricula subjects in the mother tongue (eg Albanian, Arabic) and part of the subjects in Swedish. The amount of lessons in Swedish increased as competency levels went up.

Likewise, in the project entitled *Mother Tongue Education* (UK52) (England), the school uses curriculum targets as a form of assessment, pacing the target for language of instruction and curricular areas for later years while allowing for initial years' education to be in pupils' mother tongue. In contrast to research described in the previous section 2 citing overall lower achievement rates for minority language speakers, this project states that of pupils leaving at age of 11, significant numbers attain nationally expected curriculum levels and above. Notably, there are other projects in the school focused on music and culture, teacher training and dual-text publications that run parallel to this project and that likely feed into attainment results.

In another example, in an experimental school in Athens (GR113) where 70 percent of the students are non-native speakers (mostly from Albania but also from Egypt, Sudan, Nigeria, Iraq, Syria, China, Poland and former countries from the USSR), the student's first language is used to help the student to adapt to learning procedures and as a measure to help prevent school failure and drop-out.

3.2.3 Use of mother tongue for educational support

Mother tongue instruction is not always an integrated part of the curriculum. In some cases it may be used as a form of support in specific moments (examinations, content support, 'bridge' classrooms, etc.). The project *Enseñanza de la lengua materna a los niños de origen amazige (bereber) en Cataluña* (ES209: Maternal language instruction for Tamazight (Berber) children in Catalonia) is co-funded between regional government and a private non-governmental organisation. This project teaches (and therefore gives value to) the language and culture of the pupil. It also provides support for the development of teaching resources so that students have materials to learn to read and to write in their maternal language. This helps smooth the transition to the new culture and language of the school while reinforcing pupils' self-identity and self-esteem.

At times, heritage language courses or minority language courses are incorporated into broader intercultural awareness endeavours. Based on a detected lack of Islamic religion classes in the Valencia teaching institutions and a need to extend knowledge of Arabic and Muslim religion to communities outside of these cultures and religions, the Valencia Islamic Cultural Centre (CCIV) has set up *Árabe en los patios* (Arabic in the school yards, ES210). In this programme, Arabic is taught to Muslim origin children to enable them to know their religion and read the Koran, and communicate with their relatives when they travel to their original countries. At the same time, the programme makes the learning of Arabic and Islamic culture available to anyone (an increase in interest, not only in Muslim families but also between Spanish families has been noted), thus enhancing intercultural knowledge about Islamic culture and supporting integration to the host society while maintaining the community's cultural roots.

A similar project in Malta is designed to compensate the lack of instruction in Arabic language, religion and culture in Maltese public and faith schools and to preserve Arabic culture and language. Despite the fact that the Maltese State is legally bound to teach children of migrant workers their culture and language (the Legal notice 259 of 2002 regulates the education of children of migrant workers) there is no instruction in Arabic or in Islam for Muslim students in Maltese public schools (except for a limited number of secondary centres that have started offering Arabic as an optional language course, with support from the Arabic Resource Centre of the Education Division). To compensate for this lack, the Muslim community set up their own school to provide mother language and religious training (see MT244: Arabic Community School).

3.2.4 Support in language of instruction

As it has been pointed out elsewhere, it is fairly common for policy and practice to include support for the language of instruction for multilingual students and for newly arrived immigrant students. There are, however, some initiatives that seek to go further than remedial, in-school courses. In the Netherlands, a special literacy programme for language development known as *Voorleesexpress* (NL82: Reading to children express) aims to diminish the lag in language from allochtoneous children. These children are paid a weekly visit at their home by a Dutch-speaking student who reads to them, thus bringing both the children and their parents into contact with the written and spoken Dutch language. Parallel to the language and vocabulary development, cross-cultural contact is made and the children become acquainted with Dutch children's literature through an enjoyable experience.

3.2.5 Teacher training and material development

Several countries have invested time and resources into teacher training of specialist and mainstream teachers, development of specialised resources and research in the area of minority language groups. For instance, the *Primary National Strategy (PNS) (EAL Pilot)* (England) aims :

- To develop the confidence, skills and expertise of the school community in general and mainstream teachers in particular in meeting the needs of bilingual children.

- To support projects which increase mainstream primary teachers' confidence in and expertise for meeting the needs of advanced bilingual learners (UK62).

Under the auspices of *PNS*, pilot local government departments LEAs have received funding to appoint one EAL consultant who works in 10 schools in partnership with PNS consultants and link advisers/inspectors as well as the school leadership team. The consultants coordinate training and resource material for teachers and help staff audit their provision for advanced EAL students.

The understanding that new initiatives and policies must be practice-driven through continued teacher training and working with education agents is highlighted in several of the projects and policies found in the database. For instance, the project *Wonderwel* (BE22) (Belgium) not only promotes cooperation between welfare workers, education agents, students in the target group and their parents, it also recognises the need for "sensibilisation of diverse institutions and actors towards a contextual approach of social vulnerability by informing and mobilising them to joint actions". Through these joint actions, appropriate pedagogical actions can be taken that reduce the disadvantages of language minority groups considered to be at risk of social exclusion and more likely to drop out of school.

Another important aspect of teacher training that is being focused on by the Swedish government is the improvement of teacher competences in assessing student with diversity. In the initiative known as *Ett diskussionunderlag om kunskap och bedömning med inriktning mot elever som har svårt att nå målen* (Developing competence to assess, SE119), the government seeks to provide a basis for discussion about knowledge and assessment, especially when dealing with students who have difficulties in attaining the nation-wide curriculum goals. The government develops material that aims to stimulate more debates about assessment and evaluation of all students in school and to help teachers know how to interpret and use the so called 'exception to the rule', thus helping teachers understand when they have a right (and should) establish separate goals for students to attain, if there is a special reason for it. This same policy helps teachers develop challenging and supportive learning environments and to develop strategies for helping newly-arrived students with backgrounds other than Swedish.

A further example of Sweden's commitment to teacher support is the project *Lärarlyftet* (The teacher lift, SE127). This project focuses on improving teacher competencies (both content and teaching methodology), teachers' knowledge of reading and writing development (concerning all subjects), and developing competencies in marking, testing and evaluation.

Likewise, part of the *Educational Priority Zone (Z.E.P.) of Saint Antoniou school complex in Limassol* (CY86) (Cyprus) underlines the importance of teacher development concerning teaching and assessing language minority students. The project does not concentrate only on this – it is a much wider strategy aimed at fighting functional illiteracy and school failure in a region denominated as an "Educational Priority Zone" because of the presence of a large number of children with different linguistic backgrounds coming from low socio-economic and educative backgrounds. Within the broad coverage of the initiative, teacher training is featured through the organisation of educational activities concerning the evaluation of children with learning difficulties and attending to adjustment problems faced by children from different linguistic backgrounds. The initiative also employs a teacher of Turkish Studies in the Elementary school and a secondary teacher for Greek language courses to Turkish – Cypriots students and for Turkish – Cypriot mothers.

In an interesting cross border initiative between Ireland and Northern Ireland, the project *Together Towards Inclusion Toolkit* (IE40) was launched in December 2007.

It takes the form of a book with has four sections: "Getting Ready addresses the preliminary issues that any school must deal with if it is to be genuinely welcoming and inclusive; Early

Days is concerned with the first steps towards the integration of pupils from other countries, cultures and ethnicities. The third and fourth sections, Moving On and What's Next? respond to the fact that inclusiveness is a never ending process." [Description courtesy of email from Integrate Ireland Language and Training (IILT) administrative assistant]

The project provides linguistic and intercultural support for teachers, offers opportunities for teachers to work collaboratively between North and South, possibilities to share outcomes and research at institutional level, promotes respect for diversity and challenges prejudice, promotes inclusive schools/classrooms, enhances provision of English as a second language, and opportunities to share best practice. Apart from the toolkit, IILT runs a support programme for teachers of non-English speaking pupils (in-service seminars in centres around the country).

In a similar vein, the Danish initiative known as *Dette virker pa vores skole* (This works at our school, DK153), provides opportunities for shared learning and development. This project collects good pedagogical examples from schools with many bilingual pupils and uses these experiences to develop second-language pedagogies. It also collects managerial and organisational examples from schools (with many or few bi- or multilingual pupils) that work actively with subject teaching methods for these pupils and strategies for strengthening schools' cooperation with parents.

Teachers are not the only target audience of the materials designed in the projects outlined in the EPASI transnational reports. With funding from the Czech Ministry, Hradec Kralove University has designed the "Start Learning Ukrainian" (CZ166) set of texts for learning the Ukrainian language for children and whole families of the Ukrainian origin. These include a Ukrainian handbook (introductory course: pronunciation and reading exercises, lexical exercises and short texts and a basic course with dialogues and texts, etc.). There are also supplementary materials such as a reading book, a workbook and an exercise key, and recordings. The project is a response to the difficulties of the returning emigrants from the Ukraine to find some teaching sources to teach their children the Ukrainian language.

3.2.6 Taking a real look at current practices and language minorities groups' needs
Findings from the PISA 2003 report showed that bi- and multilingual pupils and pupils with non-Danish background had results in reading and mathematics significantly below the Danish average and that only about half of the difference could be statistically explained by these pupils' lower socio-economic status. Additionally, several investigations point out large differences between communities, schools, and classes regarding the methods of bilingual education and the extent of instruction in Danish as second language. With this research as an impetus, the Danish initiative known as *Undervisning af tosprogede elever i folkeskolen* (Education of bilingual pupils in the public elementary school, DK151) was undertaken. It endeavours to gain more knowledge on how inadequate school results are affected by resources and methods used for bi- and multilingual pupils' schooling. Awareness of the vagueness of the Law of the Public Elementary School regarding the quality of schooling of these pupils highlighted the imperative for more knowledge of actual needs. The evaluation project had these aims:
- To analyse the strategies of local authorities and schools for the education of bilingual pupils, with respect to organisation, planning and implementation.
- To analyse how the schools conceptualise education of bilingual pupils, particularly in relation to the education in Danish as second language and the use of Danish in the lessons at school.

The results indicate considerable differences between the schools with respect to their views, routines, organisation and qualifications for the education of bilingual pupils.

- Some of them treat lecturing in Danish as second language as a separate topic, others view it as something that should be integrated in all subjects, and some of them combine both aspects.
- The efforts made by each school depend directly upon the number of bilingual pupils in the school.
- Only a small number of teachers have specific competence for teaching Danish as second language, a factor which has great impact on pupils' learning.
- There is little dissemination of teachers' knowledge to other teachers.
- Some schools have a static rather than contextual view of language, that is, they tend to view language instruction mainly as an instrument for teaching in other subjects, focussing on the pupils' linguistic deficiencies, rather than relating language instruction to work with integration.

(Suggestions stemming from this project have been included in the recommendations section at the end of this document.)

Another project that considers the evaluation of education institutions, the regulation of a legislative framework of multicultural education, the creation of course programmes and educational material, the training and sensitisation of teachers, parents, students is the Greek project: Ένταξη παιδιών παλιννοστούντων και αλλοδαπών στο σχολείο για την Α/θμια εκπαίδευση (Integration of Repatriates and Foreigners Students in Elementary Education, GR111).

3.2.7 Re-assessing assessment: Diagnostic tools for diversity
As it has already been pointed out earlier, evaluation of language minority groups is fraught with potential discrimination and cause for educational disadvantage. In an attempt to create more equitable circumstances, the European project in Slovakia, co-sponsored by Project Phare (SK201: Reintegration of socially disadvantaged children), endeavours to create better conditions for Roma education within the schooling system by means of designing suitable diagnostic tools which will enable to uncover the real potential and abilities of Roma children to carry on study at primary schools. Specific objectives of the project include the following
- to re-evaluate, update and define new diagnostic and entrance tests measuring the school readiness of children attending primary schools
- to re-evaluate and update of the verification tests for children enrolling in the first grades of a primary school
- to create a software application for the evaluation of the tests
- to provide on-the-job training for Slovak experts on using the proposed evaluation
- to organise trainings for the teachers and teacher's assistants working with children from socially and linguistically disadvantaged environment on related topics
- to develop 'culture fair' testing tools with specific administration of tests and consequent interpretation of the results taking into account specific living conditions - cultural environment, housing, habits etc. of socially disadvantaged children (mostly Roma children).

3.3 Is the target group involved?

Improving the access rate of minority language groups into higher education is a complex issue to tackle, considering the numerous factors that come into play. The fact that the following project includes minority language students in the design and outline of their own study proposals makes the *Proefpas* (BE18) (Belgium) programme unique. This is a programme file that is filled in by the pupil, with a multidisciplinary teacher counsel. Between them, they discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the pupil and link it to the orientation files of the pupil guidance centre. The teacher expresses his belief in the pupil and invites the pupil to contact the *Proefpas* counsellor of higher

education. This first contact, by means of the internet or the phone, is of the student's own initiative, placing the final decision and responsibility into the hands of the student. Privacy reasons are also at stake.

The *Proefpas* programme offers training so that students can find a good job in the labour market, placing a special emphasis on a positive orientation based on their competencies and their interests. Support is given to students and their families as the students enter into higher education. One specific branch of support lies in improving the candidate's language skills because good language skills are essential to succeed in higher education and to ensure integration in society.

The previously mentioned Belgian project *Wonderwel* (BE22) also highlights the need for involvement of the target group through parent education and parent involvement in the school system. This programme begins at pre-school age, arranging interactive language activities such as Book and Play on a Visit, The Babblebox, and Puppet-shows. It promotes high articulation between schools and minority language parents through activities like "School and Language for Mothers", parent participation at school, coffee-moments, working group Education, and a working group parents committee.

The Czech project *All–day school programme for a school with a majority of pupils from different socio-cultural surroundings* (CZ164) similarly bets on parental involvement, in this case aiming at the Roma population. In its endeavour to implement community-oriented educational activities, raise school-success and lower school-absence of pupils from socio-economic groups, minimise risk of social pathological phenomena, support pupils' personal growth, develop social skills and key competences and motivate them for further education in a natural and friendly school atmosphere, this programme insists on the importance of activating parental participation in their children's education. The areas of activity cover several fields, from support for educational skills and competences to leisure time activities. These may take place within amateur clubs and workshops, cultural and sporting trips, training camps, or thematic excursions round the Czech Republic.

In a similar vein, the Maltese programme NWAR (Late Blossoms) Family Literacy Programme (MT245), funded by the Foundation for Educational Services (FES) from the Ministry of Education, encourages parents to make a commitment that they will actively participate in the learning process of their children. This is supported by the heads of the schools and the classroom teachers of each referred child, who are invited to visit their pupil at special work centres in order to familiarise themselves with the process. The family literacy after-school programme is aimed at students most at risk of educational failure - from age 8 to 13 - and their families, with individual attention being given after assessment of needs. Individualised Learning Plans (ILPs) are prepared, implemented and reviewed with the parents of each referred child. Parents are expected to attend and learn the strategies, so that these can be replicated at home. It is important to point out that while officially Malta does not have any minority language groups; this programme signals vulnerable language communities as being given precedence in this service. These at-risk students lack basic literacy skills; which is often the case when minority language students' literacy-development needs are neglected.

Section 4: Conclusions and recommendations

4.1 A Summary of Educational Disadvantage related to language minority groups

It is important to revisit the markers outlined previously that can be considered to be indicators of inequality in education, which are functional literacy levels, exclusion and/or expulsion rates, rates of continuing education in post-compulsory leaving age and participation in higher education, employment rates after education, institutional segregation and evidence of social exclusion (including bullying).

As has been seen previously, **exclusion and institutional segregation** are a significant factor in minority language education, whether this is in form of placement practices resulting in uneven representation of language minority students in lower level courses and lack of access to academic content courses or higher representation in special education courses and more frequent drop-out rate.

In many countries there is evidence of institutional segregation or discrimination that may result in poorer achievement results. It is possible to see, for instance in the Spain country report (Dooly and Vallejo 2008) how there is little attempt by the central government to teach or use minority languages (eg Tamazight) in provinces where at least 25 percent of the population speak these language as their primary language. Whether this lack of instruction in the primary language may help strengthen general literacy skills is open to debate and goes beyond the scope of this study. Nonetheless, it can be noted that in the United Kingdom country report (Leathwood *et al.* 2008) lower levels of **literacy** were not only associated with socio-economic disadvantage, it was also found to be linked to those pupils with a first language other than English[9]. The Denmark country report clearly outlines the governmental position that links economic disadvantage and lack of the national language with educational disadvantage (Cederberg and Lingärde 2008). This same report indicates that there is a correlate between a lower level of **literacy** achievement and ethnic minority status: just as **school attainment levels** are lower for pupils with immigrant background (Cederberg and Lingärde 2008:18). Similarly, it has been indicated that immigrant populations are among "the groups that are most prone to being identified as functionally illiterate" in Greece (Spinthourakis *et al.* 2008:14). In the Czech Republic country report, immigrant and Roma populations are directly linked with issues of social integration (especially economic) with a subsequent focus on the teaching of Czech language although **literacy** is not mentioned (Vrabcova *et al.* 2008a).

Institutional exclusion can be an indirect result of 'invisibility' of certain populations, resulting in inappropriate policies or lack of resources allocated to that group. In many countries, the policies aimed at minority language groups (in particular 'new languages' stemming from immigration) are subsumed under general policies such as Intercultural Education. This can lead to a lack of cohesion, orientation and transparency when dealing with the diverse groups collocated in intercultural or 'minority' education or it may result in a combination of multilingual status with disadvantage. For example, according to the Denmark country report, the political understanding of is "children with another mother language [other] than Danish, often with incomplete knowledge of Danish" (Cederberg and Lingärde 2008:12). In Luxembourg, the multilingual population is seen as both a "wealth" and "a heavy mortgage" for the education system (Tozzi and Étienne 2008:3).

Considering the strong arguments made for long-term, late-exit language instruction, reception classrooms that are integrated into such wider policies may result in short-term solutions and worse overall education results for immigrant students. These short-term policies (for instance one-cycle reception class schemes) is based on an assumption that immigrants can acquire proficiency in the

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[9] This statistic refers to students with a non-British first language. The data does not include first language Welsh speakers and there is no indication that they have lower levels of literacy than (British) English speakers.

school's language of instruction and integrate into the mainstream curriculum in one academic year (see Spinthourakis *et al.* 2008:10). Reception classrooms are common practice in many of the countries observed in the EPASI study. These are often accompanied with additional resources, based on percentile of non-native speakers in the schools, although the efficiency of such measures for improving educational achievement has been questioned (see Lambrechts and Geurt 2008:25-26).

In some countries, pupils of ethnic minorities are guaranteed the right to education in their mother tongue, however this is often conditioned to available resources and the level of "development of their ethnic community" (Vrabcova *et al.* 2008a:5). In the Czech Republic, schools for national minorities may reach upper secondary school level, especially in the case of Polish immigrants. This is not available for other minorities because of the population distribution of different ethnicities. Minority language education is also available in Slovakia in certain regions (Hungarian, Ruthenian, Ukrainian, German or Bulgarian) wherein instruction in the minority languages is provided either in separate schools or in schools with joint administration (Vrabcova *et al.* 2008b: 4). This is contingent upon concentration of population. "Usage of national minority languages is allowed if citizens of the Slovak Republic who belong to national minorities make up more than 20 per cent of the population of the municipality according to the last census" (*ibid*.).

In other cases where mother tongue education is provided, studies indicate that there are a number of deficiencies, as is explained in the following example from the Swedish country report:

> The status of the subjects is low and there is a lack of qualified teachers. The main problems are that there has been a decrease in mother tongue education over a period of ten years and that the negative attitudes towards mother tongue education in the municipalities must be changed (Hartsmar 2008:16).

In some countries, concern has been expressed in relation to the use of native speakers in the role of helping in the integration of newly arrived students. "These teachers are paid by these countries and there is some suspicion about expanding ideological or religious ideas. More than 90 percent of these pupils live in Muslim families and the problem is that they are taught by Muslim teachers in State schools" (Étienne *et al.* 2008:8).

It has been argued elsewhere in the EPASI study that "educational attainment exerts a major influence on employment" (Moreau *et al.* 2008:20). As Leathwood *et al.* have argued, "on average, the higher the level of qualification attained, the higher the employment rate" (2008:16). Given that studies have demonstrated that track placement of minority language pupils is often inappropriate and these students are systematically placed in lower-level courses regardless of their academic ability, which in turn results in less opportunities for participation in courses required for **higher education admission** (Zuniga *et al.* 2005), then it is plausible to conclude that minority language speakers are more likely to have a lower **employment rate**[10]. For instance, in Denmark employment for immigrant population was significantly lower than there Danish counterparts: 38 percent of immigrant women are employed in comparison to 71 percent for native Danish women; 51 percent of immigrant men are reported as employed while 77 percent of male Danes are employed (Cederberg and Lingärde 2008:19). Apart from these percentages, there is a general dearth of statistics concerning minority language speakers in education as well as lack of studies in unemployment for this population in the countries examined in the EPASI study, there are studies worldwide that indicate that minority language groups tend to have a higher drop out and expulsion rate than majority language speakers (Cuenca 1991, McNeil and Valenzuela 2001, Heilig and

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[10] As mentioned previously (footnote 7, § 2.4.2), we are focusing on minority languages that are not the LoI. We are not referring to students attending schools where their first tongue is the minority language that forms part of a multilingual education model (eg Welsh, Catalan, Basque, etc.).

Darling-Hammond 2008) and achieve lower overall educational results than other populations (Walters 2007).

This premise is supported by Spinthourakis *et al*. (2008) in the Greek country report. These authors indicate that despite the fact that lower secondary education is compulsory, a large number of ethnic Greek and foreign immigrant pupils does not seem to enrol (Dimitrakopoulos quoted in Spinthourakis *et al*. 2008:15). It has already been pointed out in section 2 of this report that when language minority students have to repeat grade levels and fail exit exams, they are at increased risk of eventually dropping out of school, resulting in lower possibilities of any **postsecondary** plans or opportunities (King 2007). "Pupils with immigrant background can be expected to be clearly under-represented [in **higher (tertiary) education**], unless their disadvantages at primary and secondary level are significantly reduced (Cederberg and Lingärde 2008:18). It should be noted, however, that this is not necessarily the case in all the countries examined in the EPASI study. The Ireland country report indicates that "non-nationals were slightly *less* likely to fall in the category 'early school leavers'" (Moreau *et al.* 2008:19).

4.2 Recommendations

We have already discussed some of the potential risks of educational disadvantages for language minority groups such as, but not limited to, language assessment, lack of representation, affective problems related to identity, confidence and self-esteem, unequal distribution of resources, inequitable education systems, and negative attitudes towards the minority language. The effect different types of intervention may have on minority language teaching has been discussed. We have also looked at some of the ways in which these factors are being confronted by policy-makers, educators and members of the language community and considered some initiatives being taken in different countries in the European Union. It is encouraging to be able to say that considerable progress has been made but it stands to reason that more can be done. The following sections, while categorised in major target areas, should not be read as exclusive since inevitably there are transversal issues and opportunities that cross over different sectors in education policy and practice. Also, it should be borne in mind that these recommendations are seen as some of the key factors for bringing about more equality for language minority groups but the list should not be read as the only strategies that may be used to tackle the issue.

4.2.1 EU Policy-makers
In general, policymakers could
- bring more public awareness to the issue
- forge accessible policies through negotiation with all the major stakeholders (minority language groups included)
- foment research
- provide adequate resources for implementation of sound practice
- strengthen the role of publishing in minority languages.

Rationale:
In many countries, the dearth of explicit policies dealing with minority languages and the minimal practices to be found either in mainstream education or local bottom-up endeavours speaks almost as loudly as any advocacy group. It appears that, although there have been many calls for greater awareness of language diversity, language rights and the recognition of assets associated with plurilingualism, these insights appear to have had little impact so far on mainstream educational discourse. Greater public awareness and public discourse on the gains that can be achieved through linguistic diversity could possibly bring about more positive attitudes towards language minority groups and, subsequently, strengthen these groups' educational resources and possibilities. This requires more substantial research and publicity of research results that demonstrate the correlation

between degrees of multilingualism and economic and social development. This should then be directly translated top-down into European educational policy that deals with literacy and language development. Nonetheless, top-down policies must ensure that there are sufficient resources and support for implementation since the real correlation does not lie with quantity (number of language and degree of multilingualism) but with quality (education in the different languages).

There is a need for more informed enquiry into what is gained or lost by expanded multilingual education and minority language educational support. We might begin by defining education policy as the planning and organisation of strategies and activities that are directly or indirectly aimed at solutions to social issues. Add to this the concept that education policy is oriented towards the needs of target groups and that this commitment to the target group must be advocated, disseminated and accepted by not only the target group but also the general public, decision-makers and administrators, media, and professional organisations; then the complexity of educational reforms becomes evident. The aforementioned commitment to social issues implies the responsibility of policy-makers to bring about attitudinal and behavioural change, and negotiate new social setting amongst dynamic multi-stakeholder partnerships that make up society.

An important area for research for minority language education, then, is its cost effectiveness. Negative reactions towards multilingualism in education are often based on numerical considerations. Many official (and non-official) arguments against minority language education or heritage language education claim that there are either too many languages and therefore it is not feasible to develop the infrastructure needed for their use in education or else it is too costly. With this argument, the only solution remaining is to continue with the current practice. And yet there are very few studies on the costs and benefits of different languages in education programmes (nor studies on the cost of continuing with current practices with the inherent school failure of minority language students described previously). It would be of interest to compare the costs to society stemming from the different language teaching models discussed earlier with actual costs. Studies carried out by Vawda and Patrinos (1998, 1999) indicate that the majority of additional costs are tied to reformed teacher training and materials production costs, both of which are areas that consistently turn up in the EPASI Database as policies being written or local and/or regional practices. A global, systematic push is what is still missing since it appears that on local and regional levels, and to some degree, national levels, this practice is already taking place.

Research and dissemination of research and subsequent policy recommendations can help local, bottom-up initiatives as well. Practices should be informed with the latest research and recent policy documents in order to provide solid theoretical background to new projects. This is often over-looked in local endeavours but may be essential when seeking start-up funding and when looking for local, regional or national support for continuity. A recurrent factor that we found in our study is the lack of longevity of many projects which, apart from an abrupt ending, did not appear to have any faults in planning and implementation and were based on a solid needs-analysis and well-structured plans. Long-term planning is not easy and preliminary research into the eventual effects of a project and how to sustain efforts invested should be factors to take into consideration. Inevitably, opposition to local endeavours may occur since, as has been demonstrated, the nodal discourse currently remains rather negative towards minority language groups and well-informed positioning can be a key point for gaining advocates and for ensuring a long-life of the projects.

Finally, it is highly recommended reinforcing resources for publishing in minority languages that are placed in a disadvantaged position. The Education sector is in need of relevant teaching and learning materials, and as well as a general public exposed to minority language literature will adopt a more positive attitude towards the language. More emphasis on publishing –in all types of media- can also help create a meaningful literate environment for the minority language group.

4.2.2 Education policy-makers
National, regional and local policy-makers should strive to
- provide continued training services that enable teachers to comprehend and act in entho-linguistically diverse contexts
- promote multidisciplinary teaching and workgroups
- invest in specific training in language and literacy development in cross-disciplinary areas
- invest in the area of minority language education in the school curriculum
- reconsider assessment strategies
- foment innovative teaching approaches for minority language groups.

Rationale:
Most teachers are well-intentioned. But good efforts are often thwarted by lack of knowledge on how to best achieve theoretically sound goals. Providing support for teachers and education leaders is key. In many cases educators do not know how to encourage higher participation from language minority families, are unaware of the different ways in which cultural differences can complicate their work with minority language families and underestimate the economic, educational, cultural, and linguistic challenges that discourage families from participating in their children's education (Levine, Irizarry and Bunch 2008). Teachers, school staff and all personnel who work with language minority students need to be specifically prepared for dealing with the students and their families. Nowadays it would be unthinkable for a multinational company to ignore the language and cultural diversity of their employees and yet, in schools where student populations are all diverse, such expectations are practically inexistent. Education authorities need to ensure that teachers and school personnel have continuous training, updated resources and materials, and professional and personal support for adapting to these expectations. After all, as Muller and Baetens Beardsmore (2004) point out:

> Ever more classrooms are faced with mixed ethno-linguistic populations where in the early lessons there may be no common language that both teachers and pupils share or master comfortably. In the Dutch city of The Hague (Extra *et al.* 2001), 49 percent of children in primary education together use 110 different languages at home and 45 percent of the secondary school population share 75 different home languages, yet find themselves in a school system that was originally designed to cater for children who came from a 100 percent Dutch language background. Similar cases exist all over the world (p 1).

Educators and policy-makers also need to be prepared to interrogate the teaching approaches and educational perspectives underlying their academic systems. This is not always easy or comfortable; for instance, the most common approach to working with 'resistant students' is compensatory education. Compensatory education focuses on the cognitive approach to teaching and learning languages – that is emphasising the mechanics of language (Johannessen 2003). An approach that shows "students to learn how to learn" (*ibid.*), especially students who can draw on multilingual resources may prove to be more effective. This implies getting the students involved in their own learning process, as we have seen in a project detailed earlier in this report. It also means ensuring students see a purpose for learning by demonstrating that there are equal opportunities for access to higher education and future job markets. As has been discussed earlier, compensatory tracking systems do not guarantee this type of equity.

This should not be taken to mean that special support, when needed, should be withheld. Heritage language speakers, newly arrived immigrant groups and minority language speakers may need systematic help in their development of language and literacy in the language of instruction. Returning to the previous argument that programmes should be based on research-supported planning, then it stands to reason that language and literacy development programmes should take a broader approach than mechanical learning of language form. According to Cheung and Slavin (2005) beginning reading models based on phonetic programmes that consider the development of

all the students' languages (mother tongue and LoI) are especially effective while for more upper-elementary literacy development cooperative learning, extensive vocabulary instruction, and use of literature are most successful.

Parallel to this, policy-makers should work to ensure fair assessment for minority language groups, including new means of evaluation from very young ages and assessing procedures that integrate all language competences of the student. Most second-language research has looked at primary and secondary students, but there is also a need to develop effective evaluation methods for very young language-minority students (Nitsiou 2006). Apart from effective assessment tools, teachers must be trained to understand and assess multiple language development in young children. This is especially important considering that most mainstream testing is designed for monolingual students competent in the language of instruction and that this type of assessment has long-term effects on language-minority children in terms of tracking, opportunities and general expectations of them in the school system. These efforts should be coupled with the compilation of comprehensive data concerning the student's linguistic exposure and proficiencies in their language(s) and dialects and how they use language(s) in all their environments (inside and outside school). Developmental history described by family members and caretakers is essential as well as continuous monitoring through portfolio reviews of specific tasks designed to cover various areas of speech and language development.

It was pointed out earlier that research shows that education in the mother tongue (or one that they are comfortable with in the case of multilingual children) is one of the most effective ways for children to learn subject content – especially very young children. With this precept in mind, the promotion of teaching in the L1 of minority language groups, at least in the initial stages, seems reasonable. Attention must be paid to how this is set up. For instance, heritage language courses that work on developing academic proficiency and push minority language students to explore challenging content in their home language (content that has usually be reserved to courses aimed at higher education access) can enhance student motivation for learning (Matthews and Matthews 2004). It can also help broaden traditionally limited curriculum and academic choices for minority language students who, because they are in remedial language courses, do not have possibilities to enrol in these subjects.

This does not mean that the minority language should exclude instruction of the majority language considering that competence in the official language is an important means to avoid social exclusion in areas like employment or continued education opportunities, but it does mean re-thinking the more commonplace notion of monolingual education. Nor should this be taken to mean that only one or a handful of pupils in a region automatically gives rise to a right to be taught a minority language in a public school as this is not economically or pedagogically feasible. However, measures for promoting minority language learning of representative groups in mainstream education should be seriously considered and planned for wherever possible.

At the same time, minority language students should have access to learning in mainstream courses as well. This requires that local authorities integrate their policies directed at bilingual pupils' schooling with their general policies for all children and youth in the schools and that the education authorities clarify the link between the official learning goals of the language of instruction and the learning goals in other subjects in elementary school. Of course, few teachers are experienced at facing the challenge of delivering instruction and enabling pupil learning to a linguistically diverse student profile. Teachers may not comprehend in what ways and to what degree difficulties with the language of instruction can contribute to minority language children's obstacles with various educational tasks. To cite an example, in a 2005 study that explored the relationship between difficulties in language comprehension and task solutions, it was found that teachers almost always categorised the children's difficulties in mathematics as either technical difficulties or other diffuse

difficulties rather than explicit language-comprehension difficulty (Tuveng and Wold 2005). That is to say, the teachers cited "language of instruction problems" but were not able to state explicitly what kind of comprehension problem was taking place (eg did not hear a key word; did not know specific lexicon pertinent to the resolution of the problem; was not able to explain what they know). Specific training in detection and correction of this type of comprehension difficulties can help. Training teachers to provide effective content and literacy instruction requires integrating knowledge of: their students' language and cultural experiences; knowledge of the process of subject learning; and understanding of literacy development (Johnson 2005).

All of the above inevitably requires a new organisational framework within the wider curricula of many countries; more emphasis on teacher training in this area; recruitment of teachers from minority language communities; development of educational materials; promotion of new technologies for minority language teachers (which is often ignored commercially); better cooperation between multilingual communities and, perhaps most importantly, explicit acknowledgement of minority languages by majority language communities. There must also be a guarantee of continuity in the provision of regional or minority language education in pre-primary, primary and secondary, upheld by sufficient high-quality teaching materials and quality teaching of the regional or minority language.

4.2.3 Local administration (heads of schools, local education authorities, etc.)
Local administration should
- ensure there is sufficient investment in money, time and effort
- provide a space for sincere reflection on traditional practices
- invest in space, resources and teacher support
- encourage multidisciplinary work teams, both inside and outside the school context
- guarantee greater dissemination of useful examples.

Rationale:
Reconsidering the school infrastructure is a key factor for ensuring that language learning in kindergarten, primary and secondary school is effective. This may require additional investments. To begin with, class sizes must be small enough for language learning to be effective, there must be easily available and appropriate learning materials and enough time for languages scheduled into the curriculum. Training and implementing multidisciplinary teaching teams that include majority and minority language teachers can prove useful in planning and implementing learning programmes as well as providing a diversified team for comparative analysis of student performance (Salend and Salinas 2003). This can also serve as a platform for establishing a teaching and learning model that emphasises content learning through cooperative, hands-on engagement with the materials. Language learning through concept-related 'thinking' tasks and discussion can be successful. Above all, schools must adopt effective strategies for comprehensive language and literacy teaching.

The hiring of teachers and education professionals from language minority groups is a quick and efficient means of improving the current status of minority language students and improving their results (Lankard 1994, Díaz-Rico *et al.* 1994, Wong 1996, LLMPP 2000).

> University bilingual teacher preparation programmes can help to alleviate the shortage of bilingual teachers by identifying the human capital within the communities they serve. Community members who have the linguistic and cultural skills needed in bilingual classrooms can be a rich source for 'grow-your-own' bilingual teacher preparation programmes. Success can be ensured through careful selection of participants and modifications of the university's bilingual teacher preparation programmes. Especially, programmes should pay attention to identifying professors who are aware and prepared to

challenge the socioeconomic and sociopolitical biases and perspectives of the diverse group members. Through the careful building of a sense of community, specifically within the bilingual teacher preparation programme and the fieldwork placements, a safe zone is created where sociopolitical perspectives as well as educational theory and practice can be examined and critiqued. (Bustos Flores *et al.* 2002:518)

This is one step for schools that seek to adapt their organisational structures in order to meet the needs of minority language pupils and integrate such aspects in the rest of the teaching. It has been recommended in some of the policies in this report that the area of language of instruction teaching should be priority in teacher recruitment. In doing so, multilingual teachers should be high-profile recruits. Seeking volunteers for this type of learning outside the school can help provide a supportive environment that integrates plural languages into the academic context and helps bridge communicative gaps between minority language groups and majority language groups.

Educators and local education authorities can play a significant role not only in promoting positive attitudes towards minority languages but in creating opportunities for people to use it. This implies establishing networks that go beyond the classroom and the school yard. Non-formal education systems can be included in these networks, thus catering to children who have dropped out of school. Additionally, creating informal networks that incorporate members from the academic staff and members from outside the teaching community to create guidelines and recommendations can help schools from taking ill-informed choices. This can also lead to sharing of minority language resources and people 'know-how' and will maximise existing knowledge and expertise. And, as has been recommended by policies in the study, schools could create forums for dissemination of knowledge in this area.

4.2.4 Teacher training institutions
These institutions should:
- integrate positive attitudes in the training courses for all teachers, not only specialist teachers
- provide multidisciplinary approaches that integrate different aptitudes and knowledge about dealing with diversity
- strive to prepare teachers to successfully take advantage of the inherent resources of minority language students in the classroom.

Rationale:
A lot has already been said about the need for general teacher training concerning minority language groups. An essential starting point is the issue of attitude towards minority languages. Studies show that teacher training, along with the trainee's personal experience with languages other than the language of instruction, has a significant impact on the role they take in the classroom in relation to the minority language (Lee and Oxelson 2006). Teachers need to be made aware of the critical role they play in the personal, academic, and social trajectories of linguistic minority student (*ibid*.).

At both initial and postgraduate level of teacher training, there should be more integration of multilingual and intercultural education theories, methodologies and practice. This will help teachers become familiar with multiple language acquisition and such an interdisciplinary approach to teacher training that includes knowledge about and practice with minority language groups would prove more effective than relying only on language teachers to have expertise in this area. These interdisciplinary programmes could include collaborative development between both in-service and pre-service teachers as this can be fertile ground for reflective action and research for both groups of teachers. It may also be beneficial for joint training programmes across regions or even cross-border in the EU, in relation to languages in common.

Teaching institutions should recognise the important role of teacher supervisors otherwise there is little hope that the supervisors will promote the educational reform needed. There has been less focus on this area for recruitment than the need for recruitment of teachers from minority languages. However, inevitably the preparation that these minority language trainees receive will have direct and indirect effect on their future teaching practices (Dooly 2007, 2009). Minority language trainees may face unfamiliar, hidden difficulties that majority language teacher trainers are unaware of. Full support for both trainers and trainees, in terms of seminars, workshops, training materials and other teacher resources are needed.

4.2.5 Teaching strategies

Many recommendations that overlap the area of teaching have already been discussed. In this section, the recommendations are limited to specific strategies that can be used by teachers to enhance the learning and teaching opportunities of classrooms with minority and multiple language student profile. Recommendations are:

- be prepared to understand language diversity
- be accepting of all languages in the classroom, whether a prestige or non-prestige language
- legitimise the presence of multiple languages
- accept language-switching
- do not focus on prescriptive, formalised use of languages
- learn to carry out error correction effectively
- learn to recognise learners' use of interlinguistic strategies and do not label them as 'errors' or 'deficient use' of the LoI
- recognise individual developmental stages of pupils
- integrate peer tutoring into teaching approach

Rationale:

Several teaching strategies have been discussed explicitly or implicitly in our previous discussions about language teaching modules, infrastructure of the classroom and teacher training. Thus, in this section we will only mention what has not been explicitly described earlier, beginning with the idea of plurilingual classrooms. As was highlighted earlier, multiple languages in the classroom is, by and large, the norm in many schools throughout Europe. In such circumstances, a relaxed, tolerant attitude towards languages in general, without preference for any language in particular will help relieve some of the pressure on linguistic effort felt by minority language students as well as legitimising the presence of multiple languages outside the classroom. Perceiving code-switching between languages as communicative bridges that allows students with otherwise restricted abilities in the dominant language helps create an affective environment where no language is per se threatening.

If, on the other hand, the teacher focuses on non-native-like use of any language as cause for worry, inadequacy or in need of remediation, then the chances of 'risk-taking' in the weaker language of the student will be inhibited. Risk-taking, according to second language acquisition research is a requisite part of the development of accuracy (see Swain 1985 for more information about output hypothesis). As Milroy and Muysken (1995) have shown, code-switching is a naturally occurring phenomenon in multilingual societies which is used when deemed appropriate by participants in order to enhance communicative efficiency. In the plurilingual classroom, it should be seen as one of many interlinguistic strategies (Gajo 2001, 2007) that can be effectively used by teacher and pupils alike to construct meaning and knowledge.

The reality of ethno-linguistically diverse student profile requires that teachers be skilled in using pedagogy that is sensitive and responsive to the developmental and educational needs of their

students (Darling 2005, Hefflin 2002, Johnson 2005). In recent research, it has been found that visual aides are extremely useful in these circumstances.

> Through pictures, teachers display visual stimuli that can be universally understood by all students (Curtis and Bailey 2001). Visuals can be used in any subject area when teaching about concepts. Furthermore, hands-on materials and visuals that students can manipulate engage a variety of senses and help to make learning more meaningful, especially for diverse students who tend to be tactile, kinaesthetic learners (Bruno 1982, Curtin 2006) (Allison and Rehm 2007:15).

The idea of using multimedia and visual aides as an effective teaching strategy for disadvantaged groups in education has been brought out in the EPASI study, however, the main focus was on special needs. Still, it is clear that, for minority language learners, the use of visual teaching aids helps the learners attach meaning and mental images to words and concepts that they might not have comprehended otherwise.

Another highly effective strategy mentioned by Allison and Rehm is peer tutoring. Peer tutoring is an intensely communicative activity wherein the minority language student will be exposed to and using the language of instruction with their peer. At the same time, this type of activity promotes cooperative learning and mutual sharing of ideas and opinions. The benefits of cooperative learning, collaborative work and peer work has been documented thoroughly (Slavin 1980, 1987; Johnson *et al.* 1993, 1994; Harmin 1994; Falchikov 2005), but it is especially important to underline the benefits for inter-ethnic, inter-linguistic peers. Several examples of peer work were mentioned in the EPASI Database as examples of good practice.

4.3 Conclusion

It is evident that there are some highly commendable policies and practices taking place throughout Europe, put into place to ensure full equality in education of language minority groups. At the same time, it is evident that a lot stands to be done. One of the most striking features of the study is what is not there – the lack of mention of minority language groups in some countries, or the submersion of these groups under other policies such as ethnic minorities or socio-economically disadvantaged groups. Indubitably, many of these groups will overlap but specific policy, clarity and transparency in implementation and fully-scaled resources and funding specifically aimed at language minority groups is the most efficient way to ensure that these groups' needs are met, rather than being subsumed under other policy measures.

Reconsideration of what is to be accomplished through the policies and practices (and again, transparency of aims and objectives) are a key element for language minority groups. Some policies place more emphasis on 'full' competence in the national language, citing this as a means of social promotion for the individual and social cohesion for the society. This may signify a hidden agenda which is not necessarily for the good of the minority language group. There is also a widespread tendency to place language minority groups (in particular newly arrived immigrants) in the same category as special needs. These groups are often put in the same category (described as vulnerable and at-risk) without specifying what risks and thus reducing the possibilities of finding the correct solutions. As a consequence of these 'policies within policies' the tendency is to provide remedial courses for language instruction and in-home contact to help students with school-related tasks. These policies may place the onus of language learning, heritage maintenance, social cohesion and promotion of the minority language on the group itself when they often do not have the legal, social and political status to sustain the efforts needed.

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