REFORMING FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING IN EUROPE. MULTILINGUAL EDUCATION, CURRICULAR CHANGES, INNOVATION AND CREATIVITY IN TEACHING, DIVERSIFYING TEACHING METHODS

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Abstract
Communication in foreign languages is a priority for the EU and the globalized world. The Knowledge Society is based on education and communication. Multilingualism is one of the key principles of the New Europe, which is developing in the framework of the unity in diversity concept. Teaching and learning foreign languages is a process of prime importance of the European Union and a priority of educational policy in the European countries. Two documents prepared by the Council of Europe, Common European Framework of Reference for Languages and The Guide for the Development of Language Education Policies in Europe have a crucial role in these policies. Language teaching reform in European countries, organizing and developing multilingualism include important elements such as: diversification of the roles of teachers, stimulating, managing and evaluating educational innovation, decompartimentalization of teaching, language curriculum adaptation, diversification of language teaching methods.

Keywords: multilingualism, multiculturalism, linguistic diversity, multilingual education, quality, competence, proficiency, pragmatism.

I. Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) and the development of language policies

On February 6-8, 2007, the Council of Europe (Strasbourg), hosted an Intergovernmental Forum called "The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) and the development of language policies: challenges and responsibilities." The event recorded a large attendance consisting of experts in charge of education and language policies in the member countries of the Council of Europe and experts from European institutions. The theme and the scope of the forum attest to the importance currently attached to multilingualism and communication in a Europe that is built on democratic values, transparency and the idea of unity in diversity. As a member of the Council of Europe and the European Union, Romania is directly interested in these policies, which are able to create a genuine European opening for the country and to integrate it, to the fullest sense of the word, with the big European family.

Policy instruments devoted to multilingualism

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages was created by the Council of Europe (through its Language Policy Division) in order to promote transparency and consistency in teaching and learning foreign languages in Europe. The framework was launched in 2001, the European Year of Languages, and since then it has been translated into 36 languages. In the opinion of its initiators, the success of the system thus promoted has exceeded expectations, as the application of the Framework had a substantial impact on learning, teaching and assessment of foreign languages. The positive effects of the Framework continue to unfold, as its provisions are being implemented. CEFR, along with the **Guide for Language Educational Policy Development in Europe**, is a key tool in the efforts of the Language Policy Division to promote multilingualism. These two general instruments are complemented by specific, contextual means, such as the **European Language Portfolio** and the **Reference Level Descriptions** (RLD) for national and regional languages based on the CEFR. The Common European Framework of Reference has a broad coverage, including all levels of education institutions: primary, lower secondary and upper secondary education and higher education for adults, also known as "lifelong learning."

CEFR includes a descriptive scheme of language learning and use and speed of progress regarding its various parameters. It provides a common framework for developing programs, curricular directions, manuals, training programs for teachers and programs for their examination. There are six levels of progress with specific results - a compendium of descriptors of language proficiency, involving not only knowledge of, but also ability to use it. These descriptors have been made according to scientific criteria and are organized in a database that can be enriched and modified to meet current and future needs. Applying the common framework of reference

has enabled European countries to stimulate the reform of the curriculum and assessment in various educational sectors.
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Social cohesion and intercultural understanding

The need to create CEFR and then to implement and permanently adjust and improve it, according to specific national or regional contexts, was born amid major changes in terms of democracy, human rights and fundamental values in Europe. Thus, awareness at local, regional and national level of the role of foreign language learning and teaching conferred on the acquisition of language skills the priority status within educational policies. Under these circumstances, the relevant authorities and institutions have felt the need to introduce explicit standards to increase quality and efficiency of learning and teaching and to subordinate the idea ofcompetence. Increasing mobility in education and the employment market and the development of exchanges across Europe continue to determine the need to improve the transparency of language skills. At the same time, increased international collaboration gives new importance to linguistic development and intercultural understanding among citizens. It should be added that the rapid changes that took and take place in the composition of society determine a particular emphasis on language and intercultural skills as essential means of social cohesion and intercultural understanding. In the context generated by the affirmation of the value of linguistic and cultural diversity of Europe, it is necessary to review the role and place of different languages and learning objectives as a means of making multilingualism accessible to any European.

Six years after its initiation, the implementation of the Common European Framework of Reference has reached a key moment when the actions taken to date are assessed and the next steps are plotted. A need was felt for a discussion between administrative factors and industry experts on the use and influence of the Framework and the role the parties involved can play. The overall objective of the Forum of the Council of Europe was to examine ways to use the CEFR to maximum efficiency in its endeavor to promote multilingualism in Europe. In this context, the meeting offered the opportunity to address issues of prime interest in disseminating the Framework: analyzing the implementation of the CEFR in relation to other Council of Europe instruments; confirming the policy and principles related to the development of the CEFR and relating them to the current state in the implementation of the Framework; examining the roles and responsibilities of different partners regarding appropriate and effective use of the Framework; analyzing the best ways to disseminate experience in the field in the future; identifying new ways to meet the expectations of beneficiaries and to fill possible gaps in the Framework for a dynamic development of the CEFR; putting forth proposals on how the Council of Europe could best support its Member States in achieving current and future needs relating to the use of the CEFR. The Forum was also targeted at emphasizing the cardinal role of the language education policy as part of the social policy designed to promote an inclusive society, which focuses on cultural and linguistic diversity and promotes equal opportunities for everybody for quality life-long learning of foreign languages. Discussions at the Forum focused on three areas: assessment; curriculum and textbooks, teacher training.

New realities, new demands

The debate in the plenary session, stretched over three days, involved a wide range of topics related to the three main areas mentioned above. In order to shape up an image of diversity approach, we gleaned some of the titles of the speeches delivered in the hemicycle of the Council: the EU multilingualism policy; European indicators of language proficiency; Language policy for democratic citizenship and social inclusion; The impact of the CEFR and the European Council's emphasis on the new area of European education; The CEFR and the common reference levels: validated reference points and local strategies; The use of the CEFR in specific contexts. The plenary debate followed by workshops: groups 1 and 2 on evaluation, groups 3 and 4 on curriculum and teacher training.

The debate in the plenary session and the four workshops created the framework for drawing conclusions on the current state of the implementation of the CEFR in Europe and the measures that need to be taken for its development, depending on specific conditions of each country or region and at the same time, the consumer needs. Here is a selective presentation of the most important thereof, gathered under the sign of need: a consensus regarding future directions; identifying ways of ensuring quality of existing resources; creating an international platform for action; enriching the means to assess multilingualism; providing support for the implementation of the CEFR; providing complementary use of the existing instruments.

In Romania, foreign languages have always aroused interest, and Romanians have always overall displayed penchant for learning and speaking foreign languages. In this process, a major role is obviously played by schools, starting with the first, pre-school stages, up to university. However, over the recent decades, foreign languages have recorded a visible decline, especially at high school level, because of the teaching approaches and a marginal status that was conferred by virtue of an ad hoc scale of priorities. It was even a precarious approach of Foreign language studying, a treatment whose effects show today. It is time to eliminate such practice and for the educational institutions (schools, colleges, universities), together with their disciples, to assume the cardinal importance of learning at least two foreign languages. This is an urgency of education policy in Romania and of every citizen in the context of cultural diversity and multilingualism in the New Europe.

II. Plurilingual education, a European priority

The second part of this study is a selection and a summary of some of the fundamental issues addressed and developed in the **Guide for the Development of Language Education Policies in Europe. From Linguistic Diversity to Plurilingual Education** (Language Policy Division, Council of Europe, Strasbourg, April 2003). Presenting them in this paper aims to popularize in the academic space the guidelines of European policy related to languages.

Linguistic reality in each space and language teaching experience demonstrate that there are no standard solutions for the implementation of multilingual education, but instead there are many ways to do this, based on the principle that foreign language learning can be adjusted to suit context. Languages can be learned in different ways and degrees of knowledge. It is important to give up the preconceived idea that there is only one compulsory way for language teaching and learning, beyond which nothing is conceivable. In reality, teaching may be diversified in terms of the levels of competence, the types of competence (oral comprehension or oral expression, for example), types of speech, planning (the acquisition order), etc. This plurality of courses, skills and organization levels is the foundation of multilingualism; in this context, it is important to be aware of a reality: compulsory education should not pursue the same level of competence for all linguistic varieties taught. Organizing teaching in the context of multilingual education requires decisions regarding objectives and, hence, what is expected of students. In this process, the following would be specified: regional, social and other characteristics that may require certain forms of language teaching (border regions, areas with communities of immigrants, etc.); the coordination of language teaching, focusing on issues such as grammatical terminology, teaching literature, principles of curricular organization, etc.; curricular forms: combining skills to be taught; skills and proficiency levels monitored at each stage; covered thematic content to justify, for example, the criteria for the choice of cultural content: the supposed interests of learners, the validity of teachers' support methods, the aims of the intercultural education pursued etc.; the educational institutions involved; whether language learning is mandatory or optional; the language education format (total number of classes, classes per year, semester, week, etc.); teaching methods, evaluation and certification. Each of these aspects of language teaching can have different specifications, which means that one can imagine a huge number of practical forms able to manage linguistic repertoires and to develop life plans and needs for learners.

Foreign languages teachers: diverse roles, missions and responsabilities

Given the new conditions and requirements of knowledge and communication, it becomes necessary to redefine the profile of teachers involved in multilingual education. It is important to note that the responsibilities of language teachers are not only teaching: in many cases, they organize extracurricular activities such as study trips related to language teaching, performing arts activities, competitions, research and coordination under international projects, study groups, etc. It is very useful to identify these different functions - educational, institutional, cultural and intercultural - and integrate them in the official mission of teachers, since currently they are often conducted on a voluntary basis, although they are essential for the development of language teaching curricula.

Diversifying the teaching profiles also concerns teaching skills: the traditional demarcation of languages in school leads usually to the predominance of a particular teaching model - a single language teacher (English, German, French, Spanish etc.). However, multilingual education involves transferring skills and knowledge from one language to another and, therefore, suggesting the development of various profiles for teachers, who should have extensive linguistic experience and potential to teach a broader range of topics. In addition to teachers trained and qualified to teach one language (including literature), there should also be teachers trained to teach: a modern language and one or more classic languages (e.g. Latin), a language and humanities (e.g. philosophy or history), a language and a science subject, a language and technical or vocational discipline, a language and artistic discipline or sports etc. In response to the diversification of subjects, there should also be specialized teachers: 'exchange' teachers (a teacher who specializes in mother-tongue who teaches that language as a foreign language abroad); lecturers, assistants etc.; self-education tutors, distance education institutions (in which advanced students can play this role for the rest of the students); foreign language speakers who are not teachers, working temporarily as teaching staff; teachers in charge of international affairs; teachers responsible for promoting languages that are rarely taught in schools, also responsible for increasing the interest of colleagues, parents, speakers, businesses leaders and others in issues related to foreign language education policies; qualified teachers in life-long education to coordinate educational research and evaluation; teachers in charge of coordinating the use and production of teaching material (especially digital material), coordinating materials and language laboratories, etc. Each educational system can identify the most appropriate types of teachers to implement multilingual teaching, paying particular attention to training teams of teachers responsible for foreign languages, curricular design, assisting students, textbook selection, in accordance with the autonomy of each institution.

Didactic innovation and creativity, multidisciplinary approaches for a culture of plurilingualism

The multilingual education project also requires creating new ways of organizing classes. This type of education goes beyond the usual borders of subject matters, the usual pace of teaching and the usual structure of

education cycles. Its gradual implementation requires collective creativity in its management, in defining products (curriculum and syllabus design) and ways of teaching. A culture of multilingualism can be developed by creating study groups clearly identified with certain themes that bring together, in educational contexts, objectives and projects around common people who usually are not in contact: administrative staff and teachers, teachers from other educational institutions, teachers from different levels of the system, teachers of foreign languages and other subjects, teachers of official foreign dialects and foreign dialects, etc.

Teaching teams should cultivate multidisciplinary, thematically organized approaches: the same subject treated by teachers of various specialties. They can also handle issues related to: teaching methods in terms of competence, learning and preparation for learning, ways of transferring skills and knowledge from one language to another, the relationship between teaching language skills and cultural skills teaching, developing language classes (languages in diversified approaches) that meet the expectations of regional communities and national requirements. In this area of concern, we recommend contact with university teams. Research findings can be assessed by the administrative, academic and political authorities to determine whether their implementation in educational institutions is warranted, at least experimentally.

Creating a culture of multilingualism also involves collective research of how it can be applied in a certain place. This is not only an administrative issue, but it requires a change of mentality in the reorganization of foreign language teaching. It cannot be implemented without political continuity, medium and long-term financial planning and a timeframe for reform that enables the implementation to be evaluated and its cultural and social benefits identified.

Harmonization of the didactic methods. The integrated management of foreign language teaching

Traditionally, the curriculum was designed as a set of subjects studied over an academic cycle, without connections between them. Any possible links between subject matters and information are left to the pupils and students. The situation is substantially the same in terms of foreign language teaching, where the national language, foreign languages and regional languages are taught as separate matters. Such a division leads to a false perception of languages, since learning one of them is presented as being in competition with learning the others: the national language is compulsory in primary and secondary education, while others are optional, which leads to a hierarchy of languages according to the order in which they are studied (first, second language, etc.).

Multilingual education is based on the principle that the acquisition of a new language is grounded in previously acquired skills and knowledge while learning other languages. In this context, we need skills and knowledge transfer from one language to another, through a teaching approach that exploits the previous accumulation and experience, instead of ignoring them. Such an approach recommends that these subjects should be harmonized and, to a certain extent, be placed in relation to each other. A number of ways open in this respect: including linguistic awareness in the teaching of all languages to show what is common to the functioning of all natural languages; explicitly defining the objectives of language teaching; designing the curriculum in terms of clearly defined and explicit skills and levels of proficiency building on the proposals contained in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages; promoting defined common sets of skills (especially communication skills), applicable to all linguistic varieties: strategies for teaching writing systems, teaching/learning, reading, understanding the national language, analytical activities in the first language, approaches to oral understanding, based, for example, on television programs in national and regional languages, etc. Such harmonization of teaching methods is at the core of multilingual education. In addition, other means can be identified: activating the transversal skills of students by clearly identifying learning skills, particularly through training in autonomous learning, which is considered a basic skill; stimulating learning strategies through comparative approaches in relation to other languages: using multiple languages alternately in oral interaction, comparing linguistic systems (comparing descriptions of languages, types of speech, etc.); harmonizing teaching terminology (naming language-related activities), language description (concepts and categorization), by relating the grammar description of the national language/official language and other language varieties to each other; harmonizing assessment methods. Such harmonization can lead to simultaneous or parallel learning of related languages (Romance languages and Latin) that have common linguistic and cultural elements, but limited to certain skills (e.g. understanding reading and oral understanding).

An integrated management of foreign language teaching is also possible in the relationship between languages and other subject matters. For example, the teaching of literature should not be restricted to national literature, but it may include an introduction to European literature (in translation or original). Translating poetry provides another favorable context for examining the relationship between language and literature, just as drama does. History, economic and sociological studies of society (as part of a specific subject matter such as Geography) are key areas of intercultural contact for creating national perceptions and should therefore be treated in terms of intercultural education. Many other subject matters may involve the use and teaching/learning of language varieties other than the school language, especially in projects, problem solving, simulations and games, the same as other activities promoted by the education system.

Another way to integrate language teaching with general education is the teaching of subjects in another language: it may be a national or official language variety other than the usual, or one that is recognized in a particular region or regional, minority or foreign varieties. To this end, we need: language-trained teachers

specializing in a specific subject or subject-trained language teachers; teaching teams where the task of each member (language teachers, teachers of other subjects) is clearly defined; textbooks; articulation and coherence for the next stages of education (e.g., from secondary to university, through cooperation agreements with foreign institutions) so that teaching a subject in a foreign language does not represent just an isolated episode.

Curricular changes for teaching and learning foreign languages
The potential diversification of teaching depends on the choices made according to the objectives in the educational institutions. It is based on the possibility of structuring language learning in skills and goals for each skill.
a. Language and cultural skills differentiation: the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages
The results expected from students at the end of a language class can be defined in terms of skills by clear, common indicators, regardless of the language taught. A typology of these skills or skill components was established by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, and Assessment (CEFR). The document, which was proposed as a common basis for designing language syllabi, is an essential tool for creating coherence within and between the education systems of the Member States of the Council of Europe.
This tool can also be used as a basis for individual self-assessment of language skills, as described in the European Language Portfolio. The language skills and skill elements identified in the Framework of Reference are: oral production (speaking, the purpose of making a presentation to an audience, for example), written production (writing a text), auditory and visual reception (watching television, listening to a song, a conference or radio program, etc.) understanding of reading (reading in the traditional sense), spoken interaction (in the sense of taking part in a discussion, debate, etc.) written interaction (real time: Internet chat groups, emails, etc.). These skills involve recognition or production of written or oral discourses, which may be different in shape and organization in different linguistic communities (ways of greeting, apologizing, writing a business letter, etc.).
Such skills can be acquired by developing a strategic know-how (such as planning a text) and knowledge, especially grammar (also known as linguistic): phonetics and intonation (very important for oral communication), and lexical and semantic skills (vocabulary), morphologic skills (verbal forms), syntactic skills (the combination of words and their order in the sentence), writing skills. Language teaching also implies cultural skills that can be separated from language skills. For example, skills and know-how - instrumental skills (the ability to coordinate an unfamiliar environment) and interactive skills (the ability to coordinate verbal and non-verbal interaction with others); the ability to discover: the science of finding and acquiring relevant knowledge and information about a particular company; the ability to interpret unknown cultural, social, and political terms in terms of an individual and that of members of other companies (external personal interpretation and interpretations made by the social actors involved); the *savoir- être* as an intercultural skill in the strict sense: the ability to manage cultural shock, to adopt an attitude that is more than a tourist reaction, to be detached, to see things in perspective, to develop an open and tolerant attitude, to act as a cultural mediator, etc.
In order to design curricula, it is important to determine the skills envisaged (all skills, some of them, one skill, etc.), and also the skill target. This definition of levels is possible through reference levels provided by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. Reference levels are drawn up in accordance with common principles and in relation to the Framework.
b. The content of language teaching and learning in compulsory education
The content of teaching in the context of compulsory education presents special problems. The linguistic needs of the students are not identifiable at this level; their future career paths cannot be a decisive factor. Curricular content and target language skills, in the strict sense of the word, and appropriate educational activities may be chosen based on several considerations, including: their alleged communicative usefulness in the medium term, their immediate and short-term value to motivate students, their role in group project management (in class or school), their educational usefulness (learning to learn, for example), their role in aesthetic experience, intellectual training, identity development, intercultural education, for democratic values and for creating social cohesion and solidarity. The dominant pattern in many types of language teaching is still curricula with undifferentiated skills, aimed at acquiring one skill only: language. It is this all-inclusive model that should be replaced by an approach of skills and proficiency levels, thereby making possible the diversification of language curricula and the development of diversified language courses for school and post-school age.
c. Content of language teaching and learning and language needs
The options regarding the skills to be taught and each target level can be determined according to the linguistic needs of students. Such analysis is relevant to the entire educational process (including compulsory education), but it regards essentially those involved in vocational education - organized language courses at companies or government departments in the context of lifelong learning. It is important that the learning objectives be negotiated between company managers, training departments (internal or external) and trainees. In this context, the following issues should be clarified: specification of the initial level of knowledge, how to select

students, recognizing the company's training courses (bonuses, access to certain jobs, careers, etc.), the time of the course (during office hours or the rest period?), the proposed certification (internal, external, official, etc.).

d. *The content of language teaching and learning in higher education*

Higher education institutions have an important role in multilingual education, since they are, in a sense, where the transition occurs from school-imposed acquisition to the free option to learn languages. It is absolutely essential that languages continue to be part of university education, no matter the area in which the students specialize.

Language teaching can be well established in higher education, but oftentimes only a few hours are allocated for it, and this at substantially more advanced levels. It is therefore essential to ensure the continuity of secondary education at university level. For a profitable use of the limited time dedicated to language skills, focused courses should be developed. Such an approach, the same as the course content, will vary greatly depending on the specialization of students: target skills will not necessarily be the same for those who specialize in math, biology or filmmaking. At the same time, it is governed by the level of skills of students in their specialties (degree of initiation, research, etc.). In most cases, a special place must be given to reading and understanding (reading texts not translated in other languages: articles in specialty publications, newspapers, etc.).

Usually in higher education, except for the foreign language and arts departments, little time is given to foreign languages, and this can cause language courses to be awarded an ungrateful status. University language policies should be designed in a holistic perspective, while transversal skills should not be abandoned. In particular, it would be useful to consider the question whether or not it is appropriate to make room for elementary language education (level A1); however, some consider it outside the mission of higher education. This is a way to understand the university as a step in the process of acquiring knowledge, and not as a language route. Establishing joint language resource centers would be a way to encourage learning for purposes other than academic or professional (travel, personal interests, etc.) and could provide opportunities for training in the autonomous learning of languages.

Teaching languages in higher education should therefore be diversified at curricular level in accordance with the following points: the function of language in the courses offered (in university departments, for example), the function of language in the student's personal education, language function in transmitting knowledge (use of languages in teaching), language function in the international affairs of higher education institutions: international agreements, online education, mobility of teachers and students, training periods abroad, the presence of foreign students.

But such diversification in agreement with specialty should be supplemented by transversal teaching to avoid losing sight of multilingual skills. Universities may find it even easier to assume this role in language learning routes if their teaching is conceived in relation to the territory and, therefore, consistent with its accessibility to people from outside the university, with emphasis on the idea of complementarity with other language courses available elsewhere.

Teaching foreign languages: diversified methods for diverse groups

Multilingualism has been adopted as a principle for language policies, due to the increased need for Europeans to communicate with each other. This view arose from the need for more effective teaching. The solution adopted was to use what is called communicative teaching methods based on the division of matter, not on formal elements (like the article, adjective, main sentences, secondary sentences, etc.), as it was before, but based on functions (to apologize, to offer something to someone, to give advice, etc.). Teaching is based therefore on active methods (simulation of real communication situations) and practical methods (using texts and materials that were not designed for teaching) to engage students directly in the act of learning. Such a genuine methodology was designed to make it possible for languages to be learned, if not faster, then in a more operational manner, in actual communication.

Language teaching methods vary by groups of students, educational objectives and different educational situations, which means that there is no single solution. While active, authentic teaching methods are more efficient, they do not always prove suitable for any group of students and all teaching and learning situations. In the context of the essential need to learn languages, some students have to be gradually led to communicative teaching methods, so as not to reject them, since, as effective as they are, they do not conform to the student's view on language teaching.

Therefore, attention should be given to diversifying teaching methods in order to take into account the following: student's age – younger students will love approaches involving games, not necessarily suitable for adults, who may consider them childish; their level - level C students want more explanations regarding problems of grammar or precise language problems than beginners (level A) and also prefer more analytical methods; their style of learning: some students are prepared to take risks and make mistakes in order to learn, while others want, above all, to understand; educational traditions, especially the type used for teaching the national language. If tradition is very formal, then teaching may also be planned according to the first experience of language learning. Similarly, if the traditions of teaching are organized in relation to skills, teaching skills will be a justified criterion adapted to the educational context; the nature of present-day languages - if the new

language varieties to be incorporated into linguistic repertoires vary greatly (in terms of linguistic structures and cultures) from existing ones, students may feel the need for a descriptive intellectual transition before starting communication, even simulated.

These characteristics of educational situations require appropriate teaching of students, not necessarily in agreement with their opinions on teachers, but not too far from their expectations. Such educational prudence can be expressed by choosing different methods, according to skills, levels and types of multilingual repertoires and education cultures.

Conclusions

Teaching and learning foreign languages represent a priority in Europe. The linguistic diversity and the need for communication in the European Union have generated the need for people to know at least two foreign languages. Thus plurilingualism has become a governing principle of the current language policies in Europe. Policies provided in such documents as the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, the Guide for Language Educational Policy Development in Europe, the European Language Portfolio, the Reference Level Descriptions address to the European countries and their educational systems. Education is the space of teaching and learning foreign languages, viewed as means of communication and knowledge. In this respect, European policies and documents promote the reform of teaching and learning foreign languages by new methods and approaches to facilitate the plurilingual education for the European citizens throughout the educational process in all its stages, from preschool to university education, and through lifelong learning. Some of the most important elements of these policies are: diversifying the roles of teachers, stimulating, managing and assessing educational innovation, decompartmentalizing language teaching, adjusting language curricula, diversifying language teaching methods.

Given the nature and extent of the changes in this area, the reform of teaching and learning foreign languages launches a major challenge to education systems, to schools, higher education institutions and human resources. To achieve this reform, some elements are needed: creating an administrative framework at the level of education to support European innovations, reforming the educational process itself from inside. It means that not only the educational system must adapt to the new demands, but also each language teacher must review the vision and teaching methods. The stake of the plurilingual education development is a major one and involves responsibility and competence at the administrative systems and human resources levels. Plurilingual education is a social and individual need in the European Union and in the Knowledge Society. In this respect, in the new contexts of life and training, it must be assumed as a priority by the states, by the education systems and by each individual, which is a crucial challenge. Multilingualism in a world defined by multiculturalism and diversity makes such concepts as *unity in diversity* and *alliance of civilizations*, which might seem mere utopian projections, possible and effective, through plurilingual communication in the world of globalization.

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