

Faculté de philosophie, arts et lettres

Closer to diversity

Plurilingual education: the notion of
interculturality

Mémoire réalisé par : Romina Casadei

Promotrice : Prof. Fanny Meunier

Année académique : 2023-2024

Master [120] en langues et lettres modernes, orientation germaniques, à finalité didactique.

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Abstract (EN)

The subjects of culture and interculturality in the language classroom have already been at the core of numerous publications, projects, and discussions. An evolution in the concept of culture in pedagogy and the advent of new principles have indeed been observed in recent decades, notably in the European context, with an emphasis on so-called 'pluralistic approaches' to contribute to the attainment of the educative goals suggested by the Council of Europe in the domains of languages and cultures. This master's dissertation therefore aims to explore the notion of plurilingualism, and more specifically interculturality, in the realm of language education. More specifically, the present research endeavors to overcome a lack of information and resources concerning these pedagogical principles. This study adopts an exploratory and intervention approach where new material is proposed to teachers and co-created with them. Concrete examples of activities that train the intercultural competence are thus offered for every stage of education (from kindergarten to B2-level of language) and ways of improving these activities are given. All in all, this thesis is made for teachers and with teachers to promote and facilitate the implementation of the intercultural competence in language education.

Keywords: *culture, plurilingualism, interculturality, language awareness, awakening to languages, ...*

Abstract (FR)

Les thèmes de la culture et de l'interculturalité dans les classes de langues ont déjà été au cœur de nombreuses publications, projets et discussions. Une évolution du concept de culture en pédagogie et l'avènement de nombreux principes ont en effet été observés au cours des dernières décennies, notamment dans le contexte européen, avec un accent mis sur les approches dites « pluralistes » pour contribuer à la réalisation des objectifs éducatifs suggérés par le Conseil d'Europe dans les domaines des langues et des cultures. Ce mémoire vise donc à explorer la notion de plurilinguisme, et plus spécifiquement d'interculturalité, dans le domaine de l'enseignement des langues. Plus précisément, la présente recherche s'efforce de combler le manque d'informations et de ressources concernant ces principes pédagogiques. Cette étude adopte une approche exploratoire et d'intervention afin de proposer et co-crée du nouveau matériel aux/avec les enseignants. Des exemples concrets d'activités qui entraînent et forgent la compétence interculturelle sont ainsi proposés pour chaque stade de l'enseignement (de la maternelle au niveau B2 de langue) et des moyens d'améliorer ces activités sont donnés. En somme, cette thèse est faite pour les enseignants et avec les enseignants pour promouvoir et faciliter la mise en œuvre de la compétence interculturelle dans l'enseignement des langues.

Mots clés : *culture, plurilinguisme, interculturalité, éveil aux langues, ...*

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List of abbreviations

CEFR = Common European Framework of Reference for Languages

DBR = Design-based research

EAL = Éveil aux langues (Awakening to languages)

ECML = European Center for Modern Languages

ELODIL = Éveil au Langage et Ouverture à la Diversité Linguistique

EOLE = Éducation et Ouverture aux Langues à l'École

FL = Foreign Language

FREPA = Framework of Reference for Pluralistic Approaches to Languages and Cultures

FWB = Fédération Wallonie Bruxelles

L1 = First language (mother tongue)

L2 = Second Language

M1 = Première maternelle (First year of kindergarten)

M2 = Deuxième maternelle (Second year of kindergarten)

M3 = Troisième maternelle (Third year of kindergarten)

P1 = Première primaire (First year of primary school)

P2 = Deuxième primaire (Second year of primary school)

TEMPLATE = Technology-Mediated Plurilingual Activities for (language) Teacher Education

TBI = Tableau interactif (Interactive board)

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1 Introduction

Precisely defining the main focus of language learning in European foreign language classrooms is no easy task. Many existing studies in the broader literature have tried to answer this question and it seems that it has received different answers through time (grammar, vocabulary, communication, etc.). Still, one aspect seems to be marginalized in language teaching pedagogies: culture. Culture – as well as intercultural skills - has somehow always been relegated to the margins as it was considered as knowledge (or skills) that pupils would learn or acquire after other skills were acquired, and possibly also not necessarily in classrooms but rather through traveling or visiting other countries, places or interacting with new communities (Liddicoat 2004: 2). Yet, several studies seem to argue that the situation is slowly changing in European foreign language classrooms. In these last few years, plurilingualism has become an important aspect of language teaching as it is now a key principle of the *European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEFR). The CEFR thus defines plurilingualism as follows:

“Plurilingual and pluricultural competence refers to the ability to use languages for the purposes of communication and to take part in intercultural interaction, where a person, viewed as a social agent has proficiency, of varying degrees, in several languages and experience of several cultures. This is not seen as the superposition or juxtaposition of distinct competences, but rather as the existence of a complex or even composite competence on which the user may draw.” (CEFR 2001: 168)

Taking a closer look at the four main approaches of plurilingualism, and specifically at the intercultural approach, it can be argued that this principle is an asset to developing cultural awareness in all stages of education. In Europe, some teaching systems, such as the FWB in Belgium, are moving in this direction as they now offer an awakening to languages course from kindergarten onwards. These language awareness courses, although not strictly speaking language courses, can be a good opportunity to work on intercultural competence. In this dissertation, it will be argued that developing the intercultural competence is not only necessary in language teaching because it allows pupils to acknowledge the essential role that culture plays in communicative situations but also because it allows pupils to learn to know themselves and their (often plural) cultural identity(ies) and that of others. The idea of culture as “pure” and “original” has long been refuted in favor of a more accurate reality: that of the multicultural nature of our societies. To navigate in these societies, it is therefore essential to

have the right tools and competence. It can therefore be argued that teachers' ally in introducing culture as a competence in the classroom is the notion of interculturality. The *Guide for the Development and Implementation of Curricula for Plurilingual and Intercultural Education (2016)* defines this notion as follows:

"Intercultural competence, for its part, is the ability to experience otherness and cultural diversity, to analyse that experience and to derive benefit from it. Once acquired, intercultural competence makes it easier to understand otherness, establish cognitive and affective links between past and new experiences of otherness, mediate between members of two (or more) social groups and their cultures, and question the assumptions of one's own cultural group and environment." (10).

Although European recommendations and pedagogies seem to tend to these principles, much research has shown that it is not always an easy task to implement them into practice. The scarcity of resources and information to target culture can be challenging for teachers from kindergarten through the last year of secondary school. It is therefore crucial to create practical material that can help teachers implement the notion of interculturality in their classrooms.

The structure of this dissertation is as follows. Section 2 over the literature review is divided into seven subsections which endeavor to show the evolution in terms of culture teaching in the spectrum of language teaching (section 2.1) as well as the difficulties teaching culture brings (section 2.2). European documents and recommendations are analyzed in this context (section 2.3) to then give a proper definition of plurilingualism (section 2.4) and interculturality (section 2.5). Lastly, section 2.6 is dedicated to analyzing the FWB context in terms of language teaching and awakening to languages. Section 3 outlines the methodology of the practical part as well as the aim of the research questions. Section 4 is dedicated to the practical part and is divided into seven subsections each devoted to a specific activity and the feedback received. Lastly, section 5 concludes this dissertation and opens the discussion to further analysis.

2 Literature review

2.1 Culture in Language Teaching

The issue of culture in foreign language classrooms has been the subject of much research and many authors have argued that culture should be an integral part of language teaching. While it is often said that learning a language opens one's mind to other cultures, there is a paradox in the conception of culture and the place it should have in foreign language learning. Kramersch and Byram have done some insightful work on this aspect and state that culture is often regarded as knowledge to be acquired independently of languages. In that sense, culture is only considered "as mere information conveyed by the language and not as a feature of the language itself" (Kramersch, 1993: 12). However, it can be said that every word of a language is embedded in a specific cultural context. Kramersch in the first chapter of *Précis du plurilinguisme et du pluriculturalisme* (2008) states that "[l]'apprentissage d'une langue n'est pas simplement l'acquisition d'un système linguistique autonome mais le développement d'un mode d'expression que partagent les membres d'une communauté linguistique donnée" (35). Byram agrees saying that "les mots d'une langue étrangère renvoient à des significations à l'intérieur d'une culture donnée, créant ainsi une relation sémantique que l'apprenant doit comprendre" (1992 : 18). More recently, an article entitled *Culture Teaching in Foreign Language Teaching* (2013) has argued that "the relationship between language and culture is dynamic" and that if language constitutes a crucial element of culture, the culture also influences the language. Sun even uses the metaphor of water and source to talk about language and culture to highlight the fact that every language, or variety of languages, is rooted in a cultural heritage. One cannot go without the other (Sun, 2013: 371). The work *Context and Culture in Language Teaching and Learning* (2003) therefore shows that the same word can have different meanings depending on the pupils' sociocultural context (Byram and Grundy: 4–18). It can therefore be argued that a language is not merely a means of communicating but also the reflection of a certain culture. If culture is conveyed by language, a failure to understand the meaning of a sentence or word does not necessarily come from a lack of vocabulary or skill in the language but can come from a cultural misunderstanding. As explained in *Context and Culture in Language Teaching and Learning* (2003), if someone does not know that some people in Africa are accustomed to carrying their babies on their backs

rather than on the chest, as usually done in Western countries, he or she may not understand the meaning of “carrying a child in the back” if it is introduced in a conversation even if he or she can translate every word of this sentence in his or her language. The misunderstanding does not come from a lack of skill or vocabulary but comes from a cultural misunderstanding (Byram and Grundy, 2003: 26). In this regard, learners must be considered “social actors” who have different cultural identities that help them shape the world accordingly (Byram and Grundy, 2003 : 2). It can therefore be argued that “since language and culture are inseparable, we cannot be teachers of language without being teachers of culture – or vice-versa” (Byram 1994: vii)

However, many have observed that teachers often prioritize listening, reading, and speaking skills in the classroom at the expense of culture. Moreover, when it comes to higher-level students and/or communicative competencies it can be observed that, although culture is mentioned in textbooks and language teaching programs, they tend to focus more on skills and communication rather than culture itself. A paradox is thus observed by Byram, who argues that the study of languages alone cannot provide pupils with the so-desired openness and that it is thus necessary to have a well-established pedagogy of the culture in foreign language classrooms (Byram, 1992: 18). In that sense, language learning should help learners master different cultural codes to communicate properly with others and avoid misunderstandings. Moreover, if the main focus of language teaching is on communication, teachers most certainly need to target culture because, in a communicative situation, cultural mistakes are often less forgivable than grammatical or vocabulary-related mistakes. Another dimension can therefore be added to language learning: the aim is not only to speak about one's own culture through the words of the other but also to understand the other's culture through his or her language. In doing so, pupils become “aware of their power to construct, in that language, worlds different from their own” (Byram and Grundy 2003: 16). Only then, can it be said that language learning provides pupils with openness and tolerance towards others because pupils will have freed themselves from the limits of their cultural environment and ways of thinking (Byram 1992: 11). Byram was already highlighting the importance of culture in language teaching in 1992, and this concept is still the driving force behind a great deal of research. More recently, a study called *Interculturality in the English Teaching and Learning*

Process (2022) went in the same direction arguing that “the pragmatic and sociolinguistic awareness, which are essential components in communicative approach, are not enough aspects to be considered if teaching and learning a foreign language aims at contributing to the construction of more profound human relationships” (164). It is therefore stated that “[t]he ability to use the language in a socially and culturally appropriate way, plus the awareness that teachers and students must have in the classroom with respect to diversity and complexity, is the basis for building a democratic society.” (Flórez-Montaña et al : 163).

2.2 Difficulties of cultural teaching in foreign language classrooms

It is however relevant to state that targeting culture in foreign language classrooms can be challenging for several reasons. Kramsch in her work *Context and Culture in Language Teaching* (1993) introduces many oppositions that make the learning of culture difficult and controversial. Although some of these difficulties and paradoxes have been partly resolved today, it remains relevant to dive into the vision that has dominated language teaching for many years. First and foremost, grammar was often put in contrast to communication in language teaching (Kramsch, 1993: 4). This implies that teachers usually had the idea that learners should master the grammatical structures of a language before learning how to communicate. Yet, it is by learning how to communicate that we can come into contact with others and their culture. Recent articles such as Kim’s *Learning Language, Learning Culture: Teaching Language to the Whole Student* (2022) put forward the same argument, saying that “[i]nstead of teaching language, as if it were just a collection of grammar and vocabulary, we need to think about language as extending into many aspects of life and engaging whole people” (Kim, 2022: 519). Another recurrent opposition in language teaching was “skill versus content” (Kramsch, 1993: 4). The second focus of the teacher was on teaching the learners how to understand and communicate properly. They therefore taught learners how to master skills such as reading, listening, writing, and speaking but they often left the content, which here includes culture, out of the picture. Yet, as previously stated in section 2.1, learning to communicate without considering what you want to communicate and whom you want to communicate with can lead to misunderstanding and miscommunication. In addition, extensive research states that learners do not speak enough in the classroom. Kramsch talks about “teacher talk versus learner talk” (5). Teaching is still too often seen in the traditional

way, where the teacher passes on his or her knowledge and the learners absorb it silently. However, if the learner adopts a passive stance in the classroom with very little speaking time, it is difficult for the cultural encounter to take place. Yet, there seems to be a change in mentality in this area. In fact, it seems that recent years have seen a growing awareness of the place of the teacher and the student in the classroom. Recent articles for example state that “in general more attention should be paid to culture teaching methods in FL teacher education in order to move from the traditional teacher-centered approach towards a new dynamic and learner-centered practice” (Maijala, 2018). This MA dissertation will later explore this change by analyzing arguments that suggest that the learner should be seen as an actor with his or her own identity and therefore his or her cultural background.

Another important dichotomy that could explain the difficulty of teaching culture in foreign language classrooms is “language versus literature” (Kramersch, 1993: 7). Teachers often choose texts for their informative value to exercise the reading competence. Learners must read the text, understand the main message, and be able to express themselves on the subject. These texts, however, have rarely been literary texts that learners could interpret. Language teachers considered for a long time that it was not their place to teach literature as such or they felt they were not competent enough to do so (Kramersch, 1993: 7). It is however relevant to add that this conception of literature in foreign language classrooms has evolved the last decenniums. There is greater attention to authentic materials in the classroom and teachers, therefore, use literature as input materials as mentioned in several programs and referential for languages. However, there is still little place in foreign language teaching to analyze and interpret literature. The primary use of literature is thus to provide learners with texts they can use to train their receptive skills. Yet, literature can give valuable insights into a culture, and learning to interpret a text and debate with others on the different ways of understanding this text can be part of cultural teaching. As previously stated, the main focus when reading a text in foreign language classrooms is to understand and extract information. There is little to no attention paid to the way the text is written, its register, style, or choice of words. These elements can however give information about the cultural background in which the text is written. Kramersch names this phenomenon “reading to learn versus learning to read” (1993: 6). Kramersch’s observations lead to the conclusion that language is often set in

opposition to culture as if culture is not anchored in the language (Kramersch, 1993: 7). It has however been demonstrated that change has been on its way for quite some time regarding culture in foreign language classrooms. A later section will show how programs and referential have been adapted to this end.

In addition, if teachers could overcome their misconceptions about language learning, they would still be facing many practical obstacles that would prevent them from implementing a pedagogy of the culture in their classroom. Byram states that cultural learning should “contribuer à réduire les préjugés et promouvoir la tolérance” as well as “promouvoir le développement personnel des élèves et leur éducation dans son ensemble”(1992 : 34). However, these objectives can never be taken for granted as they require considerable investment of both time and energy (Byram, 1992: 34). Moreover, Kramersch develops two aspects that can hinder these objectives. She speaks of “aspect culturels et politiques” and “aspect stylistiques et littéraires” (2008: 36). The cultural and political aspects refer to anything that prevents language learning for political or cultural reasons such as discrimination, taboos, censorship, discrediting, consideration of ‘non-official languages’ etc. In some countries or regions, learning about culture can be difficult for political reasons and it can be the source of stereotypes or discriminatory prejudices. It is therefore of the utmost importance to be aware of these aspects to avoid them as much as possible, thus fulfilling the objective of reducing prejudice and prompting tolerance. In the same way, the stylistic and literary aspects point to the difficulty of finding an identity in the other’s language. As previously stated, culture and language are intertwined. In this regard, writing and speaking in another language means finding your own style and identity through someone else’s language and culture. Kramersch therefore points to the difficulty of appropriating the language of the other while retaining one’s own identity (Kramersch, 2008: 36).

To conclude this section, it can be argued that establishing a pedagogy of culture in foreign language classrooms presents a large number of difficulties because it requires a lot of time, self-awareness, energy, and caution. Many researchers, however, argue that despite the obstacles, it is not impossible to achieve this aim. Some of them give teachers insights and advice on how to target culture in the language classroom (see references mentioned

hereafter). Byram states that cultural learning is broad and can therefore encompass many topics such as “social identity and social group, social interaction belief and behaviour, socio-political institutions, socialization and the life-cycle, national history, national geography, national cultural heritage, stereotypes, and national identity” (1994: 51). He also argues in two of his works that to target culture in the classroom, learners first need to learn about their own culture, then encounter another set of values which will enable them to compare and put in relation the two cultures. In that sense, learning about culture is seen as a process and not as knowledge to be acquired. Byram says that “learners need to have access to and analyse the complex values and meanings of a national culture existing within national and state boundaries” and “learners need to engage actively with alternative interpretations of the world, meeting phenomena which express some of the shared meaning of the foreign culture which they can compare and contrast with their own” (Byram 1994: 50). Liddicoat in his work on *Intercultural language teaching* (2004) concurs and argues that learners first need to reflect on their own culture, and then compare it with another to notice differences and similarities (7). Fenner’s *Cultural Awareness in the Foreign Language Classroom* (2017) states that this practice allows the learner to decenter, develop critical thinking, and create their own identity (211). In that sense, culture is not knowledge to be taught but rather a skill to be acquired. Liddicoat talks about “exploration rather than repetition” (4). Furthermore, in his work, *Culture et Education en Langue Etrangère* Byram even develops a “programme d’études linguistiques et culturelles” in four steps to show how to target culture in foreign language classrooms (1992: 38). If Byram demonstrated that despite the difficulties, cultural teaching is possible, his research, as well as these of many others, remains very theoretical, and they do not provide any examples of activities to put these findings into practice.

2.3 Analysis of European frameworks and recommendations

The first two sections explored the fact that although culture seems to be an integral part of language learning, it has too often been relegated to the margin in favor of other skills. Several studies have also shown that teachers sometimes have misconceptions regarding cultural teaching and that this represents an additional real challenge. Finally, even though some experts have suggested ways of encouraging cultural learning in foreign language lessons, this has remained sporadically applied for a long time. Yet, several studies argue that

change is taking place regarding cultural awareness in European foreign language classrooms. As such, it is necessary to examine the changes and recommendations made at the European level in recent years. Several documents from the Council of Europe will be reviewed in this section to achieve this goal.

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) is one of the most important documents. Written in 2001, it aimed to “provide a transparent, coherent and comprehensive basis for the elaboration of language syllabuses and curriculum guidelines, the design of teaching and learning materials, and the assessment of foreign language proficiency” (*Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)* - www.coe.int, n.d.). One of the goals of the CEFR is thus to support teachers in their teaching activities. A new companion volume to this document was published in 2020, mainly because many critics had been issued against the original version calling it too difficult and too complex to understand and use. Candelier, among many others, states in his 2008 book *Approches plurielles, didactiques du plurilinguisme: le même et l’autre* that

“On connaît l’usage important qui est fait aujourd’hui, en Europe du Cadre Européen Commun de Référence pour les Langues: apprendre, enseigner, évaluer (Conseil de l’Europe, 2001 – désormais: le Cadre) au niveau de la détermination des programmes d’enseignement. Cet usage, qui se cantonne dans l’application des outils que constituent les échelles de compétence, peut être qualifié de « périphérique », dans la mesure où il fait l’impasse sur le cœur même du projet, c’est-à-dire sur la notion de compétences plurilingue et pluriculturelle.”(5)

In addition to the fact that the 2020 version claims itself more “user-friendly”, it also displays the changes in terms of foreign language teaching and learning mentioned above as new concepts have been added to this version, such as: “mediation”, “online interaction”, “sign language competences” and (what will be of particular interest in this MA) “plurilingual/pluricultural competence”. According to the Council of Europe:

“This publication marks a crucial step in the Council of Europe’s engagement with language education, which seeks to protect linguistic and cultural diversity, promote plurilingual and intercultural education, reinforce the right to quality education for all, and enhance intercultural dialogue, social inclusion and democracy.” (*Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)* - www.coe.int, n.d.).

It can therefore be argued that, since 2020, the Council of Europe has been advocating and supporting greater cultural diversity in language teaching. The above quotation implies that this cultural diversity will be implemented through plurilingual and intercultural education. It is, however, relevant to mention that plurilingual and pluricultural competence was already mentioned in the first version of the CEFR and was defined as follows:

“Plurilingual and pluricultural competence refers to the ability to use languages for the purposes of communication and to take part in intercultural interaction, where a person, viewed as a social agent has proficiency, of varying degrees, in several languages and experience of several cultures. This is not seen as the superposition or juxtaposition of distinct competences, but rather as the existence of a complex or even composite competence on which the user may draw.” (CEFR 2001: 168)

Although plurilingualism and interculturality will be the subject of separate sections (see 2.4 and 2.5) and will therefore be explained in more detail, it can already be said that plurilingual and pluricultural competence is defined by the CEFR as a learner’s ability to communicate in and understand several languages, to make links between these different languages and the cognitive processes associated with learning these languages, as well as openness to cultural diversity and cultural mechanisms. Furthermore, this first definition of plurilingual and pluricultural competence already emphasizes an important point that will also be developed in more detail later in this work: the notion of the learner as a social agent. However, it should be noted that the 2001 version makes very little mention of plurilingualism and pluriculturalism, which is why the 2020 version, and more precisely the companion volume, will be of greater interest in this MA.

The most recent CEFR (2020) states that the concepts of plurilingualism and pluriculturalism were mentioned for the first time in language education in “the second provisional version of the CEFR in 1996” (Europe, 2020: 30) and were later developed in Chapter 8 of the 2001 version. The document also agrees to explain these terms while making the distinction with multilingualism. The latter is described as “the coexistence of different languages at the social or individual level”, while plurilingualism is defined as “the dynamic and developing linguistic repertoire of an individual user/learner”(30). Many experts also questioned the difference between pluri-, multi-, inter-, and trans-, as in the case of Benessaieh in the book *Transcultural Americas* (2010) where she focuses more on culture than

language as such. Because culture is the main issue in this MA, it would be relevant to clarify these prefixes about culture, namely making the distinction between multiculturalism, transculturalism and interculturality. In her book, Benessaieh argues that multiculturalism is used to “qualify societies that experience a high degree of cultural diversity through migrational inflows and/or openness to such diversity”. This term has however been highly criticized because it encourages the idea of very distinct and autonomous cultures living side by side within the same territory (Benessaieh, 2010). However, several studies have recently shown that cultures are intertwined. It is for this reason that Benessaieh advocates a rather transcultural view of culture. She argues that “transculturality invites us to consider the intermingling of presumably distinct cultures and the blurry lines between them” (2010). Finally, the author also defines interculturality as a way of encouraging dialogue between cultures to notice differences and similarities and promote the right for each culture to exist (Benessaieh, 2010). It can therefore be concluded that many new terms have emerged concerning culture and languages, showing a tendency to consider cultures and languages as being in constant connection with each other. Most researchers now refute the idea of cultures as ‘pure’ and autonomous (and therefore the terms multilingualism and multiculturalism) for the benefit of concepts such as plurilingualism and pluriculturalism. These terms have therefore become the main principles of the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (2020) and it is thus relevant to gather more information regarding their implementation according to the CEFR.

The CEFR (2020) divides plurilingual and pluricultural competence into three steps: “building on pluricultural repertoire”, “plurilingual comprehension” and “building on plurilingual repertoire” (Europe: 123). Once the learner has mastered these three stages, they will be able to understand and notice the differences and similarities between cultures and adjust his or her reactions and actions accordingly, they will also be able to understand and communicate in one or more languages. Moreover, the CEFR provides a detailed explanation of each of these steps following the different levels of proficiency (A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, C2). Because this MA dissertation centers around culture, it is relevant to analyze deeper the first section, namely “building on pluricultural repertoire”. In this regard, the CEFR states that “many notions that appear in the literature and descriptors for intercultural competence are included”. These include “the need to deal with ambiguity when faced with cultural diversity,

adjusting reactions, modifying language, etc.”, “the need for understanding that different cultures may have different practices and norms, and that actions may be perceived differently by people belonging to other culture”, “the need to take into consideration differences in behaviours (including gestures, tones and attitudes), discussing over-generalisations and stereotypes”, “the need to recognize similarities and use them as a basis to improve communication”, “willingness to show sensitivity to differences” and “readiness to offer and ask for clarification, anticipating possible risks of misunderstanding” (Europe, 2020 : 124). This is followed by a description of all the key concepts to be developed at each level of proficiency. These concepts consist of “recognising and acting on cultural, socio-pragmatic and sociolinguistic conventions/cues”, “recognising and interpreting similarities and differences in perspectives, practices and events”, and “evaluating neutrally and critically” (124). It can therefore be argued that plurilingual and pluricultural competence is part of the EU curriculum and is recommended by the CEFR. This competence is developed in detail in the document, and it is recommended to teach and assess it at each level of proficiency (cfr tables p.125 -128). The new version of the CEFR has thus implemented and detailed key concepts to be acquired at different language levels in terms of plurilingualism and pluriculturalism.

While the CEFR offers a wide range of information and recommendations about plurilingual and pluricultural competence, it also advises users to “consult FREPA/CARAP for further reflection and for access to related training materials in this area” (Europe, 2020 : 124). In their work *Valoriser, mobiliser et développer les répertoires plurilingues et pluriculturels pour une meilleure intégration scolaire* (2010), Castellotti and Moore describe the FREPA as a document that provides an initial framework for plural approaches. They state that it is :

“un référentiel visant à en [the initial framework for plural approaches] coordonner les mises en synergie et les finalités. Ce référentiel propose une série de descripteurs précisant les compétences, les savoirs, savoir-faire et savoir-être visés pour faciliter le développement et l’enrichissement continu de la compétence plurilingue et pluriculturelle des individus apprenants.” (14)

In turn, *Le CARAP- une introduction à l’usage* states that the CARAP/FREPA aims to provide those involved in language teaching with tools and resources to help them implement

plurilingual and intercultural competence in foreign language classrooms (Candelier et al., 2010a: 19). The authors also argue that the document

“s'appuie sur deux piliers principaux : les approches plurielles, d'une part, qui fournissent les démarches didactiques permettant ce travail, et un référentiel de compétences et ressources qui 'cadrent' en quelque sorte ce travail en explicitant les savoirs, savoir-être et savoir-faire qui sont constitutifs de ce qui est véritablement pluri- ou inter- dans la compétence plurilingue et interculturelle telle que définie par le Conseil de l'Europe (cf. chapitre 1).” (25)

Castellotti and Moore also define the concept of plural approaches saying that they encourage learners to draw on languages with which they are already familiar to promote the transfer of knowledge and strategies from one language to another. From a cultural point of view, these approaches also encourage decentralization and the questioning of norms (14). In addition to providing valuable insights into plurilingualism, the FREPA aims at developing in detail the global competencies that the learner should acquire in terms of knowledge, attitudes, and skills (Candelier et al., 2010b). It can therefore be argued that this work is another valuable resource regarding plurilingualism and pluriculturalism in European education. The document states that

“Although there is now a good range of theoretical and practical work available on each of the different pluralistic approaches to languages and cultures, there is not yet (except in our project) any reference framework of the knowledge, skills and attitudes which could be developed by such pluralistic approaches. The lack of a set of descriptors is a serious handicap to the teaching and learning of languages and cultures in a domain which is a key aspect of any didactic approach to the achievement of the goals and objectives set by the Council of Europe.” (Candelier et al., 2010b: 9)

This last quotation is of great importance because it shows that, while plurilingualism has become the focus of attention for the Council of Europe in terms of language teaching, there seem to be few resources available to those involved in this field apart from the FREPA. This last argument, however, needs to be handled with caution as there are quite a few resources available to date to help teachers implement this competence in practice. In the introduction to the second section of the *Précis du Plurilinguisme et du Pluriculturalisme* (2008), Lévy mentions several activities suggested by the Council of Europe to handle this matter, namely “les Portfolios de langues, les biographies linguistiques et langagières, les autobiographies interculturelles, les curriculum vitae raisonnés, ou encore les passeports de langues” (71). All in all, it can be said that the Council of Europe has made plurilingualism the focus of language

education policies. This principle has thus been described and defined in two major works: the CEFR and the FREPA. Moreover, the Council of Europe recommends activities that “promote exchange between teachers, teachers and learners, and learners” and tries to encourage learners to use more than one language as well as to encounter more than one culture (Beacco et al., 2016: 12). To do so, the Council of Europe provides some activities (cited hereabove), but numerous experts have also made their contribution. Castellotti and Moore mention, among others, the manual EUROMANIA created in 2008 by Escudé that “vise la construction intégrée d’activités scolaires dans différentes disciplines de l’école (sciences, technologie mathématiques, histoire) dans six langues romanes, conjointement (espagnole, français italien, occitans, portugais, roumain)” (15). Moreover, they also refer to the website *Education et Ouverture aux Langues à l’Ecole* (EOLE) (<http://eole.irdp.ch/eole/index.html>) which provides some activities for the implementation of awakening to languages in primary school, which is one of the approaches of plurilingualism (see the following section). Many other examples can be mentioned to prove that change is on its way regarding plurilingualism in European foreign language classrooms which is very much in line with the changes made in this area at the Council of Europe.

To conclude this section, it can be said that change seems to be on its way regarding cultural and linguistic diversity in European Frameworks as plurilingualism and pluriculturalism have now become the main principles of the CEFR. The European Union has now decided to make plurilingualism an asset in education as the Council of Europe argues that

“[l]e dialogue interculturel a un rôle fondamental à jouer pour créer et maintenir la cohésion sociale et les compétences interculturelles en sont le fondement pratique puisque l’enseignement et l’apprentissage de la compétence interculturelle sont essentiels aux fins de la culture démocratique et de la cohésion sociale’ (par. 151).” (Byram, 2009 : 7)

Plurilingualism and pluriculturalism are crucial to the political and social integration of Europeans and offer many advantages in terms of work and leisure. According to the Council of Europe, these skills enable the creation of “a sense of European identity” (Beacco et al., 2007: 9). While it has been presented in previous sections that, although culture is an important aspect of language learning, it has often been relegated to the margins in favor of other skills, it would appear that there has been a shift in this area. The Council of Europe

advocates for more cultural diversity and the establishment of culture as a competence, namely intercultural competence. This MA will thus concentrate on this new competence to see to what extent it allows greater integration of culture in language learning. To achieve this aim, the two following sections will be devoted to what the experts have to say about plurilingualism and interculturality.

2.4 Towards change with the notion of plurilingualism

As seen in the previous section, plurilingualism has become an important aspect of language teaching in these last few years as it is now the main principle of the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEFR). Plurilingual and multi/inter/transcultural pedagogies are now better known by teachers.

Just as our societies are complex and constantly changing, language teaching cannot be reduced to a simple, classic scheme. The idea of nation-states with a national language and culture that dominated the 20th century is now outdated. Societies are characterized by diversity encompassing multiple languages and cultures. Moreover, monolingual individuals are rare if not nonexistent. Most people speak several languages, sometimes dialects, and are in contact with several cultures (Byram 2009: 4). The document, *Précis du Plurilinguisme et du Pluriculturalisme* (2008) mentions (the Austrian linguist Mario) Wandruszka who argues that everyone is plurilingual because everyone uses several registers, dialects, or ways of speaking within his or her mother tongue. He develops his argument by saying that any individual usually uses colloquial language when speaking to his or her family and acquaintances. This familiar language is not the same as the standard language he or she learns at school and that gives them access to many cultural elements nor the same as the language he or she will use in their professional life. This means that plurilingualism is even present in our mother tongue. This is all truer as each language is in constant contact with others and is therefore subject to the linguistic phenomenon of borrowing (Christ and Hu, 2008: 113). We can therefore argue that people are plurilingual, so it makes sense to introduce the notion of plurilingualism into education (Byram 2009: 4). Numerous documents therefore deal with plurilingualism, and several of them provide a definition. If the document *From Linguistic Diversity to Plurilingual Education: Guide for the Development of Language, Education Policies in Europe*

(2007) introduces plurilingualism more generally as the ability of an individual to speak several languages (8), other documents such as the *Framework of Reference for Pluralistic Approaches to Languages and Cultures* (FREPA or CARAP in French) (2010) centers more around the notion of plurilingualism from a didactic point of view. It states “[t]he term ‘*pluralistic approaches to languages and cultures*’ refers to didactic approaches which use teaching / learning activities involving several (i.e. more than one) varieties of languages or cultures.” (8). Another definition can be found in the document *Guide for the Development and Implementation of Curricula for Plurilingual and Intercultural Education* (2016):

“Plurilingual and intercultural competence is the ability to use a plural repertoire of linguistic and cultural resources to meet communication needs or interact with other people, and enrich that repertoire while doing so. Plurilingual competence refers to the repertoire of resources which individual learners acquire in all the languages they know or have learned, and which also relate to the cultures associated with those languages (languages of schooling, regional/minority and migration languages, modern or classical languages)” (10).

These definitions demonstrate that plurilingualism serves as a pedagogical principle that facilitates the exploration of multiple languages and cultures within the realm of education. As already seen in the previous section, the FREPA adds that the acquisition of these plurilingual and pluricultural skills involves acquiring knowledge, skills, and attitudes relating to linguistic and cultural facts. This can thus only be achieved if the classroom becomes a place for plurilingual and intercultural exchanges (2010: 9).

Kramersch, Lévy, and Zarate’s work *Précis du Plurilinguisme et du Pluriculturalisme* (2008) will thus prove invaluable in elucidating the fundamental tenets of plurilingualism. As previously mentioned in sections 2.2 and 2.3, there seems to have been a change in the conception of the learner in language learning. Whereas for decades the learner adopted a rather passive stance in the classroom, this new teaching approach places the learner at the center and considers him or her as a valuable actor in the learning process. Kern and Liddicoat, in the introduction to the first section of the document, argue that before the 50s and 60s, the student was considered a learner (“apprenant”) who had to focus solely on the grammar of the language as well as on reading and writing skills. Over time, the conception of the learner changed, and the student is now seen as an actor and a speaker (“locuteur/acteur”).

With the rise of plurilingualism, the learner started to occupy a central position in language learning. Kern and Liddicoat state “plurilinguisme et pluriculturalisme n’existent qu’au travers d’individus qui parlent, communiquent et agissent en plusieurs langues et dans plusieurs contextes culturels.” (2008 : 27). Additionally, they contend that

“la connaissance de plusieurs langues et de plusieurs cultures est vue comme un phénomène intrapersonnel qui réside dans la tête du locuteur. Par contraste, l’amalgame locuteur/acteur exige une nouvelle perspective qui transforme le plurilinguisme et le pluriculturalisme en phénomènes interpersonnels. Le locuteur n’est plus seulement quelqu’un qui parle, mais quelqu’un qui agit, c’est-à-dire qui fait acte de parole et par là même devient acteur social.” (Kern and Liddicoat, 2008: 29)

It can be argued that this new conception of the learner is essential in acknowledging the individuality of the learner, fostering greater awareness and appreciation of their capabilities and identities. A commonly held notion in the realm of language acquisition posits that learners should, as much as possible, try to imitate the native speaker. This perspective engenders a hierarchical structure in which the native speaker is positioned superior to the learner. From a cultural point of view, this equates to requesting the learner to forsake their own cultural heritage and personal identity in favor of imitating that of someone else. This proposition is inherently unfeasible and arguably lacks logical coherence. In contrast, the advent of plurilingualism and the concept of the speaker/actor allow each learner to be valued for who they are: a plurilingual and pluricultural being who, by learning a new language, is trying to engage with another linguistic system and a new culture. The aim is not to attain a level of proficiency in linguistic codes equivalent to that of a native speaker but rather to adopt a contrastive approach with the other languages and cultures in their repertoire (Kern and Liddicoat 2008: 31). Kern and Liddicoat, therefore, summarize the aim of plurilingualism by saying that “le but d’un enseignement des langues plurilingue et pluriculturel est donc de transformer et d’élargir la collection de pratiques linguistiques et culturelles que chaque individu possède, et qu’il doit exploiter comme locuteur/acteur social” (31).

So far, this section has endeavored to show that a focus on plurilingualism responds to the needs of a society that is itself plurilingual. This principle has thus been implemented in didactic and is now at the heart of language learning. Its fundamental principle is openness to several languages and cultures, intending to exchange and acquire knowledge, skills, and

attitudes. The learner is therefore placed at the center of this principle and he or she is considered a speaker/actor who has his or her own identity and cultural background which is as valuable as those of anyone else. All in all, plurilingualism is a pedagogy that considers the individual as a whole, with all his or her richness. It can therefore be stated that “plurilingualism is not only a matter of competence but also an attitude of interest in and openness towards languages and language varieties of all kinds.” (Beacco et al., 2007: 9)

If plurilingualism has been the subject of much research in recent decades, it is relevant to state that its application in European classrooms is still hesitant and sometimes even absent. Scholars have observed a paradox within plurilingualism, as it is frequently perceived as unrealistic, excessively ambitious, and potentially dangerous, despite the pervasive presence of plurilingualism and pluriculturalism in our societies (Coste et al., 2009: 13). Therefore, to make plurilingualism more concrete and encourage its implementation, several European projects are promoting plurilingual approaches to language teachers. One such example is the TEMPLATE project (Technology-Mediated Plurilingual Activities for (language) Teacher Education – <https://templateplurilingualism.eu/?lang=fr>). This European project is mainly aimed at teachers who want to learn more about plurilingualism and technology-mediated activities. Amongst other aims, The TEMPLATE project presents the four main approaches of plurilingualism: The Integrated Didactic approach, Intercomprehension, Awakening to languages, and the Intercultural approach. The integrated didactic approach suggests that learning one foreign language facilitates the learning of another foreign language because learners can use the resources they have mobilized to learn their second language (L2) such as the method of working, the strategies to adopt to understand a text or an audio fragment, etc. to learn a third language (L3). The integrated didactic approach also encourages pupils to establish links between the language(s) they are learning and their mother tongue so that they can mutually support one another. Concretely the integrated didactic approach “invite[s] learners to notice similarities between their L1 and their L2 and L3 (e.g. by asking them which words in their L1 or L2 helped them understand a text in their L3)” (TEMPLATE plurilingualism, 2021). The second approach is intercomprehension and is based on linguistic families. It encourages pupils to notice differences and similarities between categories of languages such as Roman languages, Germanic languages, or Slavonic languages

to name but a few. The TEMPLATE project introduces intercomprehension as an approach that “refers to the comprehension of a (foreign) language without having acquired it by formal learning or in its cultural environment” (TEMPLATE plurilingualism, 2021). The third approach of plurilingualism also encourages pupils to compare different languages and reflect on their differences and similarities but more in terms of sounds, writing systems, or cultural background. Awakening to languages “involves any languages in the world that is/could be learned” in an attempt to “increase positive attitudes towards these languages and cultures” (TEMPLATE plurilingualism, 2021). Finally, the last category of plurilingualism is undoubtedly the most important as far as this thesis is concerned because it focuses on the learning of culture. The intercultural approach indeed encourages teachers to “use phenomena from one or more cultures to promote reflection about contact situations involving people with different cultural backgrounds to make learners develop a better understanding of the others” (TEMPLATE plurilingualism, 2021). In concrete terms, this approach would enable students to compare phenomena from other cultures with their own, in order to identify cultural similarities and differences around the world. The intercultural approach could therefore be a way of implementing a pedagogy of the culture in foreign language classrooms as advocated by Byram, Kramsch, and Liddicoat. Plurilingualism and more specifically interculturality thus seem to be a solution to the paradox concerning culture in foreign language learning which is probably why the Council of Europe places it at the heart of its language teaching policies. Therefore, it is advisable to conduct a thorough examination of interculturality.

2.5 Interculturality: towards a pedagogy of culture

As mentioned in the previous section, the notion of learner/actor is at the heart of plurilingualism. According to Kern and Liddicoat, this notion suggests that “une bonne connaissance de la grammaire ne va pas toujours de pair avec la réussite communicative” (2008 : 30). They develop this argument saying that a good knowledge of the grammar of a language does not guarantee good communication in a foreign language. They argue that “on passe d’une conception de la langue comme système autonome et fixe à une conception de la langue comme ressources sémiotique dynamique que l’individu combine avec d’autres ressources pour agir dans le monde social” (2008: 30). This means that to be able to express

oneself and communicate properly in another language, grammar and formal aspects of the language such as the vocabulary or linguistic formulas are only one part of the equation. This observation points towards the need to implement intercultural education as part of language teaching. Interculturality is, among others, defined in the document *From Linguistic Diversity to Plurilingual Education: Guide for the Development of Language, Education Policies in Europe - Executive version* (2007) as follows:

“Intercultural competence: Combination of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors, which allow a speaker, to varying degrees, to recognize, understand, interpret and accept other ways of living and thinking beyond his or her home culture. This competence is the basis of understanding among people, and is not limited to language ability.” (Beacco et al., 2007: 114)

A similar definition can be found in the document *Guide for the Development and Implementation of Curricula for Plurilingual and Intercultural Education* (2016):

“Intercultural competence, for its part, is the ability to experience otherness and cultural diversity, to analyse that experience and to derive benefit from it. Once acquired, intercultural competence makes it easier to understand otherness, establish cognitive and affective links between past and new experiences of otherness, mediate between members of two (or more) social groups and their cultures, and question the assumptions of one’s own cultural group and environment.” (Beacco et al., 2016 : 10).

As previously stated in the first section of this MA, language courses are said to provide opportunities for students to gain a greater understanding of the world and its diversity. Kern and Liddicoat, however, raise awareness of the fact that “l’apprentissage d’une langue n’est pas nécessairement un apprentissage interculturel” (2008: 33). The danger of targeting culture in foreign language lessons without an intercultural perspective is that it can convey the image of a homogenized national culture. Sercu in the section *La formation de l’acteur/locuteur : l’enseignement comme aide ou entrave* of *Précis du Plurilinguisme et du Pluriculturalisme* (2008) states that “[l]a culture est représentée comme un ensemble fixe de descriptions et de faits, ce qui crée ou maintient une perception stéréotypée de la culture cible” (57). Moreover, culture would then be used as a subject for developing skills rather than as a separate skill. Sercu argues “le contenu culturel est donc un véhicule, fournissant des thèmes pour la pratique des compétences linguistiques et susceptible d’être mémorisé pour un examen écrit éventuel” (57). By contrast, the implementation of the intercultural competence in foreign language teaching enables learners to engage in an exchange with

interlocutors from different languages and cultures. This exchange thus avoids the formation of a stereotyped view of the other's culture, and also enables the learner to draw on his or her own culture to compare and contrast it with that of the other. Sercu adds that "ces échanges exigent que l'apprenant appréhende la communication comme une action sociale, se servant de ce qu'il a appris, mais prêt à construire, avec ses interlocuteurs, de nouvelles significations et de nouvelles structures symboliques" (58). The contrastive approach is therefore essential in teaching intercultural competence. Sercu gives the example of emblematic monuments of each country. In an intercultural framework, it is not sufficient to explain that the Eiffel Tower is an emblematic monument of France and therefore part of the French culture to learners of French as a foreign language. The teacher should engage the learners in a contrastive approach, asking them if their country also has an emblematic monument comparable to the Eiffel Tower. The teacher should then prompt learners to ask questions about the history of these monuments, their purpose, the image they convey etc. highlighting the possible differences or similarities between the two cultures (58). Beacco et al., (2016) therefore argue that pluricultural and intercultural education has a dual purpose: "[f]irst, it facilitates the acquisition of linguistic and intercultural abilities". This first aim involves enriching learners' linguistic and cultural repertoires by making effective use of the resources at their disposal according to their needs, languages and contexts. (2016: 15). The second aim is to "[promote] personal development, so that individuals can realise their full potential" which implies on the one hand that individuals will be more open to and respectful of diversity of languages and cultures taking into account the multicultural and multilingual

nature of the world. On the other hand, learners will be encouraged to realize the extent of their potential in terms of capacity and competence (2016: 15).

It is however relevant to state that plurilingualism and interculturality are not limited solely to the mother tongue and the target language of the learner. This attitude of openness to languages and cultures can/must combine several elements to be efficient. The Council of Europe thus provides an illustration presenting the different categories of

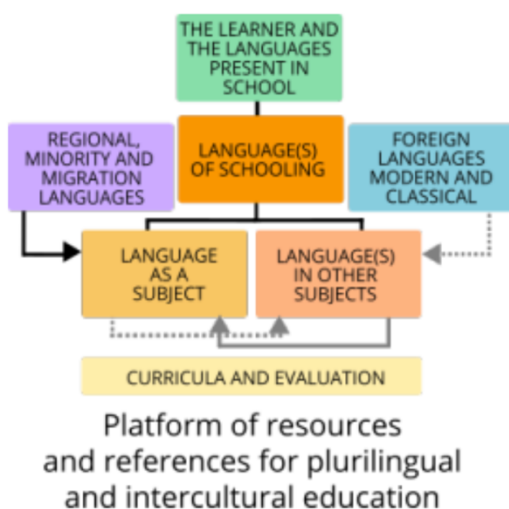


Figure 1: diagram of languages in intercultural education

languages that can play a role in plurilingualism and interculturality (*Platform of resources and references for plurilingual and intercultural education* <https://www.coe.int/en/web/language-policy/platform>). The first language and culture that play a role when practicing interculturality is the language of schooling. This language is usually the official language of the country or region in which the schooling takes place. This language and its culture will play a major role because it will serve as a basis for comparing other languages and cultures. Through this language of schooling, the pupils can learn more about their own culture and personality. The other element that comes into play in interculturality is the foreign languages (modern and classical). In the context of interculturality, the aim of foreign language teaching is not to train learners to reach the same level of proficiency as a native speaker but to make them notice differences or similarities between this foreign language (and foreign culture) and their mother tongue (their own culture) and also, to try to make them communicate properly with an interlocutor who does not have the same language or cultural background. The third category of languages to consider in plurilingualism and interculturality, and perhaps the most interesting category, is that of regional, minority, and migration languages. These “other” languages often exist in the school on an ongoing basis but are rarely acknowledged by the teachers. They sometimes even live clandestinely within the establishment. As previously mentioned, monolingual individuals are becoming increasingly rare. It is not wrong to assume that most pupils speak other languages at home or in other contexts in their private lives. These regional, minority, and migration languages can even be the mother tongue of many of these pupils. They can thus also serve as the basis for plurilingualism and interculturality. On a larger scale, acknowledging and using these languages could help pupils and families with a migration background to feel more included in education. It can be stated that it is essential to include these languages and cultures in schools and this can be achieved through the process of plurilingualism and interculturality. Coste, Moore and Zarate (2009) indeed state that “l'école n'est pas nécessairement ouverte à toutes les cultures. Elle est capable de rejeter, niant une réalité linguistique et culturelle non conforme à la politique linguistique nationale, et elle est capable de diffuser une culture qui ne repose pas sur une réalité culturelle existante.” (23). However, much research has now shown that implementing interculturality and plurilingualism could help schools tend toward more inclusivity. Cavalli et al., state that “l'école peut tout aussi bien tirer parti de la diversité des langues pour son projet éducatif et

agir en tant qu'espace institutionnel privilégié pour l'accueil, la valorisation du multilinguisme sociétal et du plurilinguisme individuel déjà là, contribuant ainsi à l'inclusion sociale" (2009 : 5). Practicing interculturality in this way would mean giving a voice to pupils with a plurilingual and pluricultural background to bring together different cultures, languages and values systems. This would thus enable every learner to develop and enrich their repertoire in terms of languages and cultures, which is the first aim of plurilingualism and interculturality, but it would also help each pupil to learn more about themselves and to take a place in the multilingual and multicultural society they live in thus fulfilling the second aim of plurilingualism and interculturality. Although there seems to have been numerous attempts to include several languages and cultures in education since the 20th century, Castellotti and Moore argue that "malgré cette communauté de principes, relayée dans différents programmes nationaux, l'observation de situations éducatives diversifiées laisse apparaître des usages qui mobilisent encore peu, dans leur majorité, la diversité des répertoires linguistiques et culturels présents dans les écoles." (2010: 8). Yet, change seems to be on its way as the use of plurilingualism and interculturality towards more inclusion seems to be in line with the values that the Council of Europe wants to promote today. Cavalli et al., indeed state:

"l'éducation plurilingue et interculturelle n'est pas à considérer comme une nouvelle méthodologie pour l'enseignement des langues : elle représente plutôt un changement de perspective, caractérisée par le fait qu'elle n'implique pas seulement les langues étrangères mais que les langues de l'environnement proche, les langues des répertoires des apprenants, la/les langue(s) de scolarisation et toutes les autres matières y concourent. En fait l'éducation plurilingue et interculturelle se caractérise d'abord par ses finalités qui concernent, avant tout, les droits fondamentaux de chaque apprenant et qui se fondent sur des valeurs destinées à assurer sa formation en tant qu'individu et que citoyen. Ces valeurs sont constituées par les principes directeurs des actions du Conseil de l'Europe : la cohésion et la solidarité sociales, la démocratie participative, la compréhension réciproque ainsi que le respect et la valorisation de la diversité linguistique et culturelle" (2009 : 7).

This section can thus be concluded by saying that interculturality is about being open-minded and curious about other cultures and showing empathy towards their members. It involves using this understanding of differences to connect with and exchange ideas with people from diverse backgrounds. Interculturality does not mean becoming part of another culture or adopting other practices (although this is not excluded either) but rather reflecting on your background to understand your own thoughts and behaviors in society.

Interculturality can be beneficial for every individual because most people are pluricultural and most societies are multicultural, but it can also be an asset in promoting the inclusion of children from a migrant background and their families in school. Several methods can be used to target interculturality and it is relevant to state that foreign language classrooms are not the only places where interculturality should take place. Figure 1 indeed shows that although plurilingualism and interculturality can/should be targeted in language teaching, other subjects can/should play a role in the acquiring of this competence because each of these subjects uses the language of schooling in different contexts, using different vocabulary, and register. This can be seen as a form of variation of the language and therefore seen as a part of plurilingualism and interculturality. The plurilingual and intercultural competence do not limit themselves to other languages but also consider the variation within the same language. It is for this reason that all school subjects should be involved. If cultural awareness is not exclusively reserved for language learning, it means that it can start very early in a pupil's education. In any case, Byram (2009) states the importance of the role of the teacher in intercultural competence as he or she must start from the languages and cultures available to them while playing the role of the mediator between them.

2.6 Analysis of Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles' Curricula and recommendations

Up to this point, this work has endeavored to demonstrate that plurilingualism and interculturality are at the center of European policies regarding language learning. However, because each country, each region, and each context must be taken as a starting point, plurilingualism will not be handled in the same way everywhere in Europe. This MA dissertation has thus chosen to analyze whether and how plurilingualism and interculturality are enacted in French-speaking Belgium (Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles -FWB).

If the role of culture in foreign language teaching and learning has not always been well defined in the past, the *Programme des langues modernes I, II, III* (2018) stresses the role of culture as essential. It indeed states that “[l]oin de reléguer la culture dans un rôle accessoire, il est essentiel de réaffirmer la nécessaire coexistence de la langue et de la culture: parce que la langue est à la fois produit d’une vie en société et moyen de communication, de transmission entre les membres de celle-ci, elle est indéniablement tissée de culture.” (9) The document also introduces the argument that culture is an integral part of every act of

communication and therefore argues that “[i]l est donc essentiel d’introduire dans le travail par compétences une dimension culturelle et d’y ajouter la compétence interculturelle.” (9) This focus on culture and interculturality in the school curriculum responds to a wide range of issues. First and foremost, the program mentions communicative issues. These include awakening learners to the fact that culture is an integral part of language and is just as necessary as formal aspects of language (vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, etc.) to guarantee good communication. The second issues are personal and identity issues. They relate to the fact that learner should be aware and become actor of their own identity and cultural traditions within their own spatial and cultural context. Then come the linguistic issues. Learners should become aware of the fact that societies are multilingual, and many individuals plurilingual. They should therefore become open to the diversity of languages but also to the diversity within languages such as the diversity in discourses, registers, and ways of expressions. Finally, the cultural approach meets relational, ethical, and citizenship-related issues. The program states that the learners should decenter and adopt different points of view regarding culture. They should be aware of the fact that every culture has its richness and specificity. Precisely, “[l]’approche interculturelle permet ainsi de stimuler la curiosité donc la motivation mais aussi l’empathie... elle permet de devenir un humain capable à la fois d’être critique et de s’accorder à l’Autre.” (10). The document also provides teachers with suggestions of pedagogical supports/resources they can use in order to train intercultural skills (such as movies, videos, documentaries, songs, works of art, press articles etc.). It emphasizes the fact that such input material should ideally be authentic material. Lastly, the program also details a list of themes which can serve as basis to target culture in the classroom such as daily life, conventions and behaviors, social elements, beliefs and rituals, perception of space and time, stereotypes, language and its diversity, art and reflections on countries in which the language is spoken (11). It can thus be observed that the programs and curricula in the FWB are in line with the Council of Europe regarding plurilingualism and culture. The *Programme des langues modernes I, II, III* (2018) details the role of intercultural competence in language education and provides teachers with some practical advice on how to integrate this competence in their lesson. The document describes the “démarche interculturelle” as a competence that “force à la mise en relation. Ainsi, il importe de doter les élèves de mécanismes de réflexions, de mécanismes critiques.” (12)

In the specific context of the FWB, it is also relevant to mention that a vast education reform – le Pacte pour un enseignement d'excellence (initiated in 2015) has been enforced since 2020. From a language learning point of view, the first modern language is now taught/learnt as of the 3rd year of primary education (P3), and the second as of the second year of secondary education (S2) (see <http://www.enseignement.be/index.php?page=24987>). Moreover, it should be noted once again that the FWB's recommendations are in line with those of the Council of Europe regarding plurilingualism because in the new "Pacte pour un Enseignement d'Excellence" awakening to languages (éveil aux langues-EAL) has also been implemented from the first year of kindergarten on (enseignement maternel – M1) to the second year of primary school (P2). As seen in the previous section, awakening to languages is one of the four approaches of plurilingualism and aims at increasing "positive attitudes towards [...] languages and cultures" (TEMPLATE plurilingualism, 2021). According to *Enseignement.be*, the main objective of "l'éveil aux langues en maternelle" (EAL) is to make pupils aware of cultural and linguistic diversity. A thorough definition is provided as follows:

"L'Éveil aux langues vise une ouverture à une diversité de langues. Les activités qui y sont liées consistent à découvrir, explorer et comparer une variété de langues et de divers statuts (langue de l'école, langue du voisin, langues européennes...). Ainsi, parallèlement à sa dimension linguistique et à son attention particulière au sonore et au rythme, l'éveil aux langues permet de se sensibiliser progressivement à d'autres cultures, contribuant par là-même à une société davantage tolérante et ouverte." (<http://www.enseignement.be/index.php?page=24987>)

Furthermore, it is argued that being awakened to languages at a young age would facilitate the learning of a foreign language a few years later and would also teach pupils to be more open and tolerant towards other cultures (Herbinaux, et al., 2022: 90).

The implementation of EAL in the FWB is guided by a document called *Eveil aux langues: Balises de progression et ressources pédagogiques de M1 à P2* (2020). Like the FREPA, this document is organized under the headings of knowledge, skills, and attitudes and is made up of progress markers that specify what learners need to master according to their level. These sections are in turn divided into three sub-categories: phonological awareness, multilingual and multicultural society, and language as a communication tool. Firstly, attention to "la conscience phonologique" should provide information about the variety of sounds present in languages in such a way that would enable students to notice differences and

similarities in the phonology of several languages. Secondly, the subcategory “société multilingue et muticulturelle” is particularly interested in raising pupils’ awareness of the diversity of languages and cultures while establishing the link that exists between culture and languages. This should thus enable pupils to talk about their own culture or that of others. Lastly, “langues comme outils de communication” emphasizes the communicative aspect of languages by familiarizing pupils with different alphabets or with the similarities that exist between certain languages thus promoting and training intercomprehension. The purpose of this document is, therefore, to provide teachers with explanations regarding its implementation, and to do so, it relies on the CEFR and the FREPA (4). The document places language awareness firmly within the framework of pluralistic approaches, and also maintains that “l’Eveil aux langues comporte également une dimension interculturelle importante qui contribue à une meilleure intégration de chaque élève au sein du groupe classe” (4). In a video explaining EAL posted on the site *Enseignement.be*, it is also mentioned that EAL can take various forms and include the skills of children or their families. This argument is in line with what was said in the previous section, namely the fact that the linguistic and cultural diversity of pupils is an invaluable asset in practicing plurilingualism in the classroom.

It can therefore be stated that even if awakening to languages is often associated with younger learners outside of language classes as such it can be considered as a preparation for foreign language courses and it seems to be a favorable moment to promote the opening to other cultures and languages. It is thus here argued that the four approaches of plurilingualism need to be seen as intertwined rather than as separate categories. There is indeed an intercultural dimension in awakening to languages as it aims to raise awareness of the world’s cultural diversity. Moreover, according to Liddicoat, developing pupils’ cultural awareness as early as possible would also prevent them from developing assumptions about other cultures which would thus facilitate the acquiring of intercultural skills later in foreign language learning (2004: 3). Awakening to languages is, therefore, the first step to including more culture in Belgian teaching programs.

The FWB is not alone in implementing awakening to languages. The EVLANG program, for example, is a European program of pedagogical innovation and research that took place between 1997 and 2001 intending to check whether awakening to language activities in

primary schools were having the desired effect and to remedy the situation if necessary. In Canada, the ELODIL website (<https://www.elodil.umontreal.ca/liens-utiles/eveil-aux-langues/>) was created in 2004 to provide teachers with activities regarding awakening to languages. Finally, some resources have been made available in the FWB on the E-class website (<https://www.e-classe.be/>) to which all teachers in the FWB have access. However, it is relevant to say that since the introduction of the EAL in the FWB curricula is quite recent, many teachers still have the feeling of being ill-equipped to deal with EAL and many find it difficult to implement it in practice (Herbinaux et al., 2022: 100).

2.7 Interim conclusion and research gap

So far, this MA dissertation has tried to highlight the importance of teaching culture in foreign language classrooms. Although culture seems to have been marginalized in the past, a change seems to have taken place over the last two decades as a new concept has been promoted in European curricula: plurilingualism. According to the Council of Europe and numerous language experts, plurilingualism is a concept that emphasizes the linking of several languages to support learning. Furthermore, plurilingualism places the learner at the center of his or her learning, considering him or her as an actor who already possesses a good number of skills and knowledge to draw on. Plurilingualism has therefore brought with it a new vision of language learning. The aim is no longer to train learners to imitate the native speaker but rather to compare different linguistic systems and explore the diversity of the world. Plurilingualism, as advocated by European policies on language learning, can be divided into four categories: the integrated didactic approach, intercomprehension, awakening to languages, and interculturality. The latter is especially important in the introduction of a pedagogy of culture allowing culture to be considered as a dynamic skill rather than a fixed, stereotyped piece of knowledge. Intercultural competence raises learners' awareness of the world's cultural diversity and the importance of culture in communicative situations. To target interculturality in their courses, teachers can create several activities where the learners will have to adopt a contrastive approach to cultures allowing him or her to wonder about his or her own cultural identity as well as to compare it with those of others to notice differences and similarities and to question them. Teachers must however remember to use the resources at their disposal, namely the richness of their learners. Because individuals are rarely

monolingual and monocultural, they represent a rich source of information about different languages and cultures that can be put to good use in plurilingual and intercultural education. Moreover, it allows learners to feel seen and validated with their own background and own identity which promotes social inclusion.

Yet, if European policies are now paying more attention to plurilingualism and cultural diversity in language learning, and if many things have been done to this end, it is nevertheless relevant to say that examples of concrete activities to be carried out in classrooms are still rare. Some manuals have been produced to explain in detail to teachers what is expected of them in terms of plurilingualism and interculturality, and some websites are now available to provide teachers with example activities, but they remain scarce, and this leaves many teachers feeling helpless. Herbinaux et al., (2022), for example, illustrate some of the difficulties faced by teachers who have to implement awakening to languages activities in the FWB. Teachers have expressed their struggles and those include a lack of resources and information, and a lack of time, and they also report some difficulties working with pupils with a different mother tongue (100-101). This shows that improvements are still needed to make plurilingualism work as recommended by several European frameworks. This lack of resources may be explained by the fact that

“Because of the variation of multilingualism in different parts of Europe, the plurilingualism of individuals has to be appropriate to the area where they live; There is no preferred or recommended model of plurilingualism, and the plurilingualism of the individual may change with mobility and throughout lifelong learning.” (Beacco et al., 2007: 9).

We can thus argue that plurilingualism is plural. There is no universal model to be followed. Teachers need to adapt their activities to the context in which they teach, the pupils, and their cultural and linguistic backgrounds. It is therefore difficult to create activities on a European scale that could satisfy the language teachers at each school, of each region, and of each country. Certain resources can be created (as is already the case) but they must be adapted to each situation. This makes it difficult to create materials to help teachers.

To address this issue, this master dissertation will revolve around the following research question: how can intercultural dimensions be implemented in French-speaking Belgium’s classrooms from kindergarten to secondary school? To answer this question, this

thesis will endeavor to develop new activities highlighting intercultural dimensions to provide teachers with resources for each level of teaching, from kindergarten (with activities of EAL) to the last year of secondary school.

3 Research question and methodology.

The first part of this master's dissertation, devoted to the literature, showed that the intercultural approach not only has its place in education (from kindergarten, through awakening to languages, to secondary school language courses) but even represents a significant asset. European documents are moving in this direction and now advocate for pluralistic approaches that highlight all the facets of plurilingualism. However, it is relevant to admit that these recommendations have their limitations, as many teachers feel ill-equipped to meet these new demands, and do not always know how to cope with the lack of resources or support available. To address this issue, the practical part of this master's dissertation will revolve around the question: how can intercultural dimensions be implemented in French-speaking Belgium's classrooms from kindergarten to secondary school?

After having analyzed the legal framework, I will endeavor to develop new activities highlighting intercultural dimensions to provide teachers with resources for each level of teaching. Methodologically speaking, my dissertation is anchored in design-based research. Design-based research (DBR) emerged twenty years ago as a promising collaborative approach between teachers and researchers to help address the research-teaching gap (The DBR Collective 2003). Still recommended today in the field of education, DBR emphasizes collaboration between researchers and practitioners to address real-world challenges that consider specific contexts (Karsten and Van Zyl, 2022). While some of the proposed activities could be used in several European contexts, it is important to note that they will be imagined and created in the context of the Wallonia-Brussels Federation in Belgium. This means that we will be basing ourselves on the FWB school system to distinguish the different levels of learning. This thesis will therefore propose a total of seven activities. In the first instance, we have chosen to create an activity for kindergarteners as part of their awakening to languages program (l'éveil aux langues- EAL- en maternelles). As the Walloon system has three levels of kindergarten (from M1 to M3), we decided to dedicate the activity to an M2 class (pupils around 4 years old). The activity can, however, be adapted by teachers to be used in M1 or M3. Subsequently, another language-awareness activity will be provided, but this time within the framework of the first level of primary education (P1-P2). This choice has been made because, from P3 onwards, Walloon children will begin language classes as such. Lastly, this

thesis will develop an activity for each language level present in Belgian secondary schools, as suggested by the CEFR (A1, A2, B1, B2). It is, however, relevant to clarify that because the objectives in terms of language level are different for each competence at each learning cycle, the language level assigned to each activity does not necessarily concern all the skills. It rather gives a general indication of whether the activity is created for the upper or lower secondary level. We therefore considered that the first activity (A1) was intended for lower-level learners, while the next (A2) was intended for the second degree of education (pupils in their third or fourth year of secondary school). Finally, the B1 activities were intended for the third-degree (pupils in their fifth or last year of secondary school) while the B2 activity was intended for higher-level learners. Of course, these activities are meant to be flexible and adaptable to specific classroom contexts within (and hopefully also beyond) the FWB.

While this thesis aims to develop activities on plurilingualism and, more specifically, interculturality, it will also demonstrate that this intercultural competence can be worked on at any age and any level of education. For the sake of consistency, we have chosen a common theme around which all activities will be organized. Indeed, the theme of “relations with others” fits in with all school curricula, from kindergarten through primary to secondary school language programs. All this will be explained and demonstrated in detail in the description of each activity (see next section). Finally, because this dissertation takes place in the context of the FWB, it is important to mention that several languages will be used. The awakening to languages activities will be carried out in French, the language of instruction, whereas the activities created for language courses in secondary schools will be done on the one hand for English courses, and on the other hand for Dutch courses since these two languages are the L2 of many Walloon pupils. This initiative is an attempt to demonstrate that all these activities can be adapted to different contexts and languages. This thesis will show that the intercultural dimension can be worked on from the cultural richness of each student, but also from the political and social context in which we live (by establishing a link between Walloon and Flemish people and the French and Dutch language in Belgium for example), as well as from more distant languages and cultures (the American, Australian and British culture and the English language in the context of Belgian education for example). In doing so, this MA

dissertation will have swept across all levels of education, from language awareness to language learning itself, and will have traveled from near to far.

For this paper, a qualitative approach will thus be conducted as this method enables the researcher to gather in-depth insights on topics that require further investigation (Decorte, slide 14). Cresswell defines qualitative research as ‘an inquiry process of understanding a social or human problem, based on building a complex, holistic picture, formed with words, reporting detailed views of informants, and conducted in a natural setting’. (1994, p.1-2). A mix of exploratory and intervention research will be conducted to provide teachers with materials. The aim of this study being to create activities and teaching sequences without having to test them directly in the classroom, the design is situated between the exploration of new areas of inquiry and the intervention in the classroom. Some teachers, however, offered to test the activities in their classrooms with their students, which therefore led to a collaborative effort. This enabled us to collect data on how the activity unfolded, the feelings of the students towards the activity, the feelings of the teachers who gave the activities, and, to a certain extent, the feelings of the parents of the pupils. This research is thus based, for a part, on teacher and researcher collaboration and co-construction as the opinions and insights of several teachers were requested. For each activity presented, we received feedback from at least two teachers to vary the data. The data collection method is thus based on semi-guided interviews in which teachers were asked a series of questions of the type:

- What do you think of the activity?
- Do you think the activity is adapted to the level of the pupils?
- Do you think this activity fits in with your programs?
- What are the positive aspects of the activity?
- What are the limitations of the activity?
- Would you be interested in doing this activity in your classroom? Why or why not?
- If this activity has been tested, what did you think of it?
- What would need to be changed?
- Were the pupils receptive?
- Did you encounter any difficulties in carrying out this activity?

Lastly, for the activity dedicated to awakening to languages in kindergarten, feedback from some parents was also requested to see what they thought of the activity, which highlighted the cultural diversity of the classroom. This also enabled us to see if the activity had made parents feel more involved and represented in their children's school and education as suggested by numerous research. A survey was thus given to the parents of a class where the activity was tested. On the one hand, the questionnaire was presented in the form of a Likert-scale survey, and on the other hand, the parents were asked to answer a series of open questions (see appendix 1). To conclude this section of the methodology, it can be argued that this research is built for and with teachers.

4 Propositions and analysis of didactic materials

This section presents the didactic materials created to attempt to answer the question: how can intercultural dimensions be implemented in French-speaking Belgium's classrooms from kindergarten to secondary school? The practical part does not only contain the materials created for future interventions in classrooms. It has been submitted to expert teachers who have provided feedback. Some of the activities have also been tested in class. Finally, parents have also been asked to comment on one activity proposed for very young learners (second year of kindergarten, M2). This section is divided into seven subsections that each center around one activity. These activities are presented in chronological order: from M2 to B2-level. Every subsection is thus composed of a presentation of the activity and the basic information related to the educational level, material, theme, thematic field, etc., and feedback received by several teachers. For the activities tested in class, the subsection also consists of a report of in-class observations. Lastly, for the activity dedicated to the M2, a survey was given to the parents of one class where the activity was tested. The aim was to analyze their feelings about the activity; and the results are presented in the M2 section (section 4.1. below).

4.1 Little Chefs Around the World –activity for M2 pupils

4.1.1 Presentation of the activity

BASIC INFORMATION

Theme: Relations with others

Course: Awakening to languages

Name of the activity: "Little Chefs Around the World"

Thematic field: Food and dishes around the world

Reference to the program:

"3. Les langues et les cultures comme outils d'ouverture à l'autre"

Balises et sens: « Les élèves évoluent dans des univers multiculturels et multilingues parfois même sans le savoir. L'objectif, par le travail de cette compétence, est de mettre en lumière

et de valoriser les langues et les cultures présentes dans les classes, dans l'école, dans l'environnement proche. Par ailleurs, cette approche permet de dépasser certains clichés qui laissent à penser que l'on parle espagnol en Espagne et chinois en Chine, et, que dans notre environnement proche, nous avons une culture partagée. La réalité est toute autre. » (Programme de l'école maternelle volume 2, 2021: 147)

“L'Éveil aux langues se veut une voie privilégiée pour rencontrer les visées du Code de l'enseignement fondamental et de l'enseignement secondaire, et mettant en place le tronc commun, à savoir aux articles:

– 1.4.1-1 « préparer tous les élèves à être des citoyens responsables, capables de contribuer au développement d'une société démocratique, solidaire, pluraliste (...) et ouverte aux autres cultures »

– 1.4.1-3 4° « à l'intérêt de connaître des langues autres que le français et, principalement, de communiquer dans ces langues »

– 1.4.1-3 7° « à la transmission de l'héritage culturel dans tous ses aspects et à la découverte d'autres cultures, qui, ensemble, donnent des signes de reconnaissance et contribuent à tisser le lien social ».» (Eveil aux langues - Balises de progression et ressources pédagogiques de M1 à P2, 2020 : 7)

This activity fits into “les balises de progression” regarding knowledge (S3, S4, S6), skills (SF4, SF5, SF6, SF9) and attitudes (C3) which are considered useful at this level (Eveil aux langues – Balises de progression et ressources pédagogiques de M1 à P2, 2020: 20 -22).

OBJECTIVE: Awakening to languages – interculturality

The objective of this activity is to open pupils to the diversity of cultures by making them aware of the cultural diversity of the class. The activity will also enable them to express themselves on their identity(ies) and cultural background and will enable them to formulate preferences.

EDUCATIONAL LEVEL/COURSE FOR WHICH IT IS ADDRESSED

Pupils in their first/second year of kindergarten (3 to 4 years old). The present activity has been designed for pupils living in the French speaking part of Belgium.

LANGUAGES CONCERNED IN THE ACTIVITY

French and the mother tongue of the pupils

MATERIAL

- Pictures of the child with a typical dish of his/her culture
- A3 posters
- Two letters to give to the parents: the first to tell them about the activity and what they need to prepare, the second so they can fill in information about the dish they have prepared (see appendix 1)

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY

A few days (or weeks) before starting the activity, the teacher explains to the parents that, as part of the language awakening program, the children will be doing an activity on different cultures through traditional meals. The teacher explains that this will highlight the different cultures in the class, as well as highlighting culinary diversity. He or she therefore asks the parents in the class to take a photo of a traditional meal from their culture that they eat/have eaten with their child and to fill in a form where they provide information about the dish: what is the name of the meal? From which country is it from? What is the dish made of? Do you usually eat this dish as a meal or as a dessert? How do you say "enjoy your meal" in your mother tongue/language of origin? (see appendix 1).

On the day of the activity, the pupils come with their picture and the teacher gives each child time to explain what he/she has eaten, what the meal is and what country it comes from. If it is too difficult for the pupils to explain on their own, the teacher can help the child thanks to the form that the parents have filled in. The teacher can also show the children dishes from other countries, asking if they know what they are and where they come from. Next, the teacher asks the children questions to draw their attention to the intercultural dimension of the activity. He/she may ask a pupil if he/she has ever tasted a fellow pupil's

dish. The class can discuss the similarities/differences between the foods. Is this meal eaten in the morning, at lunchtime or in the evening, etc.?

In a second phase, the teacher creates different posters with the children, according to the countries that have been mentioned. He/she pastes the photo received, noting the name of the dish, the name of the country where the dish originates, the name of the child who brought the picture of the dish, the names of children who have already tasted the dish and the names of children who would like to try the dish. He/she also inserts a photo of the country's flag, as well as a list of the main condiments and the words "enjoy your meal" in the target language. If two children bring the same dish, they will make a poster for 2 with their 2 pictures. (see the sample of the poster in appendix 1)

EXPECTED RESULTS

This activity should be a fun way for kindergarteners to learn about food and human relations. They will train their speaking skills by talking about themselves and their preferences, which is usually motivating. This activity should also make every pupil feel included and confident as they will be able to express themselves on their culture/country and they will all be valued and highlighted. This activity will also make pupils aware of the diversity of the class and, by extension, of the world. They will be awakened to languages, and they will train the intercultural competence. Finally, we are also expecting parents from the class to feel valued and included in their child's school which would also encourage dialogue between parents and the teacher. As stated in the previous sections, this would be all the more beneficial for pupils and parents with an immigrational background. Moreover, the website of the European Center for Modern Languages (ecml) dedicated to involving parents in plurilingual and intercultural education states that "working with parents as partners facilitates not only language acquisition, but also the development of positive attitudes towards otherness, attitudes which are necessary for the harmonious development of individuals and society" (<https://parents.ecml.at/>)

4.1.2 In-class observations

For this activity, we had the chance to attend the language awareness lesson in an M1 and M2 kindergarten class (it is indeed a class that we call “classe verticale” where half of the pupils are in M1 and the other half in M2). We were, therefore, able to take notes on how the activity unfolded. The observations made will be described as faithfully as possible.

First, it is relevant to note that after having informed the parents one week in advance and having made several reminders, all the (21) pupils had done their little assignments and brought a picture of a meal from their culture, which was one first sign of involvement from the families. The request had been formulated as a service because kindergarten teachers cannot impose homework as such. The teacher was pleasantly surprised to see that all the parents had been motivated and had done the little assignment. On the day of the activity, when the teacher gathered the pupils for the collective moment, many were already sharing their pictures and thoughts with each other before the activity even began. They seemed eager to talk about themselves and compare with their classmates. In the first step, the teacher introduced the activity by reminding the pupils of what she had asked them to do and what they brought with them that day. She then explained to the students that the activity aimed to share and compare meals they had eaten to see if everyone in the class was eating the same thing and had the same eating habits. Immediately, one pupil interjected that it was obvious that not everyone had eaten the same meal. It seems that some of them already had come up with ideas and hypotheses about what was going to happen and where the teacher wanted to bring them. In the second step, the teacher gave each pupil time to show the picture they had brought and tell the others what they had eaten. When needed, the teacher helped the children to express themselves, using the information sheet that the parents had given her beforehand. Overall, the children were able to express themselves and explain to others what they had eaten. What is particularly interesting to note is that children from multicultural backgrounds (i.e. with parents from different cultures) spontaneously came with two pictures showing two different dishes. Moreover, when one pupil was sharing his/her experience, the others commented immediately by saying things such as “I too have already tried this” or “I have never eaten that”. Furthermore, by showing the different pictures and describing the foods in each dish, pupils were able to make links with meals they were

unfamiliar with. This led to discussions such as “I have never eaten this, but it is made of mushrooms, and I love mushrooms” or “What you ate looks like ravioli”. It is however relevant to state that some pupils were not entirely conscious of their origins and diversity of culture. To take but one example, one pupil came with a picture of couscous to show that he had Moroccan origins. However, when the teacher asked him where the meal was coming from, the child answered that it was a Belgian dish. It can be assumed that the child, naturally, concluded that since he lived in Belgium and eats couscous in Belgium, the dish was indeed Belgian. The teacher then led a very interesting discussion about the fact that all the pupils in the class live in Belgium and are Belgian, but that each of us/them could also have family origins in other countries and be part of cultures other than the Belgian culture. She concluded that our identities were, therefore, composed of a mix of several cultural practices. The activity enabled the pupils to reflect on their own identity and compare it with that of others, which is the basic principle of interculturality. Nevertheless, it is relevant to say that the concept of ‘culture’ seemed to be a new concept for them (which is also probably related to their young age) and it thus made the activity useful. Their young age did, however, not prevent them from understanding and discussing the basic ideas behind of the concept in their own words.

To make the activity more visual, the teacher had printed different flags from different countries and placed them on the floor. Each time a child made his/her presentation, he/she then had to place his/her picture next to the flag corresponding to their country of origin. This showed the pupils that each country had a different flag and it helped them remember the different countries mentioned during the activity. In general, we could see that children recognized the Belgian flag as well as the flag of their country of origin and were generally very enthusiastic about showing it to others. Even pupils who are normally more reserved or shy were willing to speak in front of others. Moreover, pupils who lack French language skills and therefore do not usually speak in class have taken the floor here to say the name of their dish in their mother tongue. Generally speaking, it can be stated that all pupils were involved in the activity.

The children were relatively attentive during the activity and were able to tell which classmate had which origins by the end of it. Nevertheless, we noticed that the language part was slightly too difficult for them. Originally, pupils were indeed also expected to say or recognize how to say “enjoy your meal” in the language of their country of origin. However, children seemed to have difficulties with the concept of translation. Nevertheless, the teacher still introduced these words with the help of an online pronunciation tool and some pupils took the exercise a step further, pointing out that some countries can contain several languages. One pupil had indeed brought a picture of a Belgian dish that is more of a Flemish specialty. His parents had thus written that “enjoy your meal” translated into “smakkelijk” in Dutch. However, one pupil noticed that in Belgium, he was used to saying “bon appétit” because he lives in the French-speaking part, he was thus puzzled and asked the question. The teacher therefore explained that in some countries, such as Belgium, we can speak several languages, which was a discovery for some pupils, and thus a worthwhile activity too.

All in all, the activity seems to have gone well. As is often the case in classrooms, not all situations had been anticipated in the basic plan, but the teacher was resourceful and was able to adapt. She also made things easier by printing flags, which was not foreseen in the basic canva, and it turned out to be very rich and facilitative in the activity. The children seemed to be motivated by the activity and seemed to have learned things they did not know about the concept of culture in general, about themselves and their classmates.

4.1.3 Feedback from the teachers

After the activity was conducted, the teacher provided feedback. The main comments concerned the practical side of the activity. The teacher indeed pointed out that bringing a picture could be a problem for some children who did not have a printer at home. This was the case for many of the children in the class. Due to messages received from parents, the teacher suggested that they send her the picture by e-mail so she could print them on the school printer. The second aspect concerned the duration of the activity. The teacher indeed mentioned that, because the activity is designed to be carried out as a group activity, it should not last longer than 30 minutes otherwise it becomes complicated for children to stay focused.

However, in general, the teacher was quite happy with the activity. She felt her pupils were involved and proud, and she noticed that some students who were shy or had difficulties with the French language still participated, by showing the picture to others or being receptive to the visual of the flags. She was even quite surprised to see some pupils expressing themselves, as this is very rarely the case. The teacher testified to a real involvement on the part of the pupils, which she believes is due to the fact that the activity starts with them and values their origins and their culture.

Lastly, the teacher believed that the second part of the activity, namely, poster-making, is important as it enables students to recall the collective activity and keep a record of it. The teacher is also planning follow-up activities that could meet the pupils' needs and expectations, based on what she observed during the activity. Indeed, as mentioned above, the pupils seemed to have difficulties understanding that they all lived in Belgium and were therefore Belgian, but that they could have other origins and belong to other cultures as well. It is important to note that there must be no confusion here, because if children misunderstand what they are being taught, the activity could have the opposite of the desired effect, namely, categorization and exclusion. This is why the teacher decided to create a poster with the Belgian flag in the center and different arrows linking it with other flags and pictures of the corresponding pupils. On the poster we can read the sentence: "Nous habitons tous en Belgique mais nous avons des origines et cultures différentes". This activity allows pupils to understand that we are all different yet share a common culture and country. This poster is now displayed in the classroom (see appendix 1). Finally, the teacher suggested showing the different countries mentioned on a map of the world to make pupils realize the distance separating all these countries. Showing union in difference and difference in union, here lies the main principle of interculturality.

It is relevant to state that although we were only able to observe one class, the activity was tested in three other classes in the same school and of the same level. Teachers have thus given their feedback after the activity was conducted in their class. The questions that were asked were presented in the previous section (see section 3). Globally, it seems that teachers were interested in the activity because they argue that it opens children to different cultures,

allows them to compare and express themselves in front of others, makes them feel seen and valued, and opens them to a new range of vocabulary. They also stated that the activity is adapted to the level of the pupils and can be modified so it suits all kindergartner's levels. Moreover, it fits well with their program in the "awakening to languages" section.

Teachers have found several positive aspects to this activity such as the fact that it allows pupils to be aware of the diversity of cultures present in the classroom. One teacher also noted that asking them to bring a picture of themselves from home, allows the class to see a part of their lifestyle and cultural practice. For example, through these pictures, they have been able to notice that in some cultures, we eat with a fork, in others with a spoon, or even with the hands. Nevertheless, some limitations have been presented. The main limitation lies in the fact that in some classes, parents were not involved and so, did not give their child a picture to bring at school. Some pupils were thus able to present, and others were not. However, one teacher added that the pupils who did not have pictures had a chance to express themselves by comparing their experience with what had been previously said. While this is encouraging, it would be wise to rethink this activity to remedy this shortcoming. To conclude, despite the limitation cited above, the teachers seemed to agree on the fact that pupils have been receptive to the activity as they were proud, participative, and even curious.

Lastly, we also took the opportunity to test the hypothesis put forward in the first part of this thesis, which stated that it was difficult for teachers to find language awareness activities due to the lack of resources and information. To do so, we asked teachers if this activity had helped them in the design of their awakening to languages course, and they answered in the affirmative, saying that it was generally complicated for them to find suitable resources. Moreover, we also asked an additional question: "Does the activity fit in with your conception of language awareness?" All four teachers admitted that they had not expected this at all and that they did not even know that culture could be the subject of the Awakening to Languages course. Originally, they believed it meant teaching pupils a foreign language. This is thus in line with the hypothesis put forward at the beginning of this thesis namely that teachers are faced with difficulties in the making of the lesson of awakening to languages

because of the lack of information and resources. Concrete activities such as the one proposed are thus needed to overcome these difficulties.

4.1.4 Feedback from the parents

As previously stated in this master's dissertation, practicing plurilingualism and interculturality at school can bring many benefits to families from migrant backgrounds (see section 2.5). Taking pupils' own experiences and identities into account can indeed help pupils with a migration background to feel more valued at school and it can help the family of the child to feel more included in their education. In the class where the activity was observed, we noticed a very wide cultural diversity. A total of seven different cultures have been distinguished within the class. Because this activity takes the child's culture and sometimes mother tongue as the basis, and because the help of the family of the pupil was requested, we took the opportunity to conduct a survey among parents to see how they perceived the activity. As mentioned in the previous section, the survey consisted, among others, of a series of open questions such as: "Did you feel valued within the school thanks to this activity? Yes or no and why?" or even "Do you think it is important that the school takes interest in your culture of origin and allows you to talk about it?". In general, we found out that parents of foreign origin responded very positively to the questions asked. They seem to find it important that the school generates a dialogue with them and their culture. They mention a feeling of pride, recognition, and reinforcement of self-esteem. Moreover, they argued that this type of activity strengthens the relations between children but also between the parents and the teacher. In one of the surveys, we can read "cela permet [...] de se sentir comme une grande famille avec les enseignants et les autres parents". Many parents thanked the teacher for this activity and even expressed a desire to have more of this kind of activity for their children. Furthermore, it can be argued that the majority of parents seem to believe that openness to cultural diversity is very important for children. It is relevant to state that even parents who have no foreign origins, but who are Belgian only, responded that they found the activity rich and that it was important for their child to learn to "respect and appreciate different cultures". It can thus be concluded that even if parents who were exclusively of Belgian origin mentioned feeling less included in the activity because they naturally believe that the Belgian culture is

always valued in Belgium, children as well as parents, regardless of their cultural background, found positive aspects to this activity and thought it necessary in their children's education.

4.2 Stories around the World –activity for P2 pupils

4.2.1 Presentation of the activity

INFORMATION

Theme: relations with others

Course: Awakening to languages

Name of the activity: "Stories around the World"

Thematic field: daily vocabulary through stories

Reference to the program:

3.1 témoigner d'une ouverture à la diversité culturelle par la diversité linguistique.

"Savoir : Les différences et les similitudes entre les cultures à travers le monde. La variété de situations de multilinguisme dans l'environnement (la famille, la classe, l'école).

Savoir-faire : Identifier les ressemblances et les différences existantes entre différentes cultures. Identifier ses propres spécificités, références, appartenances linguistiques et culturelles.

Balises et sens : Les élèves évoluent dans des univers multiculturels et multilingues, parfois même sans le savoir. L'objectif, par le travail de cette compétence, est de mettre en lumière et de valoriser les langues et les cultures présentes dans le quotidien de l'élève, en commençant par la classe et l'école. La rencontre avec l'autre permet de découvrir la richesse et la valeur de chaque culture sous différents aspects : langues, rituels sociaux, musique, art... Cette approche permet de mettre en évidence des éléments qui rapprochent l'ensemble des humains, au-delà des différences linguistiques et culturelles et permet de dépasser certains clichés. Les situations proposées évitent dès lors d'associer une culture à une langue et/ou une langue à un drapeau." (Programme de l'école primaire P1-P2 -volume 2, 2022 : 170-171)

“L’Éveil aux langues se veut une voie privilégiée pour rencontrer les visées du Code de l’enseignement fondamental et de l’enseignement secondaire, et mettant en place le tronc commun, à savoir aux articles:

– 1.4.1-1 « préparer tous les élèves à être des citoyens responsables, capables de contribuer au développement d’une société démocratique, solidaire, pluraliste (...) et ouverte aux autres cultures »

– 1.4.1-3 4° « à l’intérêt de connaître des langues autres que le français et, principalement, de communiquer dans ces langues »

– 1.4.1-3 7° « à la transmission de l’héritage culturel dans tous ses aspects et à la découverte d’autres cultures, qui, ensemble, donnent des signes de reconnaissance et contribuent à tisser le lien social ».” (Eveil aux langues - Balises de progression et ressources pédagogiques de M1 à P2, 2020 : 7)

This activity fits into “les balises de progression” regarding knowledge (S1, S3, S4, S11), skills (SF2, SF3, SF4, SF5, SF6, SF8, SF9, SF11, SF13, SF15) and attitudes (C1, C3, C5, C6) which are ranging from necessary to important at the P2 level (Eveil aux langues – Balises de progression et ressources pédagogiques de M1 à P2, 2020: 20 -22)

OBJECTIVE: Awakening to languages – interculturality

The first objective is to make pupils aware of the fact that some languages use different writing systems.

The second objective is to make pupils notice the cultural dimension of the story (settings, animals) but also to reflect on the fact that in every culture, stories are important and share similarities (form and content).

With this activity, pupils will train their reading skill and they will have acquired knowledge about another culture and language. Pupils will also have learned to express themselves on a specific story and their feelings.

EDUCATIONAL LEVEL/COURSE FOR WHICH IT IS ADDRESSED

Class of French-speaking primary school pupils (P1-P2: from 6 to 7 years old)

LANGUAGES CONCERNED IN THE ACTIVITY

French and Chinese

MATERIAL

A text with a Chinese short story written in French, a glossary with the translation of the Chinese words in French and a digital tool to hear the pronunciation of the words in Chinese via an online dictionary (<https://chine.in/mandarin/dictionnaire/>). Learners can also access the audio file of the story in French on YouTube (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bgdeBrtFa3o>)

The text, the glossary and the exercise can be found in appendix 2.

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY**First part (linguistic diversity):**

The teacher introduces the lesson by asking pupils to recite the alphabet. After pupils have done so, the teacher asks if they know other languages with a different alphabet.

After a quick class discussion, the teacher explains that the Chinese alphabet is different and that pupils will need to decode some words today. The teacher gives a sheet of paper (see appendix 2) to every student and tells them that the text is a Chinese short story. Pupils can work in pairs, and they need to use the glossary to decode the Chinese words. They write the translation in the text next to the Chinese word. The teacher then corrects with them OR if reading the full text is too much work for the pupils (depending on their level in reading comprehension), the teacher reads the story out loud and asks pupils to find the translation of the Chinese words in the glossary as they go along (so that they only must read a few words). The teacher helps pupils rewrite the words in the text next to the Chinese word (again depending on their writing skill level).

Once everyone is done, the teacher uses an online dictionary to let pupils hear the Chinese pronunciation of these words. They can try to repeat every word.

To end this activity the teacher can ask pupils to express their opinion on the language: was it difficult? Would you like to learn Chinese one day? Do you think it's easy for Chinese people to learn French?, ... The teacher can then tell pupils that other languages have a different alphabet (by considering the answers they gave at the beginning of the activity) and show them examples of what the alphabet of these languages looks like on the interactive board (examples of languages that can be used: Arabic, Greek, Russian, ...) (see appendix 2)

Second part (interculturality):

The teacher explains that the story is part of the Chinese culture and asks which elements of the story refer to the Chinese culture (expected answer: bamboo, pandas, tigre...). The teacher asks pupils if they know similar stories and if they can briefly explain the plot. The teacher then asks pupils questions such as: "do you think that stories are important? Why, why not?" "Are you happy when you read/ when someone reads you a story?" "Do you think that children around the world feel the same?". The teacher concludes by saying that stories are important and that every culture has its own stories that they share with the youngest. He/she insists on the fact that stories can take different forms, tell different stories, be written in different languages but that they convey the same feelings: joy, fear, sadness, fun etc.

The teacher then asks pupil to come with one of their books for next time (open deadlines) and to be able to explain the plot to the others and how the story makes them feel. The teacher specifies that it would be even better if the book tells a story about another country or culture (maybe their own?). Next, the teacher can create an "ephemeral library" containing the children's books, so that they can borrow and consult the ones they liked.

The teacher ends the activity by telling pupils that they can find the Chinese story on YouTube and listen to it at home.

EXPECTED RESULTS

By making the activity look like a detective work or a puzzle, pupils should be motivated to learn and to discover the story. This activity should also make students with different origins feel included as they will be able to express themselves on their culture/country.

SOURCES

The story comes from the YouTube channel *Le Monde des Enfants* and can be found via this link <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bgdeBrtFa3o> (see bibliography)

4.2.2 In-class observations

For this activity, we also had the chance to attend a language awareness course in a P2 class (children in the second grade of primary school) in which the first part of the activity was tested. It is, however, relevant to say that the first part of the activity centers more on linguistic aspects, namely, raising pupils' awareness of the different alphabets than on intercultural competence as such. It is therefore important to note that the conclusions that have been drawn from in-class observations do not concern the intercultural aspect of the activity, but rather how the pupils reacted to the preamble and the activity proposal. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that the first part of the activity is indeed part of plurilingualism and awakening to languages, as it highlights Chinese writing and the difference between the alphabets.

First, it is argued that the activity corresponds to the level of the pupils and fits well into their program because the pupils had already seen the alphabet in detail, and were able to make links with what they had already seen when introducing the activity: the difference between upper- and lower-case letters, between writing in cursive and in script, etc. Moreover, posters with letters and the alphabet were hanging in the class which made the introduction easier and more visual for pupils. After having introduced a reminder about the alphabet, the teacher asked the pupils if they knew any alphabet other than ours. It is

interesting to note here that pupils initially confused language with alphabet and naturally replied that the English alphabet was different from the French one, for example. The teacher was thus resourceful and showed on her interactive board (TBI) an image of the English alphabet that the pupils compared with the one they knew. They came to the conclusion that the letters were the same but that the pronunciation was sometimes different. They were however unable to come up with an idea of an alphabet that could be different from the one they knew. This observation is particularly intriguing because the teacher had informed us that some of her pupils were going to the Arab school to learn how to speak and write in Arabic and were thus familiar with other ways of writing. It could therefore be said that the link between the question asked, and the expected answer is not entirely clear, or that pupils are not aware that they already have some knowledge in the domain and could provide some answers. It is therefore argued that the activity is relevant because it builds on what the pupils have already seen while bringing in new concepts that are not yet completely clear to them. They will therefore build on their prior knowledge to discover new learnings.

To start the activity, the teacher decided to create a surprise effect by giving the text to pupils without the glossary and without giving them any hints on the fact that some words were written in Chinese and that they would therefore not be able to read them. She only explained that the exercise consisted of a text pupils must read. The pupils quickly realized that some words were incomprehensible, and immediately suggested that they were Chinese words. Some of them, however, wondered if it was not rather Japanese. The teacher therefore reminded them of the scientific approach they usually adopt in the class when they have a hypothesis: they must find a way to verify it. This conversation allows us to see that the activity enables pupils to adopt a work method that they had already used/seen/discussed previously and thus builds on existing knowledge and skills. The teacher thus once again used the interactive board to show the Chinese and Japanese alphabets and made pupils compare the signs with the ones written on their sheet. The class concluded that it was indeed the Chinese alphabet. The teacher then gave them the glossary and set them to work in pairs to read the text and decipher the Chinese words. We observed that the pupils were very receptive to the activity and found the translations quite easily. They were calm and attentive as the activity seemed to interest them. Moreover, they quickly adopted strategies by

themselves to make their work easier. For example, one pair wrote numbers in front of each Chinese word in the text and wrote the same number next to the corresponding translation in the glossary. Others were able to rewrite the French words in the text, which also enabled them to work on their handwriting.

Lastly, we observed that one pupil was curious about the rest of the activity and already looked at the back of the glossary where he discovered images of different alphabets that the teacher would later present. We heard the pupil tell one of his classmates that one of these alphabets was the Arabic alphabet which confirms our prior hypothesis that pupils had already some knowledge of the diversity of writings and alphabets but were not aware of it. He was thus able to recognize the Arabic alphabet and was eager to share his discovery with his friend. It can therefore be argued that the activity made them discover new concepts, but it also made them aware of what they already knew on the subject.

4.2.3 Feedback from the teachers

After the first part of the activity, the teacher gave some immediate feedback and stated that she thought the activity went well. However, she confessed that it was necessary to have an interactive board available so that she could respond to students' questions and hypotheses on the moment. She stressed that it was sometimes complicated to anticipate pupil's answers and questions and that it was, therefore, important to have the necessary equipment to immediately deal with them. This could present an additional difficulty in classrooms where there is no interactive board and direct access to the internet. Moreover, the teacher mentioned the fact that it could be necessary to integrate to the activity an image of the Chinese alphabet as such because the glossary presents words and not signs or letters and it is therefore not an equivalent of the alphabet as they know it. This remark is pertinent as it is important to avoid confusion for the learners by comparing things that are not equivalent. Nevertheless, the teacher seemed to think that the activity was rich and interesting for pupils and that it fit well with their program and in the continuity of what they had already done. Furthermore, she observed a real interest of the pupils in the activity as they were attentive and participative.

The teacher also gave us her feedback on the rest of the activity and in particular on the part that interests us most in this thesis: the intercultural part. Moreover, another primary teacher at another school also kindly shared his expertise on the subject. Concerning the second part of the activity that centers around culture and intercultural competence, both teachers seem to think that awakening children to different cultures and asking them about the function of stories and storytelling in the world is an interesting idea. Additionally, they believe that it is also very valuable for children to be able to discuss a story from their own culture. However, one of the teachers highlighted the fact that pupils will certainly need more guidance when presenting their stories to the class. He suggested creating a small memory aid with them so that they can make sure they have the answers to the questions: What? Who? Where? When? What is happening? What is the end of the story? Furthermore, teachers have found that the ephemeral library concept was a good way of continuing the activity and making it more concrete for children. In addition, it facilitates intercultural exchanges, which they consider very beneficial. Nevertheless, one teacher mentioned the fact that not all pupils would necessarily have a book to bring or even a story to tell. It is indeed relevant to consider the sociocultural reality of the families in the school where the activity is conducted so that the assignment can be completed by all pupils without too much difficulty. To remedy the situation, we suggested that this part of the activity could be done based on a cartoon or a movie. The teacher indeed believes that it will be more accessible to some children who can, for example, choose a cartoon that highlights their (or another) culture of origin.

Another option would be to check if local libraries have books in different languages that could be lent to the schoolteachers and/or parents. La Baie des Tecks (which, when pronounced means BDthèque in French – whose literal translation in English would be Comics library, see <https://www.namur.be/fr/loisirs/culture/lectures/bibliotheques/bibliotheques-du-reseau/baie-des-tecks>) is one example of public library lending comics in various languages. Additionally, the comics can be borrowed in numbers (e.g. 20 copies of the same comics to work with in class, together with didactic materials for exploration in class).

All in all, teachers seem to believe that the activity presents several positive aspects. On the one hand, the activity raises awareness of the diversity of languages and alphabets

both visually and orally. Pupils can thus realize that we do not have the same written and spoken codes in every country. On the other hand, the activity enables them to reflect on the importance of the cultural practice of storytelling around the world and challenges them in turn to express their own cultural heritage. They can then listen to others and compare experiences, which helps them develop their intercultural skills.

4.3 Greetings around the World –activity for A1 level pupils.

4.3.1 Presentation of the activity

INFORMATION

Theme: Relations with others

Course: English course

Name of the activity: “Greetings around the World”

Thematic field: Greetings and human relations

Reference to the program: The *Programme d'études: langues modernes : enseignement secondaire ordinaire 1er degré commun (2020)* introduces different thematic fields that must be addressed which include:

“3. Vie quotidienne

Aborder les sous-champs suivants :

-quelques activités routinières (à la maison, à l'école)” (192)

Moreover, the Program also mentions the importance of the intercultural competence and precise:

“9.3 Les savoir-faire culturels

Comme on l'aura compris, les savoirs culturels sont peu utiles à ce stade s'ils ne fournissent pas à l'élève des outils lui permettant de comprendre son homologue dans ses dimensions linguistiques et culturelles et, donc s'ils ne débouchent pas sur des savoir-faire :

- *identifier les comportements liés aux cultures différentes, ainsi que des points de repère utiles pour séjourner et communiquer dans une société donnée ;*
- *reconnaitre et comprendre les différences de culture, les autres points de vue et systèmes de valeur ;*

- *percevoir les stéréotypes liés à sa propre culture et à la culture de l'autre.*

9.3.1 La méthodologie de la rencontre interculturelle

Comme pour la méthodologie de la compréhension, l'enseignant peut faire prendre conscience des différences et similitudes culturelles en suivant les quatre étapes suivantes :

- 1. activer les représentations qu'on a de l'autre: conception d'une mind map, brainstorming, répondre à un questionnaire sur les stéréotypes... ;*
- 2. enrichir sa connaissance de l'autre : par l'observation de documents authentiques, le témoignage de locuteurs natifs... ;*
- 3. rencontrer et comprendre l'autre : la rencontre peut être virtuelle (échanges écrits ou audiovisuels) ou réelle (échanges linguistiques via les plateformes spécialisées telles que eTwinning) ;*
- 4. comparer ses représentations de départ et ce que l'on a observé : cette phase de débriefing est essentielle car elle permet de lever les stéréotypes, de mettre l'accent sur les difficultés sociolinguistiques rencontrées, de confirmer le recours (ou non) aux conventions sociolinguistiques théoriques assimilées en classe..." (116)*

OBJECTIVE:

The aim of this activity is to make pupils aware of the cultural diversity in terms of greetings. They will therefore train their intercultural competence while acquiring knowledge on different cultures. Moreover, pupils will have exercised their listening and reading comprehension as well as their speaking skill. They will also have acquired some vocabulary about greetings and human relations. All in all, we can say that at the end of this activity pupils will have learned about interculturality and greetings around the world and they will have trained their listening, reading, and speaking skills.

At the end of this activity, pupils will be able to:

- understand the vocabulary related to greetings.
- understand and navigate the input proposed.
- express themselves on the input received.
- express preferences.

<ul style="list-style-type: none">- share experiences and parts of their identity.- identify differences and similarities between cultures.
EDUCATIONAL LEVEL/COURSE FOR WHICH IT IS ADRESSED: Secondary school pupils with an A1 level in English
LANGUAGE CONCERNED: English
MATERIAL Material: youtube video (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ekHpCUwXX_M) and exercises (https://learningapps.org/watch?v=pqs8rbgw323). The handout can be found in appendix 3.
DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY <p>The teacher introduces the lesson by firing up the discussion about greetings. The teacher can use the topic of the pandemic (covid19) to ask pupils if they saw any change in the way we greet one another.</p> <p>Then the teacher shows a video about greetings around the world (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ekHpCUwXX_M) and let pupils watch the first part (until 1:23) 2 times. They can take notes if they want to. The teacher then asks pupils what they understood in this first part. Pupils then make exercises 1 and 2. This will enable them to discover the new vocabulary related to greetings (see appendix 3).</p> <p>After making the correction of the exercises with the class, the teacher shows them the second part of the video and asks them to identify the different ways of greeting each other in the different countries mentioned. After watching the second part of video, the teacher asks pupils to use their phone and to do an exercise related to the greetings of each countries on the application learning.app.org</p>

(<https://learningapps.org/watch?v=pqs8rbgw323>). This exercise enables learner to test their understanding of the second part of the video.

When they are done with the online exercise, pupils can do exercise 3 – reading comprehension on the worksheet (see appendix 3). After correcting with them, the teacher then asks pupils to talk about their experience and asks if they know any other way to greet people around the world. This enables pupils to reflect on their own culture(s) and to feel included and valued.

Finally, the teacher asks pupils to form groups (of 3 or 4). They have to imagine a new creative way of greeting people. They are free to choose anything (gesture, word, objects, ...) as long as it stays respectful. Then, each group presents their findings to the rest of the class and pupils can vote for the greeting they prefer. (This is a way of working on the language function: giving your opinion – expected answer: I liked the idea of groupX because...). If the teacher agrees, this new greeting can become the ritual of the class.

EXPECTED RESULTS:

Pupils should feel involved and valued in the exercise because their work can be used as ritual for the whole class. They should also feel concerned by the activity because it makes them reflect on greetings which is a universal practice. The activity also makes pupils reflect on this practice and how it has changed and adapted during the COVID19 (event that pupils have experienced). Finally, pupils will have the opportunity to work in groups which can be motivating (it is also good for differentiation because each group will work at their own pace. Moreover, pupils with different profile and different level will work together which will help to overcome individual difficulties while reinforcing the strengths of each learner in the group.)

SOURCES:

The reading exercise comes from: <https://www.liveworksheets.com/gp1780217gn> (see bibliography)

4.3.2 Feedback from the teachers

For this activity, the feedback of two lower secondary school English teachers was requested. In the hope of getting different views, the two teachers chosen are not teaching in the same school, nor the same region. After reading the activity as it is here presented, the two teachers answered a few questions and gave their general opinions of the activity. This subsection will therefore be dedicated to their comments and remarks.

First, it is relevant to state that both teachers are not really in agreement when it comes to the activity's target audience. As suggested in the previous section, this activity has been designed for a lower level of proficiency. Although one of the teachers interviewed seems to agree with this statement and envisioned this activity with pupils in their first year of secondary school, the other seems to believe that it would be more appropriate with pupils who are not completely new to the subject and are thus in their second year of secondary school. It is however important to reiterate that the language levels described in the CEFR remain an overall idea of the level to be reached at the end of each cycle of learning, but that many teachers have testified to the fact that this level can vary from one year to the next, from one class to the next, and sometimes even from one learner to the next. This activity can thus be used when teachers believe it is most appropriate. Nonetheless, both teachers agree on the fact that this activity approaches the A1 level and ought to be done at the beginning of the school year as the theme of greetings consists of a good introduction to the English course. Moreover, they seem to believe that the activity fits into their program and one teacher even testified that she sometimes addressed this theme, but not in this level of detail, which shows that the activity has its place at this stage of learning according to them.

Secondly, from a practical point of view, both teachers argued that more resources should be provided to the learners. They indeed believe it is essential to provide vocabulary lists to pupils to make sure they can, on the one hand, understand the input integrated into the activity and on the other hand, express themselves on the subject. Moreover, they insisted on the fact that pupils needed language functions to have all the tools necessary to complete the exercise. All in all, the activity should be more guided given that the pupils are beginners, and their language skills are not yet rich enough to carry out this activity based on their

previous knowledge and skills. In addition, in the first part of the activity, pupils watch a video and are expected to take some notes to later discuss what they understood. Teachers testified of the vague nature of this instruction. According to them, the instruction must be clear and unequivocal to make sure learners know what is expected. They, therefore, suggest adding an exercise with guided questions on the video so that pupils know what they need to find out. This would also make the listening comprehension less complex for them as one teacher suggested that the fact that the video was carried out in American English could be problematic for some pupils who are not necessarily used to this variety of English. Lastly, teachers have however noted the richness of materials offered. They believe that varying the support is essential and therefore find interesting the fact that the activity is based on a video as well as a text but also offers some online and on-paper exercises. Furthermore, the group work seems to be a very good idea as it is generally a motivating factor. Additionally, teachers argue it allows learners to work on their speaking skills.

Lastly, teachers have given their opinion on the content and intercultural aspect of the activity. First, they both seem to find the activity innovative and original. One teacher stated that it is “*intéressant et différent de ce que l’on propose d’habitude*”. It can therefore be argued that this is in line with the first part of this master’s dissertation which stated that culture was not always the main target in language courses. The pluricultural aspect seems to appeal to teachers who feel that it belongs in a language course. In addition, teachers seem to think that allowing learners to express themselves on their experiences and own cultural practices will motivate them and engage them in the activity. It was even suggested by one teacher that the activity could be expanded even further. After the learners have had a taste of the different ways of greeting people in the world from a gestural point of view, they could be asked to think about how this is done linguistically. This would not only focus the activity on cultural diversity but also link it with linguistic diversity. Pupils could indeed compare the way we address each other in different languages and different cultures. Additionally, this aspect could be observed in different contexts (with a family member, with a friend, with a stranger, with a teacher...) and the different levels of directness and politeness in each culture could be compared. All the above could be achieved by starting with the learners and their cultural and social backgrounds, which would enhance the intercultural dimension of the

activity. The suggestions offered here tend to demonstrate that there are numerous possibilities and that intercultural activities are always open to expansion. Lastly, it was highlighted that the conclusion to the activity, namely the creation of a new way to greet each other, was both innovative and enjoyable. Pupils would become more motivated, and their work would be more valuable as a result. To conclude, it can be stated that both teachers have shown an interest in the activity and even mentioned that they would be willing to use it in their own classrooms.

4.4 Do you speak English? – activity for A2 level pupils.

4.4.1 Presentation of the activity

BASIC INFORMATION

Theme: Relations with others

Course: English course

Name of the activity: “Do you speak English?”

Thematic field: Varieties of English

Reference to the program: The *Programme d'études: langues modernes : 2ème et 3ème degré* (2018) introduces different thematic fields that must be addressed which include :

“1. Caractérisation personnelle

Aborder les sous-champs suivants :

- identité culturelle (pays et culture d'origine, provenance” (98)

“6. Relation avec les autres

Élargir les sous-champs développés dans le(s) degré(s) précédent(s) :

- types de relations avec l'entourage
- actions liées aux relations avec l'entourage

Aborder les sous-champs suivants :

- vie associative, économique, politique et citoyenne
- sentiments et émotions” (102)

The program also mentions different themes that can be addressed in relation to the intercultural dimension, in particular : “ La langue et sa diversité (par exemple les variantes locales, l’inclusion de l’anglais dans le néerlandais, le «spanglish »), les rythmes et intonations, les mots intraduisibles qui sont souvent le reflet d’une réalité culturelle (par exemple les «tapas») l’origine du vocabulaire (par exemple les emprunts) mais aussi le non-verbal...” and “Des informations, des réflexions sur le(s) pays dans le(s)quel(s) on parle la langue : les caractéristiques géographiques, l’environnement, la démographie, l’économie, la politique, l’histoire, mais aussi tout ce qui concerne les médias, l’enseignement, les institutions, les monuments, les célébrités...” (11)

OBJECTIVE:

- The aim of the activity is to develop intercultural competence and make pupils reflect on the links between language and culture. The objective of this activity is also to make pupils realize that the British English is not the only variety of English and that there is no hierarchy between languages or cultures.

- Moreover, pupils will have exercised their reading and listening skills as well as their speaking skill. They will also have acquired some vocabulary related to the varieties of English and human relationships.

EDUCATIONAL LEVEL/COURSE FOR WHICH IT IS ADDRESSED

Pupils from secondary school that have a A2 level of English.

LANGUAGES CONCERNED IN THE ACTIVITY

English and its varieties

TECHNOLOGIES CONCERNED

Pupils will use their phone/tablets/computer and headphones in the classroom to access YouTube videos and watch them. This activity can also be done in a computer room.

MATERIAL

The material consists of YouTube videos and texts generated by ChatGPT. They provide information about the American, British, and Australian culture and language. The texts can

be printed and handed out to pupils. For the videos, the teacher can give the links to students or give them a sheet of paper with a QR code that they must scan with their phone.

The texts and the exercises can be found in appendix 4. Links to the videos:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MEXT4b7rP8o>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OdigP3FVZBE>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EZrKx_iIVvc

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY

The teacher introduces the lesson by asking pupils if they know in which countries English is spoken. He or she then initiates the discussion by asking if having the same language means having the same culture, why and why not (in the context of French-speaking Belgium, the teacher can ask pupils to reflect on their similarities and differences with French people from France and Flemish from Belgium to establish a link between language, country and culture). Pupils draw on their own experience and take some notes (see appendix 4 ex.1)

After the topic has been introduced, the class is divided into 3 groups. Each group will receive a 'country' (Britain, Australia, USA) and will have to gather information. To do so they are given a YouTube video about the country and its culture and a text about the language. During the first 10 minutes, half of each groups reads the text, and the other half watches the video and then they switch (or they can simply share their information with the rest of the group to highlight the benefits of teamwork). The teacher can provide a vocabulary list to help pupils understand the texts and the videos. After pupils received some input, they have 10 minutes to discuss their findings and to answer some questions related to culture and language (see handout in appendix 4).

Finally, they are given some time to make a presentation on any support they want (online mind map, sheet of paper, PowerPoint presentation) so that they are able to present their findings to the whole class. If they want, they can look for extra information and pictures of their country on the internet.

After the presentation the teacher asks if pupils learned things they did not know about the three countries. He/she then comes back to his/her initial question about culture and language and lets pupils draw their conclusions. The teacher also draws the attention of the pupils on the fact that (as they saw in the videos) one country can consist of different cultures and populations and that no culture is 'monolithic or 'homogenous' just as one language does not signify one culture. The teacher also encourages pupils to think about other countries and languages where the same phenomenon can be observed (Arabic countries for examples) and pupils are allowed to share their experience with the class. This will enable them to reflect on their own culture(s) and to feel valued as there are allowed to talk about it/them.

As a final task for this activity, the teacher can ask pupils to write a text (Writing skill) where they answer the question "if you could choose to live in Australia, Great Britain or the United States, where would you go and why?" so that they can reuse the vocabulary and the information they learned.

Extra: because the texts pupils had to read highlight the differences in vocabulary and accent between the three varieties of English, the teacher can use this YouTube video (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fy-bd5AC-Ms>) to draw the attention of the pupils on pronunciation and vocabulary differences and imagine some exercise on this topic. To do so, the teacher can also use an online dictionary that provides different pronunciations of the same word.

EXPECTED RESULTS

This activity was designed to motivate pupils to reflect on their own cultural background and experiences and to open them to other cultures and customs. Learning about the varieties of English can motivate pupils as they realize that languages are not hierarchical and that there is no superiority of one variety over another. The supports are varied, and they will have the opportunity to work in groups which can make them feel more involved in the task (it is also good for differentiation).

SOURCES

Texts were generated by ChatGPT (OpenAI 2021. GPT-3.5) – “Can you provide 3 short texts about the specificity of language and accent of the British English, American English and Australian English for A2 learners of English.”

Videos come from the YouTube channel *Learn English by Pocket Passport*. (see bibliography)

4.4.2 Feedback from the teachers

As was the case for the previous activity, feedback from two teachers has been requested. They answered our questions (see section 3) and expressed their opinion on both the feasibility and originality of the activity proposed. As suggested in the previous section, this activity was designed for pupils with an A2 level of English, and we estimated that the public that most closely resembled this level were pupils in their second and third year of secondary school. The activity was created to fit into their usual English course as it awakens them to the American, British, and Australian cultures while encouraging them to train their intercultural competence.

Firstly, from a practical point of view, providing vocabulary lists was once again necessary. Because this activity is essentially composed of authentic material (except for the use of Chat GPT), it is essential that pupils are given the right tools to understand and navigate the input. Moreover, they must have vocabulary to build on when attempting to express themselves. Furthermore, discovering new vocabulary and linguistic features with each theme covered enriches their skills and knowledge of the target language. If vocabulary lists are indeed provided to pupils, teachers believe that the activity is accessible to the target audience. In addition, both teachers agreed that this activity fits into their program. One aspect that could present a problem, however, is the fact that to carry out this activity, students need access to the internet and to computers or their phones. Teachers seem to think that it is feasible but that it requires a minimum of organization. One limitation of this activity could therefore lie in the practical aspect. While one of the teachers also pointed out that the activity offered little opportunity for differentiation, they both noted the richness of

the group work, which they found interesting and challenging. Nonetheless, teachers suggested not to make groups that were too large, so that everyone can have the opportunity to work and learn. It might therefore be more valuable to have several groups working on the same theme, but perhaps on different aspects. Lastly, one teacher regrets the fact that the audio in all three videos is in American English, which is a pity as two of them present Britain and Australia. She suggested that it might be confusing for pupils to hear about Britain and Australia and especially about some typical words and expressions with an American accent. This being said, this reality could be an interesting starting point for discussion, and we could point out that the texts given to learners focus particularly on vocabulary variations and accents, and that teachers are encouraged to let pupils hear these variations using an online tool and an additional video in order to remedy any confusion they might have after the first video. We have however taken note of the relevant comment and it might indeed be better to find (or create) other videos on the corresponding variety of English. The teachers unanimously agreed that it was a good idea to have two different media (a listening and a reading exercise) so that pupils could work on both skills around the same theme, dividing up the tasks. In addition, during the final presentations, pupils will also work on their speaking skills. The fact that three different inputs were proposed was also well received, and it was even suggested that the three final tasks should also be different, to push the exercise even further and give rise to more differentiation.

After this rather practical part, the teachers also gave us their opinion on the intercultural nature of the activity. Both teachers argued that pupils would be receptive to this activity. However, it was mentioned that teachers should be careful and well-prepared to give this activity in the classroom. It was, in fact, suggested that the introduction to this activity, which encourages pupils to reflect on the concept of culture, should be well-defined and framed, since the subject of culture, although necessary and interesting, can sometimes lead to heated debate about politics and religions that can rapidly become unmanageable if not well prepared. One teacher stated that it is sometimes delicate to broach this kind of subject with young teenagers as they may not fully understand the notion of culture and all its depth. However, it could be argued that it is possible to tackle the theme of culture at any age (as demonstrated by our activities in kindergarten and primary school). Pupils do not have to be

experts in interculturality to be able to reflect on this theme and to share their often rich experience and knowledge. It is therefore essential, on the one hand, to talk about culture in the classroom but on the other hand, to frame it with the help of specific questions. It is here argued that this remark from the teacher is extremely important because the desired effect of opening to the world and cultures could quickly have the opposite effect if not taken into consideration. All in all, the teacher argued that the concept of culture as presented in this activity is probably new to pupils and should thus be handled with caution to guarantee the success of this learning. To do so, it is necessary to build a respectful classroom climate. Furthermore, it was mentioned that talking about “hierarchy” of cultures might not be ideal even in an attempt to deconstruct this idea. In the expected results of this activity, it is noted that “[l]earning about the varieties of English can motivate pupils as they realize that languages are not hierarchical and that there is no superiority of one variety over another” (table on the previous page). One teacher argued that even if the intention was right and relevant, this vision of languages and cultures was outdated nowadays and that talking about it in this way could have the opposite effect, namely, introducing this way of thinking when it was not even in the learner’s heads in the first place. Nevertheless, it seems that the activity was well received by teachers who found it interesting because it gives the learners central stage and requires their opinion on the concept of culture. In addition, it allows pupils to reflect on different English-speaking countries and their customs which makes the English course richer and different from what is usually offered. Lastly, it allows learners to discover new aspects and also to talk about their experiences. Both teachers seem to believe that it would motivate pupils and make them feel involved and valued. Teachers therefore stated that they were interested in conducting this activity in their classroom in the future.

4.5 Do you have a cat or a frog in your throat? –activity for B1 level pupils.

4.5.1 Presentation of the activity

BASIC INFORMATION

Theme: Relations with others

Course: English course or Dutch course or French course

Name of the activity: “Do you have a cat or a frog in your throat?”

Thematic field: Idioms and daily vocabulary

Reference to the program: The *Programme d'études: langues modernes : 2ème et 3ème degré* (2018) introduces different thematic fields that must be addressed which include :

“1. Caractérisation personnelle

Aborder les sous-champs suivants :

- identité culturelle (pays et culture d'origine, provenance” (98)

“6. Relation avec les autres

Aborder les sous-champs suivants :

- vie associative, économique, politique et citoyenne” (102)

The program also mentions different themes that can be addressed in relation to the intercultural dimension, in particular : “La langue et sa diversité (par exemple les variantes locales, l'inclusion de l'anglais dans le néerlandais, le «spanglish »), les rythmes et intonations, les mots intraduisibles qui sont souvent le reflet d'une réalité culturelle (par exemple les «tapas») l'origine du vocabulaire (par exemple les emprunts) mais aussi le non-verbal...” (11)

OBJECTIVE

With this activity, pupils will have trained their intercultural competence regarding idiomatic expressions. The learners will be more aware of the cultural and linguistic differences and similarities.

Moreover, pupils will have trained their listening and reading skill as well as their speaking skill. They will have acquired vocabulary related to idioms and human relations and they will have gained practice in 3 languages.

EDUCATIONAL LEVEL/COURSE FOR WHICH IT IS ADDRESSED

Pupils from secondary school that have a B1 (or more in the mother tongue) level in French, English and Dutch

LANGUAGES CONCERNED IN THE ACTIVITY

English – French – Dutch

TECHNOLOGIES CONCERNED

Pupils will use their phone/tablets/computer and headphones in the classroom to access YouTube videos and watch them. This activity can also be done in a computer room.

MATERIAL

The material consists of YouTube videos and texts from different websites that provide information about different idioms (each explained in the target language). The texts can be printed and handed to pupils. For the videos, the teacher can give the links to students or give them a sheet of paper with a QR code that they have to scan with their phone. The texts and the exercises can be found in appendix 5.

Links to the videos:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DahAZ2DQ738&t=88s>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RslOigaaolo&t=62s>

https://www.maxisciences.com/mourir-moins-con/pourquoi-dit-on-merde-pour-se-souhaiter-bonne-chance_art43064.html

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NrhAAVB0gns>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DaJo05eQ5MU>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XIVb_kK9iRs&t=32s

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rCljtLEOo_s

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WmzjgfLLuzQ>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A5Bp3677Zz8>

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY

To introduce the lesson on idioms and cultural and language differences, pupils watch a TED talk video (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DahAZ2DQ738&t=88s>) that talks about the difficulties of translating idioms from one language to another. The teacher initiates the discussion about the video to check the comprehension of each pupil. The goal of this first activity is to make them NOTICE the challenge and to make them aware of cultural differences in this specific language point.

Individual time:

After watching the video, each pupil receives a text or a video that he/she needs to watch/read individually. The texts and videos can be in French, Dutch or English and each one provides information about a specific idiom in the target language.

These idioms are:

1. Break a leg – Bonne merde – Veel succes
2. Raining cats and dogs – Tomber des cordes - Het regent Pijpenstelen
3. To have a frog in one's throat – Avoir un chat dans la gorge – Een kiker in de keel hebben
4. Spill the beans – Crache le morceau – Voor de draad ermee

First collective moment:

After this individual time, pupils will walk around in the class and summarize the main idea of their text/video to others in order to find other pupils with the same expression **in the same language** (it will be possible for some because some videos and some text match but not for others as some idioms only have a text but no video). For this first moment, pupils speak in the language of their text/video. (All in all, pupils need to find a partner that discuss the same idiom as them in the same language. E.g. one of them has received a text in French about the expression “tomber des cordes”, the other has received a video in French about the expression “tomber des cordes”).

Second collective moment:

Once some of them found their pairs, pupils walk around in the class once again in order, now, to find pupils who have idioms **in a different language** but with the same meaning. In order to find each other, pupils need to speak to each other in the language of the other (if a pupil with a French text/video meets one with an English text/video, he or she will ask questions in English and vice-versa)

Third collective moment:

After this, pupils will normally have formed 4 groups of 3 languages (for the 4 idioms in 3 languages targeted). They will now discuss their findings by finding similarities and differences from a linguistic (the language itself) and cultural (origin) point of view. For this they can choose the language they want to speak or alternate.

Final activity:

The teacher summarizes all the expressions with the whole class using the table (see appendix 5). He or she asks them if they know other idioms in other languages that are

similar to those found. This will enable pupils to share their experience with the class and talk about their own/other culture(s). This will make them feel involved in the activity. According to pupils' answers, the teacher can also ask them to find out about similar expressions in other languages and their origins, to further compare languages and cultures around the world.

Finally, the teacher stresses that the activity has shown that language is intimately linked to culture, and that it is not a matter of translating everything word for word into another language, as that does not always work (as in this case). That's why it's important to be open to the world's cultural differences if you really want to understand and speak another language.

EXPECTED RESULTS

This activity should be motivating for pupils because of the variety of languages. They are in fact often used to practicing one language at the time, here they will be able to vary the language which can be stimulating. Moreover, one of the languages present in the activity is the mother tongue of a majority of pupils which can be reassuring. Finally, establishing links between different languages and different cultures and learning more about interculturality can motivate them all the more so as they will have the opportunity to work in groups (which is also good for differentiation).

SOURCES:

Texts have been found on different websites and have been modified to fit this activity.
(see bibliography)

4.5.2 Feedback from the teachers

This activity was designed in an attempt to show that plurilingualism and intercultural competence could be trained during activities that can be described as less traditional. Indeed, it is customary for language courses in secondary school to carry out activities solely in the target language. However, this thesis aims to demonstrate that plurilingualism also involves mixing languages, sometimes within the same activity. The table presented above was

therefore submitted to two teachers of English and Dutch at the upper secondary level in two different schools, to receive their feedback on the feasibility and originality of the activity and in terms of interculturality.

Generally speaking, it can be argued that the activity was received in the same way by both teachers. Because it involves three languages and is thus not an English nor a Dutch lesson in itself, teachers were initially reluctant regarding this activity arguing that even if the linguistic point of idioms was in their program, the fact that three languages were involved and that the activity had more of a cross-functional focus was not necessarily an objective promoted by the FWB. In addition, it would require time from language classes to carry out this activity which might be less rich in the in-depth learning of English or Dutch since it brings together three different languages.

It is however relevant to say that aside from the practical part, this activity seems to appeal to teachers because of its originality and capacity to establish links between languages. They think that it would be a different type of learning for pupils but that it would be valuable because of its plurilingual and intercultural dimension. Additionally, they seem to believe that pupils would be interested in participating in this activity since it presents languages in a different way than the one they are used to. The fact that learners would be active and meet others by expressing themselves in different languages would also present an advantage. Moreover, the activity would allow pupils to train their reading and listening skills in different languages. The activity would also be valuable in terms of vocabulary. One of the teachers even suggested a follow-up activity where idioms were cut into several parts and learners should bring them back together to reinforce the vocabulary learned. Lastly, teachers have highlighted the plurilingual and intercultural dimension of the activity saying that it would allow pupils to notice similarities and differences between languages and relate this to cultural differences to realize that languages are impregnated with culture, which sometimes makes them difficult to translate, as in the case of idioms.

The main difficulty lies thus in the implementation of this activity. The first setback according to the teachers is the fact that learners need to access a computer room or have

access to their phones and the internet to watch the videos. Secondly, the first and second collective moments as presented in section 4.5.1 seem laborious to teachers because pupils would need space to move around and speak to each other. In addition, the fact that pupils would hear different languages from other groups while attempting to concentrate could disturb them. Both teachers, therefore, admitted that learners would need space to gather with their colleagues and form groups and that one classroom might not be spacious enough. It is for this reason that they suggested collaborating with other colleagues on this activity. This would ensure a larger workspace with at least two classrooms available and an extra teacher to supervise the different groups. Ideally, one teacher even put forward the idea that the activity could be done on a larger scale with all language teachers and their pupils during a day or an afternoon dedicated to opening up to languages and cultures. This would imply targeting a specific audience and level while calculating all the organizational parameters required for the successful completion of the activity.

After these two interviews, it can be concluded that the activity presents some organizational difficulties, but that the two teachers do not believe these difficulties are unsolvable. However, they would not do the activity in a language class as such but rather during a more fun and relaxed time with pupils in collaboration with other classes and teachers.

4.6 Tradities in Nederland en ter Wereld – activity for B1 level pupils.

4.6.1 Presentation of the activity

BASIC INFORMATION

Theme: Relations with others

Course: Dutch course

Name of the activity: “Tradities in Nederland en ter Wereld”

Thematic field: National holidays around the world

Reference to the program: The *Programme d'études: langues modernes: 2ème et 3ème degré* (2018) introduces different thematic fields that must be addressed which include:

“1. Caractérisation personnelle

Aborder les sous-champs suivants :

- identité culturelle (pays et culture d’origine, provenance” (98)

“3. Vie quotidienne

Élargir le sous-champ développé dans le(s) degré(s) précédent(s) :

- fêtes et traditions” (99)

“4. Loisir

4.1 activité culturelle

Élargir le sous-champ développé dans le(s) degré(s) précédent(s) :

- lieux, intervenants, objets et activités liés à la culture” (11)

“6. Relation avec les autres

Élargir les sous-champs développés dans le(s) degré(s) précédent(s) :

- types de relations avec l’entourage
- actions liées aux relations avec l’entourage

Aborder les sous-champs suivants :

- vie associative, économique, politique et citoyenne
- sentiments et émotions
- problèmes de société (criminalité, faits divers...)” (102)

The program also mentions different themes that can be addressed in relation to the intercultural dimension, in particular : “- Les croyances, les rites, la religion, les pratiques liées à la naissance, à la mort, au mariage, la tradition et le changement, les tabous, l’idée du bonheur...” (11)

OBJECTIVE:

With this activity, pupils will train their intercultural skills and will learn more about similarities and differences between cultures. They will also learn more about the cultural diversity of the class.

Moreover, pupils will have trained their listening and reading skills as well as their speaking and writing skills. They will have acquired the vocabulary related to national holidays, traditions, and human relationships.

EDUCATIONAL LEVEL/COURSE FOR WHICH IT IS ADDRESSED:

Secondary school pupils with a B1 level in Dutch

LANGUAGE CONCERNED:

Dutch (and any other languages spoken by students for the research part)

MATERIAL

- A YouTube video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jw5wJJhG720>
- The text and different exercises can be found in appendix 6.

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY

DISCLAIMER: This activity has been taken from the website of the Taalunie (hapklaar) and was thus not designed for this master's dissertation. The only part that was added is the final part in which pupils compare the different national holidays from different cultures and countries in order to highlight similarities and differences.

The teacher introduces the lesson by asking pupils if they have ever heard of "Koningsdag". They express themselves on the subject and try to give as much information as they can (expected answers: it's the national day in the Netherlands, people party, they are dressed in orange,...) . The teacher then informs students that they will learn more about this national day. To do so, pupils watch a YouTube video about "Koningsdag" and answer some questions (see appendix 6 ex.1). Pupils can watch the video 3 times (depending on their listening comprehension level) and the teacher can provide a vocabulary list to help them. A correction is then made with the class.

In a second step, pupils are working in pairs on a reading exercise. They will have to read different passages of a text about "Koningsdag" and choose the corresponding image(s)

(see appendix 6 ex.2). Again, the teacher can provide a vocabulary list with the text to help students with the exercise. A correction is then made with the class.

Now that pupils have had some input regarding this Dutch tradition, the teacher can fire up a discussion about it and ask pupils questions such as “what so you think of this tradition?”, “which activity is the most fun during this day?”, “would you like to participate? Why, why not?”. This will enable them to exercise their speaking skill.

With this first activity, pupils will have learned about the national holiday of the target culture/country. As homework, the teacher asks pupils to find information on other national days around the world. To do so, they are given questions they need to find answers to (see appendix 6 ex.3a). The teacher explains that they can choose any country they want and gather information about their/a special national day. They must do the exercise in Dutch (the target language) and be able to express themselves in Dutch on their findings for the next class. During the presentations, other pupils must take some notes of what is being said so that they all have a summary of every national day (see appendix 6 ex.3b). When each pupil has presented their mind map to the class, the teacher fires up a discussion about similarities and differences between countries and cultures (see appendix 6 ex.3c). The teacher insists on the fact that although countries usually celebrate different things, at different moment and in many different ways, everyone around the world usually celebrates its culture and history for one day and that it is thus a shared feature around the world.

Finally, pupils discuss the activity with their neighbor (in pairs). They reflect on every country that has been mentioned, they give their opinion on which national day they would most want to attend to, why and why not. And they also talk about their own experiences: have they ever been to one of these parties, what was it like,...

EXPECTED RESULTS

This activity was designed to motivate pupils to reflect on other/their own cultural background and experiences and to open them to other cultures and customs. This activity should also make pupils with different origins feel included as they will be able to express

themselves on their culture/country. Finally, they will have the opportunity to work in groups which can be motivating (and it is also good for differentiation).

SOURCES

This activity comes from the Taalunie – Hapklaar: Fiche 25: Koningsdag, feesten en tradities: <https://taalunie.org/informatie/377/hapklaar-nederlands> (see bibliography)

4.6.2 Feedback from teachers

First, it is relevant to state that, as mentioned in section 4.6.1, this activity was taken from the Website Hapklaar. It was therefore not designed for this master's dissertation but for and by the Taalunie. However, we decided to integrate this activity into this thesis in an attempt to show that the intercultural dimension can be added to an already preconceived activity. The previous activities presented in this thesis have indeed been created specifically to highlight plurilingualism and interculturality. It was thus decided to integrate a preexisting activity as well and add a final exercise to give an intercultural dimension to an activity that already targeted the topic of culture. Moreover, this decision allows us to show that even if research has demonstrated that there is a lack of material regarding culture in language courses, some activities that highlight cultural practices are still available and can be found on different websites.

For this B1-level activity in Dutch, the feedback of two Dutch teachers in upper secondary school was requested. One of them even agreed to test a part of the activity in class with her pupils and to give us her impressions. First, both teachers argued that this activity fits into their program and seems adapted to the pupils' level. They also believe that the theme of Koningsdag is appropriate for this level as many manuals also address this subject. It was pointed out by one of the teachers that this topic might already have been covered in lower secondary classes, but that it would not be done at this level of detail, so it might be appropriate to revisit it for further discussions. In addition, both teachers seem to believe it is important to give learners some information about the cultural practices of the Netherlands during the Dutch class. One of them confided in us that pupils usually have limited knowledge of the Dutch culture even after having followed six years of Dutch classes and that is it thus

valuable to approach this topic. However, it was noted during the interview that simply approaching culture as another theme, without any reflective input from the learners, was generally ineffective and had little impact on pupils. It is because this activity concludes with pupils discussing their own experience and cultural wealth that teachers find it particularly valuable. They believe that pupils will feel involved in the activity and even if one teacher thinks they might be shy at first, they would also be proud to share a part of their identity with the class.

If both teachers seemed interested in this activity, they had some remarks regarding the learning material. First and foremost, they believe it is important to integrate vocabulary lists into this activity. Learners must have the help necessary to navigate the input and produce an output. Furthermore, vocabulary lists provide a written record of learning that pupils need in order to prepare for their interrogations and end-of-year exams. In addition, because pupils are expected to produce a speech at the end of this activity, it is important to review the language functions with them to make sure that they have enough sentence structures to express themselves accurately. Secondly, concerning pupils' preparation for their presentation, it was suggested to let pupils choose their presentation medium. It could indeed reinforce differentiation and increase learners' sense of control over the task. While giving this activity, the teacher could thus specify that pupils are free to deliver their presentation on a chosen medium such as a PowerPoint, a mind map, or a poster, ... Moreover, it was mentioned that it is essential to make sure that every pupil knows what is expected of them. It would therefore be wise to conduct a discussion in class when giving the instructions to the presentation to ensure that everyone has ideas and inspiration to accomplish the task. Prompting the answers is always a valuable tool. Another aspect that might have to be modified concerns the task pupils need to accomplish during the presentations. It was indeed suggested that asking pupils to take notes during the other presentations was too vague. They must have some more guidance otherwise the teachers fear they will not write anything. An alternative to this task would be to ask pupils to write questions they would like to ask their colleagues after their presentation. By doing so, it allows learners to interact with each other and to take an interest in what is being said. This remark also applies to the final discussion which takes place in pairs and in which pupils are expected to reflect on the activity and the

different cultures mentioned and share their experiences and opinions. The teachers suggest adding more specific questions to the handout as well as space to write some keywords to make sure that everybody knows what is expected of them. Lastly, it was recommended to add more specific categories to the table in exercise 3c. Pupils are indeed asked to take notes of the differences and similarities between every country mentioned during the presentations. Teachers advise giving more guidance by adding “in terms of festivities, food, and clothes.” to the instruction for example.

It can therefore be argued that this activity seems to have been well received by teachers. The teacher who tested the listening comprehension and the reading comprehension in class reported that it went well and that she would gladly continue with the presentations. After having remedied the shortcomings mentioned, the other teacher interviewed stated that she would gladly use this activity in her classroom as well.

4.7 Moet België scheiden? – activity for B2 level pupils.

4.7.1 Presentation of the activity

BASIC INFORMATION

Theme: Relations with others

Course: Dutch course

Name of the activity: “Moet België scheiden?”

Thematic field: Daily vocabulary and economic, politic and cultural vocabulary

Reference to the program: The *Programme d'études: langues modernes : 2ème et 3ème degré* (2018) introduces different thematic fields that must be addressed which include :

“1. Caractérisation personnelle

Aborder les sous-champs suivants :

- identité culturelle (pays et culture d'origine, provenance” (98)

“4. Loisir

4.1 activité culturelle

Élargir le sous-champ développé dans le(s) degré(s) précédent(s) :

- lieux, intervenants, objets et activités liés à la culture” (11)

“6. Relation avec les autres

Aborder les sous-champs suivants :

- vie associative, économique, politique et citoyenne” (102)

The program also mentions different themes that can be addressed in relation to the intercultural dimension, in particular :

- “Les stéréotypes qui sont véhiculés dans les expressions figées, dans la publicité, dans la chanson mais aussi dans les proverbes, les métaphores, les dictons....”.
- “Des informations, des réflexions sur le(s) pays dans le(s)quel(s) on parle la langue : les caractéristiques géographiques, l’environnement, la démographie, l’économie, la politique, l’histoire, mais aussi tout ce qui concerne les médias, l’enseignement, les institutions, les monuments, les célébrités...”,
- “Les éléments sociaux : les relations entre personnes, en famille, entre générations entre personnes de sexe différent, la conversation, les manières de s’adresser aux gens, ainsi que d’autres problèmes sociaux, le travail, l’emploi, les niveaux de vie, la structure sociale, le logement, l’individualisme, le rôle de la femme ...”
- “Les croyances, les rites, la religion, les pratiques liées à la naissance, à la mort, au mariage, la tradition et le changement, les tabous, l’idée du bonheur...” (11)

OBJECTIVE:

- The aim of the activity is to develop the intercultural competences and make pupils reflect on the link between language and culture. The objective of this activity is also to make pupils realize that one country can have different subcultures, but that they can also have common points that make a national culture.

- Moreover, pupils will have exercised their reading and listening skill as well as their speaking skill. They will also have acquired some vocabulary related to different cultures and organizations of countries as well as human relations.

EDUCATIONAL LEVEL/COURSE FOR WHICH IT IS ADDRESSED Pupils with a B2 level of Dutch
LANGUAGES CONCERNED IN THE ACTIVITY Dutch
MATERIAL YouTube Video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TQOlgKPF3mY The texts and exercises can be found in appendix 7.
DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY <p>The teacher introduces the lesson by initiating a discussion around the word “culture”. He/she asks pupils what they think this term encompasses (expected answers: the way of thinking, traditions, eating habits, food, political structure, ...). To do so, pupils are invited to think about foreign countries and their cultures (the teacher can make a summary with pupils see ex.1 in appendix). This first exercise enables pupils to activate the vocabulary related to culture and human relations and enable the teacher to introduce the topic in a fun and global way.</p> <p>In a second step, the teacher asks pupils if they think that one country only encompasses one culture and if different countries can have the same culture. They are invited once again to think about cultures/countries they are familiar with. To explore this topic further, the teacher takes the example of Belgium and let pupils think about the differences/similarities between Wallonia and Flanders, or between Wallonia and France, and between Flanders and The Netherlands. The goal of this second activity is to introduce the topic more precisely and get an idea of what students are thinking before the activity. It will then be relevant to return to these beliefs at the end of the activity to see if they have changed.</p> <p>Pupils will thus work around the question: “Als Vlaanderen en Wallonië twee verschillende culturen bevatten, moet België dan scheiden ?”</p> <p>Pupils will first watch a video on the differences between Flanders and Wallonia. They will watch it 2 to 3 times (according to their level in listening comprehension) and answer some</p>

questions to train their listening skill and gain some input on the topic (see appendix 7 ex.2). To do so, the teacher can provide a vocabulary list to help pupils understand the video. A correction is made with the class.

To complete the information in the video, students are asked to read a text that explains other differences between Wallonia and Flanders. They are asked to take notes on the various aspects mentioned (see ex.3). To do so, the teacher can provide a vocabulary list to help pupils understand the text. A correction is made with the class.

Now that pupils have gained some input on the differences between the two Belgian regions, pupils will work in pairs. One pupil will receive a text about France and the other pupil will receive a text about The Netherlands. They will each read their text and then share their information with their neighbor in Dutch (to train their speaking skill) and complete the two first columns of the table ex 4 (see appendix). Lastly, in the two last columns (Wallonië, Vlaanderen), the pair must decide to which culture (French or Dutch) the two regions are the closest for each aspect. They therefore put a F or a N for each line of the table (there are no right or wrong answers for this part, it depends on pupils' opinion). A correction is made with the class and a discussion is introduced about the two last columns. The teacher asks if the pair agreed for each line (why, why not?). Do they think that Wallonia is exactly like France and Flanders exactly like The Netherlands? (why, why not?) The goal here is to make them realize that even if there exist some differences between Wallonia and Flanders and that there might be some similarities between France and Wallonia and Flanders and the Netherlands, it is not that easy to "categorize" culture. The teacher also raises the question of stereotypes by asking pupils if they think the texts were totally accurate and if there were not a bit reductive. It is here important to raise the awareness of pupils on the fact that what they have read about the French and the Dutch culture are other people's perceptions, which are sometimes full of stereotypes. So not only is it difficult to categorize them but cultures are also difficult to describe without resorting to clichés that can be very simplistic. (the teacher makes pupils take note of this conclusion as it is the main message of the activity – see ex.5)

Finally, the teacher makes the class read a last text about the similarities between Wallonia and Flanders. Pupils take some notes (see ex.6) and the teacher fires up a discussion about the fact that there is indeed a Belgian culture that extends beyond the differences of each region and that this country therefore has a culture of its own separate from that of France or the Netherlands. He or she comes back to their initial reflection on Belgium and asks their opinion on the initial question “Als Vlaanderen en Wallonië twee verschillende culturen bevatten, moet België dan scheiden?” He or she then explains that culture is not something fixed but rather something in constant evolution. Cultures can influence each other and remain unique in their own way. The teacher also explains that we can belong to several different cultures. In the case of Belgium, you can feel part of the national Belgian culture, but also belong to the Walloon subculture. The teacher then asks pupils if they feel like they belong to multiple culture (which ones, why, what are some aspects of their daily lives that shows that they belong to these cultures...). They can take notes on their handout (see ex.7).

Extra: to end this activity, the teacher can evaluate pupils’ writing skills in a writing test where they must write an essay around the initial question “Als Vlaanderen en Wallonië twee verschillende culturen bevatten, moet België dan scheiden?”. To do this, pupils will need to mobilize the vocabulary and the ideas seen in the activity to support their opinion.

EXPECTED RESULTS

This activity was designed to motivate pupils to reflect on their own cultural background and experiences and to make them aware of the complexity of the word “culture”. It enables them to reflect on different cultures and notice differences and similarities while avoiding stereotypes which can motivate them. Finally, they can reflect on their own cultural practice(s) which can make them feel valued and involve in the activity. They will also work in groups on a variety of supports which usually makes them active (and it is also good for differentiation)

SOURCES

The texts come from different websites and some passages have been generated by chat gpt (OpenAi 2021 – GPT 3-5). (see bibliography)

4.7.2 Feedback from teachers

To maintain a certain continuity and cover as many language levels as possible, this thesis has been committed to providing activities from awakening to languages classes to the B2 level of language as described by the CEFR. It is however relevant to state that the recommended level for most skills at the end of secondary school is B1 (*Programme des langues modernes I, II, III*, 2018: 23). This activity presents therefore a more advanced level than what is requested in secondary schools. Nonetheless, feedback from three 6th-grade Dutch teachers from different schools was requested to have an idea of the positive and negative aspects of this activity.

First, teachers seem to believe that although this activity was designed for more advanced learners, providing vocabulary lists with the different inputs is necessary. Moreover, it was mentioned that it could be relevant to create vocabulary exercises between the input and output to ensure that learners familiarize themselves with this new thematic field. In addition to the vocabulary, it would also be necessary to provide learners with language functions to facilitate the output. In a second step, teachers have highlighted the lack of possibilities for differentiation and have thus suggested making the handout more structured, using subheadings for example, so that pupils can navigate it easily. Moreover, this would present a crucial help for pupils with learning disabilities. Another way of differentiating would be to provide the transcription of the video and/or to offer learners the possibility to listen to the video on their own using their phone and headphones, for example, so that they can work on the handout independently and at their own pace. Lastly, to make the last question (7) more accessible to every learner and to ensure that everyone has ideas to share, one teacher suggested introducing the structure of “if I was ..., I would be ...”. This last question indeed revolves around the cultural diversity of pupils, and it can sometimes be difficult to identify our different cultural practices and backgrounds. By using the structure mentioned by the teacher pupils could perhaps identify these elements more clearly. It would also allow them to review this specific grammatical structure as well as the tense concordance. The last element linked to the practical side of this activity concerns the extra, namely the writing exercise. Unanimously teachers believe it is a valuable final task as it provides pupils with the opportunity to review the vocabulary and ideas they have trained in the activity. All in all, it

can be said that, aside from the level of the activity, it fits into the program of secondary schools in terms of topic and thematic field.

The question around which the activity revolves (Als Vlaanderen en Wallonië twee verschillende culturen bevatten, moet België dan scheiden?) also seems interesting to teachers as it is up to date and introduces culture and intercultural thinking. Teachers seem to think that pupils are more receptive when activities are based on a concrete framework and when they allow them to share aspects of their identity. According to teachers this highlights the parallel between language and identity and tackles issues related to belonging which they believe is valuable. In addition, this activity also aims to confront different ideas and stereotypes to generate a reflection on the beliefs one can have of a culture and its reality. It can be argued that it trains critical thinking and participates in turning pupils into more responsible citizens. One of the teachers mentioned that this specific aspect was totally in line with the program that must be covered with students, but that unfortunately, it was also often the one that was neglected thus confirming our previous hypothesis. From the first stage of the activity, learners are invited to reflect on the concept of culture, which seems to please the teachers, it was however suggested to start with more specific questions to ensure that pupils understand what is expected of them. In addition, pupils may not be inclined to talk and give their opinions in front of others from the start it was therefore advised to use an online platform such as Wooclap because it renders the answers anonymous which usually motivates pupils to express themselves without fear of judgment. Lastly, if starting from pupils' experiences and cultural backgrounds make up a large part of interculturality and are often seen as valuable to teachers, one of them mentioned that some pupils with a less diverse cultural background could feel helpless during some steps of the activity. To remedy the situation, she suggested providing these learners with information regarding other countries and cultures and allowing them to take interest in one of them and share what they have learned with others. This technique could be used in many of the activities presented to overcome this possible shortcoming.

To conclude, teachers have shown an interest in this activity because of its originality, the learnings it provides, and the topic it tackles. All three teachers confided in us that they

would consider using this activity in their classrooms after having made some adaptations regarding the language level and the practical aspects mentioned above.

5 Discussion and conclusion

The present master's dissertation has attempted to align itself with the recommendations made these last few years by the Council of Europe regarding the implementation of a plurilingual and pluricultural approach to language learning. The aim was to address the gaps that seem to persist in the practical implementation of these recommendations from kindergarten to secondary school. The research question of this thesis was thus formulated as follows: *How can intercultural dimensions be implemented in French-speaking Belgium's classrooms from kindergarten to secondary school?*

To address this question, we endeavored to review the literature focusing on culture in the classroom. We highlighted the positive aspects of targeting culture in language teaching while shedding light on the paradox that has long existed regarding its place in the classroom. Lastly, it was argued that this paradox has rendered the implementation of a pedagogy of culture difficult. In a second step, we explored on the one hand, the notions of plurilingualism and interculturality as presented by researchers and academics and on the other hand, the European frameworks and recommendations in this regard. The specific context of the FWB was also analyzed and the notion of awakening to languages in kindergarten and primary schools was introduced.

For this thesis, a qualitative methodological approach was chosen as the design is situated between the exploration of new areas of inquiry and the intervention in the classroom. Because the aim was to remedy a lack of information and resources in terms of interculturality, a total of seven activities have been provided to numerous teachers. The objective was to show that interculturality can be integrated into activities that fit into the program at any stage of education. Furthermore, it has been shown that these activities can be carried out in different languages following the language of education or the target language. In addition, although language courses have often promoted the learning and use of a single language, we have attempted to show that several different languages can be found within the same activity, highlighting thus the plurilingual aspect of the activity. Lastly, it was also demonstrated that promoting interculturality does not necessarily require the creation

of dedicated activities but can also take the form of a small exercise that is integrated at the end of an existing activity. This makes the implementation of interculturality much more accessible to teachers.

This thesis thus aimed at providing material for teachers that encompass all levels of education, that mix different languages, and that sometimes integrates preexisting material as well. The present master's dissertation has been carried out for teachers but also in collaboration with them as they agreed to give us some insight into the seven activities presented. We have thus received feedback and areas for improvement to make these activities accessible to learners from kindergarten to the 6th grade of secondary school. The analysis of these data has allowed us to confirm several hypotheses. Firstly, activities of awakening to languages have been beneficial for teachers who testified of a feeling of helplessness in the designing of activities for this course because of a lack of information and resources at their disposal. Secondly, teachers from secondary schools have confirmed that the topic of culture, although present in the program, was often relegated to the margin in favor of other skills and is still too often seen as a theme rather than a skill. However, all teachers seemed enthusiastic and motivated by the activities proposed. They seemed to believe that starting from pupils' experiences and cultural identities was the key to integrating culture as a skill and engaging pupils in the tasks. This aspect was observed and confirmed for two of these activities that were carried out in class. Lastly, one of the hypotheses put forward in the first part of this thesis was that pupils and families with a migration background would feel more involved in the school through the implementation of intercultural activities. We have had the opportunity to confirm this hypothesis by introducing a survey among the parents of a kindergarten class following the activity. All families from the class seemed to believe it is valuable to promote different cultures in the classroom and parents with a migration background have testified feeling proud and valued within the class. They even thanked the teacher for the realization of the activity. Overall, it can thus be stated that the practical section of this MA has confirmed the hypotheses made at the beginning of this project and has attempted to remedy various difficulties presented in the literature review. In addition, it offers valuable insights into how material can be created to overcome the lack of resources to integrate plurilingualism and interculturality in language education.

It is, however, relevant to acknowledge the limitation of this thesis. It can be argued that the main limitations lie in the creation of the activities. The main shortcomings of each activity have therefore been detailed in the previous section. The second limitation that can be put forward is the fact that the activities have been designed to offer the possibility for pupils to share their cultural identities to compare the cultural wealth of the class. It can however be argued that some schools or even classes are more inclined to have cultural diversity than others. Nevertheless, we believe that it is even more necessary to open students up to cultural diversity in areas that may be less culturally rich. The strategies developed should, however, be different in order to guarantee the success of these activities.

On a last note, some suggestions have been put forward in the previous sections to remedy the possible shortcomings of this thesis. A final suggestion would be to extend the work carried out in this MA to themes other than the one used here, namely human relations. To do so, the various themes present in the curricula and manuals could be used. It is however relevant to state that during one of the interviews carried out for the practical part of this thesis, it was noted that many manuals designed for language courses in secondary schools present culture as a theme in the same way as other thematic fields. A majority of teachers regretted that and put forward the idea of integrating an intercultural point of view after each topic dealt with in class, in order to make permanent links between cultures and bring more culture into the classroom, and thus train students' intercultural competence and reflection on an ongoing basis. It would therefore be interesting to study how intercultural competence can be integrated into each theme promoted in the various curricula and textbooks.

The suggestions put forward would enrich the present master's dissertation and would give teachers more opportunity to train the intercultural competence in their classrooms undertaking to respect the recommendations made at the European level concerning plurilingualism as a whole while enriching students from a cultural and even societal point of view.

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