Rationale

Today's language educator can no longer afford not to redefine his or her role according to the nature of modern societies, which themselves no longer conform to the traditional and erroneous model of the nation state. As the guide for language policies states: "All national entities are multilingual, even those that call themselves homogeneous" (Beacco and Byram, 2003). Modern societies are a complex environment, characterised by linguistic and cultural diversity and exchanges between languages and cultures. With the myth of monolingualism now exploded, the words "languages" and "cultures" in effect only have a meaning when used in the plural. For today's individual, it is important to be able to interact with people of other languages and cultures. Indeed that is what language education is all about: making languages a means of communication in the sense of a mode of openness and access to otherness: linguistic otherness, cultural otherness and otherness of identity.

These new orientations have been given impetus by work carried out by the Council of Europe in particular, which aims at developing, in the individual, a "plurilingual and pluricultural competence". In the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*, "plurilingual and pluricultural competence is defined as the language communication and cultural interaction skills of a social player who, at various levels, masters several languages and has experience of several cultures" (Council of Europe, 2001).

Accordingly, the LEA project aims to develop a training kit capable of contributing towards building societies that are fairer with regard to multiple linguistic and cultural identities by creating a new relational identity (see UNDP report, 2004; Wolton, 2004), as expressed in intercultural communication, respect and responsibility towards the languages and cultures of others (the dialogue with others).

The LEA project seeks to contribute towards building a school capable of providing local and global management of the language curriculum by opening up communication opportunities with those both near and far away, whilst always respecting language rights and promoting the ability to speak several languages with different statuses and functions.

That is why the activities and materials of the LEA training kit are aimed at making language teachers reflect on the diversity that characterises the process of linguistic and communicative education; at the same time, it is hoped that this work will serve to enhance the concept of otherness and inter-comprehension between the individual and communities.

1. Plurilingualism and pluriculturalism

Since the effective integration of culture in the language teaching curriculum, a growing number of terms related to this root have appeared to cover every aspect of this all-embracing term. If at first the terms "contrastive" and "cross-cultural" were the key terms in cultural studies, the incorporation of multicultural and intercultural approaches widened our perspective. The scope of cultural studies nowadays includes the self, the group and the communicative situation and those are the references of the three terms, pluricultural, multicultural and intercultural.

The *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* helps us to understand the sense of these three terms. It states that "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" (Council of Europe, 2001: 168). This definition is perhaps better understood after considering two other quotations at the very beginning of the same work:

"Plurilingualism differs from multilingualism, which is the knowledge of a number of languages, or the coexistence of different languages in a given society …. Beyond this, the plurilingual approach emphasises the fact that as an individual person's experience of language in its cultural contexts expands, from the language of the home to that of society at large and then to the languages of other peoples …, he or she does not keep these languages and cultures in strictly separated mental

compartments, but rather builds up a communicative competence to which all knowledge and experience of language contributes and in which languages interrelate and interact" (ibid.: 4).

"Plurilingualism has itself to be seen in the context of pluriculturalism. Language is not only a major aspect of culture, but also a means of access to cultural manifestations. Much of what is said above applies equally in the more general field: in a person's cultural competence, the various cultures (national, regional, social) to which that person has gained access do not simply coexist side by side; they are compared, contrasted and actively interact to produce an enriched, integrated pluricultural competence, of which plurilingual competence is one component, again interacting with other components" (ibid.: 6).

So, we assume that multilingualism and multiculturalism are concepts used to describe a general situation (region, country, community) of linguistic or cultural contact. From the linguistic point of view, it is easily "detected"; from the cultural point of view, however, it is more difficult to describe something as multicultural. Normally, the term is used to explain three visions of diversity: culture as nation state (so that a society is multicultural if different nationalities are involved, as the EU may be), culture as religion (so that a society is multicultural if different religions are involved) or culture as ethnic groups (so that a society is multicultural if different ethnic groups are involved). However, none of these metaphoric definitions of culture are satisfactory and it could be argued that others could be added, such as "culture as age", "culture as gender", "culture as profession", "culture as ability/disability", and many others (Collier, 1994: 38-39). Consequently, any country, region, community or group is multicultural by definition, as different cultures interact simultaneously at any level. So, we should keep multilingualism and multiculturalism for the description of contexts where languages and cultures are in contact (Trujillo, 2005).
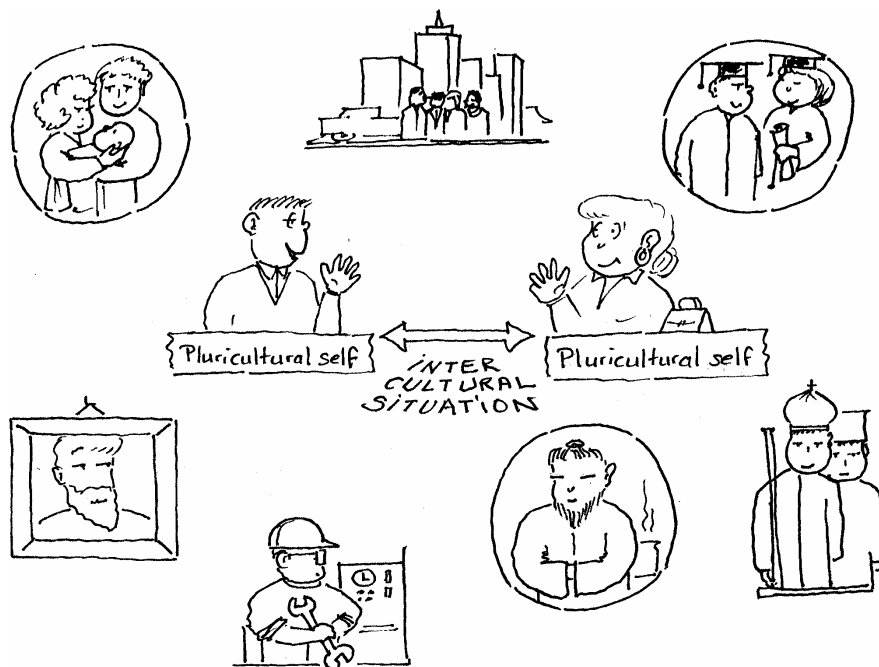
Plurilingualism and pluriculturalism is a personal feature which is put into action in a communicative situation. It is not a new competence, as we all use different "registers" of the same language in different situations just as we use different cultural repertoires in different situations. The new idea is the development of plurilingualism and pluriculturalism as the result of a process of language learning.

"Interculturality" is a term used to describe, firstly, the context of a communicative situation, in which the people involved use all their capacities to interact with each other, and, secondly, a set of communicative strategies for that interaction. It is, then, definitely situational in comparison to the

"pluri-" and "multi-" concepts, which are personal and societal respectively. Interculturality is, undoubtedly, one of the key notions in language teaching at the moment and, consequently, it has received great attention from different ECML projects. By way of illustration, over the last two years: Candelier et al. (2004: 22), in their presentation of the Janua Linguarum project, ascribe the "awakening to languages" and language awareness to the intercultural approach: "the awakening to languages emerges as a particular facet of the intercultural approach, of which it becomes an integral part, with its own characteristics"; the attempt to establish an agenda for language education in chapter one of Dupuis et al. (2003) is entitled "The intercultural framework"; Huber-Kriegler, Lázár and Strange (2003: 5) try "to incorporate intercultural communication training into teacher education in Europe" and with that intention in mind they compiled a textbook "to assist trainers and teachers in achieving this aim by providing teaching materials that focus on intercultural learning"; under Ildikó Lázár's co-ordination of the project Incorporating intercultural communicative competence in language teacher education, Aleksandrowicz-Pędich et al. (2003) studied the views of teachers of English and French on intercultural communicative competence in language teaching; Skopinskaja (2003) considered the role of culture in foreign language teaching materials from the perspective of intercultural competence; Facciol and Kjartansson (2003) developed a number of tests to assess intercultural competence; Camilleri Grima (2002) tried to introduce intercultural competence in language learning as a way of solving communication problems through the use of stories and anecdotes; and, finally, Zarate et al. (2003) dealt with topics such as cultural sensitivity (*sensibilisation culturelle*), empathy (*empathie*), hospitality (*l'hospitalité*) and representation of otherness and the other (*représentations du concept d'altérité and des autres*) in their project about cultural mediation in language teaching.

2. Awareness of languages and cultures

The notion of "awareness of language" in the sense in which it is used in this kit was defined by Eric Hawkins, its initiator, who called it a "bridging subject" put in place in secondary education in the United Kingdom in the 1980s:

"It bridges the space between the different aspects of language education (English, foreign language, ethnic minority mother tongues/English as second language/Latin) which at present are perceived in isolation …. The chief aim will be to challenge pupils to ask questions about language … and to offer a forum where language diversity can be discussed" (Hawkins, 1984).

The movement was subsequently taken up in various European countries under a variety of names: *éveil au langage* (Louise Dabène, France), *educazione linguistica* (Balboni and Luise, Italy), and *éducation et ouverture aux langues* (de Pietro and Perregaux, Switzerland). Here is the definition of awareness of language as drawn up by Michel Candelier, co-ordinator of the two successive European research and action programmes on the subject: Evlang (Socrates/Lingua) and Ja-Ling – The language gateway (Socrates/Comenius and ECML):

"An awakening to languages is said to exist when part of the activities concerns languages that the school does not intend to teach (which may or may not be the mother tongues of certain pupils). This does not mean that only that part of the work that focuses on these languages deserves to be called an awakening to languages. This sort of differentiation would not make sense as normally it has to be a global enterprise, usually comparative in nature, that concerns both those languages, the language or languages of the school and any foreign (or other) language learnt" (Candelier, 2001a).

As Michel Candelier writes: "This is certainly what the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* calls 'the prospect of a sort of general language education' (page 130), which can be seen as a preparation for language learning … but also as a supporting measure for language learning courses already under way" (Candelier, 2003). This approach, which is not about learning language(s) but learning about languages, aims to stimulate not only the pupils' curiosity and interest in languages and cultures but also their observation skills and language analysis skills, such as they may be, in order to anchor in place among the learners the first few steps in their education towards plurilingualism.

Such an awareness of language cannot be dissociated from the awareness of culture, which is intimately related to it: the language learner must be aware of three layers of culture, in relation to the

three concepts referred to above: multicultural, pluricultural and intercultural. First, the language learner, as a social agent, must be aware of diversity in society and how social groups, including nations, create, use and manage cultures, which are intermingled in a complex matrix of social contact. We will refer to it as awareness of culture from a multicultural perspective.

Secondly, the language learner must be aware of how identity is the by-product of experiences in different cultures and, thus, each of us "may enact various cultural identities over the course of a lifetime as well as over the course of a day" (Collier, 1994: 40). Awareness of culture from a pluricultural perspective implies defining identity as a complex, flexible, dynamic composite which, in any situation, can adopt an apparently definite layout for a certain purpose with a particular interlocutor. Baumann (1999) distinguishes between two views of culture: culture as product – which is static – and culture as process – which is dynamic. Thus, even though one can ascribe oneself to a given culture at a certain moment (culture as product), that ascription changes as the communicative situation changes (culture as process).

Finally, when a language learner is involved in a communicative situation, awareness must be displayed in two directions. Firstly, the language learner must be aware of the pluricultural identity of his or her interlocutor as defined above and as explained by Barnlund (1994: 30). Secondly, the language learner must be aware of the cultural conventions of the language(s) they use. Language is a culture-bound phenomenon and there are conventions ruling any communicative act, either written or spoken. Awareness of these cultural conventions can smooth communication. At the same time, a positive, co-operative attitude on the part of the listener/reader can help guard against ignoring, forgetting or flouting these conventions.

3. Plurilingualism and pluriculturalism in the context of teacher training

As we mentioned earlier, plurilingual and pluricultural competence is not achieved by overlapping or juxtaposing different competences; rather it constitutes a global and complex competence of which the speaker can avail himself or herself in situations characterised by plurality (Council of Europe, 2001). And this complexity would seem to depend on four main dimensions:

- the socio-affective dimension, which includes a certain predisposition, motivation and readiness with regard to dialogue with the other and in which the individual is willing at any time to rebuild his or her identity;

- the dimension of linguistic and communicative registers, which includes the ability to exploit a whole range of experience and knowledge and in which different languages and cultures play different roles;

- the dimension of learning strategies, which is expressed in the ability to use different ways of processing spoken language in a procedure aimed at resolving communication problems (situations of access to meaning or spoken and/or written output, with or without collaboration);

- the dimension of interaction management, which takes place in situations of language contact in which speakers update different codes to manage the communication output they produce in a conversation created by situations characterised by linguistic and cultural plurality (see Andrade and Araújo e Sá, 2001; Coste, Moore and Zarate, 1997; Lüdi and Py, 1995).

Such competence is by necessity diversified, composite, adaptable and imbalanced, and it is always open to new learning experiences in a continual movement designed to reconstruct the subject's experiences of language. It enables the speaker to move about the linguistic and cultural variety and diversity, in a process aimed at mobilising and managing multiple dimensions of his or her communicative profile (see Byram, 1997; Coste, Moore and Zarate, 1997).

In teaching and education contexts, work on plurilingual and pluricultural competence therefore plays a key role as a means of providing diversity training while focusing on the ability to go beyond obstacles and open up a certain predisposition towards languages, cultures and communication in general, as part of a willingness to establish a dialogue with the other. In this perspective, a plurilingual speaker is "someone who has an ability to interact with others, to accept other perspectives and perceptions of the world, to mediate between different perspectives, to be conscious of their evaluations of difference" (Byram, Nichols and Stevens, 2001).

4. Areas of work

Given the backdrop described above, the language teacher must be prepared to establish both plurilingual and pluricultural communication competences, something which cannot be achieved without the ability to confront the complexity, uncertainty, singularity and diversity of contexts and speakers. Language teacher training must therefore also include a preparation for dialogue which entails a certain knowledge of oneself and others. And that knowledge also presumes knowing what the teacher does and what he or she is able to do, the context in which he or she works, and the interactions and teaching situations he or she is capable of establishing.

Such an ambitious objective cannot be reached without a complete programme of language teacher training, which can be divided into two inseparably linked areas: a social and personal dimension; and a professional dimension.

Social and personal dimension

This dimension includes the teacher's personal and social development, either as an individual or as a social player. This training dimension is expressed in the observations that the teacher is able to make of himself or herself, of others and of the contexts in which he or she has to work. In this dimension we include attitudes and knowledge such as interpersonal skills, the ability to learn and the ability to commit to one's training with a view to building a fairer, more democratic society; one capable of enhancing the role played by linguistic and cultural diversity. The aim here is to perceive the language teacher (who teaches the mother tongue, the language of the school or foreign languages) as an individual who has social responsibilities, including responsibilities towards oneself as a plurilingual and intercultural speaker, and towards others. Amongst other things, this would include:

- observing the linguistic and cultural diversity of contexts and individuals;

- observing how educators can influence the attitudes of learners towards languages, those who speak them and their culture, as well as their motivation and curiosity with regard to languages;

- recognising the linguistic and cultural complexity of individual and collective identities;

- recognising linguistic and cultural diversity as a positive characteristic of groups and societies;

- enhancing the role of languages and cultures in building societies that are fairer, more supportive and more democratic;

- enhancing each individual's language and culture by considering language and culture as a means of human development (aimed at social inclusion and as preparation for exercising their citizenship);

- recognising the political character of the measures adopted with regard to languages and cultures;

- showing a critical mind towards measures of linguistic and cultural policy;

- combating exclusion and linguistic and cultural discrimination while embracing the opportunities of a life together in society;

- having a global vision of the exercise of one's profession (professionalism) as consisting of different dimensions;

- knowing oneself as a language educator by reflecting on one's own abilities, knowledge, images and registers with regard to language communication and didactics;

- thinking about one's teaching experiences (academic and professional curriculum);

- being capable of setting up self-training projects that take account of linguistic and cultural diversity;

- having confidence in one's professional ability to develop educational approaches in which taking account of linguistic and cultural diversity is a reality.

Professional dimension

In this dimension we include everything that relates to the process of teaching and learning languages or cultures, that is everything that concerns the concept, organisation and experimentation of proposals to be developed in education environments in which linguistic and cultural diversity is considered as a means of development for learners. In this training dimension we include teaching knowledge and know-how, that is knowledge that translates directly into specific teaching measures. The aim here is to see the teacher within the framework of the education system, the school and the classroom, where he or she conveys a teaching and didactic knowledge that makes each learner an individual capable of reading and building the world. Amongst other things, this would include:

- being aware of the need for a new linguistic and cultural education capable of promoting plurilingualism and pluriculturalism;

- knowing and defending the reasons for an education favourable to the development of plurilingual and pluricultural competence;

- reflecting on the new roles and functions of the language teacher as educator;

- finding and communicating purposes in the pursuit of a new linguistic and cultural education;

- being aware of the challenges of language education policies;

- adopting a position, in different contexts, with regard to measures of language policy;

- enhancing the school as a focal point of social and cultural development, with repercussions on the pupils' life projects;

- assisting in developing interactions between the various agents of education;

- observing, analysing and making use of – in didactic terms – the diversity that exists in one's teaching environment (individual and collective repertories);

- creating, experimenting with and evaluating educational projects ultimately aimed at developing plurilingual and pluricultural skills;

- creating synergetic effects between the teaching of different languages and cultures by co-operating with the teachers of other languages and other subjects;

- helping learners to set up individual projects for linguistic and communicative development.