

CLASSROOMS OF MANY VOICES

Culturally and Linguistically Responsive
Pedagogy



Melita Lemut Bajec
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PEF

UNIVERZA V LJUBLJANI
Pedagoška fakulteta

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University Textbook

Classrooms of Many Voices: Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Pedagogy

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Authors' Foreword

Classrooms of Many Voices: Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Pedagogy is a comprehensive resource designed to prepare future educators for teaching in diverse, multilingual, and multicultural classrooms. This university textbook covers a wide range of essential themes that help future teachers recognise their pupils' varied linguistic and cultural backgrounds as assets, not barriers. It aims to help students navigate complex language ideologies and lends importance to each individual's mother tongue. Specifically, it emphasises the role of education in building inclusive and empathetic societies based on respect and mutual understanding. It is highly relevant for teacher trainees as it not only addresses the skills needed for inclusive teaching but also cultivates the core values such as respect, empathy, and global awareness that define impactful educators in today's interconnected world.

How to Use This Textbook

Each chapter in this textbook introduces key theoretical concepts while actively engaging students in reflection, critical inquiry, and the development of practical skills essential for their future work as teachers. Chapters follow a consistent format built around the following interconnected components:

Intended Competences and Learning Outcomes guide students to focus their learning by outlining what they should know, understand, and be able to do by the end of each chapter. Opening questions are prompts that encourage students to reflect on their prior knowledge, experiences, and assumptions related to the topic. They are designed to activate thinking and set the stage for deeper learning.

The core text presents theory, research, and key concepts in an accessible but academically rigorous way. It is supported by real-world examples and critical insights.



Reflective Thinking, marked with a symbol, refers to research-based activities that invite students to analyse, apply theory, think critically, and reflect meaningfully. These tasks may be completed independently at home or during the lesson and serve to assess students' understanding of the topic at hand.

In **Working with Academic Papers** students engage with academic articles to develop research literacy, critical reading, and evidence-based thinking in relation to educational practice.

The **Revisiting Concepts in Focus** section compels students to identify and reflect on the key concepts introduced in each chapter. Students create their own list of core vocabulary, then summarise the main takeaways and consider how these ideas relate to their experiences, values, and future professional practice. The section encourages critical engagement with the concepts, their applications, and the formulation of remaining questions or dilemmas to support ongoing reflection and growth.

Truths across Time presents one quote per chapter from a well-known thinker, educator, or authority who has reflected on the topic from a broader, often timeless perspective. This serves as a prompt for thinking that transcends the boundaries of time and place.

Press Play for Perspective links to an audio-visual resource, thus offering multimodal engagement and real-world perspectives.

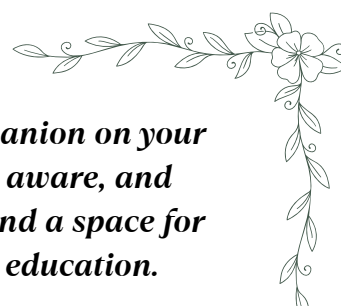
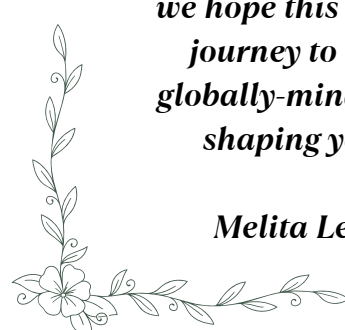
Culture & Language Curiosities introduces an engaging linguistic or cultural phenomenon or points to surprising facts. It is meant to spark curiosity and deepen appreciation for the diversity of languages and cultures in the world.

Selected References is a section with a curated list of scholarly readings and practical resources used for the compilation of the text but it can also be applied by those who want to dive deeper into the topic.

Occasional **Consolidation** activities encourage students to go beyond the topics, helping them extend their understanding and apply their knowledge in broader con

The Portfolio Assignments section invites students to build their own portfolio as a way of building their identity as a teacher. The activities are designed to help future teachers develop professional competences and prepare them for authentic classroom challenges.

Glossary defines key terms and concepts in a clear and concise way to support understanding and help students use the right vocabulary confidently.



Dear Student,
we hope this textbook will be a meaningful companion on your journey to becoming a reflective, linguistically aware, and globally-minded educator. It is both a resource and a space for shaping your own voice, values, and vision in education.

Melita Lemut Bajec, Karmen Pižorn, Jasna Fakin Bajec

Reviewers' Words

Review No. 1: Ddr. Mira Delavec Touhami, Ministrstvo za vzgojo in izobraževanje

Učbenik *Classrooms of Many Voices: Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Pedagogy* je sodobno, didaktično in z raziskavami podprto gradivo. Avtorice Melita Lemut Bajec, Karmen Pižorn in Jasna Fakin Bajec se v njem osredotočajo na razvoj zavedanja o večjezičnosti, medkulturnosti in razumevanju jezika kot kompleksnega družbenega pojava. Z didaktičnega vidika ga lahko uporabimo na različne načine: kot temeljno študijsko gradivo, kot podpora pri izvajanju vaj ter seminarjev ali kot samostojni vir za reflektivno in raziskovalno učenje. Njegovi potencialni uporabniki so predvsem študenti pedagoških smeri, ki se usposabljaajo za delo v večjezičnih in medkulturnih okoljih, služil pa bo tudi kot koristno gradivo učiteljem na osnovnih in srednjih šolah, ki želijo pri učencih razvijati jezikovno in kulturno občutljivost. Prav tako ga bodo uporabljali različni strokovnjaki s področja jezikoslovja, izobraževanja in kulturnih študij ter vsi, ki se ukvarjajo z izobraževanjem odraslih ali oblikujejo jezikovno politiko. Pristopi, ki jih učbenik ponuja, temeljijo na načelih vseživljenjskega učenja in na evropskih priporočilih o razvoju večjezičnih kompetenc.

Struktura učbenika je didaktično dodelana in pregledna. Vsako poglavje vključuje jasno opredeljene kompetence, učne izide, vprašanja in naloge za razmislek, kar omogoča študentom, da svoje znanje gradijo postopno in namensko. Preko osebne izkušnje jih vodi k akademski refleksiji ter kritičnemu razmišljanju o jeziku, kulturi ter družbi. Tako didaktični aparat učinkovito podpira razvoj metakognitivnih spretnosti in reflektivne prakse – dveh ključnih elementov pri oblikovanju profesionalne identitete učitelja. Učbenik spodbuja tudi sodelovalno učenje, možnost uporabe virov in digitalnih orodij, kar je posebej primerno za današnje generacije študentov. Zasnova, ki vključuje povezave do avdio-vizualnih gradiv in praktične problemsko naravnane naloge, ustreza principom aktivnega in izkustvenega učenja, ki ju še posebej poudarja sodobna pedagogika. S pomočjo terminološkega slovarja krepí akademsko terminološko natančnost, saj je izrazje strokovno utemeljeno in v skladu z evropskimi dokumenti (CEFR, Evropski okvir za večjezičnost in medkulturnost). Prednost učbenika je, da kompleksne izraze razlaga postopno in v razumljivem jeziku, kar omogoča vključevanje študentov različnih jezikovnih skupin in ravni.

Avtorice so v ospredje postavile sodobne pristope jezikovno odgovorne pedagogike, kot so translanguaging, plurilingual education in language-sensitive teaching, ki predstavljajo v evropskem prostoru temeljne usmeritve za kakovostno, vključujoče in socialno pravično izobraževanje. Posebno vrednost predstavljajo poglavja, ki omenjajo kulturno dediščino in jezik kot nematerialno dediščino, saj krepíjo zavedanje o pomembnosti kulturnih in jezikovnih korenin, hkrati pa ponujajo konkretne predloge, kako te vsebine vključiti v učni proces. Študenti se prek nalog učijo razlikovati med osebnim in javnim/skupnim vidikom dediščine ter razmišljati o pomenu identitete, jezika in tradicije v lokalnem, nacionalnem in globalnem okolju. Takšne vsebine so še posebej dobrodošle v slovenskem visokošolskem prostoru, kjer se vse več študentov sooča z večjezičnimi in medkulturnimi okoliščinami.

Delo študente spodbuja k razumevanju raznolikosti ne kot izziva, temveč kot pedagoške priložnosti za povezovanje, s čimer razvija ustvarjalnost, krepi posameznikove medkulturne kompetence in spodbuja empatijo ter spoštovanje različnosti, kar so ključne vrednote sodobnega učitelja. Pomembna dodana vrednost učbenika je njegova interdisciplinarnost: povezuje jezikoslovje, pedagogiko, kulturne študije, digitalne vsebine in izobraževanje za trajnostni razvoj. Spodbuja aktivno državljanstvo, saj vodi študente v razmišljanje o vlogi posameznika in skupnosti pri ohranjanju kulturne in jezikovne raznolikosti ter dediščine.

Sklepno lahko ocenim, da gre za zelo kakovostno, metodološko dodelano in inovativno gradivo, ki presega tradicionalni okvir učbenika. Odlikujejo ga visoka raven akademske kakovosti, jasen koncept ter izjemna skladnost med cilji, vsebino in učnimi dejavnostmi. Med njegove največje odlike sodijo spodbujanje samorefleksije, večperspektivnosti in kritičnega razumevanja jezika kot orodja identitete, vključevanja in kulturnega prenosa, pa tudi večjezičnosti, večkulturnosti, empatičnosti in didaktike poučevanja jezikov. Tako učbenik *Classrooms of Many Voices: Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Pedagogy* predstavlja pomemben prispevek k sodobnemu izobraževanju prihodnjih učiteljev, saj sistematično povezuje teoretične koncepte večjezičnosti, medkulturnosti in vključujočega poučevanja z njihovo praktično rabo v učilnici. Njegov izid je dragocen za visokošolski prostor, saj študentom omogoča dostop do kakovostnega, domačemu okolju prilagojenega gradiva, ki sledi evropskim in globalnim trendom izobraževanja.

V slovenskem prostoru učbenik zapolnjuje vrzel med teoretičnimi spoznanji o večjezičnosti in njihovo dejansko didaktično implementacijo v izobraževalni praksi. Medtem ko večina obstoječih slovenskih učbenikov s področja jezikoslovja ali didaktike obravnava jezik predvsem z vidika pravil, norm in metod poučevanja posameznih jezikov, omenjeni učbenik obravnava jezik kot družbeni, kulturni in identitetni pojav ter v razumevanje raznolikosti kot pedagoškega kapitala. Njegova posebnost je v celostnem pristopu, ki povezuje jezikovno občutljivost, kulturno ozaveščenost, kritično mišljenje in osebno refleksijo učitelja. Avtorice so uspešno združile sodobne koncepte z didaktičnimi orodji, ki so uporabna v praksi, kar pomeni, da učbenik ne ostaja le pri teoriji, temveč ponuja konkretne poti do uresničevanja inkluzivnega poučevanja. Izdaja učbenika je zato zelo zaželena, saj podpira vizijo slovenske univerzitetne pedagogike, ki si prizadeva za vzpostavitev odprtega, večjezičnega in kulturno občutljivega izobraževanja. Hkrati prispeva k profesionalnemu razvoju prihodnjih učiteljev, ki bodo sposobni ustvarjati učna okolja, v katerih ima vsak učenec glas, prostor in vrednost.

Doc. Mira Delavec Touhami

Mira Delavec Touhami je trojna doktorica znanosti, profesorica slovenščine in zgodovine. Zadnjih 15 let deluje kot učiteljica slovenskega jezika in kulture v Zvezni republiki Nemčiji, kjer poučuje slovenske izseljence in njihove potomce vseh starosti in vseh jezikovnih ravni ter skrbi za kulturno vez med Slovenijo in tujino. Je raziskovalka z bogatimi mednarodnimi izkušnjami na področju izobraževanja, medkulturnega dialoga in večjezičnosti, kjer pomembno prispeva k razvoju humanistične, odprte in reflektivne pedagogike. Organizira simpozije na mednarodni in slovenski ravni; je sourednica številnih zbornikov, člankov in knjig. Njeno strokovno in znanstveno delovanje izkazuje globoko razumevanje večkulturnih učnih okolij in pomena jezika kot mostu med kulturami.

Review No. 2: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Helena Bažec, Faculty of Humanities, University of Primorska

Classrooms of Many Voices: Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Pedagogy is a comprehensive university textbook designed to equip pre-service and in-service teachers with the conceptual and practical knowledge necessary for linguistically and culturally responsive teaching. The publication systematically combines theoretical grounding with pedagogical applicability, guiding readers through key dimensions of multilingual and multicultural education, including linguistically sensitive pedagogy, plurilingual and intercultural education, CLIL methodology, educational objectives taxonomy, and critical thinking. Each chapter is meticulously structured with clearly defined learning outcomes, key terminology, reflective activities, and portfolio tasks that stimulate metacognition and professional self-reflection. The inclusion of multimodal resources such as videos, quotations, and culture-focused curiosities ensures dynamic engagement and contextual understanding. The principal achievement of this work lies in its holistic vision of teacher education as a process that intertwines knowledge, empathy, and intercultural competence. The authors' coherent and research-informed approach transforms abstract educational ideals—such as equity, inclusion, linguistic diversity, and inclusiveness—into actionable pedagogical practice. The textbook thus stands as a timely contribution to the European and global dialogue on education for democratic citizenship and intercultural understanding. The textbook is primarily intended for pre-service and in-service teachers, students of education, linguistics, and humanities, as well as teacher educators and researchers in applied linguistics and intercultural education. It will also benefit professionals developing curricula, materials, and policies that promote inclusive, multilingual, and culturally responsive teaching practices. This educational resource displays exceptional terminological precision and conceptual clarity, consistently aligned with international frameworks such as the CEFR and FREPA. Its structure facilitates gradual cognitive progression from foundational theory to reflective and applied learning. The integration of reflective prompts, academic readings, and portfolio assignments effectively bridges theory and praxis, reinforcing learners' autonomy and professional identity formation. The textbook's stylistic and visual design, enriched by multimodal elements, encourages active learning and accommodates various cognitive and learning styles. Particularly commendable is the inclusion of cross-references to authentic research studies and contemporary scholarship, which enhances both its academic rigour and pedagogical relevance. A minor suggestion for future editions could concern the inclusion of additional case studies from non-European educational contexts to further broaden its intercultural reach. Furthermore, some cross-chapter referencing could be fine-tuned to improve internal coherence. Despite these minor remarks, the work is didactically innovative, methodologically well-grounded, and pedagogically inspiring. It embodies the principles of reflective teaching and intercultural awareness, offering a model of good practice in higher education. Its adoption is strongly recommended for teacher education programmes seeking to cultivate linguistically sensitive and culturally competent professionals.

Dr. Helena Bažec

Helena Bažec is a linguist and language education specialist working in the cross-border area between Slovenia and Italy. Her research and teaching focus on linguistic contact, intercultural communication, and language pedagogy. She has extensive experience in developing materials for multilingual and multicultural learning environments.

Linguistically Sensitive Teaching

Intended Competences and Learning Outcomes

After completing this chapter, you will be able to:

- explain, distinguish, and apply the principles of linguistically sensitive teaching and their role in multilingual classrooms to support learners' diverse linguistic repertoires;
- reflect on and critically evaluate your own language use and learning experiences;
- apply pluralistic approaches to design inclusive language activities;
- foster intercultural understanding and communication through language learning, appreciating diverse perspectives and cultural norms.

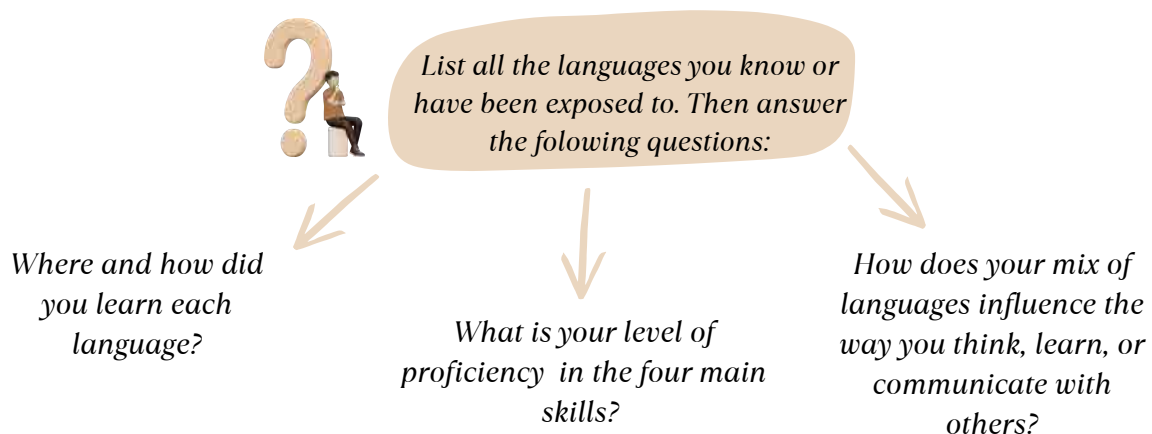
Opening Question

How does learning a new language shape your cognitive abilities, emotional responses, social interactions, and cultural understanding?

Since the 1960s, key European institutions have consistently emphasised linguistic diversity as a fundamental value of the European Union in their strategic documents. For this diversity to truly flourish, the various language communities within Europe must be both respected and supported. The traditional notion of schools as monolingual and monocultural environments no longer aligns with today's reality, as global trends have led to an increase in **linguistic** and **cultural diversity**. Consequently, concepts such as multilingualism, plurilingualism, translanguaging, and code-switching have become integral to modern education, shifting the focus from political objectives to the rich, lived linguistic experiences of learners.

Multilingualism, which means being able to speak and understand more than one language, has become increasingly important in today's world. It is no longer just a personal skill; it now plays a crucial role in helping countries grow stronger, remain competitive, and adapt to new ideas and technologies. In a globalised world where people, businesses, and ideas are constantly crossing borders, knowing multiple languages helps individuals connect and helps countries work better with each other. The European Union sees multilingualism as a key part of building a united and connected Europe. That's why it encourages all European citizens to learn at least two languages in addition to their mother tongue, helping to create a smarter, more cooperative and globally engaged society.

Plurilingualism means being able to use more than one language, even if you're not completely fluent in all of them. Unlike the idea of being multilingual, which emphasises the ability that you have to speak every language perfectly, plurilingualism focuses on the ability to understand and communicate in different languages at various levels. For example, someone might speak Spanish really well, understand basic French, and know a few phrases in German. That counts as plurilingualism. This idea also accepts that people learn languages in many different ways, at school, through travel, from friends, or online, and that their skills might grow or change over time. What matters most is the ability to switch between languages when needed and to use what you know to connect with others and make communication easier.



Code-switching and translanguaging are both ways that multilingual people make use of, but they are not the same thing. **Code-switching** is when people switch between two or more languages or dialects during a conversation, sentence, or even a phrase. This often happens when speakers are multilingual and adjust their language based on the situation, the people they're talking to, or the topic. It can help fill gaps in language proficiency, allowing speakers to use a language they're more comfortable with when they don't know the right word in one language. It also allows speakers to express their identity, signal belonging to a particular group, or emphasise a point. Additionally, code-switching can clarify meaning, especially when a word or phrase in one language carries more emotional weight or is more specific than in another. It can also be a way to signal membership in a social group, particularly if that group shares multiple languages. An example of code-switching in everyday life would be the following narrative of a teenager: "I was talking to my mom, and she said, '*No puedes salir hasta que limpies tu cuarto,*' so I stayed home and cleaned." In this sentence, the speaker switches from English to Spanish mid-sentence to give special emphasis.

*Do you ever code-switch?
In what situations, with whom, and why?*



Translanguaging, on the other hand, goes a step further. It's not just switching back and forth between languages; it's using all of your languages together as one combined tool for thinking and communication. Instead of keeping languages separate, translanguaging blends them to help speakers make meaning, especially in learning environments. For example, a student might read a science text in English, talk about it in their home language, and then write a response mixing both. This helps them understand the content better and express complex ideas more fully. Translanguaging values all parts of a person's language knowledge, not just the standard or more dominant ones. It also supports inclusion and gives equal importance to all languages, especially in classrooms with students from diverse linguistic backgrounds.



Read the paragraph below and consider why it is an example of translanguaging rather than code-switching. Then, reflect on everyday situations where you do something similar. Do you find yourself using code-switching or translanguaging more often? Why?

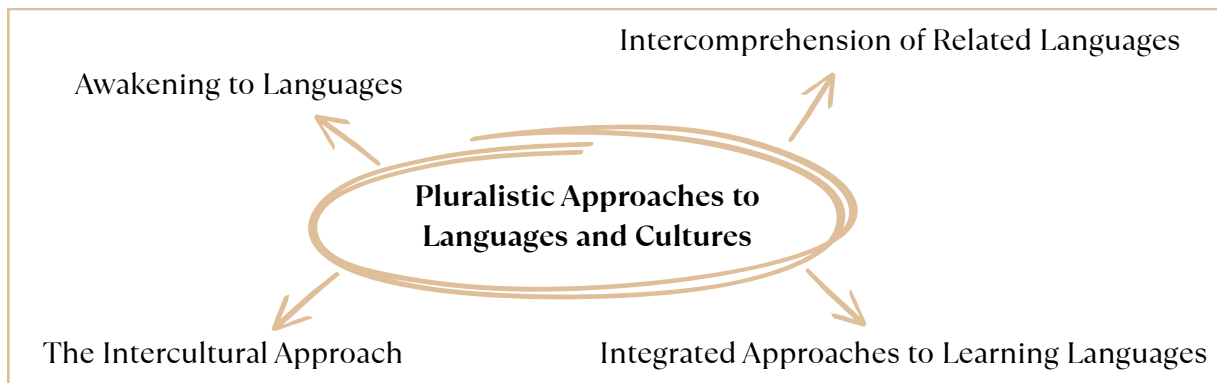
*Včeraj smo imeli res zanimiv seminar o **inclusion**. Profesor je rekel, da je ključnega pomena, da **teachers recognise every student's language background** kot prednost, **not a problem**. In to me je spomnilo na tistega učenca, ki je vedno mixel bosanski in slovenščino – pa smo ga prej kar opozarjali. Zdaj vidim, da je to translanguaging, **and it's actually empowering**.*

One approach that responds to today's linguistic diversity is **linguistically sensitive teaching**. This approach recognises that inclusive education must account for the language(s) of instruction, the languages taught in school, and—depending on the context—also regional, minority, and community languages. Linguistically sensitive teaching is centred on the learner's linguistic needs and considers their unique and dynamic linguistic repertoire, which may vary in development and use.

Linguistically sensitive teaching not only helps students improve their language skills but also boosts their awareness of how languages work and how they affect learning. This awareness covers several areas: the cognitive domain, which is about understanding how different languages are structured compared to one's own; **the affective domain**, which deals with emotional reactions and attitudes toward languages; **the social domain**, which sees language as a tool for understanding others; **the power domain**, which encourages awareness of how language can be used to influence or control situations; and **the language use domain**, which focuses on practical language skills. All these areas work together to help students develop intercultural communicative competence, an important goal of linguistically sensitive teaching.

Additionally, linguistically sensitive teaching places special emphasis on including children from disadvantaged groups, such as migrant learners and those who are blind or deaf. Among the many dimensions of language learning, linguistically sensitive teaching is most closely associated with **learning through language**. In this sense, language is considered central to all learning processes—across all subjects, not just language classes. It involves the thoughtful and adaptive use of language, tailored to learners' individual needs, in both formal instruction and informal interactions. This approach ensures that all students, regardless of their language background, are supported in their learning journeys.

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (Council of Europe, 2001, 2020) and **the Framework of Reference for Pluralistic Approaches to Languages and Cultures** (Council of Europe, 2012) are foundational documents and key instruments of the Council of Europe's language policy. They both strongly advocate for linguistically sensitive teaching, which can be implemented through pluralistic approaches to languages and cultures.



Awakening to Languages is an approach that encourages learners to become aware of and open to linguistic diversity in their immediate surroundings and the broader social context. This approach is particularly beneficial in the early years of schooling, as it enhances **phonological awareness** and **metalinguistic skills**.

Make a list of how each word is spelt in as many languages as possible.

1.



3.

Which words are completely different? What might that tell you about their origins or usage?

Which words look or sound similar? Try to find reasons for these similarities.

2.

In small groups, select a set of basic vocabulary items (e.g., numbers, days of the week, colours, family terms, etc.).

4.

Choose one word and explore its etymology in English and your native language(s).

Intercomprehension of Related Languages is an approach that helps learn two or more languages from the same language family (like Slavic or Romance languages) at the same time. However, it's important to remember that there are also differences between these languages. If the learner is not careful, these differences might confuse them and cause mistakes, like using the wrong word or sentence structure. This is called **interference**.



Translate one sentence into at least two related languages. Compare similarities and differences in vocabulary and grammar, noting which aid or hinder understanding. Then, choose one shared word and explore its origin.

The Intercultural Approach is about learning to understand and appreciate different cultures. Instead of just collecting facts about a culture, it focuses on accepting differences and being open to other ways of thinking. The goal is to help see from a broader perspective, moving beyond one's own culture and values to understand others. (More about the Intercultural approach in Chapter 2.)

1.

Describe what you notice about how people are sitting, eating, and interacting.

2.

Look for similarities and differences as well as the familiar and unfamiliar things.



3.

Research what “Itadakimasu” means and why people in Japan sit on the floor to eat in some traditional settings.

4.

Reflect on how your culture expresses similar values.

Integrated approaches to language learning emphasise the connection of various language skills, providing a more holistic and natural learning experience. This contrasts with traditional methods, which typically treat different aspects of language—such as grammar, vocabulary, and speaking skills—as isolated components.

Examples of integrated approaches include **content-based instruction** (where language is learned through subjects like history or science), **task-based instruction** (which focuses on completing real-world tasks using the language), and other methods such as **problem-based**, **research-based**, and **project-based learning**. The primary goal is to help students acquire knowledge in the subject, while language proficiency is developed indirectly as a tool for learning.

A notable approach within this framework is **Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)**. This dual focus on language and content makes CLIL a more integrated approach, where both aspects are given equal importance throughout the learning process. Unlike content-based instruction, CLIL aims to create a balance between language learning and subject matter mastery, meaning that students are expected to develop language proficiency while simultaneously learning about academic content. (More about CLIL in Chapter 3.)

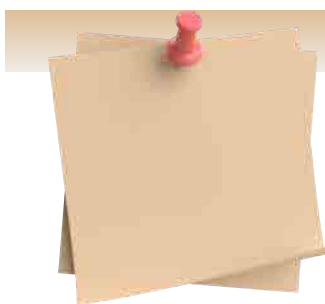
Working with Academic Papers

Read the article:

Lemut Bajec, M. (2024). Fostering intercultural education at tertiary level: A case study with students of humanities. *Revija za elementarno izobraževanje*, 17, 135–152.

Now answer the following questions:

- What evidence from the study suggests that students developed a more critical approach to learning?
- What challenges and/or limitations did the study identify despite the well-designed study course?



Revisiting Concepts in Focus

1. Create a list of the main concepts discussed in this chapter.
2. Write a summary of the key takeaways from this section in approximately 300 words. Your reflection should actively refer to and apply several of the concepts introduced. In your response, consider the following prompts:
 - In what ways has engaging with these concepts influenced your thinking, beliefs, or future actions?
 - Which key term(s) do you find most powerful, difficult to understand, inspiring, or confusing? Explain your reasoning.
3. Formulate a question or dilemma that you are still left with.

Culture & Language Curiosities

There are over 7,000 languages spoken in the world today, but about 90% of them are used by less than 100,000 people each. Many are endangered and may disappear within the next century.

Portfolio Assignment No. 1

Go to the *Portfolio Assignments* section, read the instructions carefully, and complete the task.

**Press *Play* for
Perspective**

Culturally and
Linguistically
Responsive
Pedagogy



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Truths across Time

The essence of intercultural education is acquiring empathy – the ability to view the world through the perspectives of others and to acknowledge that they may notice aspects we've overlooked or perceive things more accurately.



Consolidation No. 1

Read the story *The Three Little Pigs* and identify all the languages that are used. After you finish, reflect on what made it easy or difficult to identify certain languages.

Once upon a time, there lived an old pig who had three little piglets. She was poor and could hardly feed them. So one day she called them together and said: **“Dragi prašiči, dovolj ste veliki. Idite u svijet in si postavite svoj dom. Ne féljetek a munkától. Écoutez la sagesse, and everything will go well.”**

The first little pig met a man carrying straw. **“Per favore, buon uomo, dammi quella paglia,”** he said. The man gave him the straw, and the pig built a house of straw. He went inside to rest when suddenly someone knocked. **“Liten gris, åpne raskt!” “O nein, ich mache nicht auf!” “Ik zal blazen en je huis vernietigen!” “Я дуhy и вcë чeчeы!”** And with that, the wolf blew down the straw house and ate the first pig.

The second pig walked and walked until he met a man carrying sticks. **“Proszę, daj mi te pattyki,”** he said. The man gave him the sticks, and the pig built a house. Soon, the wolf came again: **“Κακό είναι να κοιτάξεις τον λύκο στα μάτια!” “Jeg vil ikke åpne!” “Ma j’ouvrirai jamais!”** Once more, the wolf blew down the stick house and ate the second pig.

The third pig walked and met a man carrying bricks. **“Snälla, ge mig de där tegelstenarna,”** he said. **“Erős házat akarok építeni.”** He built a solid brick house and went inside to rest. The wolf came and huffed: **“Não vou abrir!” “아니요, 열지 않을 거예요!” “Szanukh wa nufkh hatta yanhur al-bayt!” “Ka kite! Ka mau ahau i a koe!”**

The wolf blew and blew, but the brick house did not budge. Angry and desperate, he tried to sneak in through the chimney, but the clever pig quickly lit a fire and placed a huge pot of boiling water beneath it. The wolf fell straight into the pot and was gone forever. From that day on, the third little pig lived happily ever after, **“et sans soucis, ja ehkä hänen talonsa on yhä pystyssä tänään”.**



Answer key: Croatian, Hungarian, French, English, Italian, Norwegian, German, Dutch, Russian, Polish, Greek, Danish, Luxembourgish, Swedish, Hungarian, Portuguese, Korean, Arabic, Maori, French, Finnish

Plurilingual and Intercultural Education

Intended Competences and Learning Outcomes

After completing this chapter, you will be able to:

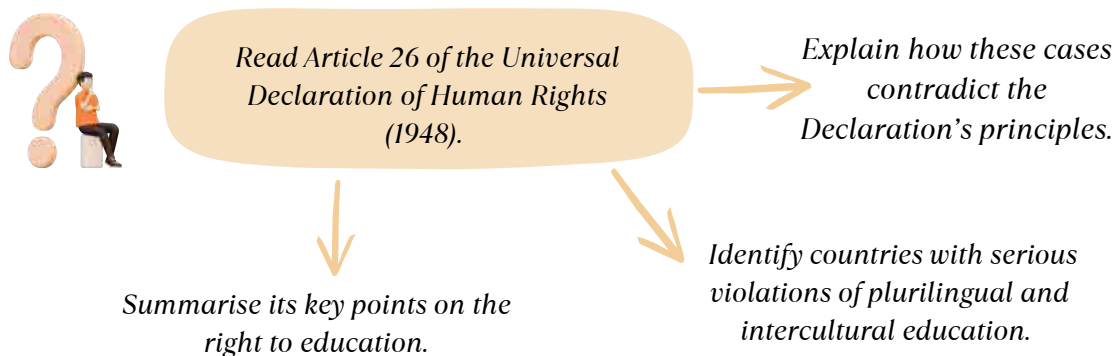
- understand how language competences influence access to education, academic achievement, and social inclusion;
- explain key concepts and frameworks related to plurilingual and intercultural education;
- apply human rights principles to real-world cases of educational exclusion or language-based discrimination;
- evaluate the effectiveness of inclusive language policies and intercultural approaches in promoting equity and democracy in education;
- assess your own intercultural competence and identify areas for growth.

Opening Question

How can a student's first language (which is not the language of instruction) serve as an asset rather than a barrier in their education?

Access to education and academic achievement are deeply tied to language competences. From the very start of formal education, some pupils may already be at a disadvantage if their language skills do not align with the expectations of the school. This can include children from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds, migrant families, or those whose first language is a regional or minority language. Regardless of their language repertoire, all pupils must learn to communicate effectively within the school environment. Mastery of the **language(s) of schooling** is not only essential for understanding subject content but is also key to participating fully in school life and achieving social mobility.

Plurilingual and intercultural education is not simply about teaching multiple languages; it's about recognising the rich linguistic and cultural resources that learners bring with them and using these as assets for learning. By embracing diversity and promoting equity in language education, schools can play a crucial role in preparing young people to thrive in diverse, democratic, and interconnected societies. The idea of intercultural education was first officially recognised in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. Since then, it has greatly influenced how languages are taught and led to the creation of several important guideline documents to help teachers prepare materials for intercultural education.



One of the central challenges faced by modern education systems is how to equip learners with both **plurilingual** and **intercultural competences**. These competences are essential for functioning as active, informed citizens and for developing open, respectful attitudes toward cultural diversity.

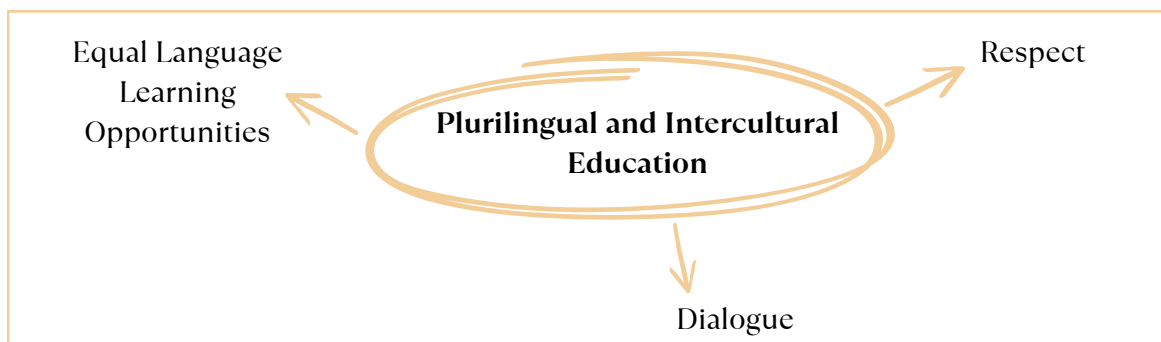
In small groups, identify the main challenges schools face in developing plurilingual and intercultural competences, considering curriculum, teacher training, resources, and classroom dynamics. Then, brainstorm possible solutions to overcome these barriers.



Plurilingual and Intercultural Education is a comprehensive approach to teaching and learning languages and cultures. It takes into account the full range of languages and cultures present in the school environment. This includes:

- Languages taught in school (e.g., national and foreign languages),
- Languages recognised by the school but not formally taught (e.g., home or community languages),
- Languages and cultures present but neither recognised nor taught (often spoken by minority or migrant communities).

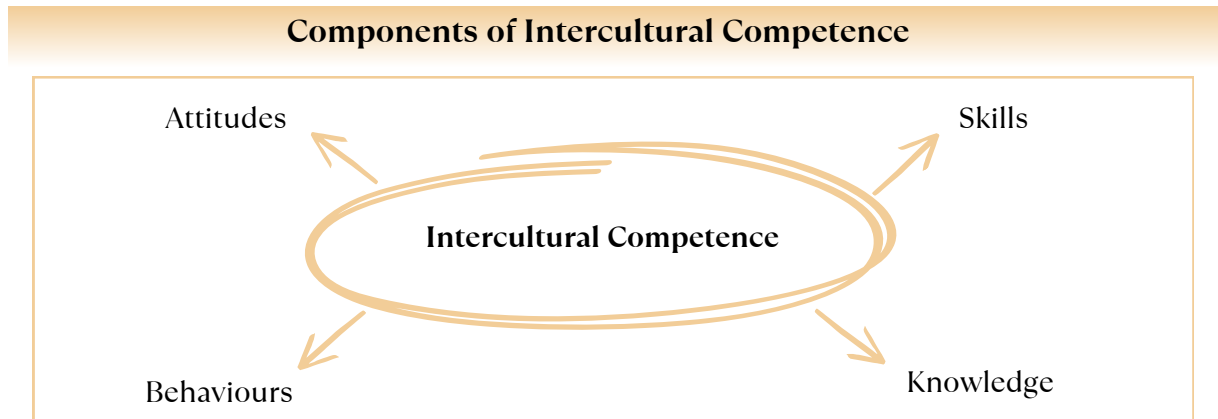
This approach promotes the idea that learners' entire linguistic and cultural repertoires should be acknowledged, respected, and incorporated into the learning process. It highlights the fact that language competence is not fragmented across disciplines, but part of a unified communicative capacity.



Plurilingual and intercultural education is founded on the following key principles:

- **Recognition and respect for linguistic and cultural diversity**, as affirmed by international frameworks such as the Council of Europe conventions. This includes valuing all languages as legitimate means of communication, learning, and expression of identity and belonging.
- **Equal access to language learning opportunities** for every student, tailored to their individual cognitive, social, and emotional needs. The goal is to empower learners to continue developing language competences throughout their lives.
- **The central role of dialogue and intercultural understanding** that fosters empathy, reduces stereotypes, and encourages openness to new cultural experiences. Dialogue is essential for mutual respect and for developing the skills to thoughtfully analyse and benefit from cultural diversity.

Intercultural competence isn't just one skill but a wide range of abilities that, together, help people solve problems and work towards creating a positive and inclusive environment between cultures. When someone has strong intercultural competence, they become **social agents** who can spot possible misunderstandings or confusion and figure out how to solve them. That's why developing intercultural competence is an important goal in education and that's why teachers are encouraged to include intercultural elements in their teaching.



Intercultural competence refers to the ability to interact effectively and appropriately with people from different cultural backgrounds. It involves a combination of attitudes, skills, knowledge, and behaviours that support mutual understanding, respect, and cooperation. It is not a static trait but a dynamic, evolving capacity that develops over time through exposure, reflection, and practice.



Look at the self-assessment tool designed by Lázár (2008). Complete the tool and review your results to identify your strengths and areas where you could grow. Then come up with three concrete and practical steps to develop your intercultural competence further.

Culture & Language Curiosities

In New Zealand, the Māori greet each other by pressing their noses together. It's called a "hongi" and shows respect and friendship.

Portfolio Assignment No. 2

Go to the *Portfolio Assignments* section, read the instructions carefully, and complete the task.

Working with Academic Papers

Read the article:

Obilișteanu, G., & Niculescu, B. O. (2018). Intercultural competence in teaching and learning foreign languages. *Knowledge-Based Organization*, 24(2), 345–350.

Now answer the following questions:

- What activities can teachers use to help students develop intercultural skills?
- What role does attitude play in intercultural competence, and how can teachers help change students' attitudes?
- Why is understanding non-verbal communication important in intercultural interactions?



Revisiting Concepts in Focus

1. Create a list of the main concepts discussed in this chapter.
2. Write a summary of the key takeaways from this section in approximately 300 words. Your reflection should actively refer to and apply several of the concepts introduced. In your response, consider the following prompts:
 - In what ways has engaging with these concepts influenced your thinking, beliefs, or future actions?
 - Which key term(s) do you find most powerful, difficult to understand, inspiring, or confusing? Explain your reasoning.
3. Formulate a question or dilemma that you are still left with.

**Press *Play* for
Perspective**

Competences for
Teaching in
Multicultural
Classrooms



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Truths across Time

The stranger sees only what he knows.

African proverb



Consolidation No. 2

Match each festival to its country of origin. Identify the season or occasion during which it is celebrated. Determine whether the festival is primarily religious, secular, or cultural. Describe the main traditions, activities, and significance of the festival.

Kurentovanje	Croatia
Carnival of Venice	Germany
Oktoberfest	Germany
Dia de los Muertos	India
Holi	Italy
Songkran	London
La Tomatina	Matera
Mardi Gras	Mexico
Up Helly Aa	New Orleans
Notting Hill Carnival	Scotland
Festa della Madonna Bruna	Slovenia
Christkindlesmarkt	Spain
Sinjaska Alka	Thailand



Content and Language Integrated Learning

Intended Competences and Learning Outcomes

After completing this chapter, you will be able to:

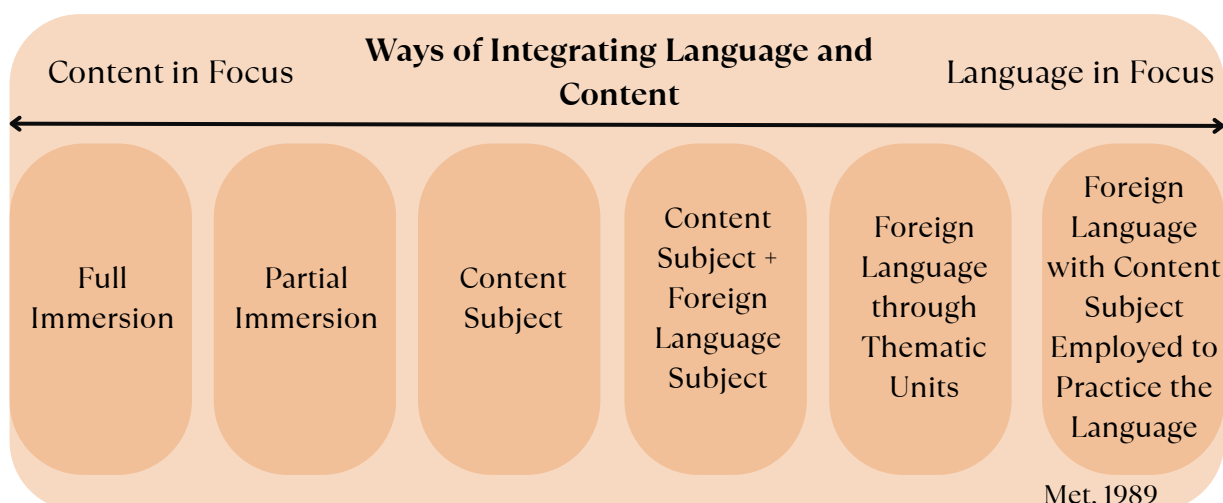
- integrate content and language across curricula;
- apply problem-solving and brainstorming techniques to enhance critical thinking;
- create your own didactic materials based on the 4Cs approach;
- analyse the language used in CLIL lessons;
- develop greater sensitivity to cultural differences and promote a mindset of tolerance and mutual respect.

Opening Question

How enthusiastic do you think teachers are when they need to collaborate with their colleagues in planning lessons and preparing materials?

CLIL stands for Content and Language Integrated Learning. It means learning a subject (e.g., science, music, or history) in a second or foreign language, often English. The CLIL approach was driven by political and educational reasons. Politically, it was about promoting mobility within the EU, which relies on being able to speak both your native language and a foreign language. Educationally, it was influenced by the growing importance of understanding different cultures and by successful bilingual programmes, like the Canadian immersion model. The goal was to enhance teaching methods, enabling more students to develop their language skills more effectively.

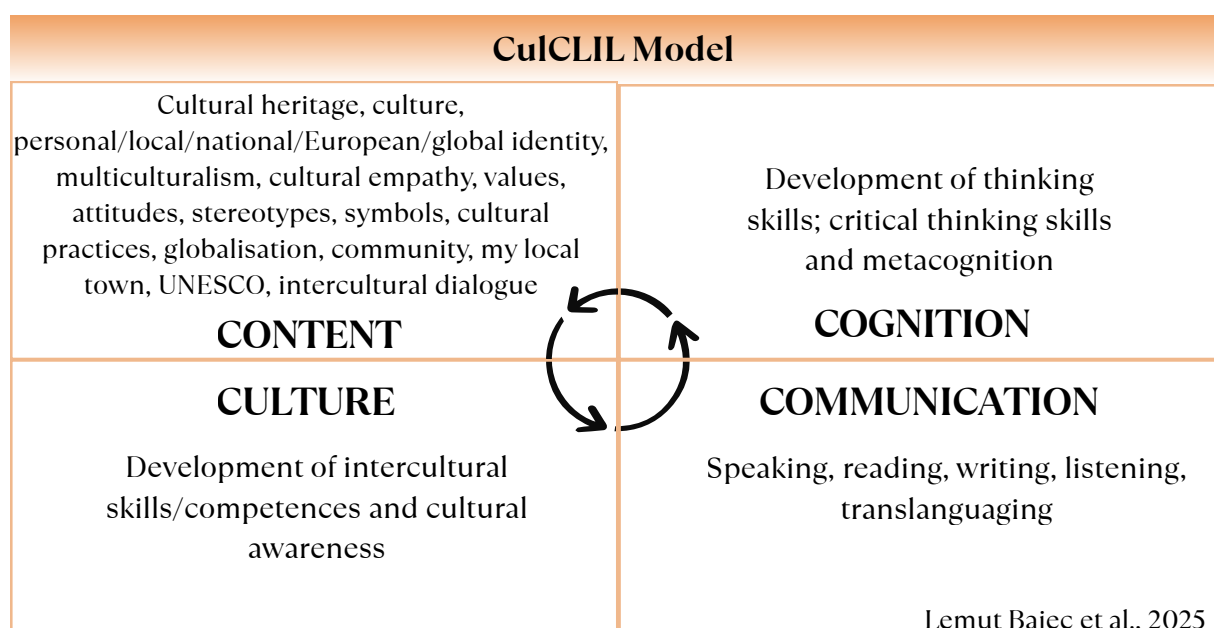
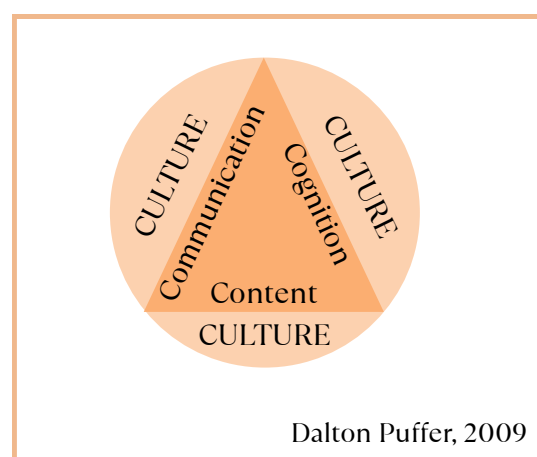
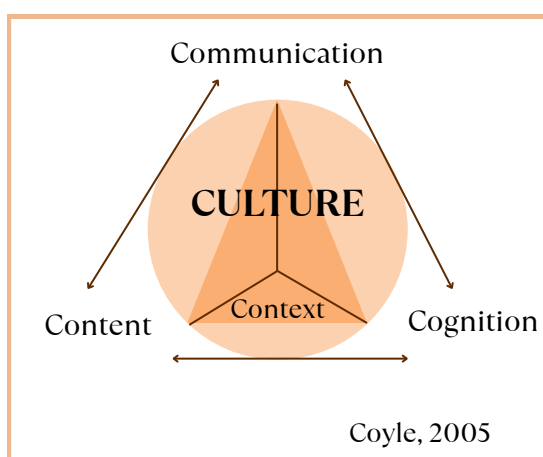
Instead of separating language and subject learning, CLIL brings them together. CLIL isn't just helpful for language; it supports subject learning, too. So, learners learn both the topic and the language at the same time without even realising how much they're learning. CLIL helps students learn languages more naturally. It connects language learning with authentic scenarios. There are many ways to combine language and subject learning in CLIL. Some lessons may focus more on the subject, while others might focus more on language. The idea is to make both work together to support learners' understanding and communication.



In a CLIL classroom, there are usually two types of teachers working together. One is the content teacher, who teaches the main subject, like biology, history, or art. The other is the language teacher, who supports the students in learning the foreign language used in the lesson. Since most content teachers are not trained in language teaching, they might switch between the students' first language and the new language to help them understand the material. This flexible use of both languages is known as translanguaging. The language teacher helps by introducing keywords and phrases connected to the subject and by encouraging students to think critically and express their ideas clearly.

CLIL places certain demands on teachers. It requires preparation, creativity, and teamwork. The most successful CLIL teachers are those who are passionate about teaching, who are strong communicators, and who are willing to collaborate with colleagues. They also need to be flexible since every class is different.

The CLIL approach offers a flexible model that is underpinned by 4Cy (Content, Communication, Culture, and Cognition), all of which are connected. Content is not just about acquiring knowledge; it's about creating your own understanding of the subject matter, and thus is closely related to thinking processes; understanding how we think and learn is an integral part of the content.





Look at the three models of CLIL and identify the differences in what each model emphasises.

Content and Cognition

Content in a CLIL classroom is dependent on the context in which it is being taught. This content may come directly from a national curriculum or it could be more dynamic, like project-based learning focused on topical issues. CLIL also often involves interdisciplinary learning, where subjects are linked together, giving students a richer and more connected understanding of the content. When it comes to content, teachers should avoid giving too much extra material. Instead, the goal is to help students go deeper into what they're already learning.

The goal of the CLIL approach is not just to teach new content but to help students go deeper into what they are learning. Rather than simply memorising facts, CLIL pushes students to analyse, question, and reflect, helping them develop a deeper understanding of the subject matter. It encourages them to think critically about the knowledge they possess, using essential skills like problem-solving, critical thinking, and metacognition.

To achieve this, CLIL incorporates a variety of activities, techniques, and methods, which also foster creative thinking and enhance the ability to retrieve knowledge quickly and easily. Some techniques that have proven effective in developing cognitive skills are:

1) Asking Questions to check students' understanding and trigger higher-order thinking processes:

- *Can you explain what we learned in your own words?*
- *Can you think of another example?*
- *What do you think about what we learned?*
- *Can you come up with your own idea using what you've learned?*







2) Concept Maps require students to reorganise and graphically represent what they have learned. By doing so, students can visualise the connections between ideas and restructure their understanding based on their own interpretations.

3) Using De Bono's *Six Thinking Hats Technique* (1985, 2021) which encourages students to view a problem from six different perspectives: emotional, analytical, creative, and critical. This method promotes open debate, helps students understand their own thinking, and stimulates analysis and creativity. By using this technique, students improve communication skills and problem-solving abilities, fostering collaborative and innovative solutions.

The activity begins with **white-hat thinking**, focusing on facts in an objective way. Next, **red-hat thinking** brings out emotions, feelings, and intuition, allowing individuals to express what bothers them without judgement. **Yellow-hat thinking** is positive and constructive, aiming to find the best solutions and including hopes and dreams. **Black-hat thinking** highlights potential problems and obstacles, helping students identify errors or misconceptions. **Green-hat thinking** encourages creative and innovative ideas, aiming for new ways of thinking. Finally, **blue-hat thinking** focuses on leading the thought process, summarising the discussion, and drawing conclusions.

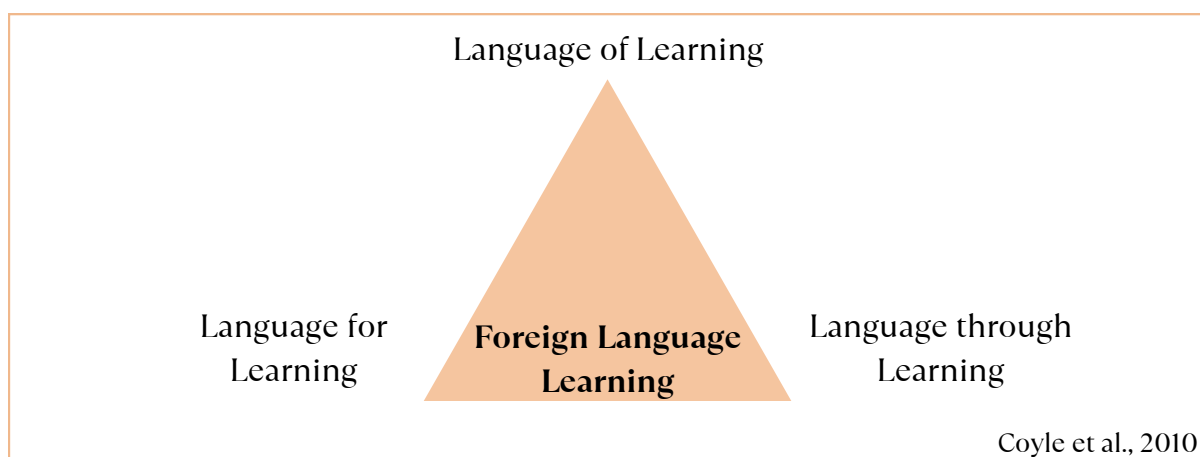
*Use De Bono's Six Thinking Hats technique to address the following topic:
To what extent should AI technologies be integrated into education?*



 <p>Facts and Information</p> <p>What statistics or studies exist on AI's effectiveness in education?</p>	 <p>Feelings and Intuition</p> <p>How do people feel about AI in education?</p>
 <p>Caution and Criticism</p> <p>What could go wrong if AI becomes too influential?</p>	 <p>Benefits and Optimism</p> <p>How could AI improve learning, productivity, or creativity?</p>
 <p>Creativity and Alternatives</p> <p>How might we integrate AI and still support human values?</p>	 <p>Process and Summary</p> <p>Guide the discussion, keep it balanced, and summarize key points and conclusions.</p>

Communication

Communication in CLIL is key. There are three main ways language is used within this approach. First, the **language of learning** refers to the language needed to understand and access basic concepts and skills in the subject matter. For example, in a science class, students would need to learn and use specific scientific terminology. Second, the **language for learning** focuses on the functional language required to carry out activities in a CLIL setting, such as writing a report, researching a topic, or presenting findings. It also involves skills like asking questions and providing answers in discussions, constructing and defending arguments, and collaborating in group activities. Finally, **language through learning** emerges as students work on projects and tasks. This is something that cannot be prepared in advance.

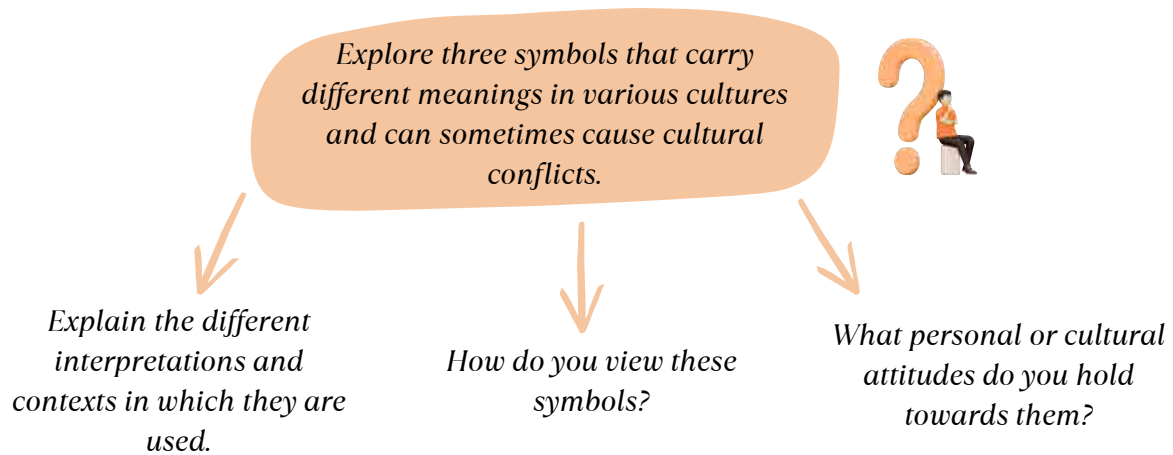


From the topic you chose before, create a list of the core vocabulary your students need to master in order to understand and engage with the subject matter effectively.

Interaction in CLIL is not just about speaking; it's also about learning through dialogue. Students engage with their peers and teachers to deepen their understanding and articulate complex ideas. For example, if students need to use the past tense in a foreign language to describe a scientific experiment but haven't yet learned the correct grammatical structure, the teacher provides the necessary linguistic support in the CLIL context. This ensures that the language needed for the subject matter is accessible to students as they work through the content. Feedback is also a crucial component in the CLIL classroom. It helps students improve their language skills and deepen their understanding of the subject matter. Using feedback, students refine their ability to articulate ideas, develop their cognitive skills, and express themselves more effectively in the foreign language.

Culture

One of the key strengths of CLIL is its ability to help students step into the mindset of another culture through a second or foreign language. This approach fosters understanding of different perspectives, acceptance of diversity, and the development of intercultural skills. Achieving this level of understanding requires more than just factual knowledge; it demands mastery of both verbal and non-verbal communication skills. In CLIL, these skills are nurtured through research and critical reflection on different cultures, using authentic materials, or creating contexts that challenge students' thinking. By encouraging students to explore cultural differences, beliefs, values, customs, and habits, they become a part of a multicultural and multilingual learning community and prepare themselves for active participation in a global society. Through this process, students gain deeper insights into both their own and others' cultures, overcoming language barriers and engaging with the world more thoughtfully and respectfully.



CLIL is flexible and can be used with students of all ages and abilities. It's also very helpful for students with migration backgrounds, as it supports both language development and subject understanding. Almost any subject can be taught using CLIL, from history and geography to music and science. However, some subjects—like math and physics—can be more challenging because they rely heavily on specific technical language and often require more use of the student's first language.

CLIL is powerful because it connects classroom learning to real life. Students don't just memorise facts; they use the new language to explore meaningful topics and solve problems. This makes learning more engaging and relevant. They also develop skills they'll need for future studies or international careers. Most importantly, CLIL encourages students to connect ideas across different subjects and cultural perspectives. It helps them understand not just what they're learning but also how they're learning and why it matters. On top of that, CLIL helps students become stronger critical thinkers and more confident communicators. CLIL also increases motivation. Because students are actively involved in their learning and can see the real-world value of what they're doing, they're more likely to enjoy the process.

Culture & Language Curiosities

Papua New Guinea has the highest linguistic diversity of any country, with over 800 different languages spoken.

Portfolio Assignment No. 3

Go to the *Portfolio Assignments* section, read the instructions carefully, and complete the task.

Working with Academic Papers

Read the article:

Lemut Bajec, M., Štemberger, T., & Bratož, S. (2025). Enhancing intercultural competences with the CulCLIL model. *Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching*, 1-21.

Now answer the following questions:

- How did integrating Cultural heritage content into lessons impact students' engagement with their own and other cultures?
- Why is the recognition of adults' role in transmitting cultural heritage considered a significant outcome of the study, even if it remains theoretical for some students?



Revisiting Concepts in Focus

1. Create a list of the main concepts discussed in this chapter.
2. Write a summary of the key takeaways from this section in approximately 300 words. Your reflection should actively refer to and apply several of the concepts introduced. In your response, consider the following prompts:
 - In what ways has engaging with these concepts influenced your thinking, beliefs, or future actions?
 - Which key term(s) do you find most powerful, difficult to understand, inspiring, or confusing? Explain your reasoning.
3. Formulate a question or dilemma that you are still left with.

**Press *Play* for
Perspective**

An Interview with
David Marsh on
CLIL



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Truths across Time

Language is the armoury of the human mind and at once containing the trophies of its past
and the weapons of its future conquests.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge



Taxonomy of Educational Objectives

Intended Competences and Learning Outcomes

After completing this chapter, you will be able to:

- demonstrate understanding of Bloom's taxonomy, including its thinking skills and knowledge dimensions;
- design learning activities that integrate multiple levels of thinking and knowledge types;
- reflect on your own learning processes and monitor their thinking strategies;
- integrate the taxonomy into a broader educational context.

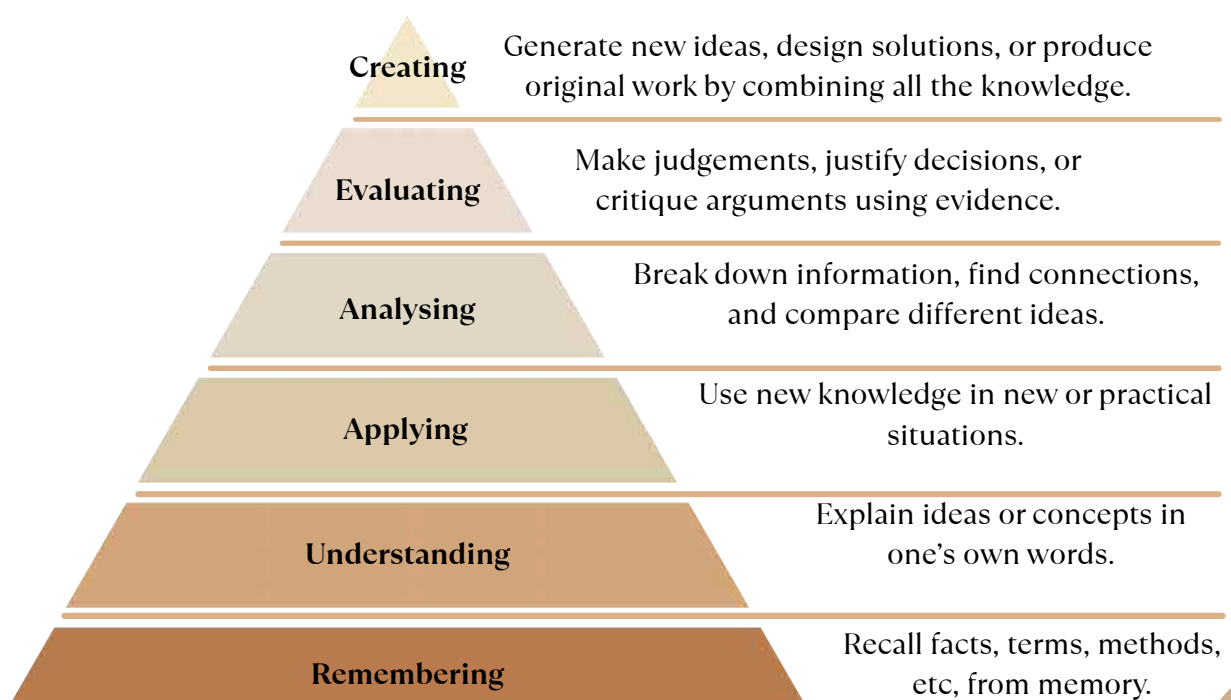
Opening Question

What strategies do you use to consolidate new knowledge and ensure it is retained in long-term memory?

Bloom's Taxonomy is a useful tool that helps us understand the different levels of thinking we use when learning. It was first created by Benjamin Bloom and his team in 1956 and later updated in 2001 to better reflect how learning actually works today. It gives teachers and students a common language for setting goals, planning lessons, designing activities, and evaluating learning. It works across all subjects and age groups and helps make sure learning moves beyond just memorising facts.

The Thinking Skills Dimension

Bloom's taxonomy outlines six levels of thinking that help us understand how learning progresses from basic to more advanced skills. These levels support academic growth and help build real-world problem-solving skills.





Choose a topic that you'd like to cover during English lessons and design one learning activity that would cover every level of Bloom's taxonomy.

The Knowledge Dimension helps us understand what we are learning, while the thinking skills dimension focuses on how we think about and use that knowledge. There are four types of knowledge, each playing a different role in learning.

- **Factual knowledge** refers to the basic facts, terms, and definitions you need to remember to get started.
- **Conceptual knowledge** goes a bit deeper, helping you see how ideas connect and how information fits into bigger systems or categories.
- **Procedural knowledge** is about knowing how to do something, e.g., following steps in a process, applying techniques, or using the right method to solve a problem.
- **Metacognitive knowledge** means being aware of your own thinking. It refers to knowing which learning strategies work best for you, and how to monitor or change them when needed.

These types of knowledge interact with different thinking processes and help you learn more deeply and effectively.

Can you share examples from your own experience where you had to use different types of knowledge—factual, conceptual, procedural, or metacognitive?



To help students think more deeply about what they read, hear, or experience in class, we can ask students different types of questions to build different kinds of knowledge.

Lower Taxonomy Questions	Higher Taxonomy Questions
What does that mean?	How are x and y similar?
Explain it in your own words.	Why or how does it happen?
Why is it important?	What are the strengths and weaknesses of it?
How do you know?	How could you use this creatively/differently?
What is the main idea of ... ?	What would happen if ...?

Working with Academic Papers

Read the article:

Stevani, M., & Tarigan, K. (2022). Evaluating English Textbooks by Using Bloom's Taxonomy to Analyze Reading Comprehension Questions. *SALEE: Study of Applied Linguistics and English Education*, 4(1), 1-18.

Now answer the following questions:

- What were the two main research questions the authors aimed to answer?
- According to the findings, which cognitive level of Bloom's Taxonomy appeared most frequently?
- Describe the research method used in this study. What type of textbooks were analysed, and how were the questions categorised?
- Based on the conclusions, what recommendations did the authors give to English teachers regarding the design of reading comprehension questions?



Revisiting Concepts in Focus

1. Create a list of the main concepts discussed in this chapter.
2. Write a summary of the key takeaways from this section in approximately 300 words. Your reflection should actively refer to and apply several of the concepts introduced. In your response, consider the following prompts:
 - In what ways has engaging with these concepts influenced your thinking, beliefs, or future actions?
 - Which key term(s) do you find most powerful, difficult to understand, inspiring, or confusing? Explain your reasoning.
3. Formulate a question or dilemma that you are still left with.

Culture & Language Curiosities

Namibia is remarkably multilingual, with a total of twenty-seven languages spoken nationwide; twenty-two of which are indigenous. Afrikaans and German are high varieties used in formal domains, whereas indigenous languages largely remain low varieties restricted to family, religious, and informal domains.

Portfolio Assignment No. 4

Go to the *Portfolio Assignments* section, read the instructions carefully, and complete the task.

**Press *Play* for
Perspective**

**The Power of
Questions**



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Truths across Time

Liberating education consists of acts of cognition, not transfers of information.

Paulo Freire



Critical Thinking and Metacognition

Intended Competences and Learning Outcomes

After completing this chapter, you will be able to:

- distinguish between opinions, facts, and reasoned conclusions;
- analyse your intellectual and personal growth over time to understand how experiences shape critical thinking;
- cultivate openness to alternative viewpoints;
- examine assumptions, stereotypes, and power dynamics shaping educational discourse;
- connect critical thinking to active and responsible citizenship.

Opening Question

Would you describe critical thinking more as a natural disposition or as a learned skill that can be developed over time?

Critical thinking is the ability to think clearly, rationally, and from multiple angles. In a narrow sense, it means analysing, evaluating, and constructing arguments. More broadly, it's about fostering reflective, purposeful thinking and engaging with the deeper goals of education itself. It involves considering different perspectives, backing up ideas with reasoned arguments, and being open to changing one's views when more relevant information comes to light. This openness adds depth and flexibility to how we think.

Developing critical thinking is a lifelong process that takes time, effort, and intention. In today's world, marked by complexity, contradiction, and diversity, where we are overflown with misinformation and fast-paced decision-making, it is more essential than ever. We're constantly exposed to fake news and cognitive shortcuts that often push us towards superficial, biased, or simply wrong conclusions. Critical thinking helps individuals make better choices, boosts personal and professional success, and fosters greater independence. On a broader level, it's crucial for building a democratic society where people can engage thoughtfully and constructively with complex issues. Critical thinking should be more than just a skill we teach; it should be a foundational aim of education. We have both an educational and ethical responsibility to nurture it.

Learning critical thinking must be planned carefully, especially teaching how to transfer knowledge to new areas. It's not enough to hope students will learn critical thinking on their own. Learning should involve many types of problems, from schoolwork to everyday life, from familiar to new, and from abstract to concrete. Learning works best when it connects to students' personal goals and respects their individuality. Students should face challenges that are neither too easy nor too hard, allowing them to learn new things while practicing skills until they become automatic. Teaching should also allow students to adapt, reshape, and make choices about their learning.

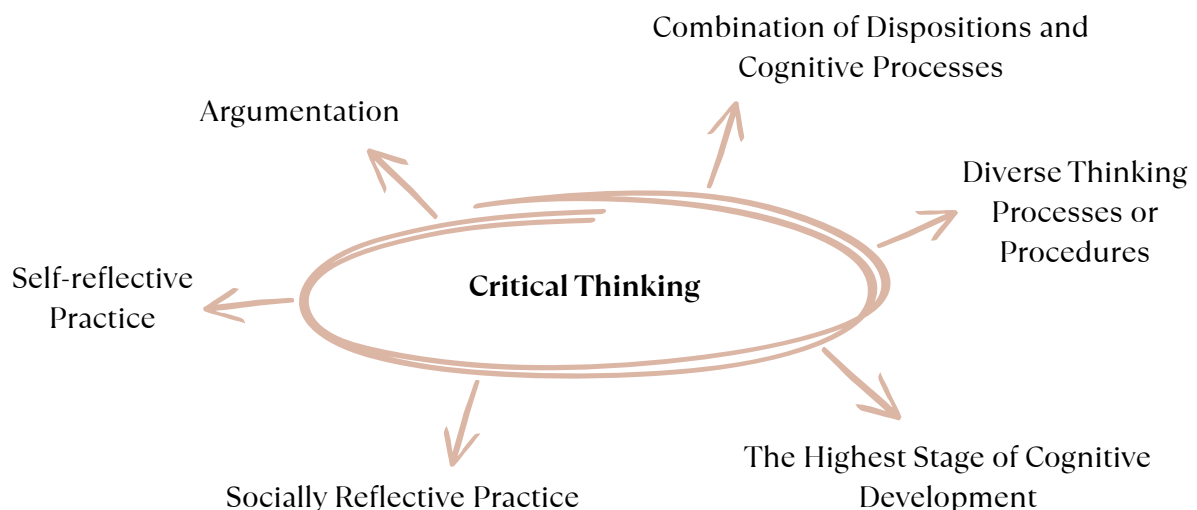
Overall, critical thinking can be taught in four different ways, which are often intertwined:

- discussing general principles of critical thinking separately from subject content to encourage critical thinking beyond classroom contexts;
- integrating critical thinking within subject lessons, explicitly highlighting its principles when discussing the topic;
- embedding critical thinking naturally in subjects without explicitly naming it;
- using a mix of the above ways.



How can we balance the demands of a fast-paced society, which often calls for quick and superficial solutions, with the characteristics of critical thinking that emphasise well-justified, argumentative reasoning?

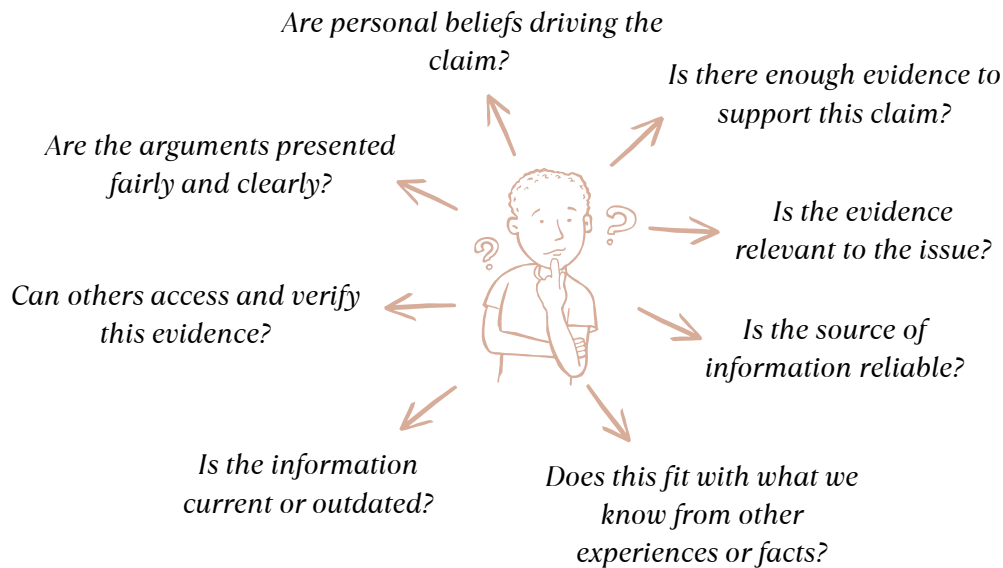
Several scholars (cf. Fischer, 2003; Ennis, 1989; Facione et al., 1994; Halpern, 1999; Paul and Elder, 2006; Brookfield, 1997; Lipman, 1987; Simard, 2004; Kuhn, 2003; etc.) have examined the concept of critical thinking through a variety of theoretical lenses, each emphasising different dimensions of its nature and application.



Critical Thinking as Argumentation

Critical thinking as argumentation is the ability to understand, analyse, and evaluate arguments and conclusions. From this point of view, argumentation is more than just debating; it's a rational, social, and verbal process that is used when one wants to influence someone's thinking or help them see an issue from a new perspective.

Good argumentation relies on deep understanding. To critically judge a claim or idea, you need to understand the subject well. An argument is more than just an opinion; it's a statement supported by reasons, which help justify or prove the conclusion. Critical thinking involves examining beliefs, uncovering hidden assumptions, detecting biases, evaluating evidence, and judging conclusions.



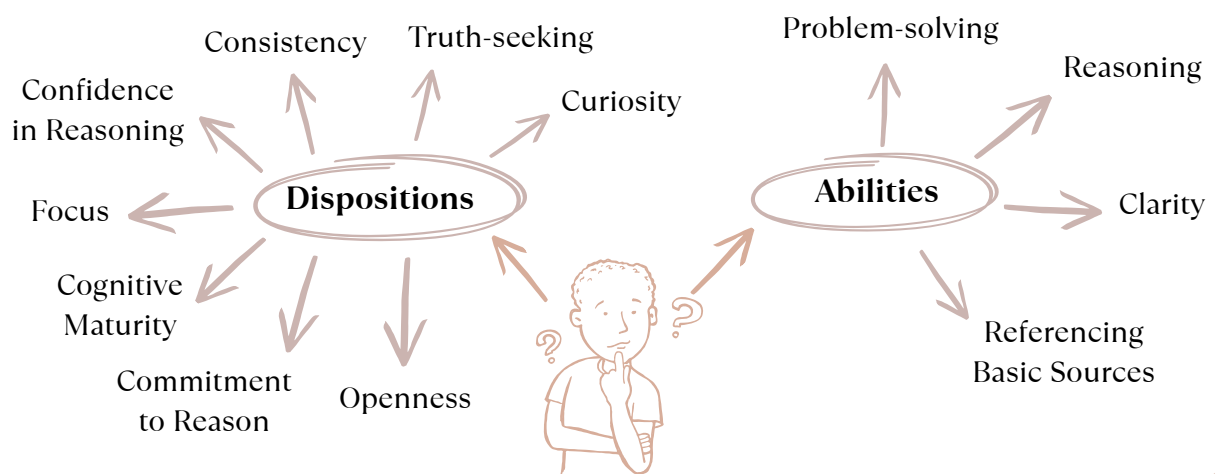
A critical thinker also considers whether the language is clear, if the ideas are precise or vague, whether the conclusions are based on facts or assumptions, and if the message is consistent and well-structured. Finally, it's important to reflect on the ethical aspects and the potential consequences of what is being said. In short, critical thinking through argumentation means being thoughtful, thorough, and responsible when forming or evaluating ideas.

Prepare four simple classroom activities that make children practice distinguishing between facts, opinions, and assumptions.



Critical Thinking as a Combination of Dispositions and Cognitive Processes

This category includes both mental processes and the social-emotional and motivational traits of an individual. Critical thinking is viewed as an important part of higher-order thinking that leads to a deep and comprehensive understanding of topics or problems. Critical thinking is also self-corrective thinking, sensitive to context. It consists of dispositions (attitudes) and abilities.



Critical thinking is compatible with creative thinking and results in original ideas and solutions that benefit society. Students develop creative thinking by working on tasks that ask them to imagine, invent, discover, predict, and make new connections. Encouraging learners to see things from other people's perspectives often leads to creative ideas.



How much of a critical thinker are you? Read each statement below. For each one, mark yourself on a scale from 1 (rarely true for me) to 5 (always true for me).

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
I'm curious and ask thoughtful questions.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I analyse things before jumping to conclusions.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I try to base opinions on logic and reason.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I'm open to hearing different points of view.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I'm fair when judging other people's ideas.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I'm careful about making decisions.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I try to be accurate and avoid mistakes.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I'm willing to change my mind when given good evidence.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I look for important and trustworthy information.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I use criteria to check if something makes sense.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I keep going, even when the problem is hard.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

After completing the checklist, reflect on the following:

- Which three qualities of a critical thinker do you feel are your strongest?
- Which two qualities do you find most challenging?
- How might your strengths and challenges in critical thinking influence your actions?

As a future educator, think:

- What kinds of phrases or sentence starters could you use to show genuine curiosity?
- Which words or expressions can you use to signal respect and openness when responding to a child's idea?
- What language markers help identify a statement as a fact/an opinion/an assumption?

Critical Thinking as the Use of Diverse Thinking Processes or Procedures

Critical thinking can also be viewed as a combination of mental processes, strategies, and ways of thinking people use to solve problems, make decisions, and learn new concepts. Higher-level thinking skills like planning, monitoring, and evaluating help one recognise the problem, decide how to approach it, choose strategies, manage time and resources, and check if the solution worked. Lower-level thinking skills are used to carry out tasks, such as reasoning, visualising space, reading, identifying, and comparing information.

Critical Thinking as the Highest Stage of Cognitive Development

Critical thinking develops from simple to more complex over time. Very young children believe that what they see is completely true because it's just a snapshot of reality. At this stage, critical thinking isn't really needed because knowledge seems absolute. In their preschool years, children see knowledge as a set of facts that can be right or wrong. When children enter school, they perceive some knowledge as very clear, but some depends on authorities or personal beliefs. Teenagers doubt everything and think that all opinions are equally valid. They don't see the point of critical thinking because everyone has their own view. Knowledge is subjective and context-dependent. Proofs and explanations depend on the situation. Adults realise that while everyone can have opinions, some opinions are better than others because they are supported by evidence and arguments. Critical thinking becomes a powerful tool to support these ideas.

Metacognition is a crucial part of critical thinking. It's thinking about thinking and it helps us plan, monitor, and evaluate our thinking. It grows stronger as we get older and helps adults control their thoughts and actions better, even noticing how outside information affects their thinking. It refers to being aware of the limits of your own thinking while also understanding that it can be improved and refined. We can develop metacognition alone or with others, by asking ourselves questions like: **Why do I believe this? How do I know this? What did I gain from this? Why am I doing this?**

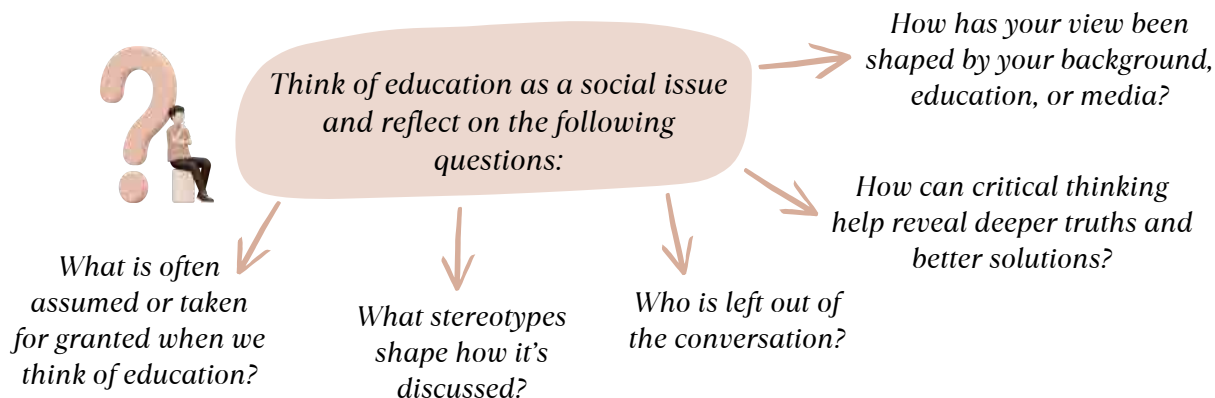
Reflect on your development as a thinker. Give examples of how you approached knowledge or made decisions in primary and secondary school and now as a university student. What could help you grow further as a critical thinker? Are there any habits or skills you'd like to strengthen?



Critical Thinking as a Socially Reflective Practice

Such an approach to critical thinking highlights how important it is for students to grow into independent, smart, self-aware, and responsible citizens who should be able to make thoughtful decisions and judgements by actively participating in society, using critical thinking to understand themselves and their values, and learning about social and political forces that limit opportunities for growth and fairness. Critical thinking becomes key to becoming a competent citizen who thinks critically and politically, cares about others, shows compassion, and is committed to making positive changes.

To develop these skills, teaching methods based on **social constructivism** are very helpful. This means students learn best by actively solving problems together in a classroom that is supportive rather than competitive. In such an environment, students see themselves as important members of their community and understand that they are responsible for their own actions.



Critical Thinking as a Self-Reflective Practice

Critical thinking can also be seen as a self-reflective practice. The individual is shaped by a unique set of beliefs, motivations, and values that influence how a person understands the world, makes decisions, and behaves in everyday situations. Critical thinking is a process that leads individuals to examine, recognise, and become aware of their own thoughts and actions, their place in the world, and how their thinking and behaviour influence their identity and engagement. Our beliefs give meaning to our existence and actions. In many ways, we are the embodiment of our beliefs, since much of what we say, think, and do stems from internalised ideas about how the world should work and what is appropriate or moral. These include cultural norms, common opinions, folk wisdom, and social expectations we have unconsciously adopted, often to the point of not realising they are not inherently part of us and may even work against our interests or in favour of others (e.g., society at large). Critical thinking encourages us to question and reevaluate these beliefs and relationships.

All this makes critical thinking **contextual**, meaning that a person may think very critically in one area—especially one they are familiar with—but may be uncritical in another area that is outside their interests or expertise. Meaningful dialogue helps us uncover how much of our thinking is unexamined and can validate suppressed feelings that conflict with dominant norms.

Culture & Language Curiosities

In Japanese, there are different ways of saying “I” and “you” depending on your social status and relationship.

Portfolio Assignment No. 5

Go to the *Portfolio Assignments* section, read the instructions carefully, and complete the task.

Working with Academic Papers

Read the article:

Simard, D. (2004). Using diaries to promote metalinguistic reflection among elementary school students. *Language Awareness*, 13(1), 34–48.

Now answer the questions:

- What differences were observed between the Enriched, Regular, and Control groups in terms of explicit metalinguistic statements in their diaries?
- How did the teacher's approach differ with the Enriched group, and how did this affect students' reflections?
- What happened with the students' metalinguistic reflection capacity over time?
- What relationship did the study find between language proficiency and the amount of metalinguistic reflection recorded in the diaries?
- What are some limitations of using diaries as a tool for promoting metalinguistic reflection, according to the study?



Revisiting Concepts in Focus

1. Create a list of the main concepts discussed in this chapter.
2. Write a summary of the key takeaways from this section in approximately 300 words. Your reflection should actively refer to and apply several of the concepts introduced. In your response, consider the following prompts:
 - In what ways has engaging with these concepts influenced your thinking, beliefs, or future actions?
 - Which key term(s) do you find most powerful, difficult to understand, inspiring, or confusing? Explain your reasoning.
3. Formulate a question or dilemma that you are still left with.

**Press *Play* for
Perspective**

Multiculturalism in
the Modern World



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Truths across Time

To think incisively and to think for one's self is very difficult. We are prone to let our mental life become invaded by legions of half-truths, prejudices, and propaganda. At this point, I often wonder whether or not education is fulfilling its purpose. A great majority of the so-called educated people do not think logically and scientifically. Even the press, the classroom, the platform, and the pulpit, in many instances, do not give us objective and unbiased truths. To save man from the morass of propaganda, in my opinion, is one of the chief aims of education. Education must enable one to sift and weigh evidence, to discern the true from the false, the real from the unreal and the facts from the fiction. The function of education, therefore, is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically.

Martin Luther King Jr.



Wisdom in Words

Intended Competences and Learning Outcomes

After completing this chapter, you will be able to:

- understand the defining features of proverbs and anti-proverbs;
- recognise the role of proverbs in cultural transmission and folk wisdom;
- analyse proverbs across different languages and cultures, identifying similarities and differences in meaning, imagery, and worldview;
- apply creative thinking to generate anti-proverbs or reinterpret traditional sayings in contemporary contexts;
- connect the study of proverbs to broader themes of cultural identity and self-awareness.

Opening Question

Why do sayings such as 'Actions speak louder than words' and 'The early bird catches the worm' last for generations, and what do they say about the way we see the world?

Proverbs are widely recognised as the world's most compact and powerful form of literary expression. With just a few words, they can communicate cultural values, social norms, and practical wisdom. Often described as the smallest literary genre, proverbs are deeply embedded in both everyday language and literary traditions.

Despite their apparent simplicity, defining what a proverb is can be surprisingly difficult. Scholars have long debated how to distinguish proverbs from other similar forms, such as:

- **proverbial expressions** (e.g., to let the cat out of the bag),
- **proverbial comparisons** (e.g., as busy as a bee),
- **apothegms** (e.g., Know thyself),
- **maxims** (e.g., Honesty is the best policy),
- **adages** (e.g., Where there's smoke, there's fire.), etc.

These forms often overlap in structure, function, or meaning, making it challenging to draw clear boundaries between them and proverbs.

Nonetheless, most definitions of proverbs are based on certain widely accepted features. One of these is **structural and semantic stability**, meaning that proverbs tend to appear in a fixed form and retain a consistent core meaning. For example, "A stitch in time saves nine" has remained unchanged over generations, and its meaning—a small effort now prevents greater problems later—has stayed the same. Another key feature is the **use of metaphor**, where abstract ideas are expressed through concrete imagery. For example, "Don't put all your eggs in one basket" uses the metaphor of eggs and baskets to advise against risking everything in one venture. Proverbs also often contain **poetic devices** that enhance their memorability, such as **rhythm** and **parallelism** (e.g., Easy come, easy go). Together, these features contribute to the distinctive style, durability, and cultural impact of proverbs.



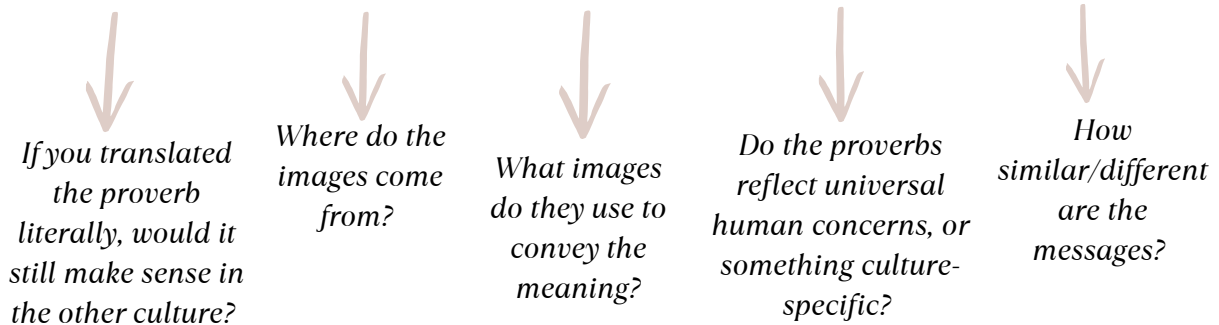
For each English proverb, look at an equivalent proverb in another language. Then analyse the proverbs.

English vs German:

You can't teach an old dog new tricks./Was Hänschen nicht lernt, lernt Hans nimmermehr.

English vs Slovene:

A good woman is hard to find/Dobre kose ni lahko dobiti, kakor ne dobre žene.



Proverbs play an important role in the transmission of cultural knowledge. Passed down through generations, they are shaped by the unique traditions and experiences of each community. They contain moral lessons, traditional beliefs, and practical advice, offering insight into a culture's way of thinking and its values.

Their cultural and social value also makes proverbs a rich source for academic study. They offer clues about how a society sees itself—its identity, self-awareness, and worldview. Because proverbs are used in so many different contexts and by individuals with different backgrounds, their meanings are often open to interpretation. A single proverb can be understood in multiple ways depending on the situation or the speaker's intent.

Many English proverbs draw on imagery from the sea, while Slovenian proverbs often refer to bread and bees. Chinese proverbs often use rice or bamboo, whereas Arabic proverbs frequently draw on desert imagery, camels, or water.









What do these differences suggest about each nation's history, environment, and values?

What does this tell us about the daily realities and priorities of these cultures?

At the same time, research shows that despite cultural differences, people around the world tend to use similar patterns of thought when creating and interpreting proverbs. This suggests that proverb usage reflects shared cognitive processes—how humans make sense of the world through metaphor, analogy, and symbolism.

While proverbs are deeply rooted in tradition, they are not static. Some fade over time, while new ones emerge. In European traditions, many classic proverbs originate from sources such as:

Ancient Greece	Ancient Rome	Religious Texts	Medieval Literature	Historical Figures	Modern Media
 <i>Know thyself.</i>	 <i>All roads lead to Rome.</i>	 <i>Pride goes before a fall.</i>	 <i>Women are the devil's net.</i>	 <i>A penny saved is a penny earned.</i>	 <i>Life is like a box of chocolates.</i>
Author unknown	Author unknown	The Bible	Fernando de Rojas' 1499 play	Benjamin Franklin	Forrest Gump






However, changes in communication, especially the decline in face-to-face interaction between generations, have had an impact on the way proverbs are passed on. Younger people may be less familiar with traditional proverbs, as their sources of language and cultural knowledge increasingly come from digital rather than oral traditions.

At the same time, a related phenomenon has grown in popularity: anti-proverbs. These are playful or creative variations of traditional proverbs. They might distort, parody, or reframe the original sayings to create a humorous, ironic, or surprising effect. For example, the well-known proverb “The early bird catches the worm” might become “The early bird gets the worm, but the second mouse gets the cheese”—adding a twist that challenges the original message. Similarly, “If at first, you don’t succeed, try, try again” can be turned into “If at first, you don’t succeed, skydiving is not for you”, using absurd logic for comedic impact. Another example is “A penny saved is a penny taxed,” which updates “A penny saved is a penny earned” with modern skepticism.

Anti-proverbs are especially popular in online spaces and advertising, where they catch attention by combining familiarity with novelty. Their playful use of language reflects a more ironic, media-savvy culture and demonstrates how traditional forms can adapt to contemporary communication.



Can you turn the following well-known proverbs into anti-proverbs? Which images did you use?

Money can't buy happiness.		
The early bird catches the worm.		
Honesty is the best policy.		
Practice makes perfect.		
Actions speak louder than words.		

Although traditional proverbs may be less prominent in everyday speech than they once were, their influence remains strong. Whether in their original form or as modern reinterpretations, proverbs continue to reflect how people think, communicate, and express cultural identity.

Culture & Language Curiosities

Did you know the oldest recorded proverb dates back nearly 4,000 years? An ancient Assyrian king, Šamši-Adad, wrote to his son, warning against haste by quoting a proverb about a dog that acted too quickly and gave birth to blind puppies. Remarkably, even at that time, this saying was already called “ancient.” This proverb uses metaphor to teach an important lesson: acting too hastily can lead to poor results, an idea that remains relevant today.

Portfolio Assignment No. 6

Go to the *Portfolio Assignments* section, read the instructions carefully, and complete the task.

Working with Academic Papers

Read the article:

Bažec, H., & Lemut Bajec, M. (2025). How the English, Italians, and Slovenians break bread: Phraseological units with bread across three languages and cultures. *Suvremena lingvistika*, 51 (99), 1-20.

Now answer the following questions:

- Which proverbs are shared between the languages, and which ones are unique to each language?
- What values or ways of thinking are reflected in the proverbs with the word bread?



Revisiting Concepts in Focus

1. Create a list of the main concepts discussed in this chapter.
2. Write a summary of the key takeaways from this section in approximately 300 words. Your reflection should actively refer to and apply several of the concepts introduced. In your response, consider the following prompts:
 - In what ways has engaging with these concepts influenced your thinking, beliefs, or future actions?
 - Which key term(s) do you find most powerful, difficult to understand, inspiring, or confusing? Explain your reasoning.
3. Formulate a question or dilemma that you are still left with.

**Press *Play* for
Perspective**

Where Timeless
Wisdom Meets the Art
of Living



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Truths across Time

The fool speaks, the wise man listens.

Anglo-American proverb



The English Language

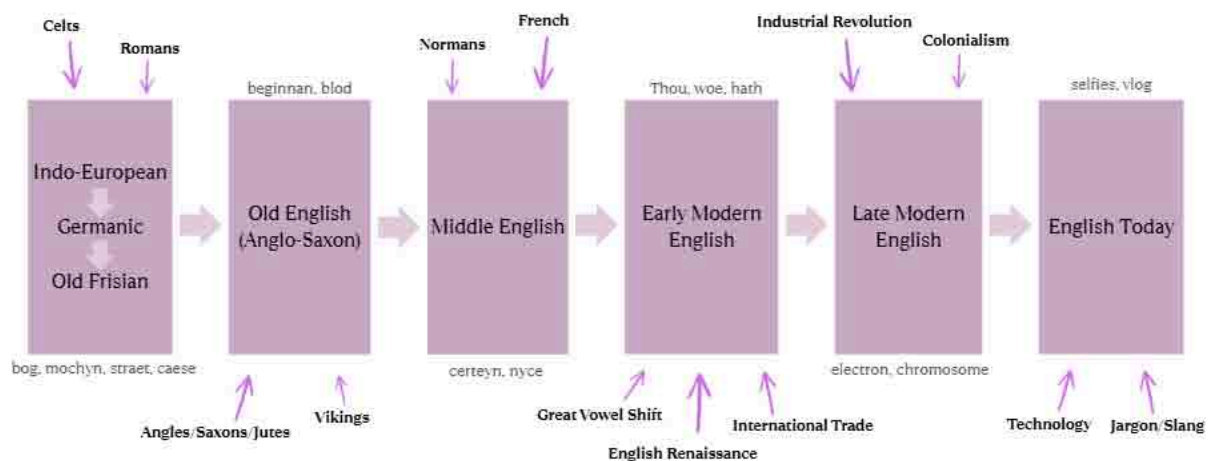
Intended Competences and Learning Outcomes

After completing this chapter, you will be able to:

- understand and describe the origins and evolution of the English language from Proto-Indo-European to Modern English;
- identify and explain major language influences on the development of English;
- analyse socio-political and cultural factors that shaped the development of a language;
- recognise and classify vocabulary origins and their functional domains;
- interpret language change as a dynamic, layered, and ongoing process;
- critically analyse the sociocultural, political, and educational dimensions of language endangerment and revitalisation efforts.

Opening Question

What do words like chef, kindergarten, pajamas, and algebra tell us about English?



The English language has deep and complex roots that trace back to the **Proto-Indo-Europeans**, a Neolithic people who lived in Eastern Europe and Central Asia sometime after 5000 BC. Although no written records of their language exist, linguists have used comparative methods to partially reconstruct **Proto-Indo-European**, the ancestor of many modern languages. Over time, Proto-Indo-European split into several major language families, one of which was **Germanic**, which later divided into North, East, and West Germanic languages. English developed from **West Germanic**, alongside relatives like German and Dutch.

However, before these tribes invaded the British Isles, there had resided other **non-Indo-European tribes**, and the **Celtic peoples**, whose influence on English grammar and vocabulary was limited. When **the Romans** invaded Britain in 55 BC, they introduced Latin and urban life. Overall, their linguistic impact was modest, leaving fewer than 200 Latin-based loanwords in English.



Explore the major language families in Europe.

The Anglo-Saxon Period: Foundations of the English language (410–1066 AD)

After the Roman withdrawal in 410 AD, four **Germanic tribes**, the **Angles**, **Saxons**, **Jutes**, and **Frisians**, migrated from regions that are now Denmark, northern Germany, and the Netherlands. The **Anglo-Saxons**, originally seafarers, settled as farmers, driven partly by climate shifts and flooding in their homelands. They displaced the native Celtic-speaking populations, particularly in the lowland and eastern areas of Britain, giving rise to a new Anglo-Saxon identity and the name England (from *Angle-land*). These settlers spoke mutually intelligible dialects of **West Germanic origin**, similar to modern Frisian, which eventually merged and evolved into **Old English** or **Anglo-Saxon**. This language, which began developing its distinct features by around 600 AD, became the foundation of English.

Christianity arrived in 597 AD with St. Augustine's mission from Rome, bringing literacy, monastic learning, and the Roman alphabet, which replaced the earlier runic script. Latin became the language of the Church and scholarship, adding religious and administrative vocabulary to English, although its broader impact on the spoken language was limited.

Old English quickly flourished as a literary language, producing major works such as the epic poem *Beowulf*. Linguistically, Old English was highly complex, with three grammatical genders, five noun cases, strong and weak verbs, and flexible word order. However, only a small fraction (less than 1%) of modern English vocabulary derives from this early stage.

By the late 8th century, **Viking raids** introduced another layer of linguistic influence. They brought with them **Old Norse**, a North Germanic language closely related to Old English. The two languages blended over time, contributing over 1,000 Norse words to English.

The Norman Conquest and the Rise of Middle English (1066–1500)

The Norman Conquest of 1066, led by William the Conqueror, marked a major turning point in the history of the English language. It began the transition from Old English to **Middle English**, a blend of the native Anglo-Saxon tongue and the Anglo-Norman French brought by the new ruling class. Over the following centuries, the Normans introduced more than **10,000 French words** into English, especially in areas like law, government, art, literature, and cuisine. During this time, **Latin** remained the language of the Church and official documents, while English became a spoken, low-status language used by the general population. Many of Old English's complex grammatical structures—such as noun cases, verb endings, and gender—gradually disappeared, simplifying the language significantly.

By the **14th century**, however, English began to regain its status, replacing French in schools, and literary figures like **Geoffrey Chaucer** began writing major works, such as *The Canterbury Tales*, in English rather than Latin or French. By the end of the Middle English period, English had not only survived centuries of linguistic competition but emerged as a national language, richer in vocabulary, simpler in structure, and firmly re-established in written and spoken form.

Investigate the origins of the following English words: beef, pork, cuisine, gown, attire, mutton, venison, feast, and the reasons for their adoption.



The Rise of Early Modern English (c. 1500–1800)

The transition from Middle English to **Early Modern English** was marked by major linguistic, cultural, and technological shifts. A key phonological change known as the **Great Vowel Shift** began in the 15th century and continued into the 17th century, radically altering the pronunciation of long vowels and bringing spoken English closer to its present form. At the same time, the **English Renaissance** sparked an explosion of new vocabulary, particularly from **Latin and Greek**.



Find 10 Latin-derived English words. Identify:

<i>Modern English Word</i>	<i>Original Latin Form</i>	<i>Type of Vocabulary (e.g., religious, legal, scientific, academic)</i>	<i>Time When the Word Entered the English Lexicon</i>

The **printing press**, introduced by **William Caxton** in 1476, played a crucial role in standardising spelling and grammar, making written English more uniform and accessible. Meanwhile, by the end of the 16th century, English was widely accepted as a legitimate language of learning and literature, no longer inferior to Latin or French.

This period also saw enormous creative expansion. **William Shakespeare (1564–1616)** contributed significantly to the richness of English, coining an estimated **2,000 new words** and showcasing the language’s expressive flexibility. The **King James Bible** of 1611 further cemented English as a powerful literary and spiritual medium, with many of its phrases still used today.



Identify at least 10 words or phrases coined or popularised by Shakespeare that are still in use today.

Words/Phrases	Meaning

By the 18th century, English had begun to stabilise. **Samuel Johnson’s 1755 dictionary** and emerging **English grammar books and newspapers** (e.g., *The Times*, 1790) helped to codify and regulate the language. International trade and British naval dominance introduced even more **loanwords** from across the world.

Identify 8–10 English loanwords that were borrowed from non-European languages? Which language did they come from? Why?



As a result, **Early Modern English** became a richly layered language. Many English words developed **triplets**—synonyms from Old English, French, and Latin—representing different cultural levels (e.g., *ask/question/interrogate*). This contributed to English’s vast vocabulary—estimated at over **one million words** today—and its unique ability to express subtle shades of meaning.



Identify at least 4 more sets of triplets that represent different cultural levels, emerging from different time periods.

Culture & Language Curiosities

Some English place names reveal hidden layers of linguistic history. For example, “Avon River” is a tautology, since Avon comes from the Celtic word for “river” making it literally “River River.” And “Torpenhow Hill” means “hill” four times in different languages: tor (Old English), pen (Celtic), how (Old Norse), and hill (Modern English).

Portfolio Assignment No. 7

Go to the *Portfolio Assignments* section, read the instructions carefully, and complete the task.

Working with Academic Papers

Read the chapter *English-Influenced Pidgins and Creoles* (pp. 267–271) in Gelderen, E. (2014), *A History of the English Language* (John Benjamins Publishing Company).

Now answer the following questions:

- What’s the difference between a pidgin and a creole, and what are the characteristics of each?
- How many pidgins and creoles around the world are English-based?

Revisiting Concepts in Focus



1. Create a list of the main concepts discussed in this chapter.
2. Write a summary of the key takeaways from this section in approximately 300 words. Your reflection should actively refer to and apply several of the concepts introduced. In your response, consider the following prompts:
 - In what ways has engaging with these concepts influenced your thinking, beliefs, or future actions?
 - Which key term(s) do you find most powerful, difficult to understand, inspiring, or confusing? Explain your reasoning.
3. Formulate a question or dilemma that you are still left with.



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Truths across Time

What's in a name? That which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet."

William Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*, Act II, Scene II



Lingua Francas

Intended Competences and Learning Outcomes

After completing this chapter, you will be able to:

- define and critically explain the concept of a lingua franca and its historical and contemporary roles;
- assess the factors that contribute to a language achieving global status, beyond linguistic characteristics alone;
- identify and describe structural innovations in English that result from its global use;
- reflect on the impact of global English on local languages, identities, and cultures;
- develop critical awareness of power, inequality, and resistance in language spread.

Opening Question

Can one global language truly exist without dominating others?

A **lingua franca** is a contact language used for communication among people who do not share a mother tongue. It functions as a common linguistic medium that facilitates interaction between speakers of different native languages.

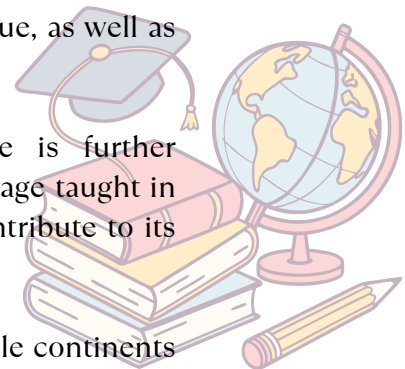
A lingua franca is a flexible and dynamic resource used for intercultural communication, unconstrained by traditional notions of language ownership. This conception positions the language as a shared global asset rather than the exclusive domain of its native speakers. The ownership of the global language begins to bear global features, reflecting its use across diverse communities. It is no longer the monopoly of native speakers, nor is it solely their prerogative to define or control its use.

The rise of a global language is rarely due to linguistic merit alone. It is a reflection of historical forces, geopolitical dominance, and cultural influence that allow a language to spread, take root, and be sustained across diverse societies. Several key elements contribute to a language gaining global status:

Widespread Use across Nations: A major factor is the extent to which the language is spoken across the world. This includes the number of countries where it is used as a first language or mother tongue, as well as those that adopt it as an official or administrative language.

Educational Adoption: The global reach of a language is further strengthened when it is chosen as the primary foreign language taught in schools. Educational policies that prioritise the language contribute to its international visibility and use.

Geographical Distribution: A language spoken across multiple continents and regions naturally gains a wider communicative scope, reinforcing its status as a global medium.





Linguistic and Literary Features: Some argue that intrinsic structural qualities, such as grammatical simplicity or flexibility, along with the size of a language's vocabulary, may enhance its learnability and adaptability. Additionally, a rich literary tradition across different periods in history can bolster the prestige and global appeal of the language.

Cultural and Religious Associations: A language closely tied to influential cultures, philosophies, or world religions often gains wider dissemination and reverence, further embedding it in the global linguistic landscape.



Political and Economic Power: Perhaps most decisively, the political and economic power of a language's native speakers plays a central role. A language gains and maintains global prominence when it is associated with powerful nations or empires that exert influence through trade, media, diplomacy, science, and technological innovation.



Based on the key criteria that determine how a language attains global status, choose one former lingua franca and investigate its rise and decline. Present your findings by answering the following questions in the form of a visual representation.

- How broadly was the language spoken or adopted (as a native, official, or administrative language)?
- To what extent was the language taught, transmitted, or institutionalised through education?
- Across which regions and continents did the language travel, and what historical forces enabled that spread?
- Were there qualities of the language itself, such as adaptability, simplicity, or a prestigious literary tradition, that enhanced its appeal?
- Was the language tied to influential religions, philosophies, or cultural movements that helped sustain its use?

Why is English the Global Language

Today, English has emerged as a prominent global lingua franca, not confined by national or ethnic boundaries. It is characterised by its adaptability and responsiveness to the linguistic backgrounds of its users. It is shaped by a wide array of influences, including borrowed vocabulary, altered grammatical structures, and varied pronunciation patterns. These deviations from native norms are not merely errors but can be seen as creative expressions of the cultural and linguistic diversity of their speakers.



Choose one of the "Englishes" (e.g., Indian English, Nigerian English, Singaporean English, Spanglish) and answer the following questions:

Where and by whom is it spoken?	
Provide examples of unique features (e.g., borrowed words, grammar shifts, pronunciation patterns)	
How do these features reflect the culture or background of the speakers?	
Do you think this variety contributes positively to global English?	

The global dominance of English is not a consequence of any inherent linguistic superiority, but rather the outcome of a complex combination of historical, geopolitical, and socio-cultural factors. Its global role is a reflection of power dynamics, not of linguistic merit.

Several key developments have contributed to English becoming the world's most widely used language:

Historical and Colonial Influence: The expansion of the British Empire in the 18th and 19th centuries played a pivotal role in spreading the English language across continents. English became entrenched in the administrative, legal, and educational systems of many colonised nations, creating a legacy of widespread use even after independence.



Economic and Technological Dominance: In the 20th century, the rise of the United States as a global economic and technological superpower further propelled the spread of English. It became the language of global trade, innovation, science, and digital communication.

Cultural Influence: English-language media (e.g., films, music, television, and the internet) have had a profound cultural impact worldwide. Hollywood, pop music, and online platforms have all reinforced English as a language of global youth culture and entertainment.



International Communication and Diplomacy: English is the working language of many international institutions, such as the United Nations, the European Union, and the International Civil Aviation Organisation. It serves as the default medium for cross-border diplomacy, business, and academia.

Education and Language Teaching: English is the most widely taught foreign language in the world. Educational systems across both developed and developing nations prioritise English in curricula, often viewing it as essential for global competitiveness.

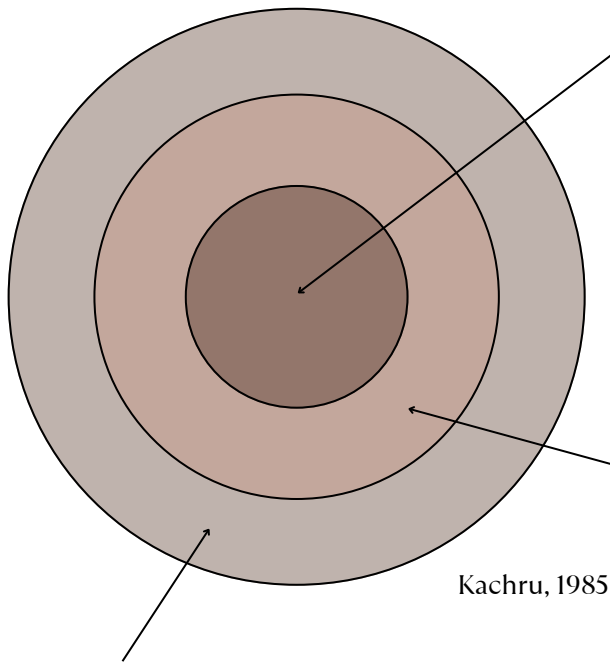


PIZZA
ALGEBRA
PRETZEL

Flexibility and Adaptability: Linguistically, English is known for its flexibility, openness to borrowing, and adaptability across cultures and contexts. While this is not the reason for its global status, it has facilitated its integration into diverse linguistic environments.

Kachru's *Three Circles Model of World Englishes*

In 1985, linguist Braj Kachru introduced the **Three Circles Model** to conceptualise the global use and spread of English. This influential framework categorises English usage into three concentric circles, based on historical, sociolinguistic, and functional criteria. Kachru's model highlights the plurality of English, not as a single, monolithic language, but as a global phenomenon shaped by diverse historical contexts and sociolinguistic realities. It also underscores the varying degrees of institutionalisation, norm-setting, and language ownership across different regions of the world.



The Inner Circle: This includes countries where English is the native or primary language of the majority population. English functions as **the first language** and is deeply embedded in national institutions and daily life, such as in **the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand.**

The Outer Circle: These are countries where English holds an important role as **a second language**, often due to historical ties to British colonisation. In these regions, English is used in government, legal systems, education, and other formal domains, such as in **India, Nigeria, Pakistan, Singapore, and Kenya.**

The Expanding Circle: This circle consists of countries where English is taught as **a foreign language** and used primarily for international communication, business, science, and diplomacy. English does not have an official or historical role, but its global significance drives its integration into education systems, such as in **China, Japan, Brazil, Russia, and Germany.**



Does a global language mean a global culture?

As English continues to serve as a global lingua franca, it undergoes constant structural innovation shaped by its diverse community of speakers. This transformation is evident in both spoken and written forms and can be attributed to sociocultural dynamics and the global diffusion of English. Some of the changes English is currently undergoing:

Changes	Examples
Regularisation of Irregular Past Tense Forms	dreamt → dreamed
Increasing Use of the Get-passive	Get my car fixed.
Denser Noun-noun Combinations	campaign coordinator
Revival of the Mandative Subjunctive	We demand that she takes part.
Decline of the Were-Subjunctive	If I was alone, ...
Placement of Frequency Adverbs before Auxiliaries	I never have said so.
Expansion of Progressive Verb Forms	How much is it costing you?
Lexical Verbs like Gonna and Wanna Behave like Auxiliaries	She's gonna leave soon.
Multi-Word Verbs	give/take a ride
Use of Less with Countable Nouns	less people
Replacement of the Present Perfect with the Simple Past	I just ate.
Extension of the S-genitive to Non-Human Nouns	book's cover
Like as a Conjunction	It looks like we could lose John.
Rise of Acronymic Nouns	IBM
Near-Elimination of Shall as a First-Person Future Marker	You will have your reward.

These developments illustrate how English is dynamically reshaped by global use, where deviations from traditional norms are not simply errors but adaptations that reflect the needs, identities, and creative agency of its speakers.

Working with Academic Papers

Read the article:

Bohara, L. B. (2018). Global language: Status, scope and challenges. *Journal of NELTA Surkhet*, 5, 89-96.

Now answer the following questions:

- What are the major challenges that could potentially limit or reverse the global spread of English? Explain your reasoning with reference to the text.
- Do you think the global spread of English also leads to cultural homogenisation? Why or why not, and how does the article address this tension?
- What concerns does the author raise about the dominance of English and its impact on local or indigenous languages? Do you think English can coexist with other languages in multilingual societies, or does it inevitably threaten them?



Revisiting Concepts in Focus

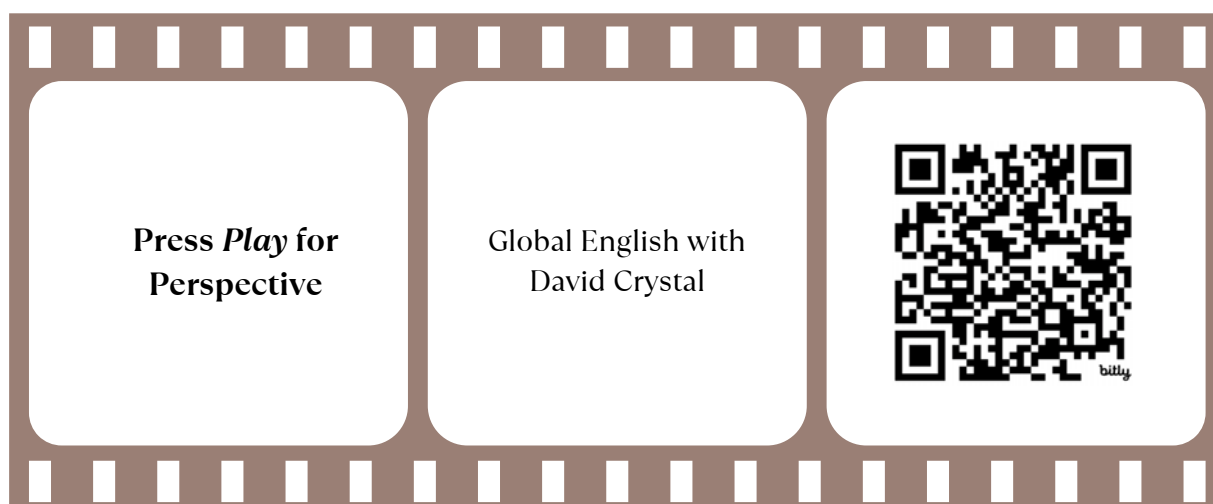
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3. Formulate a question or dilemma that you are still left with.

Culture & Language Curiosities

Due to the growing acceptance of the singular pronoun *themself*, some linguists are wondering whether this could mark a new linguistic innovation—one that may, in the centuries to come, dramatically change our perception of grammatical norms, gender expression, and the flexibility of English itself.

Portfolio Assignment No. 8

Go to the *Portfolio Assignments* section, read the instructions carefully, and complete the task.



Selected References

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Truths across Time

To ask about the future of languages is to really ask about the future of society.

David Crystal



Bilingualism and Multilingualism

Intended Competences and Learning Outcomes

After completing this chapter, you will be able to:

- explain bilingualism/multilingualism;
- describe different types of bilingualism/multilingualism and levels of proficiency;
- understand the social, cultural, and cognitive dimensions of bilingualism/multilingualism;
- identify the benefits and challenges of bilingualism/multilingualism;
- analyse the role of heritage languages and language transfer in multilingual contexts;
- reflect on bilingualism/multilingualism in your own life and educational practice, including its implications for identity and learning.

Opening Question

What defines bilingualism/multilingualism? Is it just fluency in two or more languages, or does it require cognitive and cultural embedding?

Bilingualism/Multilingualism is not simply the ability to speak two or more languages; it is a dynamic and multifaceted phenomenon. It involves varying levels of proficiency, context-dependent language use, and choices influenced by personal, emotional, or professional factors. Understanding this phenomenon requires examining how individuals acquire, use, and balance their languages across different situations. Bilingual/multilingual individuals often have uneven proficiency across speaking, reading, and writing. For example, a person may speak one language fluently but read more effectively in another, or write more accurately in the language used for academic purposes. This variation demonstrates that bilingualism/multilingualism is not uniform, and proficiency can differ depending on the skill and context.

Languages are frequently used in different **domains**, depending on social and situational needs. A person may speak one language at home while using another at school, at work and another when doing business or may rely on a particular language in other formal settings. These choices show that bilingualism/multilingualism is situational and flexible rather than fixed. Language choice is also influenced by emotional factors. Some individuals feel a strong emotional connection to one language, reflecting family ties or cultural identity. These decisions highlight the personal and strategic dimensions of bilingual language use.

Bilingualism can be classified based on the timing of language acquisition. **Simultaneous bilinguals** are exposed to two languages from birth and tend to achieve better accents, vocabulary, grammar, and real-time processing than sequential bilinguals, who, in contrast, learn a second language after the first is established, which can result in differences in accent, vocabulary, or grammar. Later exposure through bilingual preschools, nannies, or immersion programmes can still promote **functional bilingualism**, particularly when opportunities to continue using the language are provided.

A related concept is that of **heritage speakers**, who are bilingual in nature. These individuals acquire a language naturally at home, often attaining native-like pronunciation and cultural competence. However, despite fluency in everyday experiences, their lexical range and literacy are frequently limited in formal or specialized contexts. For example, a child who speaks Chech at home and English at school may have strong oral skills in Chech but rely on English for reading and writing. Bilingualism also exists within broader societal contexts, where multiple languages coexist in daily life, education, media, and government. Countries such as Canada, Belgium, Switzerland, South Africa, India, and Singapore provide examples of **societal bi/multilingualism**, showing how language use extends beyond individual proficiency to collective social practices.

Parents often worry that raising a child in a bilingual household may cause confusion or delay language development. However, research shows that bilingual children are not confused by exposure to two languages. One behaviour sometimes mistaken for confusion is **code mixing**, where children mix words from both languages in the same sentence. This is a normal and productive part of bilingual development. Children code-mix for practical reasons: they may imitate adults in their communities or use a word from the other language when the vocabulary in one language is insufficient. Even infants as young as 2 years old show the ability to adjust their language according to their conversational partner, and early code mixing follows predictable grammar-like patterns. Socially, code mixing is normative in many bilingual communities, and children benefit from exposure to these community-specific patterns. Research also shows that bilingual infants are able to distinguish their two languages from birth. They are sensitive to differences in rhythm, sounds, and even subtle visual cues, and may be more attuned than monolinguals to distinguishing between languages. Far from being confused, bilingual infants actively manage and differentiate their linguistic input.



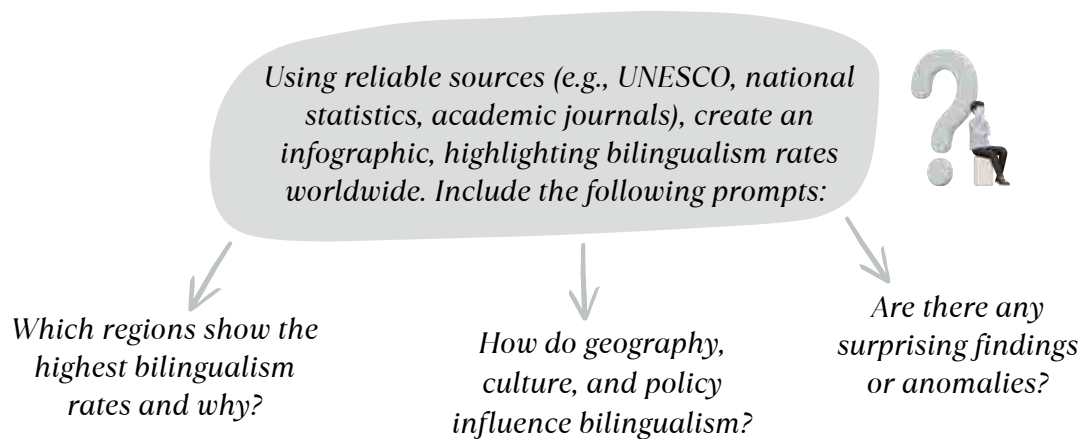
How might the relationship between a heritage language and the dominant language affect a person's sense of identity?

Cognitive, Social, and Linguistic Advantages

Beyond the obvious benefit of learning multiple languages, bilingualism can confer social and cognitive advantages. Bilingual children often display enhanced social understanding, better appreciating the perspectives, desires, and intentions of others. They may also show heightened sensitivity to communicative cues such as tone of voice. Cognitively, managing two languages appears to strengthen **executive functions**, the mental processes that allow individuals to switch attention between tasks, ignore distractions, inhibit impulsive responses, and efficiently manage complex cognitive demands. Bilinguals frequently practice these skills by selectively using one language while suppressing the other and by monitoring language use in real time, which can improve performance on tasks that involve task-switching and inhibitory control. Overall, the constant mental exercise of bilingual language management appears to support both cognitive flexibility and attentional control, providing a foundation for lifelong benefits.

Parental Strategies for Supporting Bilingualism

A common question is whether parents should adopt a **one-person-one-language strategy**. Research shows this approach can support bilingual development but children can learn two languages successfully even if both come from the same caregiver. More important than strict strategies are the quality and quantity of exposure. Infants need ample, socially interactive language input; passive listening, such as through television, is ineffective. Interacting with multiple speakers supports vocabulary acquisition and overall language processing efficiency. Balanced exposure to both languages increases the likelihood of successful bilingualism. Limited or infrequent exposure, such as hearing a language only on weekends or during brief classes, is insufficient.



The Protective Role of Bilingualism in Aging

Beyond these immediate cognitive benefits, bilingualism may also play a protective role in aging. Research has shown that bilingual individuals with Alzheimer's disease often exhibit clinical symptoms four to five years later than monolingual patients with comparable neuropathology. One explanation is that lifelong bilingualism contributes to cognitive reserve, the brain's ability to adapt, compensate, or maintain function despite damage, disease, or age-related decline. This evidence suggests that bilingualism not only enhances cognitive control in childhood and adulthood but may also provide long-term resilience against cognitive decline.

Working with Academic Papers

Read the article:

Dockrell et al. (2022). Teaching and learning in a multilingual Europe: Findings from a cross-European study. *European Journal of Psychology of Education*, 37(2), 293–320.

Now answer the following questions:

- What strategies can teachers use to effectively incorporate students' first languages into teaching practices?
- How do disparities in language learning resources across countries affect the educational experiences of multilingual students?
- What role should teachers' perspectives play in the development of educational policies aimed at supporting multilingual education?



Revisiting Concepts in Focus

1. Create a list of the main concepts discussed in this chapter.
2. Write a summary of the key takeaways from this section in approximately 300 words. Your reflection should actively refer to and apply several of the concepts introduced. In your response, consider the following prompts:
 - In what ways has engaging with these concepts influenced your thinking, beliefs, or future actions?
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3. Formulate a question or dilemma that you are still left with.

Culture & Language Curiosities

In Namibia and Kenya, English is often associated with education and social status, while local languages express solidarity and authenticity in everyday life.

Portfolio Assignment No. 9

Go to the *Portfolio Assignments* section, read the instructions carefully, and complete the task.

Press *Play* for
Perspective

The Benefits of Being
Bilingual



Selected References

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Truths across Time

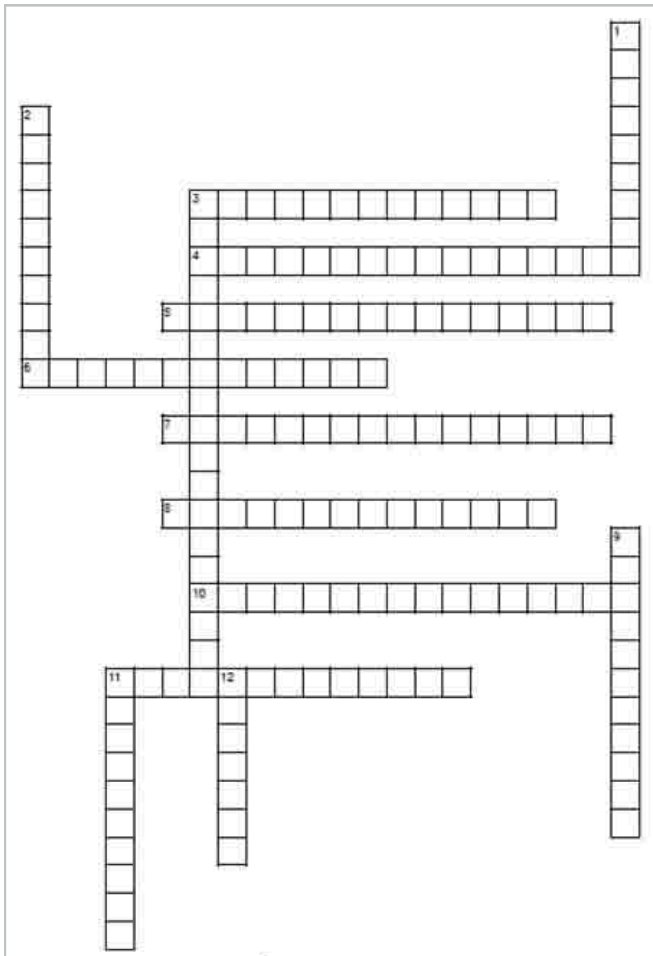
You can never understand one language until you understand at least two.

Geoffrey Willans



Consolidation No. 3

Do the crossword puzzle.



Down

1 The study of where words come from and how they changed over time

2 Traditional sayings, beliefs, and knowledge passed through a culture

3 All the languages and varieties a person can use or understand

9 Simple and often unfair ideas about a group of people

11 Using parts of two languages in the same sentence or conversation

12 Objects, images, or actions that represent and communicate shared meanings within a community or nation

Across

3 Slower language development that is not caused by bilingualism

4 Feeling that you belong to a nation, its culture, and its symbols

5 Traditions, objects, and practices passed down through generations

6 Thinking about and managing your own learning and thinking

7 Questioning and evaluating information before deciding what to think

8 Someone who keeps and shares cultural traditions and skills

10 Language used by the government for laws, schools, and services

11 Changing between languages or language varieties while speaking

Answer key:
Across: 3 - language delay, 4 - language barrier, 5 - national identity, 6 - cultural heritage, 7 - critical thinking, 8 - heritage bearer, 10 - official language, 11 - code-switching
Down: 1 - etymology, 2 - folk wisdom, 3 - linguistic repertoire, 9 - stereotypes, 11 - code-mixing, 12 - symbols

Culture, Multiculturalism, and Cultural Diversity

Intended Competences and Learning Outcomes

After completing this chapter, you will be able to:

- understand different definitions of culture, multiculturalism, and cultural diversity;
- understand the concept of culture in connection with ethnic and national communities, nationalism, and globalisation;
- reflect on national myths and stereotypes;
- apply a multicultural approach in analysing local cultural practices;
- analyse teaching practices to support learners' home cultures.

Opening Question

Which factors define a culture?

Culture is more than art and literature; it is the way people live. It includes lifestyles, value systems, traditions, beliefs, and the ways in which communities express and protect human rights. The word culture comes from the Latin word *colere*, meaning “to cultivate” or “to care for,” as in agriculture (caring for the field). Over time, the term has carried meanings such as to inhabit, cherish, teach, care for, and educate. Originally, culture was understood in relation to nature or society. Later, new perspectives emerged, focusing more on people, communities, cultural practices, and socio-political contexts. Today, culture is also studied for its role in the sustainable development of communities. In general, five main definitions of culture are recognised.

(i) Culture as the Cultivation of the Mind

In the 15th century, during the Renaissance, culture came to be understood as the cultivation, civilisation, or education of people, taking on a symbolic meaning. The Renaissance was grounded in humanism, which rediscovered classical Greek philosophy and emphasised that “man is the measure of all things.” Humanists believed in the “genius of man”; the unique and exceptional capacity of the human mind. Humanism was defined both as a method of learning and philosophy, and as a movement to revitalise, interpret, and appropriate the language, literature, knowledge, and values of ancient Greece and Rome. A person who had received a comprehensive education was therefore considered cultured. The prevailing cultural paradigm was characterised by a close link between civility and cultural norms.



Why do you think language is such a powerful marker of identity compared to other cultural elements (mythology, folklore, traditions)?

(ii) Culture as a Universal Process of Social Development



This definition dates back to the Age of Enlightenment, when culture was associated with the intellectual, spiritual, and aesthetic development of society. It relied on the idea of linear historical progress, ranking cultures in a hierarchical pyramid from “underdeveloped” to “developed.” A classic example of this model is the sequence from savagery through barbarism to civilisation. Such classifications created relationships of superiority and inferiority between cultures. Over time, these hierarchies became rooted in Eurocentric thinking, as European cultural and social elements were declared universal and most advanced.

This idea spread after the French Revolution, alongside liberal and nationalist movements. Similar hierarchical principles reappeared in the 20th century, most notoriously in modern colonialism and Nazism.

In contrast, Romanticism emphasised the value of local ethnic cultures, their past, roots, mythology, traditions, folk culture, and languages, rejecting the Enlightenment’s cosmopolitanism and individualism. Writers, poets, and cultural figures campaigned for unified literary languages, especially in communities without state traditions or established symbols. This was the time when many European nations developed new literary languages that later became the foundation of national identity and consciousness.

(iii) Culture as a Way of Life of a Social Group

Culture has also been understood as the way of life of a social group or community (ethnic, national, or otherwise). It encompasses the shared values and meanings of a community, with fundamental cultural characteristics often defined by blood ties, territory, language, religion, and customs. From this perspective, we can speak not only of social classes or subcultures (e.g., labour culture, youth culture, women’s culture) but also of the culture of specific historical periods (e.g., medieval culture, Neolithic culture).



Therefore, culture in this sense refers to the uniqueness of a way of life in a particular historical and social context. This approach allows us to reconstruct, for example, medieval meals, prehistoric dishes, or national cuisines such as Chinese, Italian, or Slovenian.

This interpretation has become the most widely accepted definition of culture in anthropology. Unlike sociology, which focuses on society and treats culture as part of social structures, anthropology defines culture as the behaviours, beliefs, arts, morals, laws, customs, and habits of people within a society. Culture thus encompasses goals, values, and meanings that originate outside the individual but are internalised through processes of socialisation (or enculturation). Society, in turn, manifests these internalisations. Culture is closely tied to communication and symbols, while society reflects the processes of meeting human needs in accordance with cultural frameworks.

(iv) Culture as Art



This term is perhaps the most widely used definition in everyday usage and refers mainly to artistic activities and production. It encompasses not only the creation of works of art, but also the efforts of a community to produce, understand, and acquire art. There is also a division between the cultural production of the upper and lower social classes; the division between high and popular culture.

This became particularly clear during the transition from the 19th to the 20th century under the influence of the modernist artistic movement. The 20th century also saw the emergence of new products such as the gramophone and radio, which influenced the production of cultural products on a large scale and triggered the development of mass culture, also referred to as entertainment culture or commercial culture (as opposed to opera).

(v) Culture as a Practice or Process of Producing Meanings

In this framework, the key question is: what meanings, values, and roles do cultural products or achievements hold within a community? This humanistic and social science definition explores how meanings are created, transformed, and negotiated in society. It focuses on what culture does rather than what culture is. Culture is thus understood as a social practice or process, not as a fixed object. Rather than being limited to a specific people, tribe, or nation, culture is seen as a dynamic process shaped by historical, political, and natural forces that are constantly evolving. This recalls the original sense of culture as cultivation. A group or community, thus, expresses itself through its customs, beliefs, ways of life, and traditions.



Language, often central to every social group, is also understood in this way. It is not a static, but constantly changing cultural practice. It evolves under the influence of wider socio-political contexts, literature, media, and other forces.



Choose a language or dialect used in your community or region. Research how it has changed over time, considering influences such as socio-political events, migration, media, literature, education, or technology. Finally, reflect on the following questions:

How do these changes reflect broader cultural, social, or political shifts?

What does the evolution of the language tell us about the identity and values of the community?

How can communities preserve linguistic heritage while allowing for natural change and innovation?

Culture and Ethnic Groups

When we talk about the culture of ethnic communities, we refer to groups of people who identify as belonging to a community based on shared characteristics, such as a common language, religion, and/or ancestry, often reinforced by ethnic endogamy (marriage within the community). The term ethnic comes from the Greek word *ethnos* and refers to a group that people are born into, as opposed to *civitas*, which is a group that individuals can become members of. In the modern era, the term ethnic community has been used alongside nation or national community to refer to immigrant communities, the original inhabitants of certain territories, or so-called indigenous ethnic groups.

Culture and Nation

A nation is a group of people who share a common language, culture, religion, and traditions. Unlike an ethnic community, a nation often seeks political autonomy or has achieved self-governance. The term nation comes from the Latin *natio*, meaning birth, referring to people supposedly born into the group. The modern concept of a political nation, or nationality, emerged after the French Revolution and is based on rationalism, personal freedom, and equality before the law, with ethnic or cultural similarities being secondary. When a nation gains political sovereignty over a specific territory, it becomes a nation-state. While states are geopolitical entities and nations are ethno-cultural entities, citizenship and ethnic affiliation are often linked in a nation-state. A nation can also be understood as a society or community of citizens and residents who may differ in national or cultural affiliation.

Nation and Common Language

An important feature of a nation-state is a language policy that prioritises the national language. This is often accompanied by the creation and promotion of a national culture, emphasising distinctive myths and symbols such as national dress, history, flags, and anthems. Material monuments and heritage also serve as important symbols of national identity and achievement, providing tangible representations to educate the public. These monuments typically carry positive symbolic value.

However, critical cultural and heritage studies, grounded in constructivist theory, challenge this view, arguing that ethnic and national communities are social constructs, products of interaction rather than fixed entities.

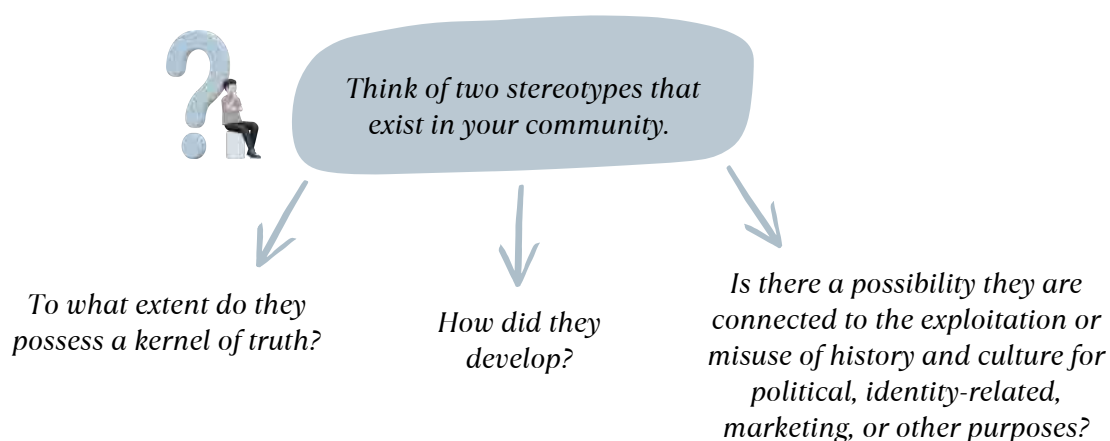
Contemporary societies are increasingly multicultural, particularly due to globalisation, and most countries host multiple ethnic communities with diverse languages. Reducing Slovenia's cultural identity to symbols like the Slovenian language, *potica*, haystacks, linden leaves, Kurenti costumes, or Mount Triglav would be overly simplistic. For example, in the Primorska region, haystacks and Kurenti costumes are absent. Similarly, is pizza truly the defining symbol of Italy?

Every farm, household, village, neighbourhood, and town has its own cultural characteristics shaped by nature, lifestyle, history, politics, and shared experiences. Local dialects and expressions reflect these diverse cultural, historical, and environmental influences. Slovenia, situated at the crossroads of four major geographical regions—the Alps, Pannonian lowlands, Mediterranean coast, and Dinaric-Carpathian area—and bordering four countries, displays strong regional variation in both natural and cultural features, which are mirrored in its dialects.

Culture is never static. It is continually shaped by migration, intercultural contact, and global developments, all of which transform the cultural practices of a community over time.

National Stereotypes and Myths

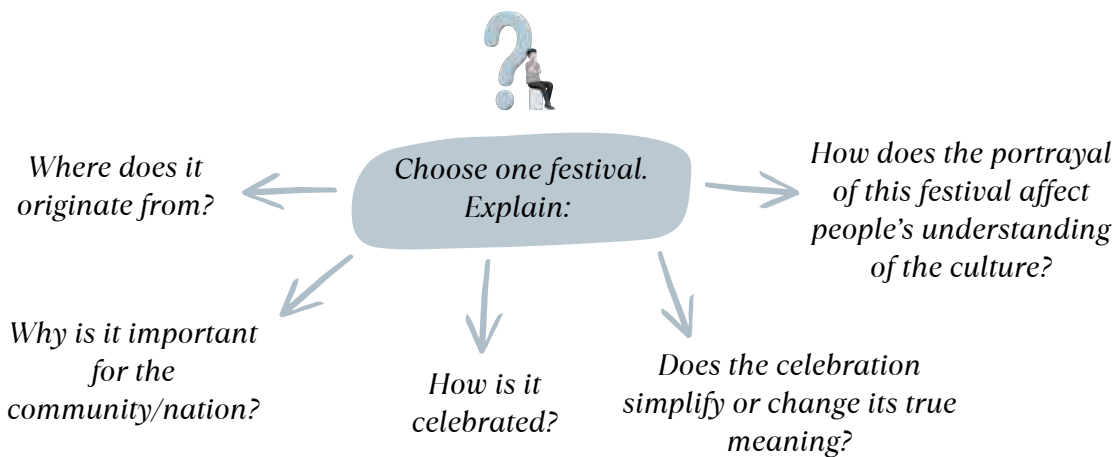
National myths are idealised stories about the past, created to serve present needs by reinforcing ethnic or national identity rather than accurately reflecting history. Their clarity and accessibility make them powerful and enduring. Rather than focusing on the past itself, national myths reinterpret it to justify the present and promote confidence in the future.



Culture and Ethnic Conflicts

Several ethnic minorities often live within nation-states. While they may enjoy equal political rights as citizens, they are frequently perceived in cultural terms as “others,” whose presence helps the majority define its own identity. This sense of otherness can sometimes give rise to tensions and conflicts. In today’s world, where migration and globalisation make ethnically homogeneous states almost impossible, the ethnic dimension of nationhood is becoming an increasingly significant issue.

Nation-states face another challenge: their sovereignty is often reduced or shared when they join larger structures, such as international unions or transnational communities. At the same time, globalisation, migration, and competition for natural resources make the role of the state more important than ever. Instead of turning to harmful forms of nationalism, states need new unifying ideas that help people build identities better suited to today’s challenges, especially environmental ones.



Language and Cultural Practices

Language plays a vital role in shaping our way of life, identity, thoughts, feelings, values, traditions, and experiences. Through language, we express who we are, the communities we belong to, why we behave as we do, and what defines us. It is one of the most important elements in constructing collective, cultural, and national identity, as it reflects the shared beliefs, traditions, and customs of a particular group or society. Language is also the medium through which culture is passed from one generation to the next. It plays an important role in socialisation and in becoming a member of various communities, including ethnic and national ones. The words we use, the idioms and expressions unique to our language, and even the way we structure sentences are all shaped by our cultural background.

Studying how people use language, the words and phrases they unconsciously choose and combine, helps us better understand a community. Every language has its own ways of thinking, expressing emotions, and perceiving the world. For example, the many words for snow in Inuit languages reflect its environmental and cultural significance in Inuit life. Similarly, the use of honorifics (special words, titles, or forms of speech used in a language to show respect, politeness, or social status when addressing or referring to someone) and formal language in Japanese highlights the importance placed on respect and social hierarchy. Languages also carry historical narratives, folklore, and the accumulated wisdom of generations.

A study published in December 2021 by the Australian National University (ANU; cf. UNESCO, 2022) raises serious concerns about the future of linguistic diversity. It shows that around half of the world's 7,000 recognised languages, including 6,000 indigenous languages, are currently endangered, with 1,500 at particularly high risk. When an indigenous language is lost, the accumulated knowledge of its community disappears, and the world's cultural as well as biological diversity is placed in jeopardy. Many endangered languages preserve knowledge that is impossible to fully translate into other languages. For example, the Tuyuca language of the Amazon has over 100 words for different types of fish, reflecting the community's deep understanding of local ecology. Safeguarding linguistic diversity is therefore crucial to protecting both cultural and biological diversity, as emphasised in the 2001 UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity.

Even though the European Union encourages multilingualism and values cultural diversity, many European minority and regional languages are at risk. Languages like Basque, Breton, Sami, Frisian, and Romansh are spoken by small communities, often have low social prestige, and are passed on less frequently to younger generations. Limited use in education, media, and public life makes it harder to maintain these languages, despite efforts to celebrate and protect them, such as the European Day of Languages.



Choose an endangered language and investigate:

Current Status	Number of Speakers over Time	Age Distribution	Official Recognition	Challenges

National Languages and Countries

The process of forming national states began in most of Europe in the 17th century, reaching its powerful highlight in the 19th century. This was followed by the creation or standardisation of national languages. These languages played a significant role in shaping national identities and consequently in the processes of separation. Today, language continues to play a vital role in shaping national identities, being seen as the 'connective tissue', the ultimate national cultural value, and the most significant symbol of national unity. Despite supranational political and economic integration, globalisation, and exceptionally high levels of human mobility, national languages remain important symbols of identity and cultural values. They facilitate mutual understanding and a sense of belonging, and allow individuals to participate in cultural rituals, share common values, and engage in collective memory. However, they can also be a very powerful means of exclusion.

Think of your own language and consider the milestones in its development. Then prepare a poster that visually presents your findings.



Multiculturalism

Modern societies are multicultural. People with diverse linguistic, religious, ideological, historical, social, and educational backgrounds live together in cities and villages, shaping social transformation. The term **multiculturalism** refers to the coexistence of different communities and seeks to promote relationships and communication among them. It covers varied lifestyles, economic power, religions, morals, traditions, and nationalities. Initially focused on migration and ethnicity, the concept has, in critical multiculturalism, been extended to other vulnerable groups. In practice, it represents an effort to create a supportive environment for all, based on tolerance and respect for diversity. All communities should enjoy equal status and integration into society. Cultural differences should not be used to judge or rank communities but recognised as part of humanity's shared diversity, which ultimately unites us.

Multiculturalism is rooted in cultural pluralism, a concept that originated in the USA. Instead of assimilating minorities into the dominant social structure, cultural pluralism promotes opportunities for different identities to coexist within the same political system. Diversity is understood through a differential model of culture that emphasises mutual respect, dignity, and the preservation of differences.

The principles of cultural pluralism distance themselves from nationalism and racism, advocating that each community maintain its language, religion, institutions, and heritage. At the same time, immigrants are expected to learn the national language of communication, which enables interaction when other languages are used as second or third languages. After World War II, cultural pluralism gained popularity but was redefined and renamed multiculturalism. One variant later developed into interculturalism, which is now an important principle for addressing diversity in the EU. Interculturalism involves respectful exchange between individuals and groups with different ethnic, cultural, religious, and linguistic identities. Key elements include coexistence, intergroup relations, and official policy towards immigrant and indigenous minorities.

It is important to distinguish between **multiculturalism** – an ideology, policy or doctrine that promotes communication and interaction among diverse cultures – and **multiculturality** (or interculturality), which merely describes cultural or ethnic heterogeneity without analysing social and political relations.

Intensifying global migration poses challenges for creating multicultural and intercultural societies while maintaining diversity. A central issue is how minority communities in a pluralistic society can be invited to take part in the customs of the majority, and vice versa.



Think of the long-established customs that are important in your community. Do minorities participate in majority traditions?

Multicultural education within the community can be achieved through a variety of ethnographic workshops, including bread baking, collecting collective memories and making educational films.

Photos: Jasna Fakin Bajec



Bread baking workshop (2025)



Collecting memories of life in a multicultural neighbourhood (2023)

In education, a multicultural approach requires recognising the specific features of different ethnic groups—such as language, religion, cuisine, dress, and values—and incorporating authentic representations of minority cultures into the school system. Mutual acceptance, however, is possible only if the majority shows a positive and conscious attitude towards its own cultural heritage. Reflecting on one's own past and traditions is therefore essential for openness towards others. At the same time, discussions about multiculturalism allow children from diverse backgrounds to share customs, beliefs, knowledge, memories, and experiences. Research projects, exhibitions, and cultural products provide opportunities to present traditions and compare similarities and differences across communities. Such activities help minority groups feel accepted and willing to participate in shared cultural practices. This participatory approach requires attention to the voices of all social groups, including immigrant and minority communities.

How do social media platforms influence cultural practices, values, and communication within and between different cultural groups?



Diversity, often linked with multiculturalism, refers to the coexistence of different cultural, racial, and ethnic groups in society and is as essential for humanity as biodiversity is for nature. This makes it part of our common heritage that must be recognised and preserved. Acknowledging diversity goes beyond noticing differences. It requires understanding, collaboration, and openness to new perspectives.

Learning about other traditions helps overcome stereotypes and biases, while fostering respect and trust across communities. At the same time, variety enriches society: people contribute languages, ideas, knowledge, and experiences that strengthen innovation and creativity. In this sense, diversity supports the idea that everyone can make a unique and positive contribution to society because of their differences. An inclusive community is one where contributions are valued, all people are empowered to reach their potential, and differences are celebrated.

Examples of Multiculturalism

Recognition of Diverse Cultural Holidays: Instead of privileging a single group's celebrations, societies may observe multiple festivals from Christmas, Muslim holidays, Orthodox Christian celebrations to Buddhist festivals, helping people from diverse backgrounds feel included and valued.



Multilingual Populations: Multicultural societies often encourage multilingualism. In Canada, both English and French are widely spoken, highlighting the country's bilingual heritage. In Indonesia, local languages such as Javanese, Sundanese, or Balinese coexist alongside the national language, Bahasa Indonesia.

Religious Diversity: Religious pluralism is another feature of multiculturalism. Churches, mosques, synagogues, and temples can often be found near one another, demonstrating the coexistence of multiple faith traditions. This diversity fosters dialogue, mutual respect, and greater understanding across communities.



Cultural Representation in Media: Media in multicultural societies increasingly reflect the population's diversity. Television, film, and other platforms that authentically represent different cultural values, traditions, and experiences help viewers feel seen and included. This representation also challenges stereotypes and promotes broader understanding.

Diverse Political Representation: Political systems in multicultural societies often include individuals from varied cultural and ethnic backgrounds to ensure that multiple voices are included in decision-making processes.



Working with Academic Papers

Read the article:

Kožar Rosulnik, K., & Vižintin, M. A. (2024). Intercultural education and mother tongues of immigrant children: The case of Slovenia. *European Journal of Inclusive Education*, 3(1), 185-199.

Now answer the following questions:

- How can teacher education programmes better prepare future teachers to work in culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms?
- What are the benefits of teaching in the mother tongues and cultures of migrant children for the whole school community?



Revisiting Concepts in Focus

1. Create a list of the main concepts discussed in this chapter.
2. Write a summary of the key takeaways from this section in approximately 300 words. Your reflection should actively refer to and apply several of the concepts introduced. In your response, consider the following prompts:
 - In what ways has engaging with these concepts influenced your thinking, beliefs, or future actions?
 - Which key term(s) do you find most powerful, difficult to understand, inspiring, or confusing? Explain your reasoning.
3. Formulate a question or dilemma that you are still left with.

Culture & Language Curiosities

3,045 languages are endangered as of 2022, 42.5% of all living languages. A language dies every 40 days.

Portfolio Assignment No. 10

Go to the *Portfolio Assignments* section, read the instructions carefully, and complete the task.

Press *Play* for
Perspective

A Thousand Colours



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Truths across Time

I hold that it is the duty of every cultured man or woman to read sympathetically the scriptures of the world. If we are to respect others' religions as we would have them respect our own, a friendly study of the world's religions is a sacred duty.

Mahatma Gandhi



Intercultural Dialogue and Intercultural Competences

Intended Competences and Learning Outcomes

After completing this chapter, you will be able to:

- understand the importance of intercultural dialogue for inclusive and empathic well-being;
- reflect on your own attitudes toward different cultural and ethnic communities;
- recognise and appreciate cultural diversity;
- develop skills in cultural literacy, critical thinking, and intercultural dialogue;
- explore activities and methods to foster intercultural dialogue in classrooms;
- use creative approaches to engage students in intercultural learning.

Opening Question

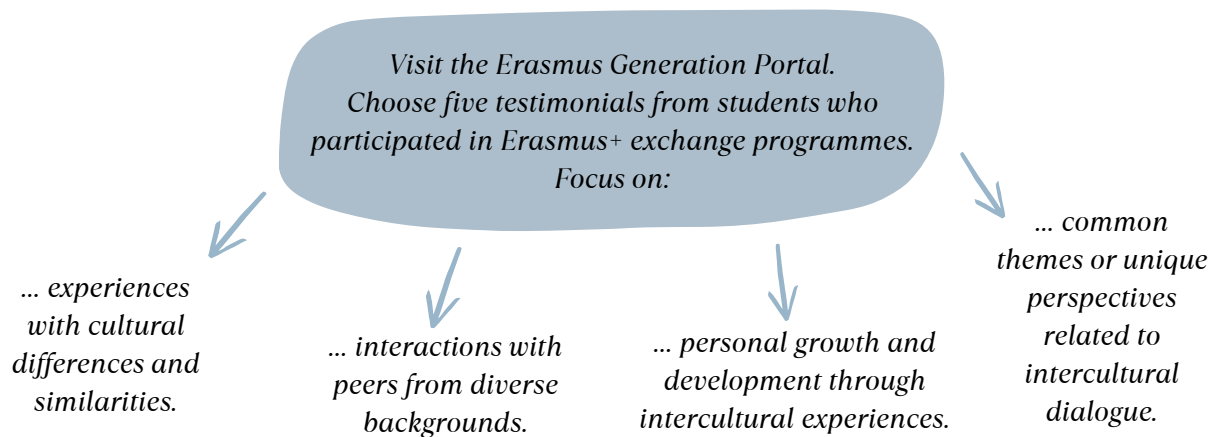
Are schools today teaching students how to live together or just how to sit together?

Intercultural dialogue offers a positive way to deal with the challenges that come with cultural diversity. Today, many people live in multicultural societies where different identities, traditions, and ways of life meet. This diversity is shaped by globalisation, migration, new technologies, and growing connections between countries and communities. While it creates opportunities for learning and cooperation, it can also lead to misunderstandings, fear, or even discrimination, racism, and conflict. Intercultural dialogue helps prevent these problems by encouraging communication, mutual respect, and a shared sense of belonging, so that people from different backgrounds can live together peacefully. According to UNESCO, it is not just about exchanging ideas but about building the trust and understanding needed to address shared challenges. It is a transformative process based on empathy and openness to different perspectives, allowing people from diverse backgrounds to coexist and collaborate more constructively.

In practice, intercultural dialogue acts as a way to help people from different cultures communicate and work together. It offers tools for dealing with conflict, discussing differences peacefully, and finding solutions that everyone can agree on. Instead of stopping at basic tolerance, it encourages real cooperation. In this way, intercultural dialogue helps people move past disagreements and join forces when working together is most important.

Intercultural dialogue is therefore vital for peaceful coexistence and democratic stability in increasingly diverse societies. Its main goals are to:

- promote equal dignity and respect for every individual, regardless of cultural background;
- encourage peaceful and constructive relations through communication and mutual understanding;
- strengthen democratic participation and active citizenship within multicultural communities;
- manage cultural diversity in ways that prevent discrimination, conflict, and exclusion;
- uphold human rights, democracy, and the rule of law as the shared foundation of intercultural relations.



Intercultural dialogue can only be achieved if its participants—immigrants, members of the majority culture, and anyone from different cultural, ethnic, religious, or social backgrounds—are treated as equals. This requires cultural learning in both directions: immigrants learning from the majority culture, and members of the majority culture learning from immigrants. Creative dialogue also depends on supportive state policies, which actively promote integration, mutual recognition, and inclusion of all cultural groups. In contrast, an assimilationist approach hinders dialogue because it expects only immigrants to adopt the majority culture's values, without requiring the majority to acknowledge or respect the culture and contributions of immigrants.

Here are some ideas for events, activities, and participatory methods that can create opportunities for intercultural exchange and experience in an engaging, respectful, and mutually beneficial way.

International Meetings: International meetings organised to carry out international cultural projects can offer participants from different countries the opportunity to introduce their own countries and cultures to each other and create an international atmosphere in which they can present their cultural heritage. These meetings usually involve participatory methods and tools such as the World Café, the Pro-Action Café, the OPERA method, the NetMapping method, round table discussions, and brainstorming, which allow all participants to take an active part in the discussion.



This approach also requires an effective facilitator who can keep the meeting on track, build good relationships between participants, and facilitate the process, especially when strong feelings arise. It is important that participants feel accepted and that their ideas are discussed within the group. This promotes trust, mutual respect, and acceptance of the different roles and responsibilities of the members.



Photo-Voicing is a creative, visual research method in which participants are given a camera and encouraged to document and explore their observations, community practices, and ideas. This method is useful for empowering communities and enabling vulnerable groups, such as those facing poverty, unemployment, low educational attainment, racial or migration issues, to present aspects of their lives, experiences, and needs to others through video and/or photographs.

The resulting photos can be used in photo exhibitions and/or group discussions to find out what the participants wanted to express with a particular photo or to attract the attention of the general public. Talking about the selected photos can also strengthen community engagement, raise awareness of cultural specificities and common symbols of identification, and encourage members to recognise their own effectiveness. Conversations help to crystallise views on a particular topic, values, emotional connections, and other meanings that are crucial to exploring and understanding ways of life in each cultural community. Where possible, we include specific quotes from participants in the final product, which may be an exhibition, a film, or a book.

Imagine you have a camera to capture a regular day in your community. What would you photograph to represent your culture most authentically?



Storytelling is a method that can be used to engage people in research, learning, teaching, and community or organisational development. Collecting, analysing, and telling stories can reveal specific cultural characteristics and past ways of life in a community and can include both real and fictional events. Stories and their characters provide a sense of wholeness, and their messages should encourage reflection on our behaviour, relationships, and habits.



Storytelling is a technique that provides opportunities for cultural practitioners to ensure knowledge transfer and experiential education. It also offers the opportunity to utilise culture or its heritage for social and cultural development. Therefore, stories have the potential to become radical tools for change in the field of social, cultural, and environmental justice. With the help of stories (including digital ones), we can intervene in dominant narratives (e.g., negative attitudes towards 'the other'), create space for counter-narratives (e.g., intercultural dialogue), and in this way address the most pressing contemporary issues.



Making graffiti can be understood both as a cultural practice and as a pedagogical tool. On the one hand, it is an urban art form rooted in the hip-hop culture of 1970s–80s New York, traditionally viewed as vandalism but serving as a voice of protest, identity, and visibility for marginalised youth. Its stylistic features, i.e., bold lettering, stylised “tags,” teamwork among “crews,” anonymity, and a constantly evolving code, make it a rebellious yet creative form of expression. Over time, graffiti has also become a medium for intercultural dialogue, challenging norms, fostering communication, and transforming public spaces into cultural arenas.

On the other hand, when studied pedagogically, graffiti highlights how place, space, and identity interact as socio-material phenomena. The meanings of graffiti evolve as people, texts, structures, and cultural artifacts intersect, exposing circulating ideologies about what is considered (un)desirable in society. Because language, script, content, style, and tools vary across contexts, graffiti is always embedded in specific socio-cultural environments. Yet, despite these differences, it also reveals shared practices and provides insights into the anthropology and sociology of writing.

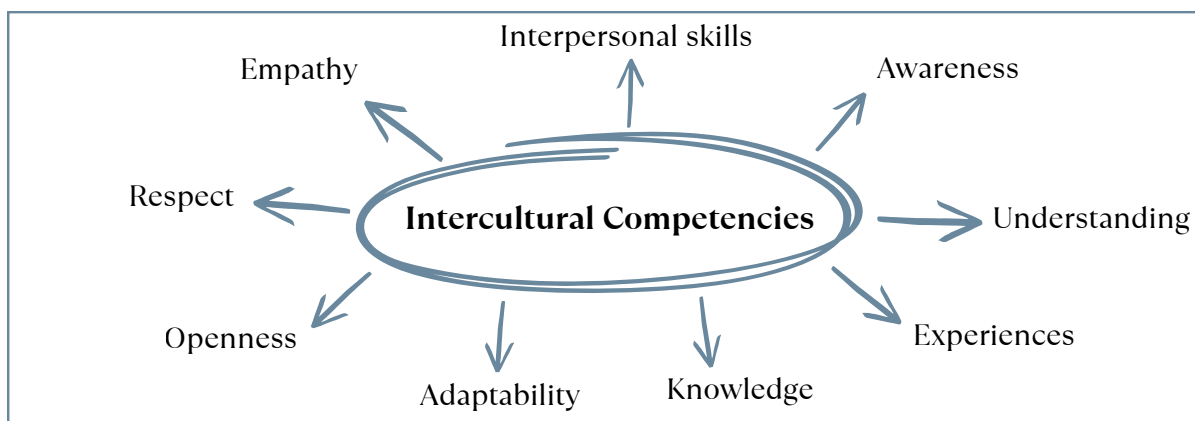
Together, these perspectives show that graffiti is more than rebellious art: it is a site of learning, identity-building, and cultural negotiation. As both a pedagogical practice and a form of intercultural dialogue, graffiti demonstrates how urban creativity can reshape spaces, connect communities, and generate critical reflections across cultures and generations.



Imagine creating a graffiti artwork that expresses your attitude towards your language? What would it be?

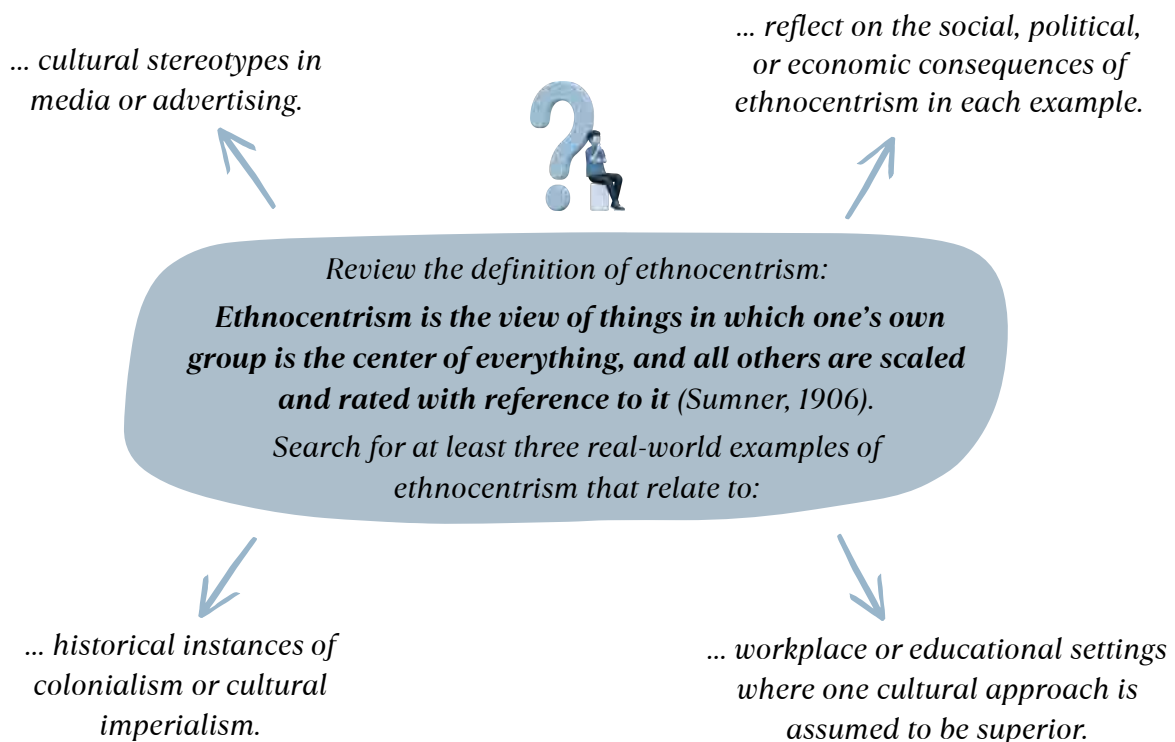
Intercultural Competences

Intercultural competences encompass the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that help people interact successfully with others from different cultures. They include knowledge of specific cultures as well as general awareness of challenges that can arise when people from different backgrounds meet. They also involve **receptive attitudes**, which means being open, curious, and respectful toward others' ideas, experiences, and ways of life, and being willing to communicate and connect with people from diverse groups. Another important part is **cultural expression**, which refers to the ways people show and share their culture, such as through language, traditions, art, music, rituals, food, or everyday behaviours. These competences help people understand themselves and others, take part in social life, and respect cultural diversity. They are essential for personal well-being and for functioning effectively in social groups, and without them, individuals risk feeling excluded from society.



The Most Important Intercultural Competencies

- **Empathy** is the ability to understand and appreciate someone else's perspective without judging it by your own cultural standards.
- **Respecting opinions and cultural differences** means accepting diverse perspectives while also noticing the similarities that connect people across cultures.
- **Openness to new experiences** involves being willing to encounter unfamiliar cultural realities and feeling comfortable in unpredictable or uncertain situations.
- **Adaptability** is the ability to adjust your behavior and responses to meet the needs of people from different cultures.
- **Recognising experiences** from other cultures means valuing and respecting the perspectives and life experiences of others.
- **Knowledge of other cultures** involves learning about the traditions, values, and customs that shape how people think and behave.
- **Overcoming ethnocentrism** requires respecting the values of others without assuming that your own culture is superior.
- **Awareness of one's own cultural identity** means understanding your own values and behaviors and confidently sharing your culture with others.
- **Strong interpersonal skills** allow you to interact effectively and sensitively in multicultural groups, avoiding stereotypes and prejudices to understand people as individuals.

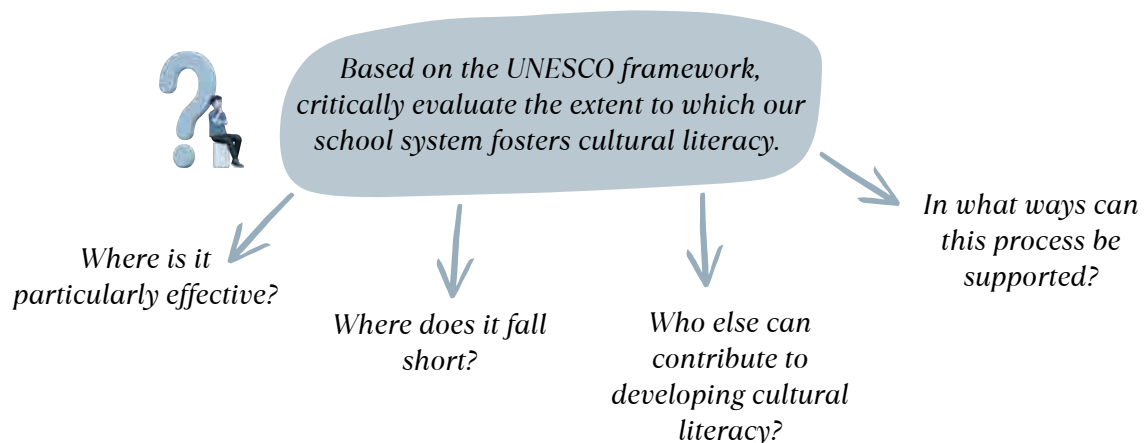


Cultural Literacy

The word "literacy" usually describes the ability to read, write, learn, and develop. It enables communication and dialogue within a community and allows people to engage in society. Since societies are diversifying, creating new challenges to communication, we need to approach the concept of literacy in a broader context. The concept of cultural literacy is based on a tolerant, empathic, and inclusive approach to cultural differences. It is the capacity to understand and engage with the traditions, norms, practices, and historical contexts of a given culture. It not only entails awareness of these elements but also the ability to participate meaningfully in both formal and informal cultural activities. Cultural literacy should be approached as a continuous process—one that fosters openness to new ideas and perspectives, recognition of both differences and similarities, and reflection on one's own as well as others' cultural values. Ultimately, it is about learning how to encounter, interact, and coexist with others in a respectful and constructive way. This process can be deepened through dialogic knowledge-building and collaborative creative practices, such as making an artwork together, which stimulate shared understanding and co-creation.

According to UNESCO, cultural literacy skills include:

- Understanding the values, history, heritage, and languages of a society, and seeing how culture connects to life beyond politics and economics.
- Accessing and enjoying different kinds of cultural content, which supports human rights and the right to express diverse cultures.
- Sharing your own culture and learning about others, which helps build understanding, fight stereotypes and discrimination, and bring cultures closer together.
- Using culture and the arts to strengthen learning, develop empathy, creativity, and critical thinking, and show how culture complements subjects like science, technology, engineering, and math.



Cultural literacy develops through creative practices and social interaction grounded in empathy, tolerance, and collaboration. Creativity fosters openness, curiosity, and new perspectives, while also strengthening skills like teamwork, critical thinking, problem-solving, communication, initiative, and innovation.

Creativity, Art, and Intercultural Dialogue and Competences

Creativity and imagination are central to human experience, helping us understand and engage with the world. Artistic practices—such as drawing, theatre, writing, photography, and digital media—offer universal ways to express ideas, emotions, and identity, while also developing life skills like critical thinking, curiosity, empathy, and openness. When combined with collaboration and dialogue, artistic expression becomes a powerful tool for intercultural understanding, fostering cultural literacy and meaningful connections across diverse communities.

Drawing and Visual Arts

Drawing and other visual arts enable individuals to explore personal and cultural identity through a playful and imaginative process. These practices connect inner thoughts, emotions, and imagination to the external world, offering a non-verbal way to process experiences that may be difficult to articulate through words alone. In this way, drawing can function as a form of dialogue—a conversation between the creator's perspective and others' interpretations.

By engaging with visual arts, individuals not only reflect on their own identities but also encounter and appreciate the experiences and perspectives of others. This engagement promotes cultural literacy, encourages empathy, and supports intercultural dialogue through shared creative practices.



Creative Writing



Creative writing demonstrates imagination, originality, and artistic expression. Unlike academic or technical writing, it emphasises character, plot, and language to convey emotions, experiences, and cultural perspectives. Through writing, individuals can explore their own cultural identities, reflect on the experiences of others, and engage with diverse traditions and worldviews. When creative writing incorporates perspectives from multiple cultures or involves collaboration across backgrounds, it becomes a tool for intercultural dialogue. It fosters empathy, understanding, and communication skills while helping writers develop narrative structure, word choice, and critical thinking. By combining creativity, reflection, and cultural awareness, creative writing supports both personal expression and meaningful intercultural engagement.

Across visual or written media, creative practices provide pathways for self-expression, exploration of identity, and intercultural understanding. By nurturing imagination, empathy, and collaboration, art and creativity prepare individuals to navigate diverse social and cultural environments with sensitivity, awareness, and insight.

Working with Academic Papers

Read the article:

Lähdesmäki, T., et al. (2022). Introduction: Cultural literacy and creativity. In *Learning cultural literacy through creative practices in schools* (pp. 1–17). Palgrave Macmillan.

Now answer the following questions

- How can creativity help develop cultural literacy and intercultural skills through curiosity and trying new ideas?
- How can creative activities that build empathy reduce prejudice and support inclusion in diverse classrooms?



Revisiting Concepts in Focus

1. Create a list of the main concepts discussed in this chapter.
2. Write a summary of the key takeaways from this section in approximately 300 words. Your reflection should actively refer to and apply several of the concepts introduced. In your response, consider the following prompts:
 - In what ways has engaging with these concepts influenced your thinking, beliefs, or future actions?
 - Which key term(s) do you find most powerful, difficult to understand, inspiring, or confusing? Explain your reasoning.
3. Formulate a question or dilemma that you are still left with.

Press *Play* for
Perspective

What does
Intercultural Dialogue
Mean?



Culture & Language Curiosities

Did you know that in Japan, silence during a conversation can show respect, while in Western cultures, there is the desire to fill the silence.

Portfolio Assignment No. 11

Go to the *Portfolio Assignments* section, read the instructions carefully, and complete the task.

Selected References

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Vrečer, N. (2011). Medkulturne kompetence kot prvi pogoj za uspešen medkulturni dialog. In M. Lukšič-Hacin, M. Milharčič Hladnik, & M. Sardoč (Eds.), *Medkulturni odnosi kot aktivno državljanstvo* (pp. 169-177). Ljubljana: Založba ZRC, ZRC SAZU.

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Truths across Time

We don't see things as they are, we see them as we are.



Consolidation No. 4

Read the traditional Tuareg folk story. Identify cultural themes in the story that reflect the Tuareg culture, beliefs, or ways of life.

The Tuaregs are a Berber ethnic group native to the Sahara Desert, living mainly in Mali, Niger, Algeria, Libya, and Burkina Faso. Traditionally nomadic pastoralists, they are known for their indigo-dyed clothing and the men's face veil, the tagelmust. They speak Tamasheq and use the ancient Tifinagh script. Most Tuaregs are Muslim, and their society has long been organized into clans with strong traditions of poetry, music, and oral storytelling. Today, many Tuareg communities face challenges related to climate change, loss of nomadic routes, and political tensions in the Sahel.

The old Tuareg story of the wind

Once upon a time, in the vast desert, there lived a Tuareg woman. In the early morning, she sat in front of her humble tent, grinding wheat to bake tagila for her family. Her hands moved skilfully, turning the heavy millstones, while the fine flour slowly gathered in a wooden bowl. As the sun climbed to its zenith and heat shimmered across the dunes, a sudden wind rose. It came from behind the sands, swirled around the woman and in a single gust, blew away all the flour she had worked so hard to grind. Fury surged in her chest. She clenched her fists and shouted into the empty air, cursing the invisible force that had undone all her labour.

That evening, as the desert cooled and night fell, the wind faded. In the silence, she heard soft footsteps approaching. Out of the darkness, a man appeared. He wore a white cloak but his clothes were torn and his hands and face were scratched and bloodied, as if he had walked through thorny acacia trees and jagged rocks.

The woman stared in surprise. She asked no questions, only brought him a basin of water and gently washed his wounds. Her hands were careful and her face full of quiet pity. The man watched her silently. Then, suddenly, he spoke. "I am the desert wind. I've come to punish you for disrespecting me. But your kindness has shown me your true heart."

He paused, then continued in a gentle but determined voice: "Know this – my life is not easy either. Each day, I must blow with all my strength to move the dunes, to cool the burning earth. The mountains push me back, the acacia thorns tear at me and the sand cuts into my skin. Do not curse me again, for I suffer, too." And with that, he vanished into the dark sea of dunes, leaving the woman alone beneath the endless, star-filled sky.

From that day forward, she never again raised her voice against the wind, not even when she was grinding wheat into flour.

Delavec Touhami, M. (2025). *Imuhar: ljudje sonca in svobode*. KD Josipine Turnograjske.

Language as a Cultural Symbol of One's Identity

Intended Competences and Learning Outcomes

After completing this chapter, you will be able to:

- understand the concepts of personal and group identity;
- recognise and compare differences between national and local identities, particularly in the context of globalisation processes;
- analyse cultural, historical, and linguistic practices that strengthen group identity;
- interpret different identification symbols through which national identity is constructed;
- evaluate cultural practices that use language as a key symbol of national culture and identity;
- design teaching approaches and projects that promote multicultural understanding.

Opening Question

Who are you?

Although there are many different ways to understand identity, the common thread is that it describes how individuals and groups define themselves and how they are defined by others, based on various characteristics—both personal and shared—such as race, ethnicity, religion, language, and other aspects of culture. We tend to reflect on our identity especially during personal or social crises, when we feel insecure, unaccepted, or threatened, as individuals or as members of a community.

In the past, the communities in which humans lived were relatively stable and changed slowly over time. Contact between different communities was infrequent, and shared values, norms, and ways of life provided stability and a sense of security. Today, however, development is extremely rapid and characterised by fast technological and communicative changes, global market systems, and intense socio-political influences—all of which affect smaller, local communities. Moreover, communities are no longer defined solely by place and time; they can also be virtual. Information circulates instantly, and the consequences of globalisation significantly shape our understanding of both the factors that create cultural diversity (such as environment, history, experience, and memory) and the elements that communities share (such as language, tradition, and values).

With the loss of the sense of security once embodied in time- and space-based communities, such as those rooted in kinship and village relations in pre-modern times, people have begun to question their personal and social (cultural) identities, which are closely interconnected.



When would someone describe their identity as hybrid? What are the characteristics of a hybrid identity?

Personal and Group Identity

Individual identity is partly shaped by biological factors, such as genetics, gender, age, and physical appearance. Through socialisation and through common roots, family ties, shared history, collective experiences, mutual solidarity and loyalty, children learn the basic values and norms of their community and gradually become members of various social groups, e.g., such as families, neighbourhoods, schools, ethnic or religious communities, youth organisations, and even transnational or migrant groups. For emotional well-being and social belonging, every person needs to identify with at least one group or community. This sense of shared identity helps individuals develop their personality, sociability, and feeling of acceptance.

Group identity not only reflects cultural similarities and social unity but also distinctions from other groups. In this way, communities often define themselves by contrasting with “others.” Processes of cultural and social differentiation have also led to new forms of group identity, based on education, profession, sports, or music, which are more flexible and depend more on individual choice.

What role does the national language or dialect play in defining your identity?



While an individual can belong to several groups at the same time, such as family, local community, school, youth organisations, or religious groups, it is important to acknowledge that these different affiliations do not always align perfectly. Balancing them can sometimes create tension or even lead to an identity crisis.

This often becomes evident in migration contexts, where people may struggle with their sense of identity because of the attitudes of the majority population toward immigrants. For example, migrants who move from non-European countries to Western Europe, or from Eastern to Western Europe, may feel caught between preserving their original culture and adapting to a new one. Young people with immigrant backgrounds might feel “too foreign” in their host country but “too different” when visiting their parents’ homeland. Such experiences are shaped by cultural distance and often reinforced by prejudice or limited acceptance of diversity in the host society.

At the same time, new identities can also emerge in new environments. For example, Slovenian immigrants and their descendants in the United States often identify as Slovenian Americans or American Slovenians. A similar pattern can be found in border regions, where hybrid identities—such as a Slovenian-Italian identity, develop through shared language, culture, and everyday interaction across borders.

Identities are never fixed; they continuously evolve in response to wider social, political, environmental, and economic changes. They are shaped by context and formed through ongoing processes of meaning-making and lived experience. In this sense, identity is diverse, dynamic, and historically conditioned, arising from differentiation, multiple forms of identification, and increasing pluralisation.

National, ethnic, or religious identities often become particularly visible in specific situations, such as international conflicts, global sporting events like the World Cup or the Olympics, travel experiences (for example, holidays or visits to one's country of origin), or moments of displacement and difference, such as migration or living among people from other cultural backgrounds. They may also surface in experiences of racism, discrimination, or exclusion, for example, being denied employment or subjected to verbal abuse.



Consider who you are based on the different groups/affiliations you belong to. What connects you to others in these groups? Think of values, traditions, or experiences that you share with other members of these groups.

Identification Processes

Identification is the psychological process through which individuals perceive themselves as part of a group rather than as separate, unrelated individuals. It also involves the emotional significance they attach to this sense of belonging and forms a key component of personal identity.

Identification Processes and Socio-Political Powers

Not all identities are freely chosen; social structures and power relations shape many. This can involve resistance, as certain societal actors, such as political leaders, use their authority and influence to define or control how identities are expressed. Such dynamics create hierarchies within communities, often making identity a marker of difference and exclusion rather than a symbol of natural unity.

History shows that politically dominant actors and ideological systems, such as fascism, Nazism, socialism, etc., have frequently sought to impose their own symbols of power on other populations. For example, in 1929, Italian fascist authorities banned the use of the Slovenian language in state offices, schools, and publications in the Primorska region.

Political powers have also tried to reduce or eliminate internal cultural differences within their territories. In Yugoslavia, for example, efforts were made to minimise distinctions among the republics by promoting shared national symbols and cultural features that would distinguish Yugoslavia from other nations. This often involved the appropriation or assimilation of the material symbols and traditions of smaller or weaker groups by larger, more dominant ones. A notable example was the attempt to construct a unified Yugoslav identity by promoting symbols such as Mount Triglav, the Serbo-Croatian language, and Slavic welcoming rituals like offering bread and salt, while downplaying other cultural markers, such as Christian traditions.

Do contemporary forces such as globalisation, democracy, the media, and the global economy shape identity in the same way as earlier systems and ideologies like fascism, racism, socialism, or colonialism?



Identification Symbols

Cultural elements from the past, such as language, monuments, rituals, architecture, traditions, poetry, art, historical events, natural landmarks, and collective memories, play an important role in shaping identity. These elements act as symbols: their physical form may remain the same, but their meaning and significance change depending on time, place, and context. Although members of a community share these symbols, each individual interprets them differently. Their personal experiences, knowledge, family background, and worldview all influence how they understand and relate to such symbols. For example, older generations who lived under fascism may attach a stronger emotional or political value to the Slovenian language than younger people do today.

Through various cultural and social activities, communities negotiate and reshape these meanings collectively. This process creates what we call negotiated meaning. For example, in Slovenia, the idea that “you are not truly Slovenian unless you have climbed Mount Triglav” reflects a shared cultural symbol, even though the environmental impact of thousands of climbers each year is rarely questioned.



Consider five symbols that best represent your nation-state. Then choose one symbol and reflect on how different generations or social groups (e.g., older/younger generation, women, people with disabilities, scientists, politicians, entrepreneurs, priests) might understand or interpret this symbol.

Symbols and Boundaries

Symbols often serve as the most powerful markers of boundaries between communities, even more so than maps, laws, or official regulations. For example, national languages or local dialects signal to members when they are “inside” or “outside” a particular group. These symbols help distinguish one community from another.

Many symbols were created long before current members encountered them, yet they continue to carry meaning. They are linked to a sense of belonging, continuity, and tangible reality. Symbols provide familiarity, guidance, a feeling of security, and a shared sense of identity, helping members understand who they are and where they fit within their community.

Choose a border region in your country and think of how language reflects the identity of the people living there.



Process of Creating a National Identity

The idea of a nation as an ethnically based community with political awareness and a claim to statehood emerged in the late 18th and 19th centuries. National identity is closely linked to nationalism, an ideology that builds and strengthens a sense of belonging to a national community. Members usually share a territory, history, culture, legal rights, a sense of common destiny, and economic connections.

Forming a nation relies on socialising individuals into citizens and community members. This is often achieved through standardised public schooling, which teaches a shared culture and national belonging. Other state-building tools include national celebrations, commemorations, flags, anthems, history, and shared cultural practices like food, dances, and customs. This sense of shared identity is supported by language, newspapers, social media, collective memory, and even selective forgetting.

A nation usually has defined borders that separate it from others. Awareness of what belongs to “our” community creates a sense of inside and outside, forming both imaginary and real boundaries. These perceptions often lead to stereotypes, as viewing other groups negatively can reinforce a more positive sense of one’s own community. Every nation defines itself not only through its own traditions and values but also in relation to others. Minority groups, such as the Roma, play an important role in shaping how the majority sees itself.

Identities are not fixed; they are constantly shaped and reshaped through agreements, disagreements, and social conventions. They give people meaning and help them navigate uncertain and complex environments. National identity, in particular, acts as a symbolic framework that links individuals to their ancestors and historical traditions. Celebrating shared history, heroic achievements, and collective rituals, it provides a sense of belonging, security, and communal connection.

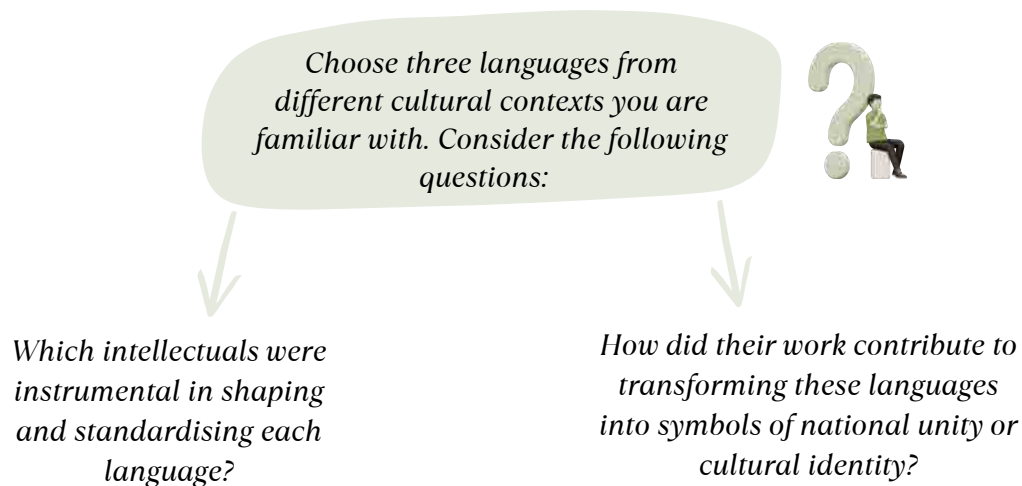


How do minority groups like the Roma influence how majority groups perceive their own identity?

National Culture

The formation of national identity and consciousness is deeply intertwined with the development of national culture. Elements such as language, literature, rituals, national costumes, and other forms of intangible cultural heritage have played a central role in this process since the 19th century. For example, the standardisation of national languages through dictionaries and grammars helped define cultural boundaries, while folk songs, epic poetry, and storytelling preserved collective memory and values. Traditional festivals, dances, and regional costumes, such as the Slovenian narodna noša, became visible symbols of belonging and pride. National political discourse often emerged through the selection and “consumption” of traits associated with the lifestyle of the majority population—in Slovenia’s case, this was largely the rural farming community, whose customs, dialect, and moral ideals were elevated as representative of the nation as a whole.

The construction, shaping, and leadership of political discourse on nationalism have largely been the work of intellectuals, who have played a pivotal role in both the cultural and political expressions of national identity. This group includes poets, musicians, painters, sculptors, novelists, historians, archaeologists, dramatists, philologists, anthropologists, and folklorists—figures who helped define and articulate the language and ideas of the nation. Through their creative and scholarly work, they gave voice to broader social aspirations, translating them into shared images, myths, and symbols that fostered a collective sense of belonging.



Language as a National Symbol

The creation of a national language, in our case Slovenian, as a key symbol of national identity has historically occurred in several stages. The first stage involved protecting the Slovenian language from assimilation, such as resisting the dominance of German over local languages within the Habsburg territories. The second stage focused on codifying and standardising the language through the production of primers, catechisms, grammars, opera librettos, and newspapers. The third stage aimed at the intellectualisation of the national language and the development of a scientific and scholarly vocabulary, including the publication of the first scientific books and the establishment of Slovenian terminology in fields such as art, science, law, and political and parliamentary life. The fourth stage included the demand for the introduction of this developed language into higher education, such as teaching Slovenian at universities. The final stage encompassed the demand for linguistic equality across all spheres of public life, as reflected in various political programmes.

Globalisation and the Revival of Local Dialects

Rapid technological and economic development, new communication tools such as the internet and social media, the rise of transnational communities like the European Union, and growing attention to subnational regions (e.g., the Karst or Brda region) have all weakened the traditional influence of the nation-state, which was historically tied to fixed borders. As a result, national identities are becoming less dominant, while regional, local, and multicultural identities are gaining importance.

Globalisation weakens the traditional power of the nation-state because local events are now closely connected to global developments. This has created **cultural globalisation**, which we can see in shared international symbols, global brands, and similar lifestyles around the world; for example, the spread of fast-food chains like McDonald's or popular movies and TV franchises. New inventions, major achievements, or crises in one country can quickly influence people everywhere, forming a "local-global" network that changes the way we live, work, and interact.

At the same time, globalisation encourages **localisation**. This is more than simply reviving local traditions; it involves adapting and renewing them in response to global trends. For example, traditional crafts, regional cuisines, or local music festivals may gain new significance when presented in international contexts. This process of **relocalisation** creates a dynamic relationship between the global and the local economies, cultures, and identities.



Think of a local tradition, dialect, or cultural practice from your region. How has it changed or adapted in response to global influences?

Emerging Dialects in the Slovenian Context

In modern Slovenia, three main trends have emerged in border and peripheral regions. First, interest in regional and local issues has grown, particularly in cross-border areas. Second, alongside the development of the standard language, school authorities have incorporated local and regional languages into educational planning. Third, a new trend in contemporary art has emerged, which can be described as "tradition with innovation."

Many contemporary Slovenian poets, singer-songwriters, and musicians who perform in dialect come from peripheral regions, such as Vlado Kreslin from Prekmurje, Iztok Mlakar from Goriška, and Rudi Bučar from Istria. Exposure to two or more language practices on a daily basis allows speakers to recognise the distinctive features of their dialect more easily, fostering a deeper connection not only with the language itself but also with their local identity, including perceptions of the surrounding space, community, and nature.

Schools in border regions were among the first to emphasise the importance of local languages and dialects. In recent years, Slovenian school authorities have also introduced dialects into the official school curricula, through emphasising songs, nursery rhymes, and vocabulary embedded in specific local contexts.

Cultural practices are increasingly combining traditional Slovenian folk art with contemporary artistic approaches in music, painting, and film. This is especially visible in music, where folk songs are adapted and performed in ways that demonstrate their ongoing relevance. Folk traditions are no longer seen as "dead remnants" of the past; instead, they are revitalised and presented in accessible, engaging ways that resonate with young audiences.

Identify examples of local or regional specifics that are taught or highlighted in primary schools. How do these practices help children connect with their local identity and understand regional or cultural diversity?



Language and Multicultural Societies

Language connects members of a national community and is a key symbol of unity and culture. At the same time, our society is influenced not just by national identities but also by globalization, international integration, and human mobility. These forces change how language is perceived and used, making it both a symbol of identity and, at times, a way to exclude others.

In multicultural contexts, statements like “in this country we speak this language only” can ignore minority and immigrant groups. People who speak other languages may feel pressure to use their mother tongue only at home, which can threaten its survival, and make it harder to pass on to the next generation.

Parents of migrant children can help by encouraging reading and writing in their mother tongue and providing access to books, newspapers, and other materials. Strong skills in one’s native language go beyond daily conversation; they can offer advantages in education, work, and careers. Being able to communicate, write, and translate in a mother tongue can become a valuable asset in the labour market.



Think of five concrete activities a teacher can use to support and celebrate multilingualism in classrooms so that it is seen as a valuable asset and not a problem.

Identification processes and identities are constantly open to formation and transformation, and are not fixed, static, or immutable as they were presented in the past. They are constructs that are 'always the result of agreement or disagreement, always a matter of conventions, agreements, innovations, always to some extent shared and to some extent negotiated. The important point is that identification provides meaning and serves as a kind of guideline, enabling people to find their way in chaotic and unpredictable living environments. National identity can be understood as a symbolic framework that addresses the existential question of human existence by connecting individuals to a lineage of ancestors and historical traditions.

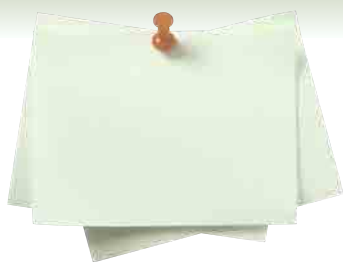
Working with Academic Papers

Read the article:

Grgič, M. (2024). Multilingualism as right and choice: A case study of Slovene speakers in Northeast Italy. *Zeitschrift für Slawistik*, 69(2), 213–228.

Now answer the following questions:

- What challenges do minority language communities face, even when legal protections exist?
- What strategies do speakers use to preserve their linguistic and cultural identity in everyday life?



Revisiting Concepts in Focus

1. Create a list of the main concepts discussed in this chapter.
2. Write a summary of the key takeaways from this section in approximately 300 words. Your reflection should actively refer to and apply several of the concepts introduced. In your response, consider the following prompts:
3. Formulate a question or dilemma that you are still left with.

Culture & Language Curiosities

A cultural chameleon is often a bicultural individual who can adapt their behavior, language, or style to fit different cultural contexts seamlessly. This adaptability allows them to navigate multiple social environments effectively.

Portfolio Assignment No. 12

Go to the *Portfolio Assignments' section*, read the instructions carefully, and complete the task.

Press *Play* for
Perspective

Languages Matter!



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Truths across Time

We become full human agents, capable of understanding ourselves, and hence of defining our identity, through our acquisition of rich human languages of expression.

Charles Taylor



Language as Intangible Cultural Heritage

Intended Competences and Learning Outcomes

After completing this chapter, you will be able to:

- understand the concepts of cultural heritage and its meaning in contemporary, multilingual, and multicultural societies;
- understand the role of UNESCO's cultural and heritage declarations;
- define tangible and intangible cultural heritage and critically assess ways for integrating them in teaching practices;
- recognise challenges in preserving, valuing, interpreting, and using cultural heritage for culturally sensitive education;
- propose practices for protecting and promoting cultural heritage.

Opening Question

If future generations were to remember your community, what parts of it do you think they should inherit?

Heritage is everything people value from the past that holds personal or collective meaning in the present. It includes both tangible elements, such as movable, immovable, and underwater objects, and intangible aspects, such as cultural practices, festivals, traditional knowledge, and skills. Cultural and natural heritage, expressed through artefacts, monuments, and cultural traditions, plays a crucial role in understanding who we are, what we value, and why we keep certain items and trash others. It reflects our identity as individuals and communities, as well as shapes the meanings of the places where we live. It reveals the lives of our ancestors, their creativity in using natural resources, their inventions, their responses to social, cultural, and political change, and their technological innovations in agriculture, crafts, industry, and urban development.

Each of us may have our own definition of what cultural heritage means, what values tangible and intangible elements from the past express in contemporary society, and why these items should be preserved for future generations. Some of us cherish our grandmothers' old recipes, our grandfather's car or engine, or the old house our grandparents lived in. Others value more their grandparents' work on the farm, or handmade products, or old poems, dialects, memories, or different legends that parents told us on different occasions. These are very important personal or family items that make our families unique and represent **personal** or **family heritage**.

However, if we look at the community or the place where we live, we can also recognise some common cultural assets such as castles, churches, old ruins, bridges, or rituals and festivals celebrated in the community. We can also talk about natural features of the environment, certain natural resources (water, stone, wood, soil, minerals), and the particularities of the environment that have significantly influenced the way of life in the past and are reflected in architecture, urban planning, economic activities such as local crafts, certain industries, using specific dialect expressions, etc. In this case, we talk about **public heritage** items.



Write down a few words you associate with cultural heritage. Then sort your words into two groups: personal/family heritage and public/common heritage. Explain your choice as well as how they influence your life or the community you belong to.

Perhaps you live in an old house inherited from your grandparents, which represents an important legacy for your family. Although it has significant personal and family value, it may not be recognised as a public cultural monument. Whether something is considered a public monument depends on criteria set by cultural heritage institutions such as UNESCO, or by national bodies like institutes for the protection of cultural heritage, museums, libraries, archives, and research centres. Certain elements of cultural heritage that have historical, aesthetic, authentic, scientific, or spiritual value are officially declared local or national monuments and are protected by the authorities.

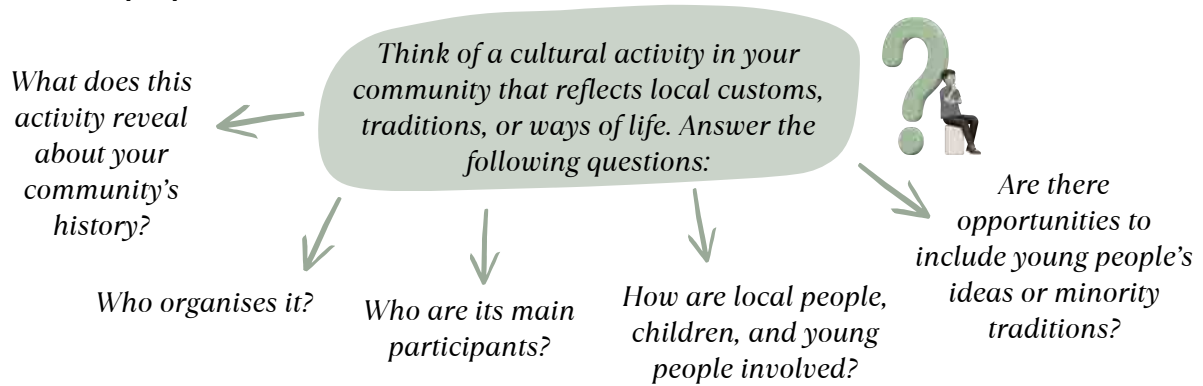
However, heritage should not be seen as the responsibility of state officials or institutions alone. It also involves people in communities who are recognised as important heritage bearers, transmitting traditional rituals and skills to younger generations. Local inhabitants' attitudes towards cultural heritage, and the meanings and importance they assign to it, shape how they preserve, maintain, and use the treasures of the past. Moreover, the selection of what from the past people choose to value, preserve, protect, or safeguard today depends on contemporary values, needs, concerns, ideas, social, political, and economic contexts, as well as local expectations.

The concept of cultural heritage is not fixed or unchanging; it is dynamic, contested, and evolving. What is considered heritage depends on local knowledge, experiences, and contemporary needs, as well as broader social, political, and economic contexts, which influence whether elements or practices are recognised as local, national, or transnational (European or global) heritage. Today, certain aspects of everyday life, such as modern houses, popular music, youth slang, dance, family recipes, or new creative ideas, may not be formally regarded as heritage, but they could gain recognition in the future.

The preservation and interpretation of cultural and natural heritage depend not only on institutions but also on civil society and local communities. Children and young people are important contributors to these processes, participating in the interpretation of the past and the co-creation of heritage. According to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, they have the right to freedom of expression and full participation in cultural and artistic life, which allows them to create cultural elements worth preserving and archiving.

Currently, they are only modestly represented as cultural bearers within institutional frameworks. Teachers and educators in cultural and heritage centres should explore ways to involve them in heritage projects, ensuring that their perspectives are considered by policymakers, experts, and other members of society.

Children and young people can contribute to heritage through play, performances, songs, and storytelling, while also helping to discover, evaluate, and interpret the achievements of past generations. When supported through education, mentorship, and opportunities to take an active role, their fresh ideas, digital skills, knowledge of social networks, and freedom from political constraints bring valuable perspectives to the research, interpretation, and sustainable use of heritage for social, cultural, environmental, and economic purposes.



What is UNESCO?

UNESCO (the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) is the leading global institution dedicated to protecting outstanding natural and cultural achievements and fostering our shared sense of humanity. One of its missions in the context of culture is to preserve, promote, celebrate, and share the world's cultural, natural, and intangible heritage, recognising it as a global public good, while also respecting the cultural values of the communities where this heritage is rooted.



UNESCO (n.d.)

According to UNESCO, cultural heritage includes “artefacts, monuments, groups of buildings and sites, and museums, which carry a diversity of values – symbolic, historical, artistic, aesthetic, ethnological or anthropological, scientific, and social significance.” As UNESCO states, “**Heritage is our legacy from the past, what we live with today, and what we pass on to future generations.**”

UNESCO divides cultural heritage into two main categories: tangible and intangible heritage.



Tangible Cultural Heritage is further divided into:

- **Immovable Heritage** that includes historical buildings, monuments, archaeological sites, and cultural landscapes, which are usually protected by institutes for the protection of cultural heritage.
- **Movable Heritage** includes paintings, sculptures, furniture, and wall paintings, which are typically preserved by museums, archives, and research centres.

Intangible Cultural Heritage encompasses oral traditions and expressions, including language; performing arts; social practices, rituals, and festivals; knowledge and practices related to nature and the world; and traditional skills.





Identify at least four UNESCO-listed heritage elements from your country. For each, note three key features or values that led to its inclusion.

UNESCO has developed several conventions to protect and celebrate the world's heritage and cultural diversity.

The 1972 Convention Concerning the Protection of the World's Cultural and Natural Heritage focuses on identifying, protecting, and preserving cultural and natural heritage sites of outstanding universal value (e.g., historical monuments, cities, natural landscapes). Today, 195 countries have signed up to the World Heritage Convention, and over 1,000 sites are included on the World Heritage List.

The 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage for Humanity aims to protect living heritage such as oral traditions, languages and dialects, performing arts, social practices, rituals, festive events, traditional craftsmanship, and knowledge related to nature and the universe. It places more emphasis on the values that communities, groups, or individuals recognise in heritage. *The UNESCO Representative List* currently features 678 elements from 140 countries, showcasing community-based and inclusive practices.

The 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions aims to ensure that cultures can flourish and interact freely. It also supports creative industries and cultural innovation, especially in developing countries.

National Register of Cultural Heritage

To be included on UNESCO's heritage lists, a site or cultural practice must first be entered in the *National Register of Cultural Heritage*, managed by the Ministry of Culture.

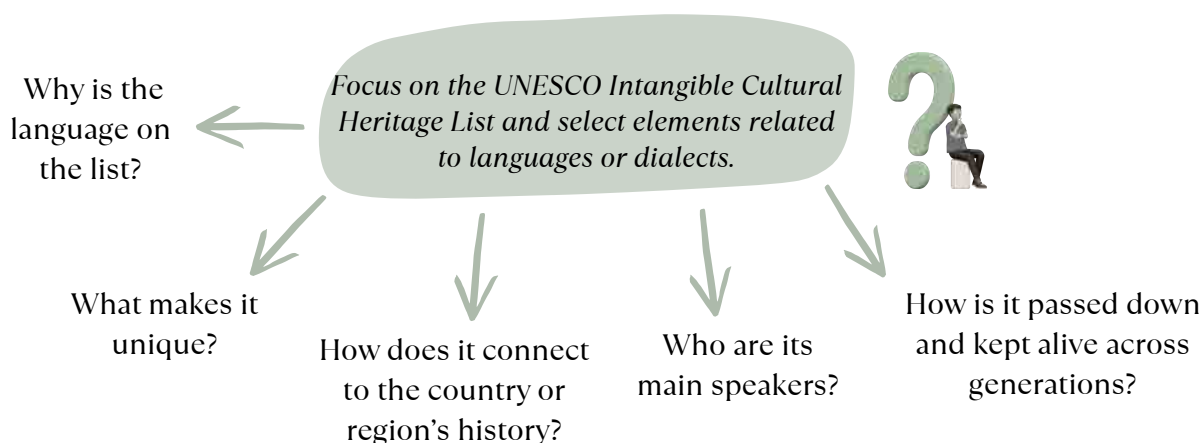


Use the online National Register of Cultural Heritage to choose three heritage sites or practices from your country.

Name	Type	Why is it important?	Is it on a UNESCO list?	How does it connect to your community?	What does it teach you?

Language as Intangible Cultural Heritage

Intangible cultural heritage is understood as living heritage and plays a crucial role in safeguarding cultural diversity in a globalised world. Linguistic heritage is recognised by individuals and communities as part of their living heritage, serving as a repository of cultural knowledge and a framework for understanding the world. Linguistic heritage includes language passed on from parents to children, the use of house names, the use of family names, dialects, and creative uses of language, such as stories, songs, or poems.



Language heritage plays a crucial role in shaping individual and community identities, as well as in fostering feelings of belonging and well-being. Language is a key aspect of how we understand ourselves, and it is learned and passed on from adults to children, from one generation to the next. It may also be seen as a reservoir that preserves traditional knowledge, particularly regarding ecology and the environment, in areas where modernity has yet to take hold. The death of a language inevitably means the permanent loss of oral traditions and expressions, which is why linguistic vitality is essential for sustaining cultural diversity. Local groups and communities therefore need support from local and national authorities to help preserve their languages, which are increasingly under threat as a result of globalisation.

Nevertheless, in the *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage* (2003), the role of language remains ambiguous. Although it is acknowledged alongside oral traditions and expressions, it is not officially recognised as heritage in itself but rather described as a vehicle or tool for transmitting other forms of intangible cultural heritage, such as whistling, chanting, or singing. As a result, languages appear on the Convention lists only indirectly, through their mediating role. According to UNESCO, despite efforts to preserve languages, it may be more appropriate to redirect heritage processes from abstract linguistic models to concrete cultural practices linked to oral traditions and other activities that are realised through language and are therefore inherently linguistic. The recognition of different forms of linguistic creativity thus provides a potential solution for navigating between international frameworks and the desires and needs of local communities.

Political and economic factors, at both national and international levels, combined with the pressures of cultural globalisation, have negatively affected the planet's linguistic diversity. Moreover, because language is often closely connected with identity, ethnicity, and religion, it can easily become entangled in political debates. In such contexts, the recognition of indigenous or minority languages within legal or cultural frameworks may even be viewed with suspicion.

Despite these challenges, many scholars argue that language should be regarded as a key dimension of intangible cultural heritage rather than merely a medium of transmission. It underpins all other forms of intangible heritage and therefore deserves explicit recognition. Furthermore, the connections between language, culture, and the environment suggest that biological, cultural, and linguistic diversity should be studied together as interconnected forms of life on Earth.



Using the National Register of Intangible Cultural Heritage, identify the number of languages and dialects recognised in your country.

Challenges of Using Cultural Heritage for Culturally Sensitive Education

Cultural heritage is often seen as the responsibility of experts in museums, archives, cultural institutions, research centres, public parks, and NGOs that protect natural and cultural landscapes. However, the most important role in its preservation is played by each individual, who—within their community (family, village, town, association, district, school, etc.) or on their own—recognises in the achievements of the past values, meanings, roots, messages, feelings, insights, and ideas that remain relevant to present and future life. The EU, UNESCO, and state parties have recognised local communities as key carriers, practitioners, and transmitters of cultural practices to younger generations.

While public awareness of the importance of heritage preservation is growing, much traditional knowledge, such as dialects, habits, poems, and dances, is being lost due to changing lifestyles, new technologies, and socio-political changes. The key is to find ways to connect this knowledge meaningfully, so it can inspire and guide innovation, combining past traditions with new creative ideas, or be used ethically in culturally sensitive education.

Children and young people are also important stakeholders in the co-creation of cultural heritage. It is essential to present heritage to them in the context of social, cultural, economic, and environmental challenges and changes, both in micro and macro settings. In a world shaped by numerous global trends, they may not fully appreciate the importance and value of their ancestors' achievements, neither in building and strengthening their personal identity nor in contributing to collective social identification practices.

This becomes particularly significant in classrooms where children come from diverse cultural backgrounds and hold different identities, religious beliefs, or sexual orientations. Since heritage is often presented to children and young people superficially, they frequently perceive it as uninteresting and associate it only with tourism.

When considering heritage in a multicultural and multilingual context, it is important to keep in mind the following reflection shared by a Slovenian high school student aged 17:

»It is important to learn about other cultures and customs, as this helps us understand ourselves more deeply. By exploring other cultures, we can better appreciate our own and learn to value, respect, and preserve it. Throughout this process, it is essential to remain both open-minded and critical, as this is the best way to build a better life together. Today, misinformation is widespread, so it is also important to check and verify the information we encounter.«

Experience of working with children and young people has shown that their involvement in heritage activities is important for several reasons. They have the skills to attract participation from the wider community, including older adults, migrants, marginalised individuals, and people with disabilities, fostering intergenerational and intercultural connections as well as overcoming social or personal barriers, and improving well-being. In contrast, intergenerational dialogue teaches them to value the memories, skills, and ideas of older generations, which can inform responses to future challenges like environmental issues, cultural preservation, and personal development. Also, such exchanges develop tolerance, patience, sensitivity, and respect for others. Interactions with migrants and ethnic minorities expose young people to different customs, languages, and beliefs, strengthening their appreciation of cultural diversity and multiculturalism.

Think of an activity in your local community that would bring together different members of the society and be based on heritage activities.

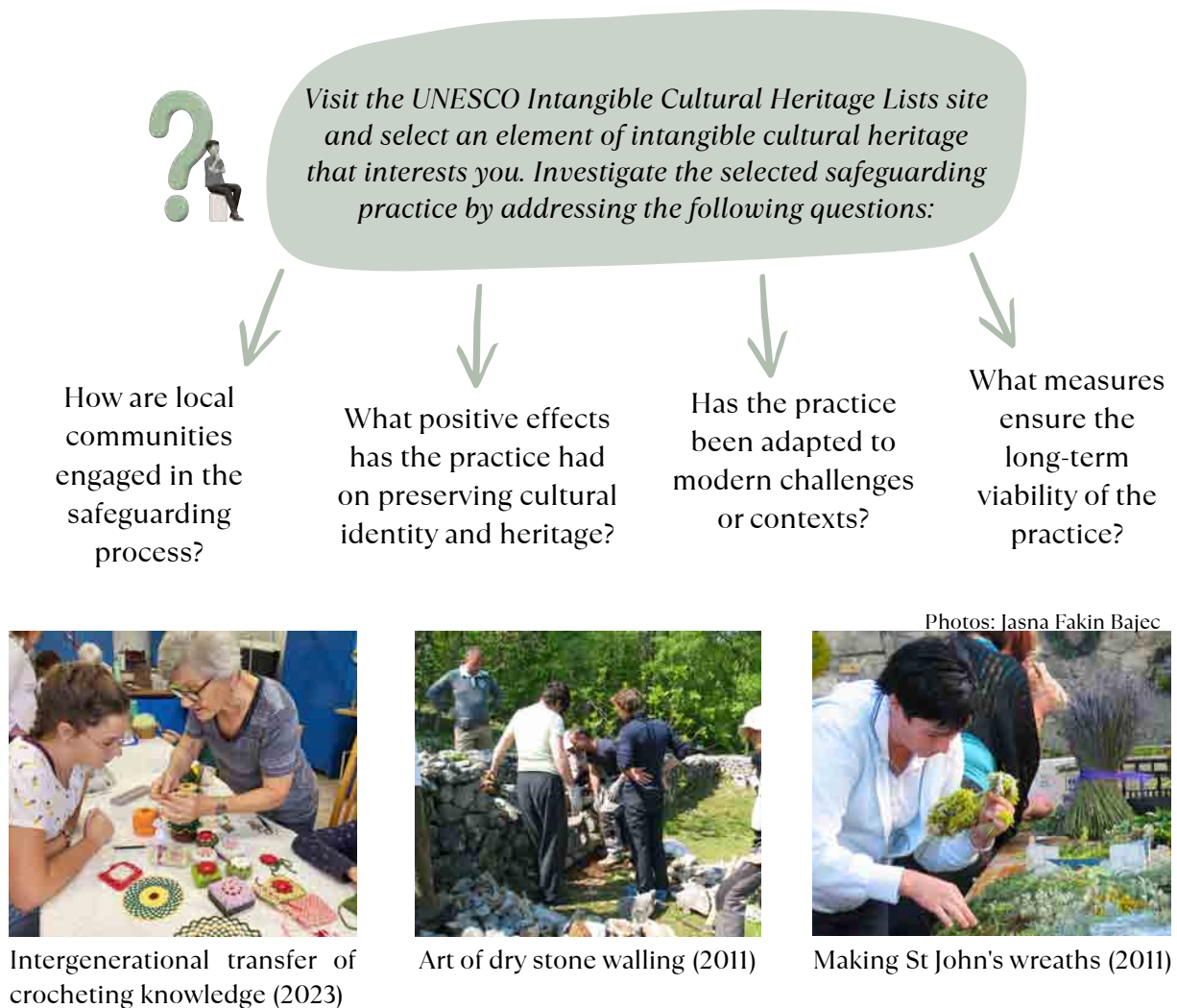


Cultural Rights

According to the *Fribourg Declaration on Cultural Rights* (2007), cultural rights, like other human rights, are both an expression and a prerequisite of human dignity. They include:

- the right to choose and respect one's cultural identity;
- the right to know and respect one's own culture and others';
- access to cultural heritage;
- the right to belong—or not—to one or more cultural communities;
- participation in cultural life;
- education and training that respect cultural identities;
- access to information and the opportunity to inform others;
- and participation in cultural cooperation.

Due to socio-political and economic contexts that often exploit the past for populist, political, or commercial purposes, it is essential to interpret historical experiences thoughtfully and deeply. In this process, the cultural rights of heritage bearers must be respected. The commercialisation of heritage can devalue people's knowledge, wisdom, and lived experience. It is therefore important to strike a balance between protecting, developing, and ethically using cultural heritage to support social, multicultural, and economic development.



Working with Academic Papers

Read the article:

Bajec, J. (2019). The interpretation and utilization of cultural heritage and its values by young people in Slovenia: Is heritage really boring and uninteresting? *Etnološka tribina*, 49(42), 173–193.

Now answer the following questions:

- What values are most important to young people in Slovenia, and how do these values connect to cultural heritage?
- How would young people like to participate in interpreting and sharing heritage?
- How do you personally contribute to your community and help preserve and use heritage ethically for social and cultural development?



Revisiting Concepts in Focus

1. Create a list of the main concepts discussed in this chapter.
2. Write a summary of the key takeaways from this section in approximately 300 words. Your reflection should actively refer to and apply several of the concepts introduced. In your response, consider the following prompts:
 - In what ways has engaging with these concepts influenced your thinking, beliefs, or future actions?
 - Which key term(s) do you find most powerful, difficult to understand, inspiring, or confusing? Explain your reasoning.
3. Formulate a question or dilemma that you are still left with.

Culture & Language Curiosities

Sumerian, spoken by the people of Sumer in Southern Mesopotamia from around 3400 BC to 1AD, is the oldest attested written language. It is a language isolate, meaning it is not related to any other known language.

Portfolio Assignment No. 13

Go to the *Portfolio Assignments* section, read the instructions carefully, and complete the task.

**Press *Play* for
Perspective**

Promoting Cultural
Heritage is Sharing
Humanity



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Truths across Time

Heritage is a unique legacy that links us to our ancestors—a precious gift entrusted to us, which we have the responsibility to preserve and pass on to future generations.

Resident of the Karst region, Slovenia



Portfolio Assignments

A **portfolio** is a collection of your work over time that shows your progress, achievements, and reflections as a learner. A portfolio demonstrates what you can do and how you got there. It connects theory and practice by encouraging you to apply concepts to authentic contexts. This portfolio includes 13 assignments given throughout the semester. Read the instructions carefully, and complete the tasks.



Portfolio Assignment No. 1: Digital Multilingual Greetings Wall

Create a digital multilingual greetings wall that includes fun facts related to greetings.

Portfolio Assignment No. 2: Our Language Tree

Devise a classroom project titled *Our Language Tree* with the goal of exploring and celebrating the linguistic and cultural diversity represented in a class of 10-year old pupils. The project should take the form of a creative and inclusive group activity, where every child has the opportunity to contribute and feel that their language and culture are valued. Form step-by-step instructions to carry out the plan.

Portfolio Assignment No. 3: CLIL and Sustainability

Create a CLIL lesson on the topic of Sustainability. Design authentic and meaningful activities that integrate subject knowledge and language learning. When designing the activity, make sure to specify the learners' age, proficiency level, and context, duration of the activity. Frame learning objectives in terms of 4C.

Portfolio Assignment No. 4: Critical Coursebook Analysis

Select an English language primary school coursebook of your choice and critically examine the task instructions. To what extent do they reflect the taxonomy of educational objectives? Which cognitive domains are emphasised most frequently, and which are underrepresented?

Portfolio Assignment No. 5: Language as a Means of Influence

Devise an activity that would help children understand how language can be used to manipulate. When designing the activity, make sure to specify the learners' age, proficiency level, and context, duration of the activity. Clearly state what skills or knowledge you want learners to develop and what learners should be able to do by the end of the activity.

Portfolio Assignment No. 6: Proverbs for Sustainability

Design a classroom project that uses proverbs with a message related to the topic of sustainability. When designing your project, make sure to specify the learners' age, proficiency level, context, and duration of the project. Clearly state what skills or knowledge you want learners to develop and what learners should be able to do by the end of the activity.

Portfolio Assignment No. 7: Borrowed Words

Identify 15 words in your mother tongue that have been borrowed from other languages. For each word, provide the original language and the original form, the estimated period or historical context when the borrowing likely occurred, and a short explanation of why or how the word was borrowed. What do the findings reveal? Do these words enrich your language and identity or threaten it?

Portfolio Assignment No. 8: Digital Storytelling: English in our Lives

Create a 3-4 minute digital storytelling video* that explores the status, spread, and influence of English in your country. In your story, address the following:

- What role does English play in your country, and in particular among young people?
- How prevalent is English in everyday communication, education, media, technology, or public spaces?
- How does English interact with your mother tongue? Consider examples of code-switching, borrowed words, hybrid phrases, or even resistance to English influence.
- End your video with a reflective question that encourages critical reflection on the future of English in your society.

*Digital storytelling is the practice of using computer-based tools to tell stories or present ideas. It often draws on the personal experiences of learners or reflections on their learning, making it authentic and meaningful. Digital stories integrate multimedia elements, including sound (narration) and images (photos, drawings, or AI-generated images). Digital storytelling fosters engagement, collaboration, and critical thinking. It helps learners develop digital and communicative skills. A well-crafted digital story evokes emotion, provokes reflection, and inspires viewers (Smeda et al., 2014).

Smeda, N., Dakich, E., & Sharda, N. (2014). The effectiveness of digital storytelling in the classrooms: A comprehensive study. *Smart Learning Environments*, 1(1), 6.

Portfolio Assignment No. 9: Bilingualism in the Age of AI

Investigate how AI translation models (e.g., Google Translate, DeepL, ChatGPT) handle multiple languages. Provide three examples where the AI produced grammatically correct translations but failed to capture cultural nuances, idiomatic expressions, or humour. For each example, briefly explain what was lost or altered in meaning.

Portfolio Assignment No. 10: Bread around the World

Create a poster on the topic of *Bread around the World*. Focus on how bread is used in festivals, ceremonies, and religious rituals across different cultures. Include photos or illustrations that show bread in cultural celebrations. Add the specific names of breads from various communities around the world. Make your poster informative and engaging, highlighting the cultural significance of each type of bread.



Portfolio Assignment No. 11: Hair Love

Hair Love is an Oscar®-winning animated short film that tells the heartfelt story of an African American father learning to style his daughter's hair for the first time. Watch the film *Hair Love* and write a short essay. Answer the following questions:

- How does the film represent an underrepresented community?
- How do the characters communicate and solve problems?
- What lessons can be drawn about empathy, collaboration, and understanding across differences?
- How are messages communicated through visuals, story, and character development?



Portfolio Assignment No. 12: Connected in Diversity

Create a poster that highlights and celebrates the cultural diversity of your multilingual/multicultural community. Include a slogan that reflects connection and a sense of belonging.

Portfolio Assignment No. 13: Telling the Stories of our Heritage

Conduct three semi-structured interviews with local heritage practitioners to explore tangible and intangible elements of cultural heritage in your community.

1. Prepare creative 10–15 open-ended questions focusing on What, Why, and How. Start with broad questions and gradually move to more specific ones. Keep your questions clear, neutral, and flexible.
2. As you conduct the interview, encourage discussion, avoid influencing responses, and follow interesting topics that arise naturally.

For guidance on semi-structured interviews, watch this short video:

3. After the interviews, summarise your results based on your research in a digital story, supported by your own photos that reflects the significance of the heritage you explored, the people involved, and the lessons learned.



Glossary

A

anti-proverb

a play on a traditional proverb, where the wording is changed to create humour, irony or a new meaning

appropriation

the adoption or use of elements from another culture, often without understanding or respecting its original meaning

assimilation

the process by which individuals or groups gradually adopt the language, customs, and values of another dominant culture

awakening to languages

an approach in language education that raises learners' awareness of the diversity of languages and cultures around them

B

balanced bilinguals

individuals with roughly equal proficiency in both languages

bilingualism

the ability to use two languages

boundaries

distinctions that separate groups, cultures, or communities from one another, often marking differences in language, customs, or territory

C

code-mixing

the use of elements from two languages in the same sentence or conversation

cognitive advantages

benefits observed in bilinguals related to task switching, inhibitory control, and attention management

code-switching

the practice of shifting between two or more languages or language varieties in a single conversation

community identities

shared characteristics, values, and traditions that define a group or community

common/public cultural heritage

the shared traditions, places, and cultural expressions that belong to a whole community, nation, or humanity, and are valued collectively

CLIL

teaching a subject through a foreign language so students learn both the subject and the language

conceptual knowledge

understanding of ideas, principles, and relationships between concepts

creativity

using imagination to come up with new ideas, solutions, or ways of expressing yourself

critical thinking

the ability to question, analyse, and evaluate information and arguments before forming a judgement

cultural diversity

the existence of different cultural and ethnic groups within a society

cultural globalisation

the spread of cultural products, practices, and ideas across borders, leading to shared global lifestyles and symbols

cultural expression

ways people show their culture, through arts, language, customs, or traditions

cultural heritage

the traditions, monuments, practices, and objects passed down from previous generations that are valued today

cultural identity

a person's sense of belonging to a particular culture or a group

cultural literacy

knowing about and understanding different cultures, including their values, beliefs, and ways of life

cultural rights

the rights of individuals and communities to access, practice, and preserve their culture

culture

shared beliefs, customs, language, art, and ways of life of a group of people

D**dialect**

a regional or social form of a language with its own words, grammar, or pronunciation

domains of language use

different contexts in which languages are used, e.g., home, school, workplace, and social settings

E**ethnic community**

a group of people who share common characteristics such as language, religion, ancestry, or cultural traditions, often maintaining these through social practices like endogamy

entertainment culture/commercial culture

cultural forms produced primarily for profit and consumption, emphasising leisure, amusement, and market appeal (e.g., film, television, pop music)

etymology

the study of the origin and history of words and how their meanings have changed over time

F**factual knowledge**

information that is true and can be verified

folk wisdom

traditional knowledge, sayings, or beliefs passed down through generations in a culture

foreign language

a language learned that is not commonly spoken in one's community or country

G**globalisation**

the growing interconnection of societies worldwide through trade, technology, migration, and communication

H**heritage bearer**

a person or group who preserves, practices, and passes on cultural traditions, knowledge, skills, or values to others

heritage language

a language passed down from family or ancestors

heritage speakers

speakers who acquire a language at home but may have limited formal literacy or vocabulary in it

high culture

artistic and intellectual expressions traditionally associated with elite tastes and education (e.g., classical music, fine arts, literature)

home language/mother tongue/first language

the language you first learn at home, usually from your family

I**identification processes**

the ways people recognise, adopt, or negotiate their personal or group identities

identity

how individuals or groups understand and define themselves, including traits, beliefs, and social roles

immersion programmes

educational programmes in which a second language is used as the medium to teach other subjects, promoting functional bilingualism and biliteracy

intangible cultural heritage

traditions, oral stories, rituals, skills passed down from previous generations

integrated approaches to languages

teaching methods that combine multiple languages or language skills in one lesson or curriculum

intercomprehension of related languages

the ability to understand a language by using knowledge of a related language

intercultural approach

teaching or learning that emphasises understanding and respecting different cultures

intercultural competences

skills and attitudes that help you communicate and work well with people from different cultural backgrounds

intercultural dialogue

respectful exchanges of ideas between people from different cultures to understand and learn from each other

intercultural education

education that includes learning about different cultures and developing skills for respectful interaction

intercultural sensitivity

the ability to notice, respect, and adapt to cultural differences in communication and behaviour

interference

the influence of one language on another, often causing errors or changes in speech, writing, or comprehension

intergenerational transmission

the passing of language, traditions, or culture from one generation to the next

international language

a language widely used around the world for communication, such as English, Spanish, or French

intangible cultural heritage

traditions, knowledge, skills, and practices (like music, dance, rituals, or storytelling) that communities pass down, but which are not physical objects

L**language competences**

the skills and knowledge needed to use a language effectively

language delay

slower than typical development in one or more aspects of language, not caused by bilingualism

language disorder/impairment

clinically diagnosed difficulties in language development, independent of bilingualism

language endangerment

a language at risk of disappearing

language repertoire

all the languages and varieties that a person can use or understand

language revitalisation

efforts to bring a declining or endangered language back into regular use

language sensitivity

being aware of and respectful toward language differences and usage in communication

learning through language

acquiring knowledge or skills in a subject by using a language as the medium of learning

lingua franca

a language used as a common means of communication between speakers of different native languages

linguistic awareness

understanding how language works and how it is used in different contexts

linguistic/language heritage

the language(s) and dialect(s) a person inherits from their family, community or culture

linguistically sensitive teaching

teaching that takes into account students' language backgrounds and promotes awareness of language diversity

living heritage

traditions, practices, knowledge, and skills that are actively passed down through generations and continue to be practiced and adapted by communities today, such as festivals, crafts, oral storytelling, and performing arts

local heritage

cultural or natural heritage that is significant to a specific community, town, or region

localisation

the adaptation or revival of local traditions, languages, and practices in response to global influences, creating a link between global and local contexts

M**mass culture**

cultural products and practices created for large, anonymous audiences, usually standardised and widely distributed through media and technology

metacognition

thinking about one's own thinking, being aware of and in control of one's learning processes

metacognitive knowledge

knowledge about how we learn, including strategies and understanding of our strengths and weaknesses

metalinguistic skills

the ability to consciously think about and reflect on how language works, beyond just understanding or using it

minority language

a language spoken by a smaller group within a country

multiculturalism

a way of living where different cultures exist together and are respected equally

multilingualism

the ability to use or know multiple languages

N**nation**

a large community of people connected by shared history, language, culture, or territory, often seeking or possessing political self-determination

national culture

the shared values, customs, traditions, language, and symbols that connect members of a nation

national identity

a sense of belonging to a nation, often linked to history, culture, language, and symbols

national language

the language officially recognised by a country, often used in government and public life

national myth

a traditional story or belief that shapes a nation's identity, even if it is not entirely historical

national heritage

cultural or natural heritage that is important to a whole country and often officially recognised and protected by national institutions

O**official language**

a language chosen by the state for laws, schools, and administration (can be more than one)

one-person-one-language strategy

a language strategy in which each caregiver consistently speaks only one language with the child

P**personal cultural heritage**

the traditions, objects, stories, and practices that come from one's own family or life experience and shape one's personal identity

personal identities

aspects of identity specific to an individual, shaped by personal experiences, choices, and characteristics

phonological awareness

the ability to recognise and manipulate the sound structures of spoken language, such as syllables, rhymes, and individual speech sounds (phonemes)

plurilingual education

an approach to education that encourages learning and using several languages

plurilingualism

the ability to use and switch between several languages as well as blend knowledge from all of them

popular culture

everyday cultural practices and expressions enjoyed by broad audiences, reflecting current trends, tastes, and social dynamics

procedural knowledge

knowing how to do something (strategies, methods, skills)

Proto-Indo-European language family

the ancient ancestor of many modern European languages

proverb

a short, traditional saying that expresses a general truth or piece of advice

public good

something that is available to everyone in a community or society and benefits all, such as clean air, public parks, education, or cultural heritage

R

receptive attitudes

being open-minded and willing to listen to and learn from others

regional language

a language spoken in a particular area of a country

S

second language

a language one's learns after one's first language, often used in schools or society

sequential bilinguals

individuals who learn a second language after the first language is established

simultaneous bilinguals

individuals exposed to two languages from birth and developing proficiency in both naturally

sign language

a visual language using hand signs, facial expressions, and gestures, mainly used by deaf and hard-of-hearing communities

social understanding

the ability to comprehend others' perspectives, desires, and intentions, often enhanced in bilingual children

stereotypes

oversimplified and often unfair ideas about a group of people

symbols

objects, images, or actions that represent and communicate shared meanings within a community or nation

T

tangible cultural heritage

physical objects (e.g., monuments, artworks, artefacts) passed down from previous generations

taxonomy of thinking processes

a system for classifying different types of thinking, from simple to complex

translanguaging

the practice of using all of one's language knowledge flexibly to communicate, learn or make meaning

transnational heritage

cultural or natural heritage that is shared across multiple countries or regions, reflecting connections between different communities or nations

U

UNESCO's Heritage Lists

International lists created by UNESCO that recognise and protect important cultural and natural heritage sites, traditions, and practices

Note on Authors



Dr Melita Lemut Bajec is an assistant professor at the Faculty of Education, University of Ljubljana, specialising in linguistics and foreign language teaching methodology. Her research focuses on Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), particularly integrating cultural heritage to promote intercultural awareness and dialogue. She also explores cross-curricular, project-based, and learner-centred approaches that foster creativity, critical thinking, and collaboration in language classrooms.

She is actively involved in research on linguistically sensitive and inclusive teaching, focusing on strategies that promote multilingual and multicultural education as well as support learners with diverse needs. In applied linguistics, she studies the relationship between language, culture, and cognition, including how proverbs and idiomatic expressions preserve cultural memory and continue to transmit values and life lessons to younger generations.



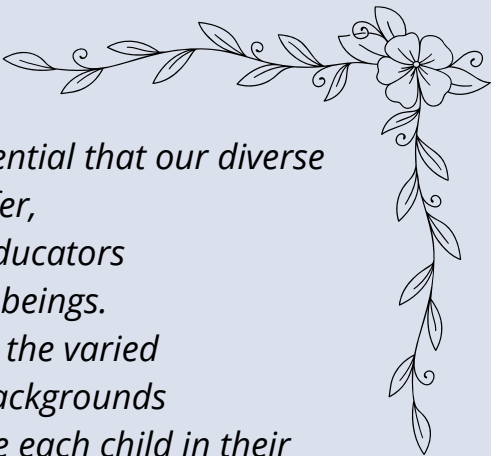
Dr Karmen Pižorn is Dean and a full professor at the Faculty of Education, University of Ljubljana. Her work spans language teaching methodology, assessment, early language acquisition, plurilingualism, and intercultural education, with a focus on connecting theory, policy, and classroom practice. Her research in language assessment has been influential, addressing both large-scale testing and inclusive evaluation for learners with diverse needs.

She emphasises fairness and accessibility, ensuring assessments capture listening, reading, speaking, and writing skills while respecting learners' individual profiles. Dr Pižorn is a leading scholar in pluralistic and multilingual approaches, exploring how plurilingual competence supports intercultural understanding, democratic values, and inclusive education. She contributes to international discussions on language policy and teacher training, advocating for strategies that foster multilingualism, intercultural dialogue, and equity in education worldwide.

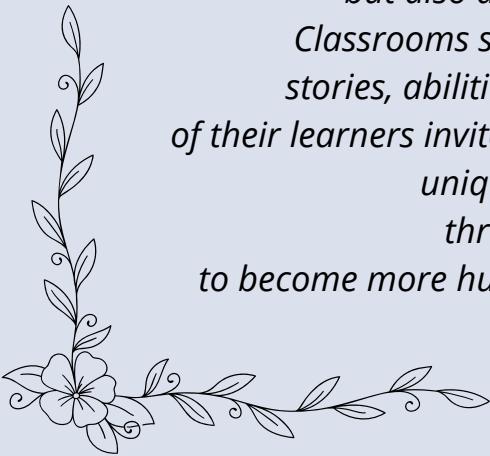


Dr Jasna Fakin Bajec is an ethnologist, cultural anthropologist, and historian, employed at the Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts (ZRC SAZU) and the School of Humanities at the University of Nova Gorica, where she is an assistant professor. She researches cultural practices and socio-political processes involved in creating heritage for the social, cultural, environmental, and economic development.

Through collaboration with local associations, cultural institutions, schools, and municipalities, she develops participatory approaches to inclusive understanding, interpretation, and utilization of heritage for sustainable life, well-being, multicultural, and respectful mutual collaboration. She also emphasises the emotional, memory-based, identity-based, and intersectional dimensions of understanding both tangible and intangible heritage items. Additionally, she addresses issues relating to commercialisation, cultural and natural rights, cultural ecosystem, and sustainable development in the context of the ethical use of heritage for development.



*If we fail to acknowledge the potential that our diverse
classrooms offer,
we fail not only as educators
but also as human beings.
Classrooms shaped by the varied
stories, abilities, and backgrounds
of their learners invite us to see each child in their
uniqueness and,
through that,
to become more humane and compassionate.*



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