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EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY ALLIANCE

Circle U. Language Compass

ACT, REFLECT, SHARE · WORTH KNOWING & THINKING ABOUT · TOOLKIT

TEACHING & LEARNING · RESEARCH · COMMUNICATION · GOVERNANCE

A Compass for Circle U.

A language policy framework for inclusion, diversity, and knowledge building

Co-funded by
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Introduction

Just a 3-minute read. We would be very happy if you spent these 3 minutes now; it will save you time later.

This compass, developed by the CU.mil team, aims to foster multilingualism and interculturality across our European University Alliance. Rather than prescribing rigid rules, we offer a dynamic framework - conceptualized as a compass - designed to help and inspire members of our universities in their plurilingual[1] development.

We'd like to stress from the start that our language compass is **not simply another language policy paper**. Many existing language policy documents are already circulating in universities. Yet, despite their qualities, such documents often struggle to generate lasting impact. One reason is that such documents are either often replaced when governance changes, not always monitored in terms of impact, or partially ignored because of financial pressures/difficulties or shifts in strategic priorities. Another reason is that language policies often propose uniform objectives (often motivated by a legitimate desire to ensure equity). Yet, uniformity often proves unattainable in reality, given the diversity of needs, resources, and realities within and across institutional contexts. Finally, and most critically, typical language policy papers often concentrate on language courses alone and rarely discuss the pervasive role of languages in knowledge production, research, dissemination, and community engagement. This narrow focus on language courses or offerings is still deeply embedded in institutional structures and practices. It unintentionally limits broader efforts toward academic inclusion, access, and excellence.

Our document should be understood as complementary to existing frameworks as it proposes a different path: not a prescriptive roadmap, but **a compass**. It is a tool designed to encourage flexible, informed, and context-sensitive engagement with multilingualism and interculturality. It helps each part of the university not only to reflect, act, and evolve in ways that make sense locally, but also to situate itself within a broader, shared vision across our Alliance for a more inclusive and intellectually vibrant academic community. We aim to support our collective and individual engagement with plurilingual practices in a flexible and personalized manner.

> **True to the nature of a compass, it is structured around four key directions: teaching/learning, research, communication, and governance.**
>
> **Within each direction, we provide three interconnected subsections:**
>
> - **Worth knowing and thinking about: foundational concepts, research insights, European language policy directions, and reflections to deepen understanding of plurilingualism and its significance in the specific area.**
> - **Toolkit and guidance: practical strategies, resources, and examples to support the implementation of plurilingual approaches.**
> - **Act, reflect, share: encouragement for self-assessment, active experimentation, implementation, critical reflection, and sharing of experiences to support individual and collective agency.**

Each direction can be explored on its own BUT their greatest impact will emerge when they interact as parts of a shared ecosystem.

We envision this compass as **a living, online resource** - dynamic, adaptable, and responsive – that will be **accessible digitally**[2]. Rather than being a static and linear document, it serves as a flexible navigation tool that allows users to easily explore the sections most relevant to their context. Hyperlinks also guide readers to cited and supporting references, case studies, or to other external resources. Designed as a community-driven initiative, the compass will be regularly updated as research, practices, and language related technologies constantly evolve.

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[1] We use the term plurilingualism as an umbrella term including multilingualism and interculturality as it aligns with the terminology used in EU documents, where plurilingualism emphasizes the active use of multiple languages as a means of promoting inclusion, communication, knowledge and mutual understanding across linguistic and cultural boundaries.

[2] As the Circle U. website is currently being revamped, the Compass will be made available in its online and navigable version as soon as the IT facilities are ready.

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Stakeholders across the alliance will also be invited to suggest additions, share experiences, and highlight successful strategies. To reflect the spirit of the project and promote accessibility, key content will be made available in multiple languages (look for the language logos and options). Infographics and visual indicators will also be integrated to make the content easier to grasp.

Whether users/readers choose to engage deeply with one area or navigate across multiple directions, the goal remains the same:

- **to inspire thoughtful and active engagement with plurilingualism,**
- **to value linguistic and cultural diversity,**
- **to foster inclusion and equity, and**
- **to contribute to multifaceted, in-depth knowledge.**

In this document, we adopt a broad understanding of communication, i.e. one that goes beyond the transfer of information to include the (co-)construction of social meaning. In this view, language as a medium of communication does not merely transmit content but also expresses, reflects, and shapes knowledge building, social relationships, identity (including group identities), and a sense of belonging. Recognizing this allows us to see how plurilingual practices can validate and support students' and staff's diverse linguistic and cultural identities.

By using this compass, Circle U. members - and anyone interested in becoming actively plurilingual - can take informed, context-sensitive steps towards multilingualism. The enhancement of our collective European identity, combined with the respect of specific linguistic landscapes, contexts and needs, will strengthen collaboration and mutual understanding across and beyond the alliance.

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ACT, REFLECT, SHARE

WORTH KNOWING & THINKING ABOUT

TEACHING & LEARNING

GOVERNANCE

RESEARCH

COMMUNICATION

TOOLKIT

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1 Teaching and learning

1.1 Worth knowing and thinking about

(Useful information, research findings, key concepts, and reflection questions to consider)

The role of language(s) and culture(s) in human cognition (in any discipline)

Language is much more than a communication tool: research highlights that language is not simply a medium of communication but that it actively shapes cognition, learning, and identity. Power relations and human agency are also instantiated through language choices and language use. Language influences not only how individuals teach, learn and think but also how they perceive and construct their identities within educational contexts.

🔗 *If you want to know more, see for instance:*

Lupyan, G. (2016). The Centrality of Language in Human Cognition. Language Learning, 66, 516-553, https://doi.org/10.1111/LANG.12155;

Ellis, N. (2019). Essentials of a Theory of Language Cognition. The Modern Language Journal. https://doi.org/10.1111/MODL.12532;

Coyle, D., & Meyer, O. (2021). Beyond CLIL: Pluriliteracies Teaching for Deeper Learning. Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108914505;

McKinney, C., & Norton, B. (2024). Identity, Language, and Learning. In Leung, C., & Lewkowicz, J. (Eds.). The Routledge Companion to English Studies (2nd ed.). Routledge. (pp. 225–237). https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003221265;

Language helps negotiate meaning and using multiple languages helps even more: studies show that allowing students to use multiple languages (e.g. by allowing plurilingual practices in class to mediate knowledge building) improves comprehension and critical thinking for disciplinary content teaching and learning. In internationalized university lectures, making plurilingual (and multimodal) resources available supports the construction of disciplinary knowledge. It is also useful in the management of participation, comprehension and attention, and complexity. Promoting plurilingual competence also supports learners' agency.

🔗 **If you want to know more, see for instance:**

Moore, E., Nussbaum, L., & Borràs, E. (2013). Plurilingual teaching and learning practices in 'internationalised' university lectures. International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism, 16, 471 - 493. https://doi.org/10.1080/13670050.2012.702724;

Marshall, S., & Moore, D. (2018). Plurilingualism amid the panoply of lingualisms: addressing critiques and misconceptions in education. International Journal of Multilingualism, 15, 19 - 34. https://doi.org/10.1080/14790718.2016.1253699);

Meunier, F. (2025). Pluriliteracies. In: McCallum, L., Tafazoli, D. (eds) The Palgrave Encyclopedia of Computer-Assisted Language Learning. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-51447-0_244-1;

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Sisti, Flora. 'Quale Scelta Per Una Politica Linguistica Universitaria Multilingue?' SAIL (2021): n. pag. Crossref. Web. https://edizionicafoscari.unive.it/it/edizioni/libri/978-88-6969-502-5/quale-scelta-per-una-politica-linguistica-universi/

Veerman, E., Danbury, E., Duarte, J. da S., Volman, M., & Gaikhorst, L. (2025). A systematic review of empirical studies into multilingual pedagogies and their outcomes in primary education. Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development, 1–26. https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.2025.2472862;

Wiese, H., Tracy, R. & Sennema, A. (2020). Deutschpflicht auf dem Schulhof? Warum wir Mehrsprachigkeit brauchen. Duden-Debattenbuch. Berlin: Duden-Verlag.

> **Technologies can support language learning and teaching: digital tools can support mobility, collaboration, and adaptive learning. AI-powered tools offer options for distributed agency, proactive and predictive personalization, and interconnected modalities (textual, visual, or auditory input; gesture recognition; haptic feedback; or multilingual systems). However, current technology can also fully augment language and bypass learning processes (translating speech while preserving voice, prosody, and even facial expressions). In such cases communication occurs without any cognitive engagement with additional languages. Rather than using technologies to replace human cognition, we advocate for a balanced, human-centered engagement with new technologies in language learning.**

🔗 **If you want to know more, see for instance:**

Danesi, M; (2024) AI in Foreign Language Learning and Teaching: Theory and Practice. Series: Advancements in Learning and Instruction; Languages and Linguistics. Nova Science Publishers. https://doi.org/10.52305/NSEI4745

EBSCOhost. (2024). The Bloomsbury handbook of language learning and technology (R. Hampel & U. Stickler, Eds.). Bloomsbury Academic. https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?authtype=ip,sso&custid=s4392798&direct=true&scope=site&db=nlebk&db=nlabk&AN=3908212

Meunier, F., Klimova, B., Lejot, E., Pareja Lora, A., Pikhart, M. (in press). Additional Language Learning and Teaching in the Human-Machine Era. In Sayers, D., Glass, M., Kelly-Holmes, H., & Fuchs, R. Language in the Human-Machine Era: New technologies and the coming transformation of language. Boston, MA: MIT University Press.

Stockwell, G., & Wang, Y. (Eds.). (2025). The Cambridge handbook of technology in language teaching and learning. Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009294850

> **Linguistic hospitality, that is a welcoming an inclusive approach to language, and the use of English as widely used medium of instruction seem to be contradictory approaches to higher education: using international English/English as a lingua franca can be useful (shared language, communicative effectiveness) but it is important to recognize that it can cause two rather opposite negative reactions: it can be seen as promoting homogenization and denying pluricentricity OR as resulting in too much diversity, lacking standards. In some English Medium Instruction (EMI) contexts, the approach to English can be highly flexible (essentially an 'anything goes' stance) in which wide variation in form and accuracy is tolerated. While this often reflects a commendable focus on communication over prescriptive norms, there are instances where the degree of variation becomes so great that even intelligibility may be at risk. To avoid extreme reactions, it should be stressed that inclusivity can also be enhanced in EMI**

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courses (e.g. using back-channeling and co-creation strategies, acknowledging diverse perspectives, allowing the use of different languages in support of making meaning and building rapport, etc.).

🔗 **If you want to know more, see for instance:**

Kearney, R. (2021). Linguistic Hospitality. The Risk of Translation. In Radical Hospitality: From Thought to Action (pp. 17-23). New York, USA: Fordham University Press. https://doi.org/10.1515/9780823294442-002;

Jenkins, J. (2009). English as a Lingua Franca: interpretations and attitudes. World Englishes. 28. 200 - 207. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-971X.2009.01582.x;

Zhou, S., Fung, D., & Thomas, N. (2023). Towards deeper learning in EMI lectures: the role of English proficiency and motivation in students' deep processing of content knowledge. Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development. https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.2023.2248078;

Culturally sustaining/responsive pedagogies (or in other words, teaching approaches that recognize, value, and actively build on students' cultural and linguistic identities as assets for learning) enhance students' (emotional) engagement by valuing and incorporating their cultural backgrounds, languages, and experiences into the learning process, making education more relevant and empowering to all.

🔗 **If you want to know more, see for instance:**

Dirim, I. & Layne, P. (2022). Dialog zur Bedeutung diskriminierungskritischer Zugänge Zeitschrift für Deutsch im Kontext von Mehrsprachigkeit. 38, 1+2, p. 227-234

Dunham, H., Murdter-Atkinson, J., Nash, B. & Mosley Wetzel, M. (2022). Building on linguistic strengths: Tenets of a culturally sustaining teacher. The Reading Teacher 75(6). 677–684. https://doi.org/10.1002/trtr.2094;

Flores, N. (2019). From academic language to language architecture: Challenging raciolinguistic ideologies in research and practice. Theory Into Practice, 59(1), 22–31. https://doi.org/10.1080/00405841.2019.1665411

Li Wei (2021). Translanguaging as a political stance: implications for English language education. ELT Journal 76; 2: 172–18 [https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/ccab083];

Perales-Fernández-De-Gamboa, A., & Orcasitas-Vicandi, M. (2024). Language teaching in the 21st century: incorporating culturally sustaining pedagogies for social and cognitive justice in education. Applied Linguistics Review. https://doi.org/10.1515/applirev-2024-0208;

Actively engaging with language and addressing language related accessibility considerations promotes inclusivity and engagement. It is essential to understand the nature, mechanisms, and outcomes resulting from engagement in language learning. To make sure that the language(s) used in class will not create accessibility problems, it can help to discuss potential problems, and to try and overcome them – at least in part by providing mediation options when available, be they human (like sign language) or technological (like speech-to-text, text-to-speech tools, AT tools, etc.)

🔗 **If you want to know more, see for instance:**

Hiver, P., Al-Hoorie, A. H., Vitta, J. P., & Wu, J. (2021). Engagement in language learning: A systematic review of 20 years of research methods and definitions. Language Teaching Research, 28(1), 201-230. https://doi.org/10.1177/13621688211001289;

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Bercaru, V., & Popescu, N. (2024). A Systematic Review of Accessibility Techniques for Online Platforms: Current Trends and Challenges. Applied Sciences. https://doi.org/10.3390/app142210337;

Reflection questions

Given what precedes, please take some time to reflect on these questions:

- Have I learned something that I wasn't aware of when reading the first section? And if so, what?
- What do I gain or lose when I only teach in one language?
- What do I gain or lose when I only accept/require classroom interactions in one language?
- How does language shape my students' understanding in my discipline/area?
- Could I potentially - and unwillingly - be reinforcing monolingual ideologies and limiting identity construction in my discipline/area? And if so, how?
- Am I encouraging plurilingual and pluricultural knowledge building in my discipline? And if so, in what ways?
- Am I comfortable with the language choices that I am proposing in my course and am I ready to discuss/justify these openly?
- Would I be ready to adapt my course to make it more plurilingual and pluricultural friendly, and if so how/for which aspects?
- How often do I include texts in different languages in the syllabus/pedagogical resources I recommend/use?
- Are my students allowed and/or encouraged to use their full linguistic repertoire in assessments?
- Am I using technologies to support engagement with multiple languages? And if so, am I aware of their affordances and risks?

Other possible format: (only a suggestion for when interactive version is available)

Self-awareness & language ideologies		❑ Have I learned something I wasn't aware of when reading the first section? ❑ Am I reinforcing monolingual ideologies and limiting identity construction? ❑ Am I comfortable with the language choices I'm proposing in my course?
Teaching practices & course design		❑ What do I gain or lose when I only teach in one language? ❑ What do I gain or lose when I only accept classroom interaction in one language? ❑ Would I be ready to adapt my course to be more plurilingual/pluricultural?
Students' linguistic repertoires		❑ How does language shape students' understanding in my discipline? ❑ Are students encouraged to use their full linguistic repertoire in assessments? ❑ Do I include texts in different languages in the resources I recommend?
Technology & institutional support		❑ Am I using technologies to support engagement with multiple languages? ❑ Am I aware of the affordances and risks of these technologies? ❑ Am I encouraging plurilingual/pluricultural knowledge building in my area?

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1.2 Toolkit and guidance

(Concrete suggestions, tools, and strategies for fostering multilingual and multicultural teaching)

Trying out plurilingual teaching approaches

- ✓ Propose **multilingual bibliographies** and encourage readings in multiple languages (and if you believe that the 'best' science/knowledge in your domain is only available in English, also have a look at the research section of the compass to reflect on the preconceptions this may reveal and the implications such assumptions may have for knowledge diversity and academic inclusion). Using multilingual bibliographies means broadening whose voices, languages, and ways of knowing are represented. It invites us to move beyond dominant perspectives by including diverse linguistic and cultural experiences, especially those historically marginalized. This approach aligns with plurilingual and intercultural teaching, promoting linguistic justice and encouraging teachers and students to engage critically and inclusively with the world.

- ✓ Propose **flexible language use in assessments**: accepting submissions in multiple languages or plurilingual submissions (several languages used in one submission) when/if possible or relevant.

- ✓ **Embed multilingualism in daily practices and lead by example** (when/if possible): provide/use multilingual course materials (PPT slides, handouts in different languages); invite guest speakers representing linguistic and cultural diversity; and ask for student feedback on such practices.

- ✓ Team up! **Work with colleagues** on joined initiatives, go and observe colleagues who would be ready to welcome you in their plurilingual friendly courses, co-teach courses with colleagues who have a different linguistic profile from yours, get involved in COIL projects (Collaborative Online International Learning) or tandem teaching. All the previous points are greatly facilitated in COIL contexts.

- ✓ **Ask students for suggestions** they might have to make the course more plurilingual. Take some time to discover the linguistic diversity present in your students' cohort. You may discover opportunities for peer- or teacher-support. Forget about perfection – for yourself and others: dare, encourage students to dare, to mediate knowledge produced in different languages and cultures, value effort, not perfection, and… let linguistic mediation (human or technology-supported) become part of your course at times.

- ✓ Encourage **receptive multilingualism** (i.e. when someone communicates effectively by speaking their own native languages while understanding the language of the other, without necessarily being able to actively/productively speak the language).

If you'd like to test your receptive skills, the following websites offer options for five languages (see https://students.uu.nl/en/hum/my-studies/lingua-receptiva (German, French, Italian, Dutch); have a try!

Using good quality technological tools to support your/your students' work

- ✓ **Explore/show students how ChatGPT** (or other GPTs like MISTRAL, CLAUDE, etc.) **can support plurilingualism**, for example, by asking a question in one language and receiving the answer in another,

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or by requesting an explanation of a key concept in a different language to expand understanding across linguistic boundaries.

Feature	What does it mean concretely for teachers and students?
Multilingual output	AI tools can translate materials in multiple languages without too much extra effort.
Adaptability	You can import subject content (e.g. a science text, video) and instantly produce bilingual or multilingual supporting materials.
Scaffolding	AI tools can help you find answers using your full linguistic repertoire when not in class (see a short video for illustration with Chatgpt), and can be used for drafts, summaries, exercise materials, and multilingual presentations to boost comprehension and inclusion. As a teacher, make sure to provide your students with good prompts and demonstrate some of these in class.
Ease of use	Tools can help you streamline the creation of multilingual video explainers with voiceover and captions (see Synthesia, HeyGen, and https://www.atlabs.ai/blog/the-best-ai-tools-for-multilingual-video-production for concrete examples

✓ **Explore/show your students/colleagues how to get immediate translation of internet documents.**
And don't look for the odd words or expressions that might be ill-translated… In a vast majority of cases, you will get a very good translation of the text and that will help you expand your knowledge base (e.g. new epistemologies or studies carried out in very different contexts and that you wouldn't have been able to understand without translation).

🌐 **Built-in Browser Features**

Google Chrome:

Chrome has a built-in translation feature. When you visit a page in another language, a translation pop-up appears. Click "Translate" to convert the page into your preferred language.

To enable it manually:

Go to Settings > Languages > Turn on *"Offer to translate pages that aren't in a language you read."*

Microsoft Edge:

Like Chrome, Edge has an integrated translator. Look for the translation icon in the address bar when visiting a foreign-language page.

Enable it via Settings > Languages > *"Offer to translate pages that aren't in a language I read."*

Safari (Mac/iOS):

Safari offers built-in translation for supported languages. Click the translation icon in the address bar when visiting a foreign site.

Firefox:

Firefox does not have a built-in translator by default, but you can install extensions like **To Google Translate** or **Simple Translate** from the Firefox Add-ons store.

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💡 Useful Plugins & Extensions

Google Translate Extension (Chrome, Edge, Firefox):

Installs a button in your toolbar for quick translations.

Chrome Extension

Firefox Add-on

Mate Translate (Chrome, Safari, Firefox):

Supports full-page translations and word-by-word translations.

Mate Translate Website

DeepL Translator (Chrome, Edge):

Known for high-quality translations with better contextual accuracy.

DeepL Chrome Extension

📱 On Mobile

Google Translate App (Android, iOS):

Can translate web pages when browsing in Google Chrome.

Safari on iPhone/iPad:

Tap the "aA" icon in the address bar and select *Translate Website.*

✓ **Explore/show students how to automatically subtitle a lecture or presentation, either in-person or online**:

- PowerPoint: Can transcribe your words as you present and display them on-screen as captions in the same language you are speaking, or as subtitles translated to another language. This can help accommodate individuals in the audience who may be deaf or hard of hearing, or more familiar with another language. On the Slide Show ribbon tab, select Subtitle Settings.

- YouTube: Offers auto-generated captions and can automatically translate them into multiple languages. This is free but requires uploading your video to YouTube.

- Microsoft Stream (part of Microsoft 365): Provides automated transcription and translation for videos.

- Zoom: Has built-in live transcription and translation features for meetings (available in paid plans).

- Rev.com: Offers both automated and human translation services for video captions.

- Google Meet: Provides real-time captions and translations during video calls.

- Otter.ai: Popular for transcription and can integrate with Zoom for live captioning.

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WORD OF CAUTION: automated translations, while **convenient and fast**, may **not always be 100% accurate**, especially with technical terms, idioms, or complex language. Always inform your audience that the translation was automatically generated. For professional or critical content and for lesser used languages, you might want to have a human review the translations.

✓ **For students/people who need additional accessibility and inclusion tools**, you may want to consult/refer them to

- o **Signly** (sign language translation tool for academic settings)

- o **NVDA** (screen reader for visually impaired students)

Practicing conversational interactions in several languages with a chatbot

✓ **Test the free version of AI-powered conversational agents or bots** like *Pi* from InflectionAI™, (see https://pi.ai/discover) and *Heero* from Screevo.ai (seehttps://heero.me). And remember, those tools are there to support you in improving/facilitating/preparing human-to-human conversations. A bot is only a tool… even if it's a great tool.

1.3 Act, reflect, share

(Steps to implement changes, assess progress, and share best practices.)

> **Lasting and transformative change begins with small, intentional steps, allowing new practices to take root and grow.**

Changes should also be regularly (re)assessed, even informally, to identify what works and what does not. And successful practices should be shared with others to inspire further changes and collective growth.

Small intentional steps might be trying out some of the suggestions from the previous section, and you could also consider:

✓ Finding **multilingual champions** in your department/university who could inspire and support colleagues in adopting multilingual practices.

✓ Checking whether **additional institutional support** for multilingual course design is available in your institution:support or incentives for lecturers to experiment with plurilingual approaches? **institutional awards for innovative pedagogies**?

✓ **Recognizing and rewarding** your students' multilingual/multicultural efforts, and yours too!

✓ Etc.

So, **explore, adapt, succeed, and share your success stories with us** *here (add a hyperlink to a CU.mil form for feedback, comments, suggestions, good practices, etc.)*

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2 Communication

2.1 Worth knowing and thinking about

Unpacking the many layers and facets of communication

Communication, in the most basic sense, is an exchange of information. This information exchange involves the sender of a message, its receiver, and the message itself. The code (or language) of the message is of particular importance, as the receiver and the sender must share a code for the receiver to be able to "decode" and properly understand the message to jointly construct meaning. As this process relies on shared background knowledge and expectations as much as on the words actually used,e should favour transaction over transmission.

Transmission model of communication.

Transaction model of communication.
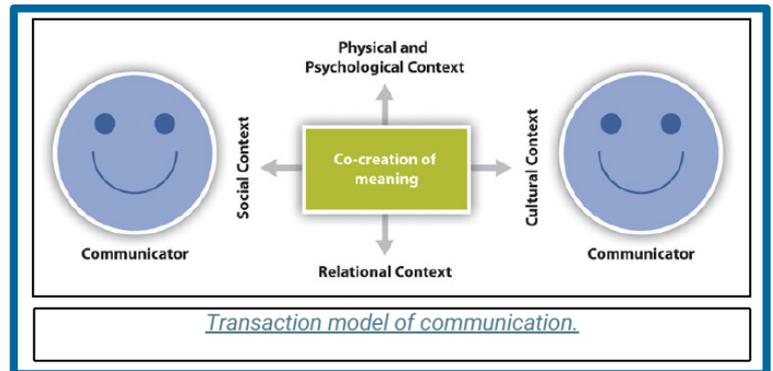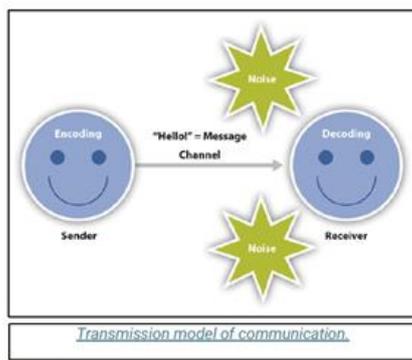
As communication in a Circle U. context is multilayered and involves many different people, our communicative needs and practices are by necessity a plurilingual affair. Plurilingual communication happens across the five layers represented below - even if we are not always aware of it.

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5 layers of communication within Circle U.

1	communication within Circle U. universities
2	communication between Circle U. universities and society*
3	communication between Circle U. universities
4	communication within Circle U.
5	communication between Circle U. and society*

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* Communication with society entails communication with prospective students and staff but also the unique role of the universities to listen to and contribute to society's and other stakeholders' concerns and needs.

> **We, as individual members of the Circle U. community, engage in functional multilingualism, for instance, when we choose specific languages for different purposes or to address different audiences on different occasions. Instead of approaching everything either in all languages (which is impossible) or just in one language (which is very reductive), we should aim to make the most of using all our languages in a functionally appropriate way.**

- o   This might involve using English with international researchers from other countries, the official/national majority language with students, and the local dialect with staff who also speak this dialect.

- o   Situations might also arise, in which speaker A understands language B but prefers speaking in language A, while speaker B understands language A but prefers speaking in language B. While both speakers in this scenario are speaking in different languages, they still understand each other by engaging in **receptive multilingualism**.

> **Communication in plurilingual and intercultural realities needs language awareness. This means careful consideration of topic and language choice, making sure we do not lose the audience, and capturing the message that we want to get across clearly and respectfully. It does not have to be English only and can be easily enhanced by offering automated translations. Even if we do everything in English, this does not necessarily make things easier or quicker, since we all have different backgrounds. We need to be**

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> **more explicit in whatever language we use, so everyone has time to find common ground, and no one feels excluded.**

🔗 **If you want to know more, see for instance:**

Avineri, N. (2020). Audience (and Audience Design). In The International Encyclopedia of Linguistic Anthropology (pp. 1–5). John Wiley & Sons, Ltd. https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118786093.iela0019

Bradlaw, C., Hufeisen, B., & Nölle-Becker, S. (2024). The Concept of Functional Multilingualism in the Context of Internationalisation at German Universities. In D. Gabryś-Barker & E. Vetter (Eds.), Modern Approaches to Researching Multilingualism: Studies in Honour of Larissa Aronin (pp. 61–80). Springer Nature Switzerland. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-52371-7_5

Gasiorek, J. (2017). Communicative Codes. In Message Processing: The Science of Creating Understanding. University of Hawaiʻi OER. https://pressbooks-dev.oer.hawaii.edu/messageprocessing/chapter/chapter-4-communicative-codes/

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Mahili, I., & Angouri, J. (2017). Language Awareness and Multilingual Workplace. In J. Cenoz, D. Gorter, & S. May (Eds.), Language Awareness and Multilingualism (pp. 323–332). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319- 02240-6_26

Open Textbook Library. (2016). Communication in the Real World: An Introduction to Communication Studies. https://socialsci.libretexts.org/Bookshelves/Communication/Introduction_to_Communication/Communication_in_the_Real_World_-_An_Introduction_to_Communication_Studies

Spencer-Oatey, H., & Debray, C. (2020). Linguistically and culturally diverse project partnerships and teams. In The Routledge Handbook of Language and Intercultural Communication (2nd ed.). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003036210

Thije, J. D. ten. (2018). Receptive Multilingualism. In D. Singleton & L. Aronin (Eds.), Twelve Lectures on Multilingualism (pp. 329–364). Multilingual Matters. https://doi.org/10.21832/9781788922074-014

Thije, J. D. ten. (2022). Intercultural mediation as intercultural competence. In The Routledge Handbook of Intercultural Mediation. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003227441-38

Reflection questions

Given what precedes, please take some time to reflect on these questions:

- What message/idea/information do I want to get across and how do I make sure that it reaches my audience?
- How much time do I have to work on my message to make it clear?
- Who is my audience and what are their language needs? Who is being addressed directly? Who else has access to my text (but is not being addressed explicitly)?
- What language choice is the most appropriate for the situation and audience?
- Am I addressing my audience in a respectful and appropriate manner?
- What do we gain if we use English only? And what do we lose?
- Can I offer options to my interlocutors, or am I imposing one language on them?

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Other possible format: (only a suggestion for when interactive version is available)

Clarity & intent		❑ What message/idea/information do I want to get across and how do I make sure that it reaches my audience? ❑ How much time do I have to work on my message to make it clear?
Language choice & audience		❑ What language choice is the most appropriate for the situation and audience? ❑ Who is my audience and what are their language needs? ❑ Who is being addressed directly? Who else has access to my text (but is not being addressed explicitly)?
Tone & respect		❑ Am I addressing my audience in a respectful and appropriate manner? ❑ Can I offer options to my interlocutors, or am I imposing one language on them?
Support tools & language equity		❑ What is out there to help me create texts and engage in plurilingual communication (in terms of making adjustments like translating or simplifying the text using AI tools, apps, etc.)? ❑ What do we gain if we use English only? And what do we lose?

2.2   Toolkit and guidance

✓ **Use simple language**. See the clear writing tips of the EU: Directorate-General for Translation (European Commission), & Field, Z. (2015). How to write clearly. Publications Office of the European Union. https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2782/022405

✓ Consider time management. **Earmark some additional time for discussions** if you know people from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds are participating.
🔗 Link to the CU.mil list of recommendations for a multilingual event.

✓ **Use tools**. Automatic translation tools, recording messages in language A and automatically translating it into language B, adding subtitles to oral presentations, using text to speech or speech to text apps.
🔗 Link to our list of recommended tools in the Teaching section of the policy.

✓ One important aspect of using automatic translation tools is being transparent about it (i.e. adding a disclaimer at the end, like "translated using xxx"). These translations don't have to be perfect but be aware of quality differences compared to human translation!

✓ **Signpost** (or provide information in more languages than just English). If you want to acknowledge people's language competences, be aware that some time and money has to be invested in translation.

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Even if we have the technology for machine translation, it is not always perfect, so we need human proof-readers.

- ✓ **Check and use language profiles**. Who can use which languages? In conferences and international meetings, it only takes a tiny bit of extra time for everyone to add the languages they speak/understand to their name tag. This information could also be collected through the event's registration form. A next step could be to add the languages you read to your email signature or your staff profile so people know they can write to you in other languages. Let's make the most of the languages we know!

- ✓ **Resources and videos to learn more about – and implement – receptive multilingualism**:

  https://students.uu.nl/en/hum/lingua-receptiva

  https://www.culture.gouv.fr/fr/content/download/93677/file/ref_2010_EuRom5_def.pdf

  https://www.luistertaal.nl/en

2.3   Act, reflect, share

(Steps to implement changes, assess progress, and share best practices.)

> **Lasting and transformative change begins with small, intentional steps, allowing new practices to take root and grow.**

Changes should also be regularly (re)assessed, even informally, to identify what works and what does not. And successful practices should be shared with others to inspire further changes and collective growth.

Those small intentional steps might be trying out some of the suggestions from the previous section, and you could also consider the following ideas:

- ✓ **Experiment with language profiles:** Try checking and using language profiles (at events, symposia, etc.) and give us feedback. Have participants appreciated the idea? What benefits (if any) have you noticed? **Topicalize languages regularly**: regularly bring up questions like "Why do we use this language here?" or "How would this sound in another language?". Make space to reflect on which languages are being used, who is being included/excluded, and what alternatives might exist. Ensure that language policies, practices, and inclusivity are not one-off discussions, but are continually revisited and openly discussed.
- ✓ **Use translation/caption/subtitles tools for conferences.** Try them out and give us feedback.
- ✓ **Allow notes/questions/text to be submitted or sent in in several languages and offer automatic translation.**

- ✓ **Identify aspects that require "extra" time** (e.g. expressing ideas in ELF/transcultural settings).
- ✓ **Give space** to what is already there in terms of other languages. People can use translating tools, but we should not expect the main language to be English all the time. Including other languages can improve efficiency, as speakers may communicate more clearly and in greater depth in a language they know well.

So, **explore, adapt, succeed, and share your success stories with us** *here (add a hyperlink to a CU.mil form for feedback, comments, suggestions, good practices, etc.)*

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3 Research

3.1   Worth knowing and thinking about

Research is never neutral

Research is never neutral, and neither are the languages we use to produce, communicate, and evaluate it. The global dominance of English in academia is not a neutral phenomenon either: it reflects economic and geopolitical interests. The demand for English-language publications also fuels a market-driven ecosystem, from academic publishing and standardized testing to language certification and training services. In this ecosystem English proficiency becomes a form of academic capital, often reinforcing existing inequalities between institutions, countries, and researchers. Recognizing these dynamics is essential if we are to question the idea that English-only practices are automatically inclusive and to promote a more balanced, plurilingual research environment that values knowledge in all languages.

> **The dominance of English as the primary language of scholarly publishing creates both visible and invisible barriers to equity, participation, and knowledge diversity. This linguistic imbalance affects who gets to contribute, whose knowledge is legitimized, and how research circulates within and beyond academia.**

The role of English as a Lingua Franca: useful, but not sufficient…

English as a global academic lingua franca undoubtedly offers important advantages: it enables international collaboration, eases access to a vast body of literature and facilitates participation in global scientific dialogues. For many researchers, especially those working in transnational teams or publishing in high-impact journals, using English is a pragmatic choice that can broaden the reach of their work.

However, the benefits of English must be weighed against the structural effects. When English becomes the only legitimate medium of academic knowledge, it risks marginalizing diverse perspectives, particularly those rooted in local contexts, languages, and epistemologies. As recent studies have shown, English-only policies can reinforce asymmetries in visibility, impact, and career progression in ways that often go unnoticed.

> **The challenge is certainly not to reject English, but to reposition it as one of many valuable tools in a truly inclusive and plurilingual research landscape.**

Recent studies highlight how the preference for English-only publishing marginalizes researchers working in other languages, limiting their access to funding, visibility, and career advancement. It can also disconnect researchers from local communities who could benefit from (and contribute to) the researchers' work. Relying on a single dominant language narrows the scope of global knowledge and privileges certain epistemologies while excluding others.

> **Multilingual publishing, by contrast, enhances accessibility, inclusivity, and cultural richness in scientific communication. It enables research to reach broader audiences, facilitates collaboration across linguistic communities, and recognizes the legitimacy of local knowledge.**

Initiatives like the Helsinki Initiative on Multilingualism in Scholarly Communication call for concrete changes in how research is evaluated and funded, encouraging institutions to support dissemination in

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multiple languages and to reward researchers who communicate findings beyond traditional academic venues.

> **Ultimately, supporting multilingual research is not just about fairness, diversity or inclusion. It is about strengthening the quality, relevance, and reach of our collective knowledge. This requires governance systems, funding bodies, and academic cultures to move beyond monolingual norms and to embed language inclusivity at every stage of the research process: from project design and collaboration to dissemination and recognition.**

More Languages, better research?

While the benefits of multilingual publishing are increasingly acknowledged, the current publishing infrastructure often remains monolingual, and this comes at a cost not only in terms of equity, but also in terms of quality.

> **Supporting English-only (or English-mainly) publishing places enormous strain on journals and reviewers. Submission volumes are rising exponentially, driven in part by institutional pressures and performance metrics that favour high-impact English-language journals. Meanwhile, the increasing use of AI tools has led to a surge in submissions that are sometimes superficial, poorly contextualized, lacking in originality, or made open access but only 'at a certain cost', i.e. reinforcing biases. Promoting and supporting increased language diversity in academic publishing may offer a path toward rebalancing the system.**

Writing in different languages allows scholars to better engage with local and regional audiences, articulate ideas more precisely within their cultural contexts, and reclaim writing as a deep, reflective act of knowledge making. Multilingual publishing also fosters epistemic diversity and allows for more sustainable, ethical research practices. It enriches scholarly conversation by expanding who gets to speak and how knowledge is expressed. Far from lowering quality, it has the potential to raise it, by restoring a sense of relevance, voice, and responsibility in academic work.

🔗 **If you want to know more, see for instance:**

Amano, T., Ramírez-Castañeda, V., Berdejo-Espinola, V., Borokini, I., Chowdhury, S., Golivets, M., González-Trujillo, J., Montaño-Centellas, F., Paudel, K., White, R., & Veríssimo, D. (2023). The manifold costs of being a non-native English speaker in science. PLOS Biology, 21. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pbio.3002184

Erdocia, I., & Soler, J. (2023). English language and the career progression of academics in Anglophone universities. Higher Education, 1-18. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-023-01151-4

Ferguson, G., Pérez-Llantada, C., & Plo, R. (2011). English as an International Language of Scientific Publication: A Study of Attitudes.. World Englishes, 30, 41-59. https://doi.org/10.1111/J.1467-971X.2010.01656.X

Flowerdew, J. (2019). The linguistic disadvantage of scholars who write in English as an additional language: Myth or reality. Language Teaching, 52, 249 - 260. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444819000041

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Helsinki Initiative on Multilingualism in Scholarly Communication (2019). Helsinki: Federation of Finnish Learned Societies, Committee for Public Information, Finnish Association for Scholarly Publishing, Universities Norway & European Network for Research Evaluation in the Social Sciences and the Humanities. https://www.helsinki-initiative.org/en

Ramírez-Castañeda, V. (2020). Disadvantages in preparing and publishing scientific papers caused by the dominance of the English language in science: The case of Colombian researchers in biological sciences. PLoS ONE, 15. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0238372

Rehm, G., & Way, A. (Eds.). (2023). European Language Equality: A Strategic Agenda for Digital Language Equality. European Union, European Commission, CEF/2020/2468356. https://european-language-equality.eu

San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA). https://sfdora.org/read/

Reflection questions

Given what precedes, please take some time to reflect on these questions:

- In what ways is the language I use in my research shaped by institutional, economic, or geopolitical pressures?
- Have I ever questioned the assumption that publishing in English is the default or best option for my field or topic?
- How do the language choices I make affect who can access, understand, or use my research?
- Do I view English as one helpful tool among many, or as the only legitimate language of research?
- What are the advantages English brings to my academic practice; and what might be the costs for equity, diversity, or epistemic inclusion?
- Have I considered publishing (or disseminating) in another language when addressing local audiences or stakeholders?
- Who is excluded or silenced when English is the only language of publication, evaluation, or recognition in my discipline?
- How do current research metrics or funding policies in my institution reinforce English-only practices?
- Am I aware of how AI-generated or translated content may impact linguistic diversity, authorship integrity, or epistemic nuance?
- Have I ever written, co-written, or reviewed academic work in a language other than English or my native language?
- How could multilingual publishing enrich my field not only in terms of inclusion, but also relevance and depth?
- Am I aware of platforms, journals, or networks in my field that actively support multilingual dissemination?
- Does my institution value and reward multilingual research communication (e.g., through CV evaluation, funding, or open-access policies)?
- How can I contribute to changing evaluation criteria so that research in and for multiple languages is more visible and legitimate?
- What practical steps can I take (alone or with colleagues) to advocate for language inclusivity in research evaluation, funding, or mentoring?

3.2 Toolkit and guidance

To support researchers, institutions, and governance bodies in promoting fair, multilingual, and epistemically diverse research practices, we suggest the following strategies:

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For individual researchers

- ✓ **Plan for multilingual dissemination.** Consider target audiences and languages from the project's outset. Include bi/multilingual abstracts, local-language summaries, or multilingual formats where appropriate.

- ✓ **Justify language choices in grant proposals.** When relevant, explain how using multiple languages enhances societal relevance, accessibility, or inclusiveness.

- ✓ **Collaborate plurilingually.** Build teams that allow for diverse linguistic and epistemic contributions. Enable members to share expertise in the language they know best.

- ✓ **Make strategic use of technology.** Use machine translation tools ethically and critically, always paired with human editing and contextual sensitivity.

- ✓ **Share your strategies.** Make your language-inclusive approaches visible on institutional platforms, in public summaries, or on academic networks.

For institutions and research units

- ✓ **Recognize publications in multiple languages.** Ensure that peer-reviewed outputs in regional, minoritized, or local languages count fully in evaluations, CVs, and promotions.

- ✓ **Reform internal metrics.** Avoid defaulting to English-only benchmarks for assessing research impact or excellence.

- ✓ **Support multilingual publishing.** Provide templates, translation grants, and editorial support for publishing in two or more languages.

- ✓ **Include language diversity in research action plans.** Encourage labs, faculties, and centers to commit to multilingual dissemination and inclusive communication goals.

- ✓ **Create incentives.** Develop awards or internal calls that reward research addressing local contexts and/or engaging diverse audiences through inclusive language strategies.

For funders, evaluators, and governance

- ✓ **Value multilingual outputs in evaluation.** Adapt funding and assessment criteria to explicitly support research in all languages, in line with the *Helsinki Initiative, DORA* declaration and *ELE Roadmap* (see references above).

- ✓ **Include language-aware expectations in calls.** Encourage applicants to explain how their results will be communicated across linguistic and cultural contexts.

- ✓ **Invest in infrastructure.** Support multilingual, nonprofit journals; open-access repositories in smaller languages; and local translation/editing services.

- ✓ **Train reviewers.** Ensure that evaluators are aware of language biases and are prepared to assess research communicated in non-dominant languages or formats.

Transversal measures

- ✓ **Map current practices.** Audit how multilingualism is (or isn't) supported in your institution's research policies, repositories, training, and evaluation systems.

- ✓ **Create a living resource hub.** Curate tools, templates, examples, and funding guidelines for multilingual research dissemination.

- ✓ **Engage with European frameworks.** Align institutional actions with the *DORA Declaration*, *Helsinki Initiative*, and the *European Language Equality Roadmap* (see references above) to ensure structural coherence and international legitimacy.

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3.3 Act, Reflect, Share

(Steps to implement changes, assess progress, and share best practices)

Lasting and transformative change in research culture can start with small but intentional shifts in how we write, cite, collaborate, and disseminate knowledge.

These shifts should be monitored and revisited over time, even informally, to assess impact and sustainability. Sharing successful approaches can inspire others and contribute to a more inclusive, equitable, and multilingual research environment.

Those small, intentional steps might include trying out some of the suggestions from the previous section, and you could also consider:

- ✓ **Exploring multilingual publishing opportunities**, including multilingual abstracts, multilingual journals, or co-authoring in more than one language.

- ✓ **Valuing and referencing research produced in languages other than English**, especially when it comes from underrepresented communities or perspectives.

- ✓ **Encouraging multilingual theses or publications** in doctoral and postdoctoral work where appropriate and supporting students in doing so.

- ✓ **Including language practices in research evaluation conversations**, and promoting recognition of diverse language contributions (e.g., translations, outreach in local languages, dissemination beyond English-only venues).

- ✓ **Discussing language choice openly within research teams**, acknowledging when English is useful and when other languages could add value, inclusion, or depth.

So, **explore, experiment, reflect, and share your insights and success stories with us** *here (add a hyperlink to a CU.mil form for feedback, comments, suggestions, good practices, etc.)*

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4 Governance

Decisions about languages are never just about languages: they reflect our values, our priorities, and how we imagine the (European) university of the future.

4.1 Worth knowing and thinking about

Making linguistic and cultural diversity visible and actionable

Linguistic and cultural diversity is a rich resource embedded in our institutions. We should ensure that this diversity is made visible and that it becomes an actionable resource.

European societies, including our Circle U. community, are home to a wide range of migration-related family languages beyond the official or majority ones. Many members of our academic communities - students, researchers, and staff - have competencies in languages such as Arabic, Berber, Mandarin, Hindi, Japanese, Korean, Kurdish, Russian, Swahili, Tagalog, Turkish, Ukrainian, Urdu, or Vietnamese, among others. Integrating this diversity into our educational practices can help students, especially those who speak dialects or non-hegemonial languages, to develop positive self-images as linguistically competent individuals.

It is also essential to note that normal plurilingual practices often involve language mixing.

As we collectively reflect on our teaching/learning, research, governance and communication policies, it is important to consider whether we allow and even encourage such practices to enable students to draw on their full linguistic repertoire and realize their potential. Furthermore, we must recognize that the standard varieties of languages used in education and research - whether in English or other languages - are only one of many dialects. These standard forms often function as gatekeeping mechanisms that benefit privileged social groups, while posing barriers to others. If we aim to mitigate these effects, we can begin by acknowledging linguistic varieties other than the hegemonial standard dialect in our communities and encouraging students to view standard forms as practical tools they can choose to acquire, rather than as the only correct or legitimate way of speaking a language.

As suggested in the various sections of the Language Compass, a coherent, multilevel approach to language inclusion embraces the potential of technological tools without neglecting the indispensable role of human interaction.

This approach must operate at all levels (individual, institutional, and systemic) and extend beyond language courses to include teaching across all disciplines, research, communication, and governance. Language inclusion is not a technical-skill add-on, but a shared responsibility that must be embedded throughout the academic ecosystem.

Framing the possibilities: the power of governance

While the strategies for teaching/learning, research, and communication listed in the previous sections may evolve organically, governance decisions frame their possibilities. Institutional

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leaders are uniquely positioned to cultivate or constrain inclusive, plurilingual environments through the visions they set, the structures they endorse, and the resources they allocate.

It is essential that governance-level language decisions do not rely on outdated assumptions, such as the belief that language inclusion can be delegated solely to language departments, or that English as a lingua franca ensures equitable access. Other decisions fall into the trap of proposing 'one-size-fits-all' language plans that, while well-intentioned, are ill-adapted to the diversity of contexts, goals, and resources across departments, faculties, or partner universities. Moreover, policy responses that lean too heavily on technocentric solutions (e.g. automatic translation, language apps, or isolated platform-based courses) may overlook the need for human interactions that are essential to learning.

In today's multilingual Europe, governance that fails to recognize the richness of its linguistic ecology risks reproducing exclusion, hierarchy, and standard language ideologies that reinforce privilege. Language policies should not be reduced to technical instruments or risk management tools: they are opportunities to reimagine inclusion, participation, and knowledge exchange across diverse communities.

🔗 **If you want to know more, see for instance:**

Bärenfänger, O., Delgado, A., & Gackle, K. (2022). *Multilingualism as a Key Challenge for Higher Education Language Policy: The ARQUS Perspective. Verbum.* *https://doi.org/10.15388/verb.35*

Christiansen, P. (2006). *Language policy in the European Union: European/English/Elite/Equal/Esperanto Union?. Language Problems and Language Planning, 30, 21-44.* *https://doi.org/10.1075/LPLP.30.1.03CHR*

Dafouz, E. (2021). *Exploring the conceptualisation of linguistic diversity and multilingualism in the construction of (Transnational) European Universities: the case of UNA Europa. Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development, 45, 759 - 774.* *https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.2021.1920964*

Flores, N. (2013). *The Unexamined Relationship Between Neoliberalism and Plurilingualism: A Cautionary Tale. TESOL Quarterly, 47, 500-520.* https://doi.org/10.1002/TESQ.114

Gazzola, M. (2016). *Multilingual communication for whom? Language policy and fairness in the European Union. European Union* Politics, 17, 546 - 569. *https://doi.org/10.1177/1465116516657672*

Hautefeuille, S. (2011). *A Union of Diversity: Language, Identity and Polity-Building in Europe. European Societies, 13, 165-167.* *https://doi.org/10.1080/14616696.2010.518032*

Hunter, M., & Parchoma, G. (2024). *Symposium 3: Content and Language Integrated Learning. Proceedings of the International Conference on Networked Learning.* *https://doi.org/10.54337/nlc.v8.9129*

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Klinge, S., & Gödeke, B. (2022). *Arqus University Alliance Staff Members' Linguistic and Intercultural Needs: Survey Results. Verbum.* *https://doi.org/10.15388/verb.36*

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Leal, A. (2020). Multilingualism and translation in the European Union. **, 483-497. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003121848-39

Leal, A. (2021). The European Union's translation policies, practices and ideologies: time for a translation turn. Perspectives, 30, 195 - 208. https://doi.org/10.1080/0907676X.2021.1927121

Leal, A. (2023). Towards a multilingual modus operandi in the European Union. Just. Journal of Language Rights & Minorities, Revista de Drets Lingüístics i Minories. https://doi.org/10.7203/just.2.24859

Lovrits, V. (2024). Linguistic authority in the context of European mobility: addressing the empty promise of élite multilingualism. Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development. https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.2024.2321394

Marshall, S., & Moore, D. (2018). Plurilingualism amid the panoply of lingualisms: addressing critiques and misconceptions in education. International Journal of Multilingualism, 15, 19 - 34. https://doi.org/10.1080/14790718.2016.1253699

Phillipson, R. (2006). English, a cuckoo in the European higher education nest of languages?. European Journal of English Studies, 10, 13 - 32. https://doi.org/10.1080/13825570600590846

Saville, N. (2019). How Can Multilingualism be Supported through Language Education in Europe?. Language Assessment Quarterly, 16, 464 - 471. https://doi.org/10.1080/15434303.2019.1676246

Siri, A., Leone, C., & Bencivenga, R. (2022). Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategies Adopted in a European University Alliance to Facilitate the Higher Education-to-Work Transition. Societies. https://doi.org/10.3390/soc12050140

Wodak, R., & Wright, S. (2006). The European Union in Cyberspace. Multilingual Democratic Participation in a virtual public sphere. Journal of Language and Politics, 5, 251-275. https://doi.org/10.1075/JLP.5.2.07WOD

Wodak, R., Krzyżanowski, M., & Forchtner, B. (2012). The interplay of language ideologies and contextual cues in multilingual interactions: Language choice and code-switching in European Union institutions. Language in Society, 41, 157 - 186. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0047404512000036

Zenkienė, L., & Leišytė, L. (2024). Strengthening university capacity in regional innovation ecosystem through the participation in the European Universities initiative. European Journal of Higher Education, 14, 88 - 108. https://doi.org/10.1080/21568235.2024.2410358

Reflection questions

(For institutional leaders, rectors, vice-rectors, and all those shaping language and inclusion policies)

Given what precedes, please take some time to reflect on these questions:

- Do our current policies reflect the full linguistic diversity of our academic community (including migration-related and non-standard varieties)?
- Do our governance decisions rest on implicit values and assumptions that reinforce standard language ideologies and exclude some groups?
- Do our strategies acknowledge and support the linguistic repertoires of students and staff with plurilingual backgrounds?

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- Have we created mechanisms to ensure that students can draw on their full linguistic and cultural resources throughout their academic journey?
- Do we promote linguistic inclusion across all disciplines, services, and governance — not just in language departments?
- Have we allocated adequate resources (human, financial, structural) to support plurilingual, inclusive environments at all levels?
- Do we actively seek input from diverse linguistic communities when making policy decisions?
- Do our governance structures enable interdisciplinary collaboration on language and inclusion issues (e.g., between education, research, internationalization, and student affairs)?
- Does our vision of the European university of the future integrate plurilingualism, interculturality, and inclusiveness?
- Are we contributing to systemic change in European higher education by challenging monolingual or 'one-size-fits-all' approaches?
- Have we moved beyond relying exclusively on English as a lingua franca, and do we enable meaningful multilingual participation in meetings, documents, and events?
- Do we ensure that technological tools (e.g., automatic translation) complement — rather than replace — meaningful human interaction and language learning?

4.2 Toolkit and guidance

To foster inclusive, plurilingual university environments, Circle U. governance bodies could consider the following concrete actions:

Policy and strategy development

- ✓ **Recognize multilingualism and interculturality as transversal policy domains**, not limited to language teaching. Language impacts teaching, research, hiring, mobility, and communication.

> **Advisory structures for plurilingual practices should not be delegated to teaching governance only but rather include a diversity of actors working together: e.g. vice-rectors for education, internationalization, research, administration, supported by teams of experts in the domain, to make sure that language-related decisions are based on and impact multiple perspectives.**

- ✓ **Develop flexible, context-sensitive local language policies** that explicitly value linguistic diversity and provide actionable implementation guidelines. We hope the present document might help reach that goal.

- ✓ **Avoid symbolic plurilingualism** by ensuring policies are backed by resources and institutional commitment.

- ✓ **Ensure policies reflect shared academic values**, not short-term political agendas.

Governance structures and decision-making

- ✓ **Establish cross-sector governance teams for language-related decisions** (e.g., education AND research AND internationalization AND administration) supported by expert advice.

- ✓ **Ensure linguistic diversity within participatory governance structures**, ensuring representation of minority, regional, and migration-related languages.

- ✓ **Ensure transparency and flexibility in language requirements for institutional procedures** (e.g., hiring, student services, evaluations).

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Teaching and curriculum integration

- ✓ **Embed plurilingual and intercultural competencies across all curricula**.

> **Support staff by making efforts towards pluriligualism visible (e.g. add an option for 'multilingual' or 'multi/plurilingual-friendly' courses instead of only allowing one language for the 'language of teaching' line in course descriptions.**

- ✓ **Promote** content and language integrated learning (**CLIL**) **AND** plurilingual-friendly courses.

- ✓ **Support staff and student training** in language awareness, intercultural communication, and inclusive pedagogies.

- ✓ **Invest in digital and AI-supported multilingual learning resources** to increase access and engagement.

Professional development and capacity building

- ✓ **Include language-aware governance, inclusive communication, and interculturality in leadership training** for managers and governance bodies.

> **Invest in professional development for leaders and managers on language-aware leadership, inclusive communication, and intercultural governance. The CU.mil will be happy to provide short seminars on the topic if governance bodies find it useful.**

- ✓ **Recognize and reward innovative plurilingual practices**, including bottom-up initiatives, through funding lines or visibility schemes.

Communication and institutional culture

- ✓ **Implement inclusive language practices** by allowing the use of multiple languages in internal and external communications.

- ✓ **Invest in high-quality translation/post-editing and interpreting services** for effective plurilingual communication at events.

- ✓ **Label and promote multilingual-friendly courses and services** (e.g., in course catalogues, websites, and events).

- ✓ **Celebrate and communicate plurilingual achievements**; make them visible to students, staff, and external partners.

> **Don't forget to advertise your plurilingual efforts widely! They might just become your best-selling point for attracting students and staff.**

Addressing barriers and risks

- ✓ **Acknowledge and mitigate the dominance of English**, especially where it marginalizes other languages.

- ✓ **Remain vigilant of language ideologies that reinforce inequalities under the guise of neutrality or efficiency.**

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- ✓ **Foster awareness of publication engineering practices that prioritize visibility and citations over inclusion and engagement**. These approaches may appear efficient in the short term but they often fail to produce long-term change or a sense of belonging.

4.3   Act, reflect, share

(Steps to implement changes, assess progress, and share best practices)

> **Lasting and transformative change begins with small, intentional steps, allowing new practices to take root and grow.**

Changes should also be regularly (re)assessed, even informally, to identify what works and what does not. And successful practices should be shared with others to inspire further changes and collective growth.

Those small intentional steps might be trying out some of the suggestions from the previous section, and you could also consider:

- ✓ **Rethinking your current institutional strategies, policies, and protocols with your new 'compass' lens**. Are there hidden expectations about language use? Are they aligned with your inclusion and diversity goals?

- ✓ Encouraging **periodic review of governance practices** to assess whether language-related decisions are fostering or limiting participation across diverse communities.

- ✓ **Promoting visibility of successful initiatives** and language-inclusive governance models through internal newsletters, cross-institutional learning sessions, or alliance-wide forums.

So, **explore, adapt, succeed, and share your success stories with us** *here (add a hyperlink to a CU.mil form for feedback, comments, suggestions, good practices, etc.)*

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5 MIL moments

A MIL moment?

Linguistic and cultural diversity are not just a topic for classrooms, research papers, or policy documents. Such diversity exists in the world 'out there' but it is also present daily in our close environment, next door, in hallways, cafeterias, shared offices, Teams conversation, or Zoom meetings. We have included this special section of the Compass to celebrate small, deliberate (or spontaneous) gestures that help make Multilingualism, Interculturality and Language learning – in short MIL moments - part of the everyday life of our universities. It's worth sharing these moments with the people around you, not only your close colleagues, but also staff, students, visitors, and basically anyone who crosses your path in a day. A simple gesture, a shared word, or a curious question can go a long way in making someone feel seen and welcomed. These moments do not require official decisions, big budgets, or special expertise: simple curiosity, kindness, and the will to make our campuses more inclusive, welcoming, and alive with languages and cultures.

Here are a few ideas to get you started if you lack inspiration, but feel free to adapt, invent, and share your own!

Just ask

Heard someone speaking a language you don't recognize? Don't hesitate and ask them what it is! Most people appreciate genuine curiosity, and it often opens up surprising conversations (which may last only a moment or be the first of a long series).

Say/write hello/bye/thanks/please differently than you usually do

Try greeting colleagues, classmates, or staff in a different language from time to time. A "bonjour", "hej", "ciao", "salaam", "ni hao", "takk", "Liebe x", etc. is a small gesture that can brighten someone's day. You can also use these simple but much appreciated multilingual touches in your emails.

Multilingualize your space

Add multilingual signs or labels to your office, lab, door, or event posters. A "welcome" in 5 or 10 languages (especially those spoken by people around you) shows openness and makes diversity visible.

Talk in tongues in informal moments

Make your coffee breaks and lunches with colleagues occasions for sharing/explaining/trying out different foods, habits, festivities, films, songs, cultural events, etc. Bring a word, a phrase, a sweet/salty/bittersweet bite to liven up the conversation (or perhaps simply to initiate it). Mix languages, making conversations richer by making use of the wealth of linguistic resources you have!

Mark the day(s)

Celebrate days like the European Day of Languages (26 Sept), International Mother Language Day (21 Feb), or World Day for Cultural Diversity (21 May) with reminder messages, small displays, wall of words, language quizzes, or why not multilingual boardgames during a lunch break.

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Did you do something small that had a big impact? Found a creative way to multilingualize a space? Please share them with us *HERE* to inspire others <mark>(add a hyperlink to a CU.mil form for feedback, comments, suggestions, good practices, etc.):</mark>

Concluding remarks: towards slow and/or bold changes

As explained in the introduction (and hopefully felt as you have read the document), our Language Compass is not meant to prescribe a single direction, but to help our Alliance and its members find their own way towards more plurilingualism. The insights, reflection questions and guidance/tools offered across the four key directions are designed to invite reflection and action at all levels.

Languages are not just means of communication, but powerful drivers through which we learn, teach, research, and lead. Plurilingualism is not a skill to be acquired or a challenge to be managed; it is a means to more inclusion, equity, innovation, and deeper learning. That is why the most meaningful and lasting changes will emerge when all directions of the Compass are actively invested and interlinked, with each reinforcing the others in a shared commitment to plurilingualism.

Finally, we would like to stress that everyone can be a 'change agent'. You don't need a title, a budget, or even permission to make a difference. Every teacher, student, staff member, policymaker, or researcher can play a role in making language practices more visible, inclusive, and reflective of the world we live in: a teacher who lets students draw on their full linguistic repertoires, a researcher who includes multilingual references or summaries, a student who suggests bilingual signage for events or makes sure to read in more than one language, a staff member who makes space for receptive multilingual practices in meetings, a governance actor who asks: whose voices are not in the room, and why? These examples are not just nice extras; they are structural seeds for long-term change.

We thus hope this Language Compass will encourage you to pause, explore, and adjust your course (individually and collectively) and embark on changes, be they slow and/or bold. Whether you are a teacher, researcher, policymaker, student, or staff member, your voice matters and your actions (will) shape the culture of your institution. We hope this Compass will support your journey.

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Appendices

Feedback form - proposal

<mark>(to be made accessible online – ! add hyperlink or QR code in sections 2.3, 3.3, 4.3 and 5.3)</mark>

CU.mil COMPASS – Share your reflections, practices, questions

We'd love to hear from you!
Use this form to share feedback, ask questions, suggest ideas, or tell us about plurilingual practices you've tried in your teaching, research, communication, or governance work. Your input can help inspire others and shape future developments across our alliance.

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1. Name (optional):

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2. Email (optional, if you'd like a reply):

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3. What would you like to share with us? *(check all that apply)*
☐ A successful practice
☐ A question or comment
☐ A challenge I've faced
☐ An idea or suggestion
☐ A resource or example
☐ Other: _____

4. Please describe what you'd like to share:

---

5. Which area(s) does this relate to? *(check all that apply)*
☐ Teaching and Learning
☐ Research
☐ Communication
☐ Governance
☐ Not sure

6. Can we share your contribution (anonymously or credited) on CU.mil channels to inspire others?
☐ Yes, with my name
☐ Yes, anonymously
☐ No, just for internal use

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Suggestions: short messages to introduce the CU.mil Language Compass to all in the Circle U. community

The Language Compass we are proposing is for everyone in our university alliance. We hope you will find inspiration, practical ideas, and new perspectives to reflect and act on when it comes to linguistic and cultural diversity in your everyday work.

@Students

Languages and cultures are part of who you are; so they should also be part of how you study, learn, connect with others, and grow. At Circle U., we believe your voice matters, in every language you speak. The Language Compass is here to help make space for your full identity and for more inclusive ways of learning. You have a role to play in shaping the future; so let's do it in more than one language.

@Teachers

Every classroom is a multilingual space, whether we recognize it or not... The Language Compass invites us to value students' full linguistic repertoires and to explore new ways of teaching that reflect the diversity around (and within) us. You don't need to speak every language; just to open the door to them. You have a role to play in making teaching and learning more inclusive and meaningful.

@Administrative, service, and technical staff

You help keep the university running; and the languages you use shape how welcome, supported, and seen people feel. Whether you are sending emails, answering questions, preparing materials, or working behind the scenes, the way you use language has an impact. The Language Compass recognizes that multilingualism is not just for the classrooms, libraries, or for research, it's part of everyday life at the university. Even small gestures (welcoming someone in their language, using clear and inclusive language, offering support across languages) can make people feel they belong. You are key actors in making our universities more inclusive and more humane.

@Researchers

Research is shaped by language: what we ask, how we write, the tools we use, who gets cited, etc. The Language Compass encourages us to reflect on the role of languages in research and to consider how we can promote knowledge diversity and equity across languages. Multilingual research is not any less rigorous than monolingual one; but it is definitely more representative. Your publishing choices and practices can help make academic knowledge more accessible, inclusive, and globally relevant.

@Governance

The language(s) we use to lead play a role in who feels seen, heard, and involved. The Language Compass helps reflect on how decisions, policies, and priorities are communicated and discussed. Leading in a multilingual environment does not mean doing everything in every language, but it should include thinking critically about inclusion and about the role of languages in all areas of academia. Any adjustments and positive initiatives towards more linguistic and cultural diversity can change who feels welcome and who feels excluded.

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@Communication teams

Words matter – you know that already! But the languages we use to communicate also play a key role in shaping our community. The Language Compass invites you to rethink what inclusive communication looks like in a multilingual university. Plurilingual communication is not just about translation, it's about recognition, belonging, and connection. What languages you use, how you frame content, who you address can open doors or close them.

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