Your language counts!
Erasmus +
Pilot model for HLE teachers

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Preface

The Pilot model you are about to read was designed by the three authors for the Erasmus+-project “Your Language Counts!”. It was then implemented by 18 teachers in three European countries across six different (in alphabetical order: Arabic, Persian, Russian, Somali, Turkish, Ukrainian) languages during the subsequent phase of the project. The results of the evaluation process included in the final stages of the project indicate that the Pilot model can function as a resource for heritage language teachers who would like to develop their practice. It is not intended to be a final or fully comprehensive guide to heritage language teaching.

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1. Introduction to the pilot model

1.1 The Pilot model in context

In this publication, we present a pilot model for Heritage Language Education (hereafter HLE) in a European context. This pilot model informs the development of one the outcomes of an European Erasmus+ project, “Your language counts!”, in which seven partners from five European countries (Finland, Germany, Greece, The Netherlands, Sweden) worked together during the Spring, 2024.

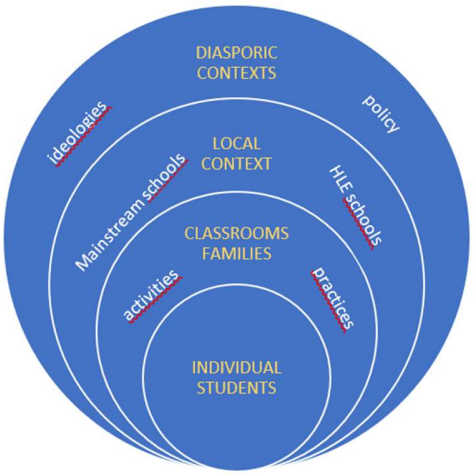
The model’s purpose is threefold:

1. to provide a framework for heritage language teachers to inform their teaching
2. to provide a presentation of HLE for school organisations and Family Outreach.
3. to provide a starting point for evaluation and development of approaches to HLE that will be collated in an HLE implementation handbook (Output 2 in the Erasmus + project)

The model positions HLE in a broad ecological perspective[1]. An ecological perspective demands that the context be taken into account in organising, implementing, teaching and learning in HLE. As contexts in which HLE takes place differ from country to country, this implies that the approaches in this pilot model will need to be adapted, so they are meaningful and workable for the specific context. The context includes the country (legislation, language education policy, school structure, the school (organisation of HLE) and the students (background, language variety, family) in which it is being applied. The structure of this pilot model reflects the layers in Bronfenbrenner's ecological model for development (see figure 1)

Figure 1

An ecological model for HLE (based on Bronfenbrenner, 1979)



[1] Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). Ecology of Human Development. Harvard University Press.

In Bronfenbrenner's model knowledge about and collaborations between all the layers of context facilitate positive development of the individual. In HLE this implies that collaborations between teachers, families, mainstream and HLE schools and dialogue with policy makers can support HLE in all contexts.

See Table 1 for a brief summary of the sections in the pilot model

Table 1

Heritage Language in Context - Pilot Model Structure

Section 2 **What is HLE?**	**Section 3** **HLE in local contexts**	**Section 4** **Perspective and activities for the HLE classroom**
• HLE in the diaspora • Linguistic diversity of families • Classroom approaches	• .Connecting with families • Organising HLE • HLE teachers • Teaching Materials in HLE	• Language • Interculturality • Identity • Knowledge

1.2 Model description

In this pilot we suggest, describe and contextualise resources to support HLE in a European context, in order to provide a model that can be adapted for use in different countries with different approaches to HLE education, and with different language groups. The material described is not intended to be used as a "course package" or textbook, rather as a framework, within which curricula in different languages can be developed and used with learners at different levels and from different backgrounds.

The pilot model provides material for discussion and development as well as twelve concrete activities for HLE. In this section (1) we describe the pilot model itself, and how it can be used to test approaches to and methods for teaching and organising HLE in a range of different contexts. In Section 2, we define and position HLE in an international context, discussing the diasporic context in which it is situated, the linguistic diversity of the target students and families and the overall perspectives that can underpin classroom and organisational practices. Section 3 draws overtly on the work of the Erasmus+- project partners, who have each contributed valuable knowledge about working with HLE in their own national context, in terms of connecting with families, organising HLE, working with and as a HLE teacher and locating and

using teaching materials. Partner insights are connected to the research on HLE in this section, in order to critically examine the challenges and perceived best practices.

Rather than being structured around levels (beginners, intermediate, advanced) or skills (reading, writing, speaking, listening, interacting), in Section 4 a range of practical learning and teaching activities are presented under four headings: language, identity, interculturality and knowledge. These represent the perspectives that researchers and this project position as key to HLE, and which all support HLE in different but overlapping ways. They are described and illustrated more fully in Section 4.

Acknowledging children's and youth's perspectives on identity and languaging make HLE meaningful for students. Raising critical language awareness through discussions of language ideologies (thoughts and feelings about languages) and language hierarchies, supports deeper understandings of the language students are studying, and themselves, in relation to their context. The pilot model acknowledges the broad range of languaging practices that students engage in, and students' linguistic diversity, but does not provide adjustments for students with special needs. We encourage HL teachers to engage with experts in their local context to make sure that access to inclusive and meaningful HLE is available to all students.

1.3 Aims of the model:

- To create a framework for transnational exchanges for HL teachers working with different languages in different national contexts to collaborate, share experiences and develop their teaching practices together.
- To give HL teachers the opportunity to test and adapt these experiences and practices into their local contexts.
- To offer a flexible structure that can be adapted to different languages, local and national educational contexts.
- To provide a springboard that builds upon teachers' existing teaching knowledge and experience, and inspires the creation of new practices in HLE.
- To provide a model for the presentation of HLE to teachers, school management and administrative staff (e.g. head teachers, principals, other school staff) as well as families.

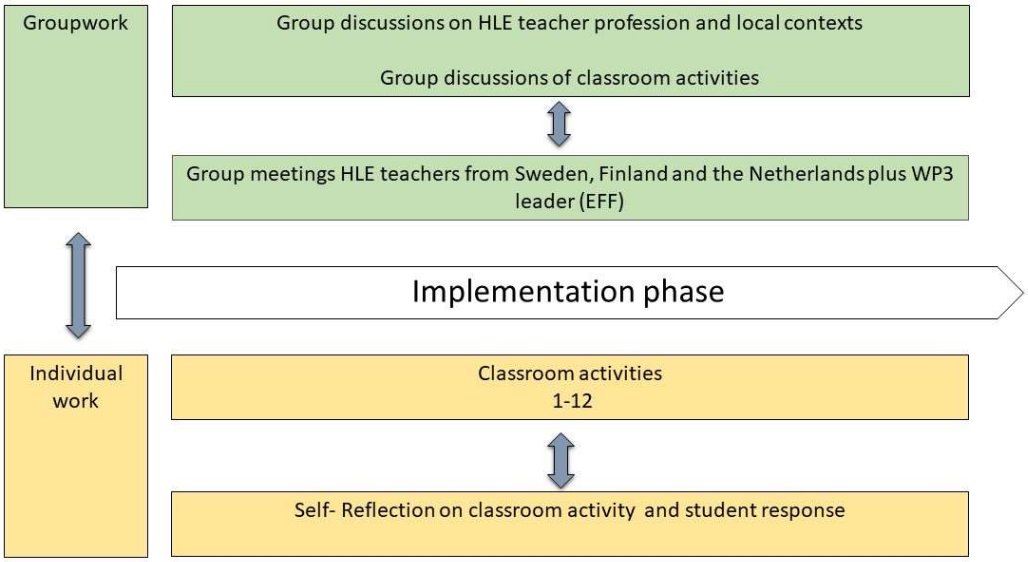
1.4 Working with the pilot model

Testing the ideas presented in this pilot model is essential for validation of the HLE Implementation Handbook. Questions for reflection are included in each of the sections; these questions will be discussed in the three countries in which the model will be tested. Feedback from these discussions will be an integral to further development of the model, ensuring that perspectives from all participants (teachers, organisers, families; including parents and students) will inform the final HLE Implementation Handbook.

In figure 2, a visualisation of the pilot model testing process is provided.

Figure 2

Pilot model process - implementation



Implementation of the pilot model includes individual work for teachers in classrooms, and group work, when HL teachers from the different contexts (Sweden, Finland and The Netherlands) will meet and discuss their interpretations of, reflections on and experiences of working with the suggested perspective and classroom activities together.

2. What is Heritage Language education?

In the "Your Language counts!" project, the term "heritage language" is used to describe the languages and form of language education in focus. This is a term commonly used in North America to describe language education that aims to pass on languages and cultures that differ from the socially dominant language and culture (English; and also French in Canada) of parents to their children. HLE in North America, and its equivalent in other countries, is typically initiated and run by parents or volunteers, and takes place in evenings or at weekends HLE is often not formally affiliated with the mainstream school system (although there are exceptions to this, read about the Victorian School of Languages in Australia[2]), and the organisation and curricula are often not formally regulated, rather are shaped and adapted to the needs and wishes of the community which they cater for. In other contexts (e.g. Australia, the United Kingdom and New Zealand) different terms are used to describe the schools (Ethnic schools, Community Language Schools, Complementary schools) and the languages taught there (community languages, ethnic languages, home languages). In Europe, the terms used for schools and languages differ again. "Mother tongue" is in relatively common use, and also minority or home language. In this publication, as in the Erasmus + project, we will refer to these as "Heritage Language(s)" and the forms of education used to teach them as "Heritage Language Education" (hereafter HLE), while also acknowledging that both the languages and the schools have different labels in other countries and contexts.

The right to use, learn and maintain one's heritage language(s) has also been part of global and national language policies and legislation. In 1999, UNESCO introduced International Mother Tongue Day to emphasise how important cultural and linguistic diversity are for societies and a sustainable future. According to UNESCO, about 40% of the world's population have no access to an education in languages they know[3] despite the fact that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights already proclaimed in 1948 that:

> "everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms (...) without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status."[4]

In 1989, the Convention on the Rights of the Child was ratified by the UN General Assembly strengthening children's right to their cultural and linguistic identities. In Article 30 it states:

> "In those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities or persons of indigenous origin exist, a child belonging to such a minority or who is indigenous shall not be denied

[2] Willoughby, L. (2018). The Victorian School of Languages as a Model for Heritage Language Education. In P. P. Trifonas & T. Aravossitas (Eds.), *Handbook of Research and Practice in Heritage Language Education,* (pp. 417–428). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-44694-3_39

[3] https://webarchive.unesco.org/web/20231228145737/https://www.unesco.org/en/days/mother-language

[4] https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights

> the right, in community with other members of his or her group, to enjoy his or her own culture, to profess and practise his or her own religion, or to use his or her own language." [5]

Heritage language education has thus an important function for giving children and youth access to and opportunities to develop and maintain their heritage languages either through formal or non-formal education. HLE is therefore an important promoter not only of multilingualism as an important resource for both people and societies. It also contributes to establishing sustainable societies that are informed by multilingualism and multiculturalism, and that foster tolerance and respect for each other.

2.1 HLE in diaspora

While the labels used to describe HLE in different countries and contexts vary, what they all have in common is that they occur in diasporic contexts. Traditionally the concept of diaspora was used to describe a group of people who were *forced* to live far away from their land and/or culture of origin. In the twenty-first century we understand the diaspora more broadly, as a social process or situation that results from international migration, which itself is often a result of globalisation.

What characterizes a diasporic situation for a group of people is that they find a sense of community in their shared history and 'homeland'.[6] A diasporic situation differs from other forms of migration because it constantly revolves around questions of a form of exile, separation, the dream of a possible return to the homeland and the creation of a "home away from home". These questions often result in the creation of and participation in cultural activities and groups, where members of the community join together to cook, sing, read, learn or participate in other cultural activities that they all associate with what is perceived to be a common heritage[7], as well as maintaining regular contact with relatives and friends in the home country via telephone and internet or, if possible, through travelling there.[8] HLE is often an important aspect of life in diasporic communities.

However, as will be elaborated on later in this pilot model, community, identity and culture are dynamic, shifting, and socioculturally situated, which makes heritage language education a particularly complex and interesting phenomenon to study and to participate in. Consider for example grade 8 students whose parents migrated from Turkey to Sweden, and who study

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[5] https://www.unicef.org/child-rights-convention/convention-text

[6] Appadurai, A. (1996). *Modernity at large : Cultural dimensions of globalization*. University of Minnesota Press.

[7] Reath Warren, A., & Ackermann-Boström, C. (2024). *Identitetsutveckling i modersmålsundervisningen [Working with identity development in Mother Tongue Education],* (pp. 1–13). Skolverket. See also

[8] Olsson, E. (2016). *Diaspora: ett begrepp i utveckling [Diaspora: a concept in the making].* Delegationen för migrationsstudier [Delegation for migration studies. (Delmi). https://www.delmi.se/media/1blleese/delmi-kunskaps%C3%B6versikt-2016_4.pdf.

Turkish in HLE Sweden. In an interview, they describe how they feel *Swedish* and use *Swedish* when visiting Turkey (as opposed to feeling *Turkish* and using *Turkish*) :

> Omer [we want to] show that we come from Sweden
> Elif That we are Swedish
> Omer When we arrive in our village [in Turkey] the next day; I go for a walk with my sister and I speak Swedish, loudly [other students laugh] but they know, everybody knows, they're used to it now. They look at me [and say] "The Swede is back in town"[9].

The same students also express appreciation for the Turkish language and being able to study it at school. Omer describes how valuable HLE is for developing deeper knowledge of a language that would otherwise only be used at home.

So even though HLE takes place in diasporic contexts, students in the heritage language classroom often have different backgrounds. Some students have perhaps recently moved to the country they now live in while others were born there. There may be students who speak the same language, but who come from different countries, or regions. This is why their situation also differs in their own diasporic community. Some newly arrived students have their own, fresh experiences of their home country, while other students in the same HLE classroom only get these experiences through their relatives, or short visits during holidays. These differences have an impact on how the students in the heritage language classroom use and learn the language and also on how they build their own identity, connecting to different stories, places and experiences. As students have these different life experiences, it is also important to recognize that their learning experiences might differ. Some students may have attended school in their home countries, while others only have experienced school in the country they live in.

2.2 Linguistic diversity in HLE

HLE classrooms are often highly linguistically diverse places! Students who use languages other than the majority language at home or in other settings have a broad individual repertoires, and different students have different repertoires. Students who study many of the larger world languages (Arabic, English, Spanish, Chinese to name just a few) may themselves have lived, or have family have live or have lived in different countries, in different hemispheres and speak the same language with different accents (Australian English versus Scottish English) or mutually unintelligible varieties of the same language (Moroccan Arabic and Iraqi Arabic for example). Students who have arrived recently in the country where they study HLE may speak, read and write the target language fluently and at a high level, or they may have passive understanding of the variety that their caregivers/parents use only. In other words, HLE

[9] Reath Warren, A. (2020). Modersmålselevers syn på språk och modersmålsämnet [Mother tongue instruction students' views on language and mother tongue instruction]. In B. Straszer & Å. Wedin (Eds.), *Modersmål, minoriteter och mångfald i förskola och skola [Mother tongue, minorities and diversity in preschool and school]* (pp. 273–302). Studentlitteratur.

is characterised to a large extent by both its context (diasporic) and its content (linguistic and cultural diversity).

2.3 Classroom approaches in HLE

As HLE can involve teaching any one of the 7164 living languages that are used in the world[10], there is also an enormous variation in possible classroom approaches. Teaching heritage languages differs from teaching languages that are the national language in the context (e.g. teaching French in France; teaching English in New Zealand). For example, heritage language speakers may not encounter the language they develop in HLE in any other other context apart from the HLE classroom, and at home, while those learning French in France, either as a second language or as a first language, will encounter written and spoken French every day. While students who attended schools in countries where the HL is used are probably literate (i.e. can read and write the language), students who have only attended school in the diasporic context, who also study in the heritage language classroom might use their heritage language mostly as an oral language. HLE is also different from teaching "foreign" languages (e.g. teaching Mandarin in the UK to those for whom it is a new language; teaching German in Italy to those for whom it is a new language). Those who attend HLE may understand the spoken language very well, but be unable to use it confidently in spoken or written texts. This has a number of implications, including that classroom approaches need to be flexible, and reflect the strengths and needs of a very diverse group of languages and learners. To work successfully with this heterogenous group, we suggest three knowledge areas identified in the research as important to incorporate in HLE: sociolinguistic knowledge, critical language awareness and language skills and modes of communication.

Sociolinguistic knowledge

Sociolinguistics is the study of how language is used in our everyday lives, for example in conversations, the media, social media, and how this language use is shaped by and simultaneously shapes societal norms, policies and laws concerning language.[11] This section therefore relates to how HLE can incorporate discussions and activities about the ways that heritage languages are used in daily life, in HL classrooms.

As early as 1995, researchers in the USA analysed and identified instructional goals and pedagogical strategies for HLE[12]. Almost thirty years later, these goals and strategies are still relevant and helpful for planning and teaching HLs in Europe. According to Valdés, HL teachers of Spanish in the USA generally worked towards four goals in instruction:

1. Transfer of literacy skills (achieved through instruction in reading, writing and grammar)

[10] Ethnologue (2024). *Languages of the World*. https://www.ethnologue.com/
[11] Wardaugh, R. & Fuller, Janet. M. (2021). *An introduction to Sociolinguistics*. Eighth edition. John Wiley and Sons Ltd.
[12] Valdés, G. (1995). The Teaching of Minority Languages as Academic Subjects: Pedagogical and Theoretical Challenges. *The Modern Language Journal, 79*(3), 299–328. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4781.1995.tb01106.x

2. Acquisition of prestige/standard varieties (achieved through teaching of a prestige variety, traditional grammar and strategies for identifying features acquired in contact/diasporic settings).
3. Expansion of bilingual range (achieved through teaching vocabulary and reading a range of texts)
4. Language maintenance (achieved through instruction in reading, writing and vocabulary)[13]

Valdés takes a critical perspective in her analysis of these strategies, particularly concerning the acquisition of prestige/standard varieties. She argues that it is neither reasonable not equitable to expect students to be motivated to learn a standardised form of a language if they are not first aware of sociolinguistic issues, such as language variation and language use in different contexts, and can thus view the language variety they use positively and in context. She therefore suggests three other groups of strategies that can benefit teaching and learning in HLE:

a) Introducing sociolinguistic principles of language variation and language use
b) Structuring lessons so that students participate in activities designed to expand linguistic, sociolinguistic and pragmatic competence
c) Consciousness-raising concerning issues of identity and language; inclusion of texts on socio-political issues; ethnographic projects in language communities

These strategies inform the activities suggested in section 4 of this pilot model.

Critical language awareness

Another broad approach in HLE which in fact overlaps with the sociolinguistic principles recommended by Valdés is that of critical linguistic awareness (CLA). CLA was developed in the UK in the 1990s, originally seeking to provide language learners not only with knowledge about how to use and describe language but also critical awareness of how language practices "are shaped by, and shape, social relationships of power"[14] (Clark et al., 100, p. 249). Hence, the CLA approach focuses on issues of social justice and how educational systems can contribute to create social equality and equity.[15] In HLE, CLA implies that HL teachers are respectful and inclusive of the language varieties spoken by their students, and promote learners' appreciation of linguistic diversity as a cornerstone of instruction[16] Using a CLA approach in HLE also contributes to empowering the students, not only to learn and reflect on language variety,

[13] Ibid., p. 309.
[14] Clark, R., Fairclough, N., Ivanič, R., & Martin-Jones, M. (1990). Critical language awareness. Part I: A critical review of three current approaches to language awareness. *Language and Education, 4*(4), 249–260.
[15] Crookes, Graham V. 2021. Critical language pedagogy: An introduction to principles and values. *ELT Journal* 75(3). 247–255. https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/ccab020.
[16] Beaudrie, S. M., & Wilson, D. V. (2021). *Reimagining the Goals of HI Pedagogy Through Critical Language Awareness. Heritage Language Teaching: Critical Language Awareness Perspectives for Research and Pedagogy*, 63–79. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003148227-5

attitudes and language hierarchies, but to be able to make their own decisions on their language practices.[17]

Language skills and modes of communication

Sociolinguistic knowledge and critical language awareness are vital for HL students to be able to contextualise, understand and appreciate the languages they are studying. However, heritage language education, like all other forms of language education, also requires a focus on language learning and development. In the European context, the Council of Europe has developed the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEFR) that focuses on learning, teaching and assessment of languages. Although it doesn't explicitly focus on heritage languages, the key aspects of the CEFR for language teaching and learning can be reference points for planning, teaching and assessment in heritage language classrooms.

Language teaching and learning has traditionally often been described through four language skills: reading, writing, listening and speaking. However, when using languages in real life a variety of activities and strategies are commonly used simultaneously. To reflect this, the CEFR uses the categories (called "modes" in the CEFR) of reception, production, interaction and mediation. Table 2 provides concrete examples, to show how these four modes of communication combine different language skills.[18]

Table 2

Communication modes and activities in the CEFR

Communication mode	**Activities**
Reception	**Listening** to music, podcasts, videos, lectures and presentations **Reading** both offline and online (e.g. books, articles, social media posts)
Production	**Speaking** (e.g. making a podcast, giving a lecture, sending a voice message) **Writing** (e.g. by hand or digital device)
Interaction	**Oral and written communication and exchange of information between two or more people** (e.g. face to face, on the telephone, online in chats or emails)

[17] Leeman, Jennifer. 2005. Engaging critical pedagogy: Spanish for native speakers. *Foreign Language Annals 38*: 35–45.
[18] Council of Europe (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, assessment: Companion volume. Council of Europe. (https://rm.coe.int/common-european-framework-of-reference-for-languages-learning-teaching/16809ea0d4)

Mediation	**Explaining ideas or concepts to others** **Transferring information to new forms** (e.g. presenting a talk includes reading, adapting the language to the target audience and writing a presentation)

This new way of looking at communicative competence doesn't mean that the four language skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking) aren't important parts of language classes anymore as the CEFR underlines. They have an important function in language teaching and learning as language education aims to improve language skills in all four areas. Instead, the four modes of communication focus more on the overarching functions and purpose of communication than on an individual's language skills.

The principles of sociolinguistic awareness, critical language awareness, language skills and modes of communication described in this section, all underpin all the classroom practices described in section 4 of this pilot model.

2.4 Questions for reflection

1. Consider the language that you speak and teach in HLE. In what ways does the community of speakers in your context work to create a "home away from home"? Are there, for example, cultural or sporting clubs? Festivals? Religious celebrations? Childcare groups based on language? Discuss these with your colleagues who speak other languages and compare the ways your groups create cultural and linguistic affinities in the diaspora.
2. What different varieties of the HL are spoken by your students and in what ways do you work with validating and strengthening all of them in HLE?
3. What kinds of expectations do parents of your students have regarding the teaching of "standardised" versus different varieties of the HL?
4. Compare the ways that the HL you teach is used in countries of origin versus in the diaspora. How can discussing these differences contribute to raising sociocultural awareness in the HL classroom?
5. What kinds of materials do you use to create activities where students' HL skills in reception, production, interaction and mediation are practised?

Further reading

- Extra, G. & Kutlay Yagmur, K. (2002). *Language diversity in multicultural Europe: Comparative perspectives on immigrant minority languages at home and at school.* (Management of Social Transformations MOST; No. 63). Unesco. https://pure.uvt.nl/ws/portalfiles/portal/883273/languagedp63extra.pdf
- Fairclough, M. & Beaudrie, S. (Eds). *Innovative Strategies for Heritage Language Teaching: A Practical Guide for the Classroom*. Georgetown University Press.
- Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) (https://www.coe.int/en/web/common-european-framework-reference-languages/home)
- CEFR Companion Volume implementation toolbox (https://www.ecml.at/ECML-Programme/Programme2020-2023/CEFRCompanionVolumeimplementationtoolbox/tabid/4299/language/en-GB/Default.aspx)
- Example of a national curriculum for heritage language education from Sweden: Curriculum for Compulsory School, Preschool Class and School-Age Educare – Lgr22 - Skolverket

3. Situating HLE in local contexts

This chapter presents challenges and best practices concerning family contact, organising HLE, HL teachers and teaching materials, based on Work Group discussions in the Erasmus + project. The challenges and best practices presented and discussed are thus specific to the countries involved in this project (Finland, Germany, Greece, The Netherlands and Sweden), but can reflect similar challenges and best practices in other European contexts. Each section in this chapter concludes with questions for reflection and discussion. Responses and further examples and approaches will be collected during the pilot implementation phase, in order to be incorporated into the final HLE Implementation Handbook.

3.1 Connecting with families

While mainstream schooling in most countries is mandatory, HLE is an elective form of language education. If embarked upon at an early age, parents are the initiators, while students who enrol in their teens may themselves feel strong motivation to study their HL. It is well established that families are key both in the maintenance of languages used at home[19] and in the establishment of extra-curricular HLE programmes[20] . Both parents and children are therefore integral partners in the maintenance and development of heritage languages.

Researchers have reported on many aspects of the role that families play in relation to HLE. For example, language hierarchies in combination with parents' knowledge about and attitudes to different languages play a significant role in the language education in which they enrol their children. Consider the family who moved from Tanzania to Sweden, and who, even though they spoke Swahili at home, enrolled their daughter in HLE in English, a language they perceived as being more useful[21]. Enrolling a child to study a language that is not their mother tongue, but rather a national language creates challenges on many levels. For the family whose children do not study their heritage language, development of that language ceases and communication and emotional connections can suffer[22]. The child who is enrolled in HLE in a language they do not understand well can also suffer feelings of stress if other students in the same class have stronger competences in the HL. For HL teachers, classes composed of students who do use

[19] Spolsky, B. (2012). Family language policy – the critical domain. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development, 33*(1), 3–11. https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.2011.638072

[20] Reath Warren, A., & Ahlgren, K. (2023). Reasons and Resistance. Parents' reflections on community language education in Swedish and Vietnamese in Australia. In K. Cruickshank, J. Lo Bianco, & M. Wahlin (Eds.), *Community and Heritage Languages Schools Transforming Education* (pp. 168–188). Routledge.

[21] Mazur-Andersson, A. (2020). Språkliga Hierarkier i modersmålsundervisning [Language hierarchies in mother tongue instruction]. In B. Straszer & Å. Wedin (Eds.). *Modersmål. Minoriteter och Mångfald i Förskola och skola [Mother Tongue, minorities and diversity in preschool and school]* (pp. 139 - 170). Studentlitteratur.

[22] Wong Fillmore, L. (1991). When learning a second language means losing the first. Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 6(3), 323–346. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0885-2006(05)80059-6

the HL at home and those for whom it is a new language have difficulty meeting the needs of all their students[23].

Depending on how HLE is organised, enrolment routines can have some impact on the student body. For example, to be eligible for HLE education in Sweden, parents are required to confirm that the child has basic knowledge of the language and uses it on a daily basis. However research indicates that despite this regulation, students with low or no knowledge of the HL still enrol, and that their lack of competence can be due to a wide range of factors (see footnote 12).

In the Erasmus + project, one working group discussed family outreach in the context of HLE and compared challenges and potential solutions for establishing and maintaining good contact with families. In Table 3, these challenges and potential solutions are summarised.

The working group emphasises the importance of communicating the advantages of HLE to parents, and also the concrete steps involved in enrolling their children. Establishing a point of contact for families is also considered essential. To achieve this, mapping service pathways is recommended. The service pathways will differ from context to context; some pathways may include gathering or submitting information to: integration centres, social workers, HL teachers, public institutions or community language organisations. Social media campaigns can be leveraged to distribute information on and garner support for HLE. Creating communication material in a range of languages that can be used and translated flexibly and according to the needs of the community at any point in time are also recommended. In order to make HLE truly meaningful for parents and for children, it is recommended that the outreach material be developed in collaboration with families, and include aspects relating to the development not only of languages but also of identities. Successful communication with families can also help resolve some challenges identified, for example when parents' have negative perceptions about the HL teacher, due either to teaching style, the language variety they use or teach, or other issues.

[23] Reath Warren, A. (2017). *Developing multilingual literacies in Sweden and Australia: Opportunities and challenges in mother tongue instruction and multilingual study guidance in Sweden and community language education in Australia.* [doctoral thesis]. Stockholm University. http://su.diva-portal.org/smash/record.jsf?pid=diva2%3A1116085&dswid=8210

Table 3

Connecting with families

Key Challenges	**Suggested practices to overcome challenges**
Parents are critical of the teacher or the teaching (perceived as “boring)	Provide information about the possible challenges of HLE, being honest about the challenges upon registration so as to manage expectations. Engage parents and students in selection of topics for classes Project-based learning/ Linked to an interactive multicultural European context Dialogue and parent/teacher meetings. Pedagogical leadership (principal or head teacher) who can mediate. Professional development opportunities for HL teachers.
Parents critical of the organisation (that HLE is not held at their child’s school, which means the child cannot attend)	Provide information about the possible challenges of HLE, being honest about the challenges upon registration so as to manage expectations. Provide parents with information about how to use the lessons as a starting point to continue to encourage language use at home. Provide parents with a forum to express concern Hybrid lessons supported by schools/ municipalities/ other broader educational institutes Families share the responsibility of transporting the children to HL classes.

Lack of official information on children's right to/access to HLE	Information about linguistic rights or where to find information on website. Provide municipality, school, whichever actor is responsible for the promotion and organization of HLE with communication materials. Dissemination of information to local community organizations Informing parents through school events/ municipal and national networks and events Public information campaigns about HLE
Students perceive HLE as boring, irrelevant or that it doesn't reflect their identity	Engage parents and students in selection of topics for classes. Engage young adults in sharing their experiences of language and identity with students – in school meetings, via social media, case examples in communication materials.
No formal HLE framework that families can easily access	Creation of a "toolkit" for any actor wishing to provide information about HLE and promote HLE, with translated communication materials and best practice for family communication, and if possible, adapted to each linguistic community in the pilot
Families insecure about encouraging HLE, as they have been indoctrinated to speak the majority language only	Provide information addressing power structures and emphasis on language rights, identity and community. Encourage schools to build a language positive environment generally to have roll-on effect on update of HLE.
Parents have unrealistic, essentialistic expectations about their children's performance in the HL	Provide clear information on content and goals of HLE, engage parents in planning, take home tasks to engage parents in the process of language learning.

Monolingual ideologies in the society position HLE as an obstacle to attaining competence in the majority language or to integration hinder greater uptake in HLE	Encourage schools to build a language positive environment generally to have roll-on effect on update of HLE.

Questions for reflection

- Do you have much contact with the families/parents of your students? If so, in relation to what issues?
- How do the families of your students find out about the HLE programme they are enrolled in?
- What are the most common issues that parents or other family members raise with HL teachers in your context?
- Do parents or other family members communicate mostly with the teacher, or with principals/head teachers?
- As a teacher, what information do you feel is essential for parents to know before they enrol their children in HLE?
- As a teacher, what expectations do you have of the students and their parents in HLE?

3.2 Organising HLE

HLE is organised in very different ways in different national contexts, and within the same context. In some countries, it is possible to study HLE into the mainstream school (e.g. Sweden and Finland). In other contexts, and particularly in less commonly spoken languages, HLE is completely reliant on volunteer groups from local communities (e.g. UK, Australia, Canada). In other contexts, there is a "fusion" approach to organisation[24], where grassroots initiatives from parents and communities with the assistance of government funding and other resources are combined to establish schools. In the best examples of this, government funding supports the development of teaching materials, examination preparation and rental of classrooms, while community input on curricula, pedagogy and format is maintained. In many contexts, all three forms of organisation, and others exist parallel to each other. Whatever form HLE takes, collaboration and mutual understanding throughout the different levels of the system supports successful organisation and implementation of HLE and in turn, students' development of the HL and thus multilingualism[25].

[24] Lo Bianco, J. (2004). *A Site for Debate, Negotiation and Contest of National Identity: Language Policy in Australia.* Language Policy Division, Council of Europe. LoNM.
[25] Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). *Ecology of Human Development.* Harvard University Press.

In the Erasmus + project, one working group discussed organisation in the context of HLE, comparing challenges in organisation, and proposing potential solutions for overcoming them. These challenges and potential solutions are summarised in Table 4.

When encountering difficulties in coordination and creating routines for HLE, the working group recommended mapping practices used in other HLE programmes in the same national context as well as internationally. These can often be found through HLE school websites. Lack of access and/or equal conditions for students is a big challenge, especially in larger countries, where diasporic communities may be small and scattered. Having access to online HLE makes a big difference here. Lack of access is also a problem for smaller language groups; for these, connecting with international diasporic communities may be a way of accessing materials. Unequal access is exacerbated when HLE is not regulated in any way; a way to mediate this is to establish larger interest groups that lobby for and provide resources and support for community language education (see for example, Community Languages Australia, the national peak body for HLE in Australia[26]).

Table 4

Organising HLE

Key Challenges	**Suggested practices to overcome challenges**
Lack of local co-ordination and routines for organisation and implementation at municipal level	Map organisational practices nationally and internationally to identify best practices for organisation
Lack of equal access to HLE, and equal conditions for all students	Develop distance education capacity
At school level, difficulties finding information about teachers and classes (no online information)	Information to or discussion with principals so they can amend this.
Location; HLE is held after school hours, sometimes in another school.	Frame HLT as a main school subject and during regular school hours
Class and group organisation: groups that are too small are shut down while large groups are never split.	This challenge can be overcomed by online and hybrid lessons. Apt adults found within schools to act as language bridges
Small languages miss out, because there are not enough students to form a group (in a context where there needs to be a minimum of 10 students to form a group).	

[26] Community Languages Australia. (2024). https://communitylanguagesaustralia.org.au/

Heterogenous groups (different ages and levels of competency)	Group/project work where students can work at the own level on the same topic.
Resources difficult to plan due to lack of official statistics on languages in the national context	Create 3 year blocks ranging in age
HLE separate from mainstream education	Engage with policy makers. Lobby groups.
Generic curriculum for all language subjects (including the few HLs offered) in schools	Create language specific curriculum based on the generic one.
Marginalised status	Engage with policy makers. Lobby groups.

Questions for reflection

- How is HLE organised in your local context? Does it vary within your country/region?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of the approach to organisation in your context?
- What kinds of public information campaigns about HLE would be achievable /successful in your context?
- Is there a system for accessing online HLE in your context? If so, do you know if it is well-received?

3.3 HLE teachers

Being a HLT requires language and language teaching skills, a lot of enthusiasm and an ability to work in what can often be uncomfortable conditions, probably for not much money! In countries where HLE is incorporated into mainstream education systems these conditions may be somewhat better (see for example a report on the professional learning strengths and needs of teacher in the NSW Community Language Schools[27]) but generally speaking HLEs face many challenges. Educational and professional opportunities for HLE teachers varies considerably from context to context, and they are often reliant on creating materials and other resources for themselves (see Section 3.4).

In the Erasmus + project, one working group discussed the situation for HLE teachers, comparing challenges and proposing potential solutions for overcoming them. These challenges and potential solutions are summarised in Table 5.

The working group suggest that permitting unqualified HLE teachers to work in schools, but provide on-going opportunities to engage in professional development programmes is a way to

[27] Cruickshank, A. K., Ellsmore, M., & Brownlee, P. (2018). *The Skills in Question.* The University of Sydney.

raise professionalism. Incorporating pathways into HLE into national teacher education programmes is potentially a way of raising the status of the profession. Creating networks for HLE teachers can help build experience, knowledge and teaching skills.

In Table 5, we provide key challenges faced by HLE teachers and suggestions to overcome those challenges based on discussions within the working group “HLE Teachers”:

Table 5

HLE Teachers

Key Challenges	**Suggested practices to overcome challenges**
Lack of qualified teachers in general; teaching not an attractive profession	Permit unqualified teachers to work in HLE (but provide on-going professional development) Incorporate pathways for HL teachers in teacher education programmes
There is a teacher shortage, particular for teaching smaller languages	
Teachers have different backgrounds and experience to analyze and adapt teaching materials.	connect teachers create network

Questions for reflection

- In your opinion, what are the main skills that HLE teachers need to successfully teach HLs?
- Are there programmes to be educated as aHLE teacher in your context? If so, describe them!
- How can HLE schools attract teachers to the profession?
- What motivates YOU as a HLE teacher, to keep on teaching?
- How can HLE schools find teachers of smaller languages?

3.4 Teaching materials in HLE

Teaching materials play an important role in the heritage language classroom. In this pilot model, we understand teaching materials as materials that teachers and students in the heritage language classroom use actively with the aim to reach certain learning goals. This means that teaching materials are not only textbooks or other written material, like newspaper

articles or literature (e.g. poems, fiction) but also podcasts, games, music, art, film and other materials (e.g. crafts, wood, stones) that can be used in the heritage language classroom.

As described above, heritage language education is often marginalized and its situation varies between different countries. This situation also has an impact on teaching materials. In some languages, there might be a lot of teaching materials available in the language while other other languages might not have access to much material at all. Some languages might even be characterized as rather 'oral languages' and have very little written materials at all. But even if there is a lot of materials available, it might not be suitable for teaching the language as a heritage language or because of its contents (e.g. ideology, politics etc.). THis is particularly important in countries like Sweden, where HLE is incorporated into the general curriculum and therefore is required to reflect and enact the foundational democratic values on which the Swedish school system rests.

In Table 6, we provide key challenges with teaching materials and suggestions to overcome those challenges based on discussions within the working group "Teaching materials":

Table 6

Teaching materials in HLE

Key Challenges	**Suggested practices to overcome challenges**
There are constraints by the national and/or local syllabus, i.e. teaching materials and syllabus don't concur.	Find different focal points in teaching materials to cover the syllabus
Teaching materials reflect neither core values nor required content by syllabus.	Create own material, e.g. in collaboration with colleagues.
The teaching materials are not adapted for heritage language education, e.g. linguistic diversity in the classroom (L1 & L2-speaker).	Create own material, e.g. in collaboration with colleagues.
There is only a limited access to teaching materials due to e.g. lack of standardization of the language, economic resources, language policies etc.	Create own material, e.g. in collaboration with colleagues.
The access to teaching materials varies between languages and local contexts.	Create own material, e.g. in collaboration with colleagues. Use TED talks Textbooks in different subjects in different languages available from UNICEF

	https://alp.teach4integration.gr/en/home_en/
Lack of local resources (e.g. work time, economic resources, other resources) to produce own materials.	
Teaching materials produced in countries of origin often not appropriate	Adjust existing material
Lack of a coherent systemised approach to teaching materials for HLE	Create workshops for teachers

Questions for reflection

- Which teaching materials do you use in your teaching? Think about the form (e.g. textbooks, digital learning platforms, activity books etc.).
- Who produces these teaching materials (e.g. teachers, a publishing house, media stations etc.)?
- Are any of the key challenges and suggested practices mentioned in the table above familiar to you? If yes, how do you overcome them in your context?
- Are there other challenges in regards to teaching materials that you have experienced? How do you overcome them?

3.5 Overall reflective questions during implementation phase

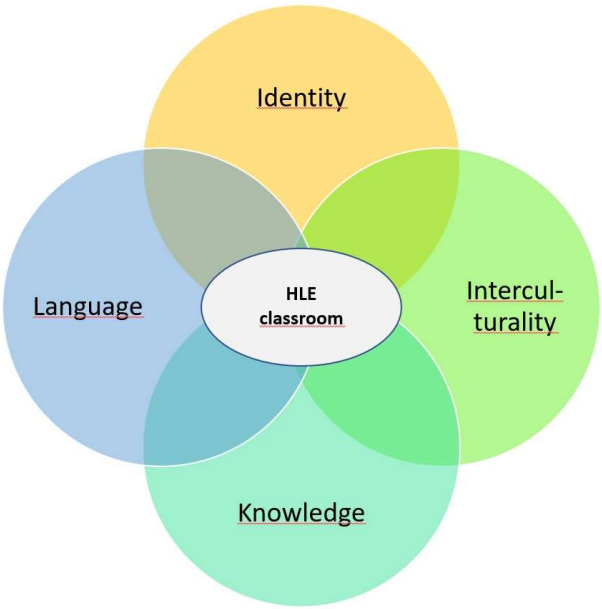
- What different ways of seeing languages are offered in your workplace?
- How is heritage language described in your workplace?
- What spaces do students have to develop their language(s)?
- What spaces are given to students to develop their language(s)?
- What attitudes towards language(s) do you meet in your work?

4. Perspectives and classroom activities

This chapter provides four perspectives (language, knowledge, identity and interculturality) upon which to organise heritage language education. It also presents a total of 12 key examples, i.e. 3 examples for each perspective to aid incorporating these perspectives in their teaching. These examples function as an inspiration for heritage language teachers and can/will be adjusted and modified by the teachers involved in the project.

Figure 3

Perspectives in HLE



The examples that are presented in this chapter are generic and must be adapted to the respective teaching context in relation to the proficiency level and age of the learners, the language varieties present in the classroom, the size of the group and the individual characteristics and interests of the students.

The examples are not necessarily for one individual lesson only, but can also extend over several lessons, or form the basis for or a component of a larger theme-based project.

4.1 Language

The HL classroom is a language classroom where learning the students' heritage language is in the centre of all teaching activities. The focus of (heritage) language teaching is *communicative competence*, a person's ability to understand and use language properly in different social contexts. Communicative competence is not only about using grammar correctly but also implies other competencies. In order to communicate with others, people need the following specific competences:

1. Linguistic competences (i.e. knowledge of grammar, vocabulary, spelling rules etc.)
2. Sociolinguistic competences (i.e. knowledge of linguistic variety, non-verbal communication, cultural references etc.)
3. Discursive competences (i.e. knowledge of how ideas and phrases are connected in order to make meaning etc.)
4. Strategic competences (i.e. knowledge and abilities to overcome e.g. language gaps, adapt language to different contexts etc.)[28]

As language(s) are social practices, two more competences are relevant for (heritage) language learning:

5. Sociocultural competence (i.e. knowledge about the sociocultural context, e.g. in different countries and/or situations)
6. Social competences (i.e. knowledge and ability to interact with others).[29]

In chapter 2.3 we discussed language skills and modes of communication that are embedded in communicative competence drawing upon the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEFR). In this section, we will present three activities that can be used to develop students' communicative competence in their heritage language(s). These activities combine both language skills and modes of communication and touch upon the various parts of communicative competence as stated above.

As described above (see chapter 2.2) the heritage language classroom is characterised by linguistic diversity. Very often, students with varying language skills in their heritage language learn together which can be a challenging situation for heritage language teachers.

[28] Canale, M., & Swain, M. (1980). Theoretical Bases of Communicative Approaches to Second Language Teaching and Testing. Applied Linguistics, 1, 1-47.
[29] Sheils, J. (1988). Communication in the modern language classroom. Strasbourg: Council of Europe.

1. Dictogloss

The following language teaching technique, called Dictogloss[30], is a teaching technique that is suitable for classrooms with linguistic varieties and backgrounds. It is a task-based activity using a collaborative–communicative approach enabling training of all communicative competences presented above. The Dictogloss is not a dictation exercise. Instead, all four modes of communication (see Language skills and modes of communication) are activated and used in this exercise.

Aim: Listening, Writing, Speaking, Reading, Training grammar and vocabulary
Content: Listening to a text, Writing notes, Discussing notes with a partner/group, reflecting on text and grammar structures
Form: Individual work, pair/group discussion, individual text writing, collaborative writing

Before you start this exercise, present the exercise for your students in order to prepare them for the task. If you want to practise e.g. a certain grammatical form with the dictogloss, do a short review of this form. Review difficult or possibly unknown vocabulary that might be part of the dictogloss together with the students.

Instructions

Procedure	**Teacher activity**	**Students' activities**
Step 1	Select a short text that is connected to the current work/theme you have done in the class.	
Step 2	The whole text is read out loud.	Students listen carefully to the text the first time the teacher reads it at normal speed for overall meaning.
Step 3	Read the text a second time.	Students listen to the text and make notes.
Repeat step 3 if necessary several times		
Step 4	Encourages, supports and reminds students of the task.	The students work together in pairs or small groups for ca. 20min. They compare and discuss their notes. They try

[30] Gibbons, P. (2015). *Scaffolding Language, Scaffolding Learning, Second Edition*. Heinemann, p. 192-193.

		to write their text together so that it is as close as possible to the original text.
Step 5	Analysis and correction This step can be done in several ways and can be adapted to the class/group. For example, all groups can share their text and it can be discussed together. Another way could be peer-review, i.e. the groups share their texts between each other and review the texts, giving feedback on e.g. grammar structures, text structure and/or vocabulary. One can also pick certain constructions from the texts and discuss them together in-depth.	

2. Donut circles[31]

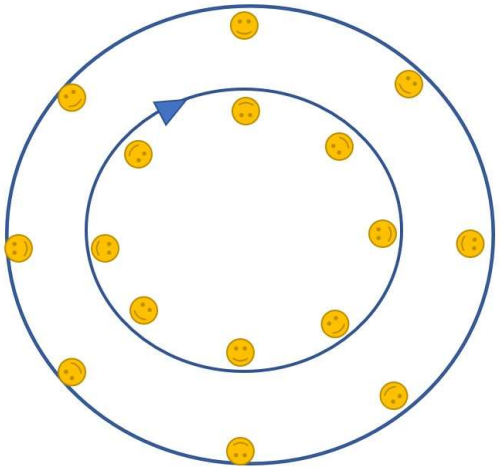
This exercise is suitable for classrooms with linguistic varieties and backgrounds as its content can be adapted to the varying level of difficulty (e.g. beginners and/or advanced speakers of the HL).

Aim: Listening, Speaking, Practising grammar and vocabulary, interacting with other speakers
Content: Oral communication and exchange of information
Form: Pair work

Instructions:

Step 1	Place the students in two circles. The number of students in each circle should be equal. The students in the outer circle should face inwards, i.e. the students should face each other.

[31] Gibbons, P. (2015). Scaffolding Language, Scaffolding Learning, Second Edition. Heinemann, p. 66-67.

	
Step 2	Each pair talks in turns to each other (ca. 1 min). The topic can be adapted to group.
Step 3	After both students have had a turn, one of the circles moves clockwise. The other one stands still. Now everyone has a new partner.
Repeat step 1-3 as long as the activity is useful.	

The “Donut circles”-exercise is a form of collaborative learning giving students opportunities to exchange knowledge and ideas and to practise their communicative competence. For not so advanced learners, the topics the pairs talk about can be more simple like e.g. “What will you do on the weekend?”, “What is/are your favourite XYZ?” or “What did you do during your holidays?”. More advanced learners can also use this form of interaction to e.g. discuss more advanced topics and/or share opinions about e.g. a text that was read earlier. The activity provides also the possibility to practise words or phrases. For students who might be anxious to talk with others, the structure of the activity provides a certain routine and predictability as they can repeat the same answer with the new partner. This creates a form of safe space for those students. As this activity is collaborative, it also enables scaffolding and support within the group of students rather than getting feedback/corrections from the teacher.

3. Working with comic strips

Comics and graphic novels are often an important part of youth culture. Using them in HLE might therefore have a positive impact on the students' interest in reading and their motivation to learn.[32] Comics are multimodal text, i.e. they combine text and images which makes them an interesting content for language learning activities. Some comic book characters are also part of the most popular films in the past years which makes it possible to work with films and texts in HLE. As some popular comic series also have been translated into several languages, it is also possible to work with interculturality aspects, e.g. discussing what the characters have been named (see also 4.3 Interculturality).

Aim: Reading, Writing, Practising grammar and vocabulary,
Content: Comic books, graphic novels
Form: Individual and/or pair work

The following table presents some activities[33] on how to work with comics and graphic novels:

Jigsaw activity	The comic strip is divided into several parts. The students are asked to put the parts in the right sequence again. This exercise practises literary skills (text structure, vocabulary, grammar). If doing this as a pair work, the students also practise interaction and mediation with their partner.
Cloze activity	The teacher removes words or phrases from the comic strip/book. The students are asked to fill them in. This exercise can be done individually and/or in pairs. The multimodal character of comic books help to fill in the gaps as the missing words might be visible in the images of the comic books. This exercise can be finished with a group discussion about the results.
Make your own comic	This exercise focuses on productive language skills. The students get the opportunity to create their own comics. This can be done either with a template (e.g. via https://www.canva.com/create/comic-strips/ or other free templates) or the students can also draw their own comics. The comics can

[32] Norton, B. (2003). The Motivation Power of Comic Books: Insights from Archie Comics Readers. The Reading Teacher, 57 (2), pp. 140-147.
[33] Based on activities presented in Gibbons, P. (2015). Scaffolding Language, Scaffolding Learning, Second Edition. Heinemann.

	have a common theme or they could be versions of existing characters or stories. The students can be as creative as possible. The finished comics could then also be presented in a class exhibition, a public reading or another form of publication (see also Identity texts).

4.2 Identity

It is common that students in HLE classrooms who are all studying the same language, speak different varieties of and have varying levels of ability in the language. This is connected to different background factors, including in which country the students were born and began their education (in the country where HLT is conducted or another country), and if they were not born in the country where HLT is conducted, when they arrived, and the nature of their journey to the new country. It also connects to whether or not students have been educated in the language(s), have been exposed to books, media and ongoing oral communication in the language and family language policies. Socio-political and ideological factors also play a significant role in language development. Language hierarchies award different languages different status, which impacts on individuals' willingness, freedom and sometimes even right to use and learn their language[34].

Language and identity are intertwined, and for multilingual children, understanding how the different languages they speak inform who they are is a central question. As students in HLE by default have experience of and some degree of affiliation to at least two languages and cultures, their identities are also by default multifaceted. Multilingual identities have been described as sites of struggle and resistance[35] which moreover are dynamic, shifting and reshaping reflexively and in relation to the contexts which individuals move through at different times in their lives.

The linguistic and cultural diversity in HLE classrooms makes it a stimulating place to learn and teach, but can also be challenging. Creating activities that acknowledge, validate and develop all students' linguistic and cultural repertoires and identities requires a high level of intercultural competence, sociolinguistic awareness and flexibility. HLE has the potential to offer a safe haven to safely explore multilingual identity formation and support the development of harmonious multilingualism[36] and identities, based on the students' own perspectives and experiences. In this section, we present three activities that can be used and adapted in HLE, that all aim to affirm all HLE students' identities and develop their linguistic repertoires.

[34] See Reath Warren, 2019 on Kurdish and Ackermann-Boström, 2021 on Meänkieli.
[35] Norton, 2000
[36] cf. The Harmonious Bilingualism Network https://www.habilnet.org/)

1. Language portraits

Aim: Spoken and written texts describing students' perceptions of their linguistic identities
Content: Drawing a portrait, describing it to a partner, writing about it in a text.
Form: Individual work, pair discussion, individual text writing, (oral presentation or digital texts could also be an outcome). This activity also offers potential to work through the four steps of genre pedagogy in construction of the final text: 1. Building knowledge in the field; 2. Modelling the genre; 3. Joint construction; 4. Independent construction.[37]

Researchers and teachers have used Figure 3 (a silhouette of a human body) to explore connections between linguistic identity and the embodied individual (the physical body) since the 1990s. It provides a simple way for students to think about, represent and then talk about the languages and language varieties they use.

Figure 3

Language portrait silhouette[38]

There are many different ways that HL teachers can work with this language portrait. The most basic steps to include are however:

1. Initial stimulation of the students' interest in their own and other's linguistic repertoires. Pre-teach any vocabulary that might be new.
2. Giving the students time to draw their own linguistic portrait. They can use colours and words and draw wherever they want to on the silhouette

[37] (see Curry, 2020; Derewianka & Jones, 2012;)
[38] This silhouette has been produced by Heteroglossia.net and can be downloaded at https://www.heteroglossia.net/Sprachportraet.123.0.html.

3. Giving students time to discuss their portraits with each other, in pairs.

This activity can also be followed up with a writing task, either individual or as a group, where students write about their own or the group's linguistic repertoires. It could also be transformed into an oral presentation, a film, a blogg, a song….

All the steps in the activity are important, as they allow the students to progressively build on their initial thoughts, and be able to talk and finally write about their languages and linguistic repertoires in more depth. Figure 4 shows a filled in language portrait (Gloria's language portrait) collected during a research project[39]. The languages represented in the portrait are 1) Bulgarian, 2) Greek, 3) Swedish and 4) English. It may be preferable to NOT share this with the students before they themselves have had an opportunity to draw their own, but as a teacher, it can help you describe the activity.

Figure 4

Gloria's Language Portrait

[39] Snoder, S. (2021). "Var i kroppen känns språken liksom?" Fyra flerspråkiga lärares reflektioner över yngre elevers språkliga identitetskonstruktioner. *Nordisk Tidskrift För Allmän Didaktik, 7*(1), 19–37. https://doi.org/10.57126/noad.v7i1.6592

2. What does my mother tongue actually mean to me?[40]

Aim: To read, discuss and write about multilingual language use in the students' local context
Content: This series of activities is like a mini-ethnographic study, where students explore language and identity in a variety of contexts, finally relating it to their own personal experiences.
Form: Reading texts about language and identity in the HL and any other languages the students understand (HL teachers will need to find these texts themselves); Interviewing teachers, neighbours or friends about the languages they speak; discussing the texts and the interviews with their class; writing about their own relationship with the languages they use.

This activity provides HL teachers with a range of activities that they can use and adapt to their own context. The creator of the activities is a HL teacher of Kurdish, who developed the lessons in response to his students' own questions to him; questions such as "Why do I miss Sweden when I visit my family in Turkish Kurdistan, but then miss my family there when I come back to Sweden?" "What does my mother tongue mean to me?" "Is a language just a language or does it impact on my identity?" "Are both Kurdish and Swedish part of my identity?" The activities will be meaningful for students if they build on their own interests, questions and reflections. In the original lesson series plan, the students would:

1) Read and discuss short stories which explored questions about personal identity, written by young authors, in Swedish and in Kurdish. Reading strategies and words about identity and multilingualism were in focus in this activity.
2) Interview a teacher (or another adult in the school they attended) about the languages they use. Start with these questions:
    a) How many languages do you know?
    b) What does your mother tongue mean to you?
    c) What does Swedish (the majority language) mean to you?
    d) In your opinion, can someone feel Swedish and Kurdish; or Swedish and any other nationality simultaneously? Can someone feel like they don't identify with either?
3) Students transcribe the answers in the interview, and discuss them in class (anonymising their informants of course!)-
4) Students write a text about their own mother tongue or heritage language, describing what it means to them, what purpose they have in studying it, and how they identify with it and/or any other languages they speak.

As with the Language Portrait activity, this is an activity that can be adapted in many ways. Perhaps there is a film that raises these issues in your language that you want to share with your students? Perhaps they have suggestions for books, short stories, songs or texts they would like to work with? THere is also scope to write different kinds of texts in the final step, digital texts, song lyrics, or even to make short films.

[40] Sönmez, C. (2024). *Vad betyder egentligen mitt modersmål för mig?* The Swedish National Agency for Education. https://larportalen.skolverket.se/api/resource/P05131892

3. Identity texts

Aim: To validate and strengthen HL students identities
Content: Creation av stories, projects, films, blogs for authentic audiences that reflect on students' personal experiences as speakers of HLs in diasporic contexts
Form: Individual and group work; presentations for authentic audiences

Students feel motivated and engaged when they feel they feel they are personally involved in and can influence lesson content[41] Identity texts enable students to use their multilingual repertoires for "powerful identity-affirming purposes"[42]. There is an endless variety of identity texts that HL teachers can support their students in creating; the content and the format depending on the students' own interests, the tools they have access to and of course, their own linguistic and cultural identities. Jim Cummins had long promoted the use of identity texts to promote learning and pride among multilingual students. Here are a few examples of the many identity texts he describes in an article (see footnote 21).

1) **Flying Home - a migration story**: a digital and hardcover book produced by students who reflected on and compared the journeys undertaken by migratory birds, and their families' journeys to Canada. THe text incorporates curriculum knowledge about migratory birds and students' personal experiences. The texts are multilingual and multimodal and students displayed the hardcover books and the videos at a "Red Carpet Gala" to which parents and other students were invited.
2) **New Year's traditions museum exhibit:** Students shared personal stories about celebrating New Year, and contributed with artefacts from their family that reflected a range of traditions and backgrounds. Texts were illustrated and displayed in a local museum.
3) **Self-identity collage project:** Students created mixed-media collages in response to the questions: "I am….; I like……; I remember….; I believe……", The text was comprised of words and paintings/sketches and was then framed as a kind of self-portrait.
4) **Welcome to Canada: A how-to guide:** Students write about activities and knowledge and that they believe are important for welcoming newcomers to Canada, for example, checking out a library book, making a snowman, ordering hot chocolate etc. THese texts can be illustrated and include different languages (bilingual texts in the majority language and the heritage language) and can of course concern different countries. FOr example, in HLE in Finland for speakers of Somali, the activity could either be "Welcome to Finland" or even "Welcome to Somalia".
5) **Our book of Awesome:** Teachers and students discuss what makes them feel great "awesome". Students study how to write short essays (genre) and then write paragraphs celebrating the awesome things in their lives, which are combined in a book that the students also illustrate. THis can be done in any language, with any group.

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[41] Cummins, J., & Early, M. (2010). *Identity texts: The collaborative creation of power in multilingual schools*. Trentham Books Ltd.
[42] Cummins, J., Hu, S., Markus, P. and Kristiina Montero, M. (2015), Identity Texts and Academic Achievement: Connecting the Dots in Multilingual School Contexts. *TESOL Quarterly, 49*: 555-581. https://doi.org/10.1002/tesq.241 (p. 555)

4.3 Interculturality

The fourth perspective focuses on intercultural competence and how to imply it in HLE. Intercultural competence is built upon interactions between people having a mutual interest in and respect for each other's languages, cultures, ways of life etc. It also includes a recognition and an appreciation of each other's diversity and differentness. Intercultural competence emphasises a non-essentialist view of culture which means that people don't have "one culture" based on their ethnicity, family background, nationality, gender etc. Instead people take part in multiple groups or cultures that may be shifting and varying in time and context. By such, identity and culture are intrinsically linked.
Interculturality is both a starting point (or rather an attitude) and a pedagogical method for developing an education that is built on diversity as a norm. However, it is important to add that developing an intercultural competence presupposes a critical perspective, i.e. an awareness of one's own limited social world and at the same time also a willingness to reconsider and broaden your own worldview through interacting with others.[43] This critical awareness and readiness to learn from others is also a way of avoiding othering (i.e. to categorise people in "we" and "them") and stereotypes of people and "their cultures". Intercultural competence combines competences such as empathy, respect of diversity, curiosity and openness that are important building blocks in a democratic, globalised world. Developing an intercultural competence in HLE is also important as "culture" in HLE can sometimes be understood in an essentialist way, i.e. students are encouraged to learn about THE culture of e.g. their families' home country. An intercultural approach makes it possible to present a more critical perspective including a variety of cultural expressions (e.g. in music, literature, food etc.) that are present in the HL classroom.

The following three examples are meant to function as an inspiration on how to work with interculturality in HLE.

1. Family life around the world

Aim: To develop critical awareness and intercultural competence
Content: Photos and films of families around the world
Form: Individual, pair and/or group work, pair/group discussions

Our lives look very different depending on where we live in the world. The Gapminder Foundation visited 466 families in 66 countries documenting their lives with photos and videos in the so-called "Dollar Street"-project.

- Go to the following webpage: https://www.gapminder.org/dollar-street

[43] Lahdenperä, P. (1997). Invandrarbakgrund eller skolsvårigheter? : en textanalytisk studie av åtgärdsprogram för elever med invandrarbakgrund. Stockholm: HLS.
Lahdenperä, Pirjo (2011). Mångfald, jämlikhet och jämställdhet – interkulturellt lärande och integration. I Lahdenperä, P. (red). Forskningscirkel – arena för verksamhetsutveckling i mångfald, Studies in Social Sciences, Forskningsrapport 2011:1. Mälardalens högskola.s.15–43.

- You can choose in the menu whether you want to look at all examples or rather choose a topic or category.
- Discuss with your students on what is shown in the database.
    - Questions for e.g. category “Most loved toys”: “What kind of toys do children play with? Are they similar to yours? What are the differences? What did you imagine what kind of toys children in country X would play with? Why did you imagine that? Were you surprised by something? Why? What toy would you choose if you got the chance to participate in the project? Why would you choose it?”

- Have a look together whether the country of your students’ family background is part of the project. Discuss together whether they recognize certain aspects or if the portrait of the family/country differs from their own experience. Discuss what they would have included in the project and why?

2. Music in my life[44]

Aim: Encourage intergenerational talks, develop linguistic competence, critical reflection on interculturality
Content: Interview of an adult, music (e.g. songs), books
Form: Pair and group work

The main goal of this exercise is to encourage students to talk to adults about a topic they like. This doesn’t need to necessarily be a family member, but can also be another “favourite” adult like a teacher, sport coach etc.

The student asks the adult to choose 5 songs or pieces of music that they would want to have with them if they had been cast away alone on a desert island. The students asks the following questions about the choses music:

1) Why is this music special to you?

2) How do you feel inside when you listen to it?

3) Where do you listen to it? (in the car? with headphones? alone?)

4) Does this piece of music make you remember or imagine?

The student interviews the adult and audio records or writes down the answers to the interview. The results are then presented and discussed in the class. Are the results similar? What are the differences? Would the students choose the same music? If yes/no, why? Etc. The students can also interview each other and reflect about the results.

[44] This example has been provided by Sheila Robson, heritage language teacher for English in Uppsala.

3. Exploring our hometown

Aim: Reflect on language variation in the linguistic landscape, develop critical language awareness, present and discuss results in classroom
Content: Document the linguistic landscape, presentation and discussion of the results
Form: Individual, pair and/or group work, pair/group discussion

Our societies are and have always been multicultural and multilingual. What language(s) and culture(s) do we see and hear in our surroundings? In this exercise, the students become explorers of their local environment. Together in pairs, they will document the linguistic landscape in their hometown with their mobile phones. What languages can one see on street signs, buildings, buses, advertisements etc.? Does this vary depending on the place? It is also possible to document the "soundscape", i.e. what languages can be heard. Then it is important to remind students that recording other people without their consent might be illegal.

Instructions:

- The students chose a certain area in their hometown in which they document the languages they meet. This can be done with the help of mobile phones.
- It is possible to document the results in Google My maps (https://www.google.com/maps/d/) where the students can add the photos to the location and also add a short description. This might be a good way to present the results as well.
- Discuss the results: What languages were visible and where? Was this connected to certain cultures (e.g. sport clubs, restaurants, official buildings, schools etc.)? Are there differences depending on which area in the hometown? What can be the reason for this? Did you find examples of your heritage language(s)? Where did you find them?
- Bonus activity: Create your own linguistic landscape together with your classmates in Minecraft, Second Life or Roblox.

4.4 Knowledge

School subjects (like Geography, or Physics or Mathematics) are generally built upon specific blocks of knowledge, that are structured in specific ways, according to the age of the learner, and what they have already learnt. It is not uncommon at all to have a series of textbooks where knowledge presented in the first is built upon in subsequent books (Geography 1, 2, 3 and 4). Knowledge in some subjects has a tendency to be more universal (Mathematics or Physics for example) while the subject of Civics/Social Science is very much context dependent.

Language courses for students learning new languages are usually constructed around the existing knowledge we have about foreign language acquisition (for example see How

Languages are Learned[45], while majority language speakers of majority languages (i.e. speakers of Swedish in Sweden or speakers of Japanese in Japan) will learn about every aspect of their language starting from letters, sounds, words and building up to knowledge of reading and writing a range of complex texts.

Creating activities for learners of heritage languages can be complex, as they can be at very different levels. When students already have basic knowledge of the HL, it does not always make sense to start "at the beginning" with letters and sounds. However if students have never learnt to read or write in their HL, particularly if it uses a script that is different from the script used to write the majority language of the society they are living in, such activities might be useful. For students who have recently moved to a new country and have gone to school, and studied subjects in their HL, such an activity would be completely inappropriate. This is why we emphasise starting with the students you have in your group, and finding out where they are in their learning. In HLE it is possible to draw upon a very wide variety of activities that aim to build knowledge about a wide range of topics.

It is common that HLE also includes aspects relating to the "culture" that is associated with speakers of the language in questions. As outlined in section 4,3, an intercultural approach can be a more inclusive way to work with such questions; where students themselves can describe their experiences in contrast to those of their HL classmates and teacher.

In this section three examples of how to work with different kinds of knowledge in the HL classroom are presented. Rather than focusing strictly on linguistic (grammar, word lists, pronunciation) or "cultural" knowledge, the focus is instead on teaching these in the contexts of other kinds of knowledge, a variation on Content and Language Integrated Learning. By choosing texts in the HL and potentially also in the majority language on the same topic, HL teachers can support the development of new knowledge, competences in the HL and intercultural awareness simultaneously. the language used (in the HL and also in the majorit language) to construct the knowledge (giving such activities a linguistic aspect)

Three examples of how to work with Knowledge

1. Working with school subjects

Aim: To learn about curricula in schools subjects in HLE
Content: Any material from any school subject that students are currently working with, and that they would like to work more with
Form: Project work; can take the form of individual; pair-work or group work.

In projects that concern school subjects, HL teachers can strengthen their students' knowledge both of content from other school subjects, but also strengthen competences in the HL, and compare the ways that knowledge is constructed in different contexts. It allows students to use their HL as a tool for discovering something new, for example about space, plants, books, ants,

[45] Lightbown, N., & Spada, N. *How Languages are Learned*. Oxford University Press.

etc. It also opens up for parental or family participation in HLE, for example if students' parents' or caretakers are experts in a particular field.

2. Gap-fill crossword[46]

Aim: To learn and revise subject specific language in any subject
Content: Students read, describe and write a range of subject specific words and descriptions of them.
Form: Pairwork

Students work in pairs (A and B). Prior to the lesson the teacher has developed a crossword with a range of words from a specific subject or knowledge area that the students are working with[47]. The teacher then creates one version of the crossword for student A, with only the horizontal words filled in, and another version for student B, with only the vertical words filled in.

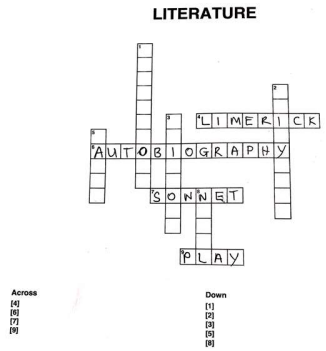
The students are not permitted to show their filled-in crosswords to each other. They take it in turns to give each other clues about their words, while the other student tries to guess what it is. For example A goes first and describes as best they can what one word is their crossword is. Student B guesses as best they can, and can also ask questions about the word. This discussion can be in the heritage language, using gestures, words from other languages etc.. When Student B guesses the correct word, they write it into their crossword and then they describe a word they have in their crossword to student A who tries to guess. They continue taking it in turns until the whole crossword is filled in.

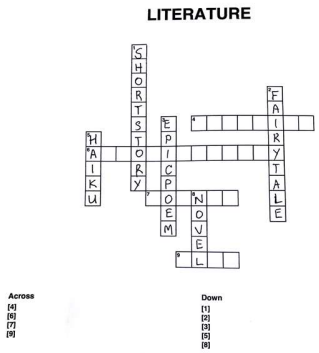
Depending on the age and abilities of your students, they can also write the clues for the words as they guess them. This can be a joint writing exercise. Alternatively, when the whole crossword is finished they can write the clues together, or individually as a follow-up activity or homework. In figure 5 you can see an example of a gap-fill crossword based on the theme of "Literature".

Figure 5

Literature gap-fill crossword

[46] Gibbons, P. (2018). *Lyft språket, lyft tänkandet. [English title: English Learners, Academic Literacy and Thinking - Learning in the Challenging Zone]* (3rd ed.). Studentlitteratur. (p. 118)
[47] There are many online sites where you can generate crosswords for free, e.g. https://crosswordspin.com/create





3. Progressive brainstorming[48]

Aim: Speaking and writing about a new topic
Content: Knowledge that the students already have on the topic
Form: Group work

When you start on a new block of work in any subject, or a new theme, activating what the students already know about it is a great way to motivate interest in the topic, let students be the "knowers" and for you as a teacher, to get to know what they already know in order to help you plan. Progressive brainstorming helps teachers to activate and record their students' knowledge in a structured and communicative way.

1. Divide the students into groups of four or five and give each group a large sheet of blank paper (A3 size or bigger is best). In the middle of the paper is a question "What do you know about X?" where X is the topic or theme about to be studied, e.g. Life cycle of a mushroom, Democracy, Pets, Chemical reactions
2. Give each group a different coloured pen
3. Each group brainstorms and writes as much as they about the topic, using the coloured pen that the teacher gave them.
4. After a few minutes (they do not have to be finished) the teacher asks the groups to move to the next table, where a different group's partly filled-in paper lies. Each group takes their coloured pen with them, so that their knowledge is always recorded in the same colour.
5. The groups continue rotating, filling in the different papers with new knowledge, until they get back to the piece of paper they started at. They then read, and critically discuss the content on their paper, noting the valuable additions, and those they disagree with.
6. Each group's paper is then hung on the wall, and each group briefly presents the content of their chart, explaining what they have learnt from other groups

[48] Gibbons, P. (2018). *Lyft språket, lyft tänkandet. [English title: English Learners, Academic Literacy and Thinking - Learning in the Challenging Zone]* (3rd ed.). Studentlitteratur. (p. 107)

4.5 Questions for reflecting on the classroom activities

- How easy/difficult/time-consuming was it to prepare and implement this activity?
- How did your students react to it? Enjoyment? Boredom? Interest? Was it too easy or too challenging?
- Could you use this activity with different levels? If so, what would you need to tweak/adjust?
- Would you use this activity again? If so, is there anything you would adjust?
- In what ways could you build formative and summative assessment into these activities, according to the syllabus you may be obliged to follow?

Further reading

Books and articles

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