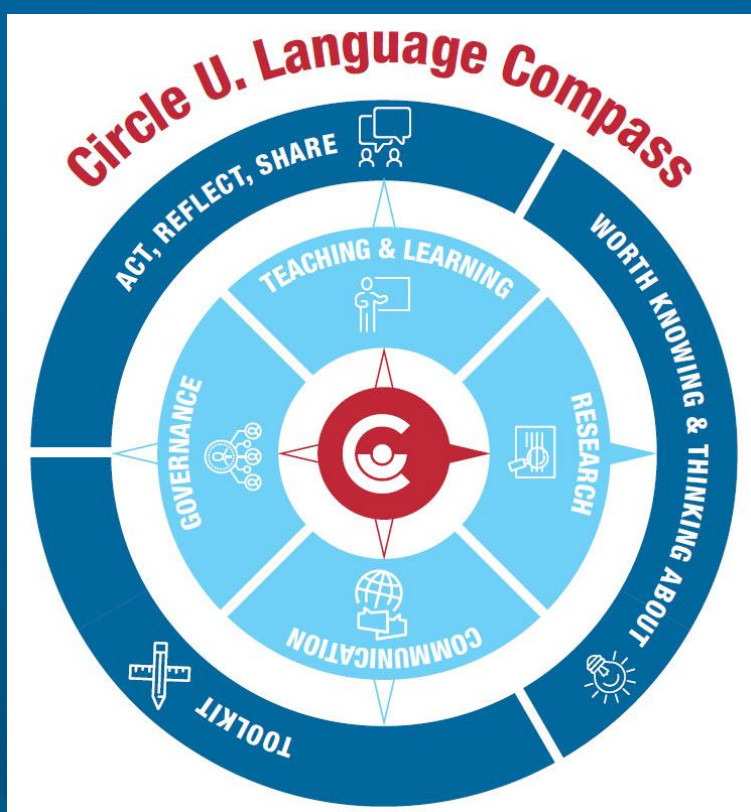




Circle U.
European University Alliance



A Compass for Circle U.

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

Document version

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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 plurilingual¹ 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 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 (Angouri & Delmas, 2025) 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.

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.

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 plurilingualism. 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.

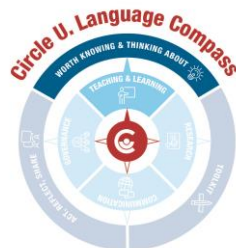
Angouri, J., & Delmas, M. (2025). Multilingualism in higher education: (What) do European university alliances deliver? *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 1–19.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.2025.2529947>

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;

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 in (Language) Learning and Teaching

Technologies can support (language) learning and teaching: digital tools can support mobility, collaboration, and adaptive learning (i.e. when technologies dynamically adjusts the learning content, pace, and feedback based on each learner's performance and needs to provide a more personalized learning experience). 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 rather than merely assist learning, i.e. when speech is automatically translated in real time through AI-mediated speech-to-speech translation systems, while preserving the speaker's 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>

English as a lingua franca?

Linguistic hospitality, that is a welcoming and inclusive approach to language, and the use of English as widely used medium of instruction seem to be contradictory approaches to higher education at first glance: 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 courses, effectively combining linguistic hospitality and English as a lingua franca (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 responsive pedagogies

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>;

Accessibility considerations

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>;

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:

For teachers...

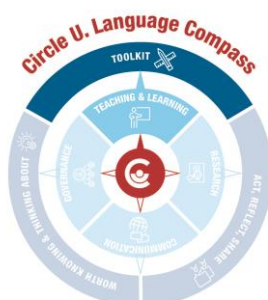
- Have I learned something that I wasn't aware of when reading the first section? And if so, what?
- What do I gain or lose when I only teach in one language?
- What do I gain or lose when I only accept/require classroom interactions in one language?
- How does language shape my students' understanding 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?

For students...

- Have I discovered something new about languages or learning that I wasn't aware of at first?
- What do I gain or lose when I rely mainly on one language for learning?
- What happens to my understanding when I use (or am asked to use) only one language in class?
- How does the language I use affect the way I understand concepts in this discipline/area?
- Could I, even unintentionally, be reproducing monolingual ways of thinking or limiting my own identity as a learner?
- Am I developing my plurilingual and pluricultural competences? In what ways do I notice this?
- Am I comfortable using different languages when learning, and am I open to explaining or reflecting on these choices?
- Would I be willing to try learning or expressing myself in a more plurilingual and pluricultural way? If so, how?
- How often do I read, listen to, or use materials in different languages for this course or topic?
- Am I encouraged (or do I allow myself) to use my full linguistic repertoire when learning or being assessed?
- Do I use technologies that help me engage with different languages? If so, am I aware of their benefits and risks?

1.2 Toolkit and guidance

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



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 preferred language/s 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, or by working on a document in language X and 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 – or presentations - in multiple languages without too much extra effort..(see for instance the Live Subtitles option in PowerPoint which automatically generates real-time captions of what the speaker says during a presentation and can also translate the speech into another language. This feature enhances accessibility and inclusivity, as it allows audiences to read subtitles in their preferred language. It can also be particularly valuable for deaf or hard-of-hearing participants when the original and subtitle languages are the same.
Adaptability	You can import subject content (e.g. a science text, video) and instantly produce bilingual or multilingual supporting materials.
Scaffolding	AI tools can now help you find answers using your full linguistic repertoire when not in class, 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 explanation videos 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.

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.

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.

Moreover, when using these services, it is important to be aware of safety concerns, especially when it may involve storing texts in clouds: Who has access to these files? For how long will they be stored? How sustainable are these services?

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

- [Signly](#) (sign language translation tool for academic settings)
- [NVDA](#) (screen reader for visually impaired students)

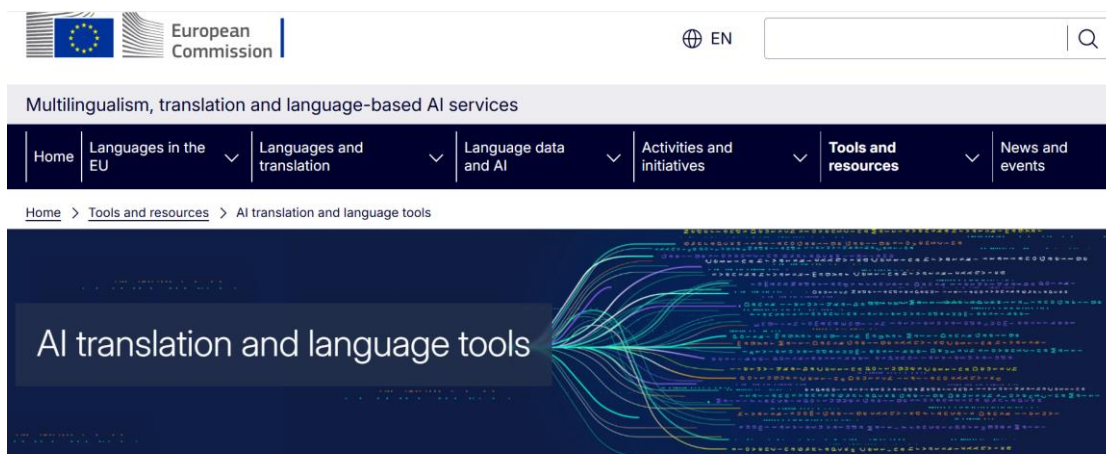
Practicing conversational interactions in several languages with a chatbot

- ✓ **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 (see <https://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.

Using safe AI language tools from the European Commission – Directorate-General for Translation (DGT)

The European Commission's Directorate-General for Translation (DGT) provides a dedicated platform offering a suite of secure, AI-based language tools designed to support multilingual communication, documentation, and knowledge circulation in public and academic contexts. These tools, accessible to universities and thus to European University Alliances, can be strategically mobilised to support plurilingual practices across teaching, research, communication, and governance.



The European Commission's free and secure AI language tools

Use our tools to translate, generate and improve content in multiple languages. These tools use AI to build on the EU's decades of professional translation expertise.

https://translation.ec.europa.eu/tools-and-resources/ai-translation-and-language-tools_en

Some examples of tools and their potential usages

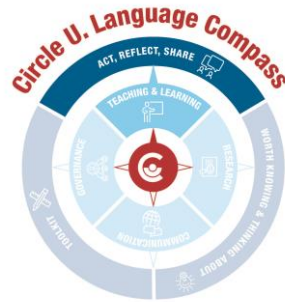
- **eTranslation** – Secure translation of learning materials, task instructions and feedback, supporting comprehension and scaffolding in multilingual classrooms.
- **WebText & Accessible Text** – Adaptation of academic content into clearer, more accessible versions for diverse learner profiles.
- **Speech-to-Text** – Transcription of lectures and oral interactions, enabling translation, revision and inclusive access.

Guidance

- Use AI as a support for learning, not as a shortcut that bypasses cognitive or linguistic engagement.
- Encourage critical reflection on AI outputs as part of developing plurilingual and digital literacy.
- Frame tool use within pedagogical coherence and learner empowerment.

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.

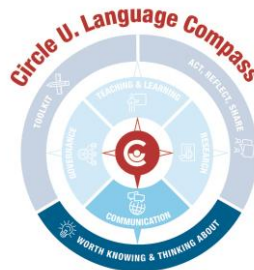
Small intentional steps might be trying out some of the suggestions from the previous section, and you could also consider:

- ✓ 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](#) (hyperlink to the CU.mil form for feedback, comments, suggestions, good practices, etc.)

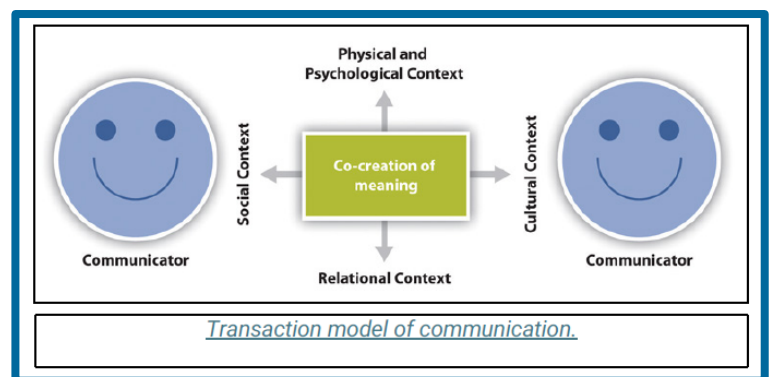
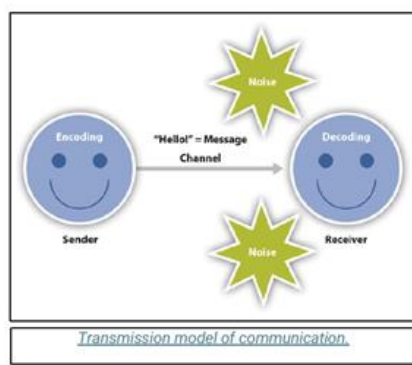
2 Communication

2.1 Worth knowing and thinking about

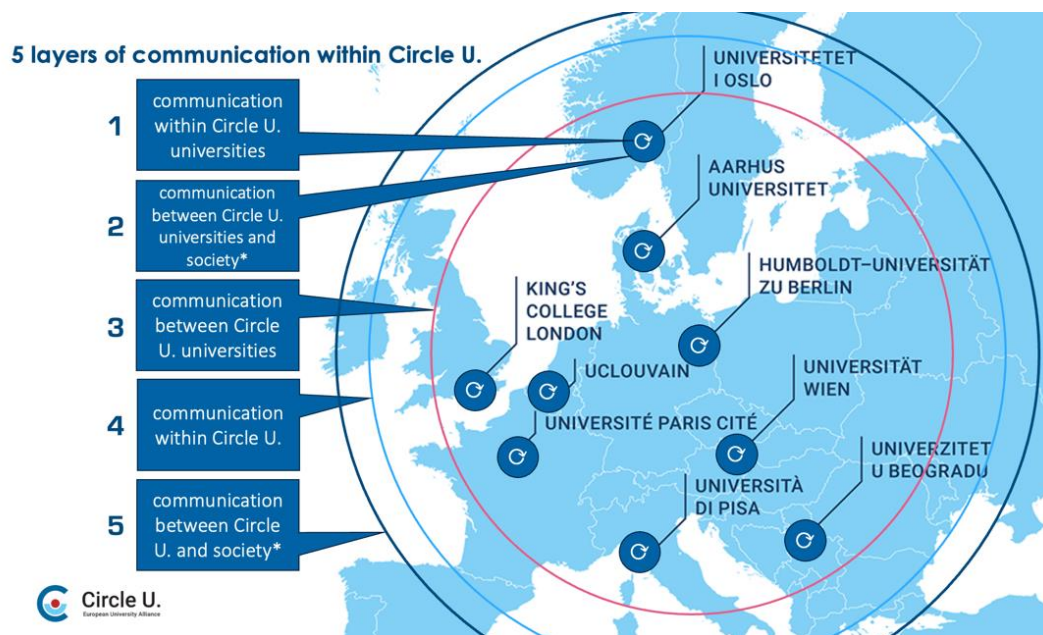


Unpacking the many layers and facets of communication

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, it is less a question of ‘transmission’ than of ‘transaction’ and co-creating meaning.



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.



* 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.

- 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.
- 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 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. Gabrys-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

Bradlaw, C., Hufeisen, B., & Nölle-Becker, S. (2022). Das Konzept der funktionalen Mehrsprachigkeit im Kontext der Internationalisierung deutscher Hochschulen. *Fremdsprachen Lehren und Lernen*, 51(2). <https://doi.org/10.24053/FLuL-2022-0018>

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

Li Wei, L. (2023). Translanguaging and intercultural communication: Rethinking 'cultural thought patterns'. In *ELF and Applied Linguistics*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003391463>

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>

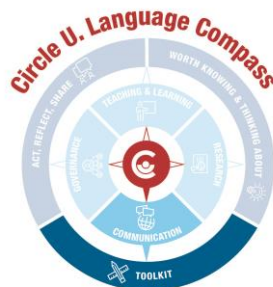
Thije, J. D. ten. (2022). Intercultural mediation as intercultural competence. In *The Routledge Handbook of Intercultural Mediation*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003227441-38>

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?

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 them 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. Even if we have the technology for machine translation, it is not always fully appropriate, 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:**

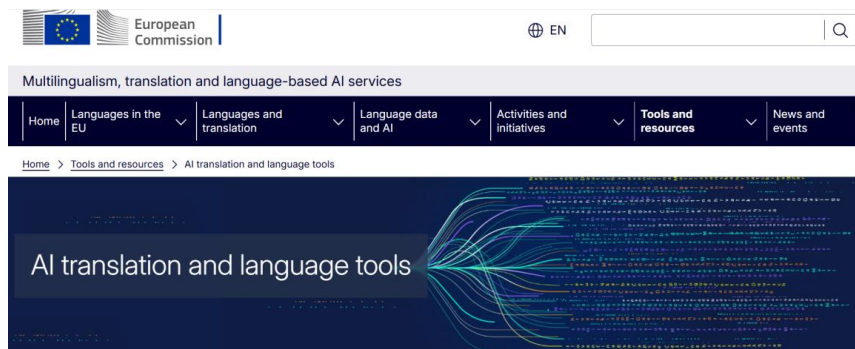
<https://students.uu.nl/en/hum/lingua-receptiva>

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

<https://www.luistertaal.nl/en>

✓ AI Language Tools from the European Commission – Directorate-General for Translation (DGT)

The European Commission's Directorate-General for Translation (DGT) provides a dedicated platform offering a suite of secure, AI-based language tools designed to support multilingual communication, documentation, and knowledge circulation in public and academic contexts. These tools, accessible to universities and thus to European University Alliances, can be strategically mobilised to support plurilingual practices across teaching, research, communication, and governance.



The European Commission's free and secure AI language tools

Use our tools to translate, generate and improve content in multiple languages. These tools use AI to build on the EU's decades of professional translation expertise.

https://translation.ec.europa.eu/tools-and-resources/ai-translation-and-language-tools_en

Examples of tools and their potential usages

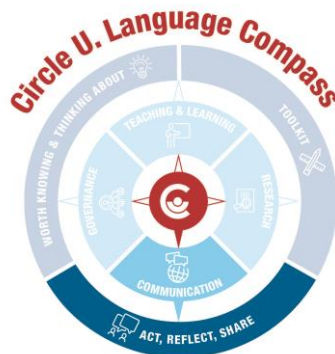
- **Multilingual Post** – Creation of short parallel messages in several languages for web and social media.
- **eTranslation** – Translation of institutional announcements and communication materials.
- **WebText & Accessible Text** – Simplification and clarification of content for broader audiences.
- **Speech-to-Text** – Transcription and captioning of recorded events.

Guidance

- Avoid maximal translation logic; favour strategic language choices.
- Balance efficiency with inclusive engagement.
- Use plurilingual communication as a marker of institutional identity and values.

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.

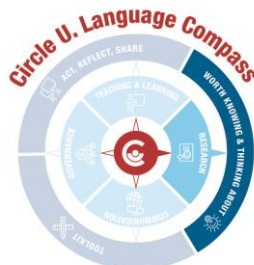
Those small intentional steps might be trying out some of the suggestions from the previous section, and you could also consider the following ideas:

- ✓ **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 English as a lingua franca/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 other languages they know well.

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

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 (see <https://www.helsinki-initiative.org/>) call for concrete changes in how research is evaluated and funded, encouraging institutions to support dissemination in 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 individuals, 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., Montaña-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>

Hamel, R.E. (2013). *El campo de las ciencias y la educación superior entre el monopolio del inglés y el plurilingüismo: elementos para una política del lenguaje en América Latina.* *Tópicos de Lingüística Aplicada*, Campinas, n(52.2): 321-384, jul./dez. 2013. <https://scispace.com/pdf/el-campo-de-las-ciencias-y-la-educacion-superior-entre-el-4zcv2pfc9c.pdf>

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://sfpora.org/read/>

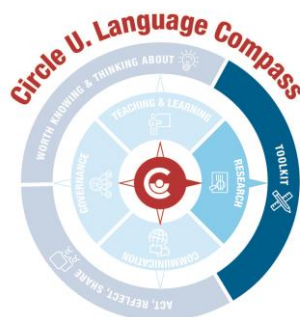
Reflection questions

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, or presenting) in another language when addressing local audiences or stakeholders?
- Have I considered offering my slides in various languages?
- 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:

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. (link to our feedback form)

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.

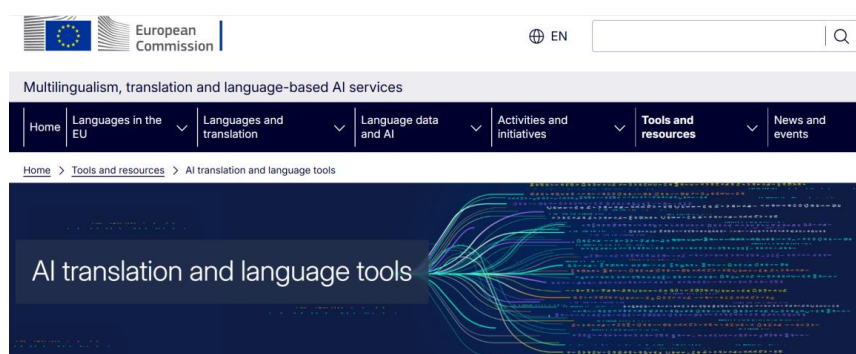
For funders, evaluators, and governance

- ✓ **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.
- ✓ **Use AI Language Tools from the European Commission – Directorate-General for Translation (DGT)**

The European Commission's Directorate-General for Translation (DGT) provides a dedicated platform offering a suite of secure, AI-based language tools designed to support multilingual communication, documentation, and knowledge circulation in public and academic contexts. These tools, accessible to universities and thus to European University Alliances, can be strategically mobilised to support plurilingual practices across teaching, research, communication, and governance.



The European Commission's free and secure AI language tools

Use our tools to translate, generate and improve content in multiple languages. These tools use AI to build on the EU's decades of professional translation expertise.

https://translation.ec.europa.eu/tools-and-resources/ai-translation-and-language-tools_en

Some examples of tools and their potential usages

- **eTranslation** – Translation of abstracts, project proposals and dissemination materials to broaden linguistic access.

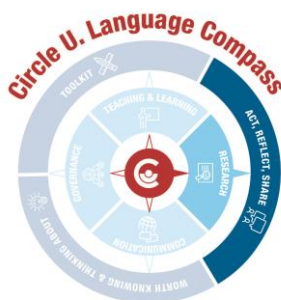
- **eSummary & eBriefing** – Multilingual summarisation and synthesis of research or policy documents for collaborative work.
- **Anonymisation tool** – Masking personal data in multilingual qualitative datasets.

Guidance

- Use AI tools to promote epistemic inclusivity beyond English-only dissemination.
- Retain human responsibility in interpretation and meaning-making.
- Align AI use with responsible research assessment and linguistic diversity principles.

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.

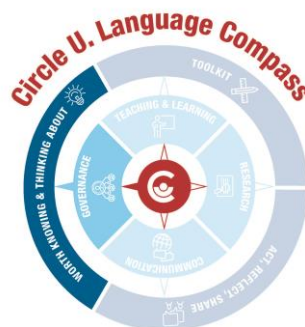
- ✓ **Including language practices in research evaluation conversations**, and promoting recognition of diverse language contributions (e.g., translations, outreach in local languages, dissemination beyond English-only venues).
- ✓ **Discussing language choice openly within research teams**, acknowledging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

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 institutional 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 stakeholders to draw on their full linguistic repertoire and realize their potential. Furthermore, we must recognize that the standard varieties of languages used in education, administration 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 encourage students to view standard forms as practical tools they can 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 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 work/manage.

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>

Kjellgren, B. (2024). Innovative Ideas and Academic Realpolitik: Building Global Competence Development into a European University Alliance. 2024 IEEE *Frontiers in Education Conference (FIE)*, 1-5. <https://doi.org/10.1109/FIE61694.2024.10893174>

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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>
- Lauridsen, K. (2016). IntlUni – the opportunities and challenges of the multilingual and multicultural learning space in the international university. *European Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 4, 349 - 354. <https://doi.org/10.1515/eujal-2016-0010>
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- 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>

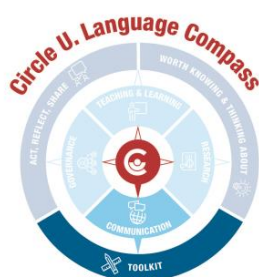
Reflection questions

(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?
- 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, including the ones of its member universities, 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).

Teaching and curriculum integration

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

Support staff by making efforts towards plurilingualism 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.

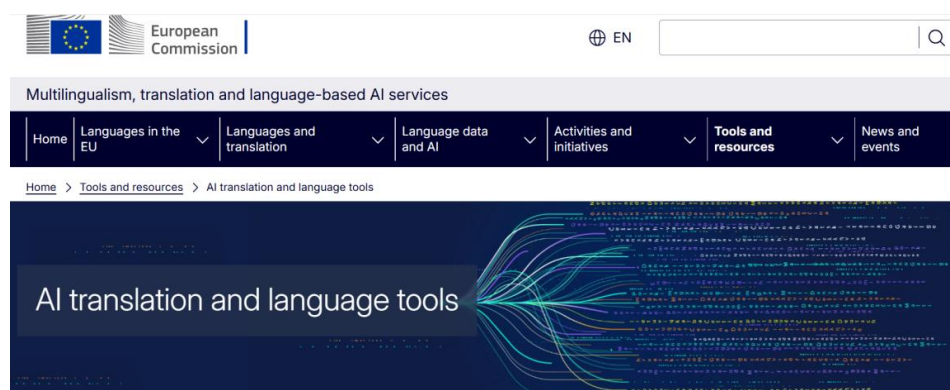
Invest in professional development for leaders and managers on language-aware leadership, inclusive communication, and intercultural governance. The CU.mil will be happy to provide short seminars on the topic if governance bodies find it useful.

- ✓ **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
- ✓ **Use AI Language Tools from the European Commission – Directorate-General for Translation (DGT)**

The European Commission's Directorate-General for Translation (DGT) provides a dedicated platform offering a suite of secure, AI-based language tools designed to support multilingual communication, documentation, and knowledge circulation in public and academic contexts. These tools, accessible to universities and thus to European University Alliances, can be strategically mobilised to support plurilingual practices across teaching, research, communication, and governance.



The European Commission's free and secure AI language tools

Use our tools to translate, generate and improve content in multiple languages. These tools use AI to build on the EU's decades of professional translation expertise.

https://translation.ec.europa.eu/tools-and-resources/ai-translation-and-language-tools_en

Examples of tools and their potential usages

- **eBriefing** – Preparation of structured briefing notes for governance bodies.
- **eReply** – Drafting formal responses to consultation or policy documents.
- **eSummary** – Summarisation of strategic or administrative texts.
- **Anonymisation** tool – Ensuring GDPR-compliant document sharing.

Guidance

- Use AI to support inclusion in English-dominated governance spaces.
- Use AI to support multilingual document sharing where feasible and appropriate.
- Ensure AI-supported processes remain embedded in human accountability.

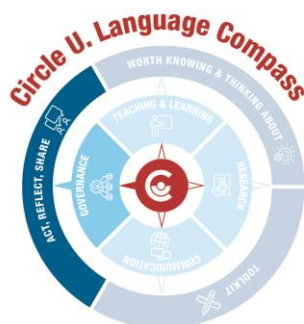
Don't forget to advertise your plurilingual efforts widely! They might just become your best-selling point for attracting students and staff.

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.**
- ✓ **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 the CU.mil form for feedback, comments, suggestions, good practices, etc.)

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.

And share your MIL moments

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 (add hyperlink to a CU.mil form for feedback, comments, suggestions, good practices, etc.):

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. Our Compass does not point to a single fixed North as there here is no single way forward when it comes to fostering linguistic and cultural diversity in universities. The four directions, together with their respective subsections, are all equally essential. Each individual, group, or institution can begin from the point that makes the most sense in their local context. In the end, our only true North is the freedom to choose a direction - and reach It - according to one's position, needs, and aspirations.

Languages are not just means of communication, but powerful drivers through which we learn, teach, research, work, 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 seeds for long-term structural 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.

Appendices

Feedback form

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

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.

1. Name (optional):

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

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