BRITISH COUNCIL



Language-responsive education in the European context

01 Our position

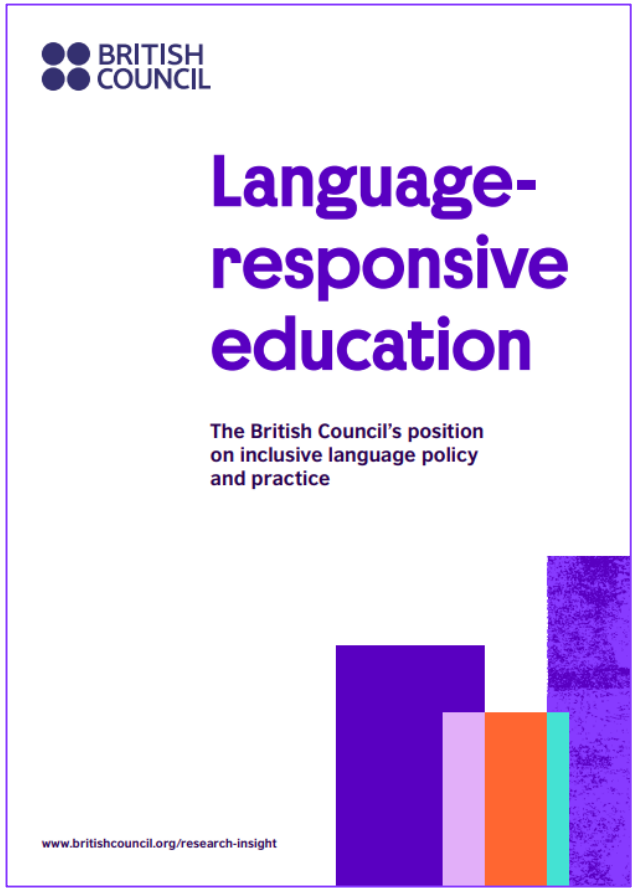
02 Examples in our work

Our position on inclusive language policy and practice



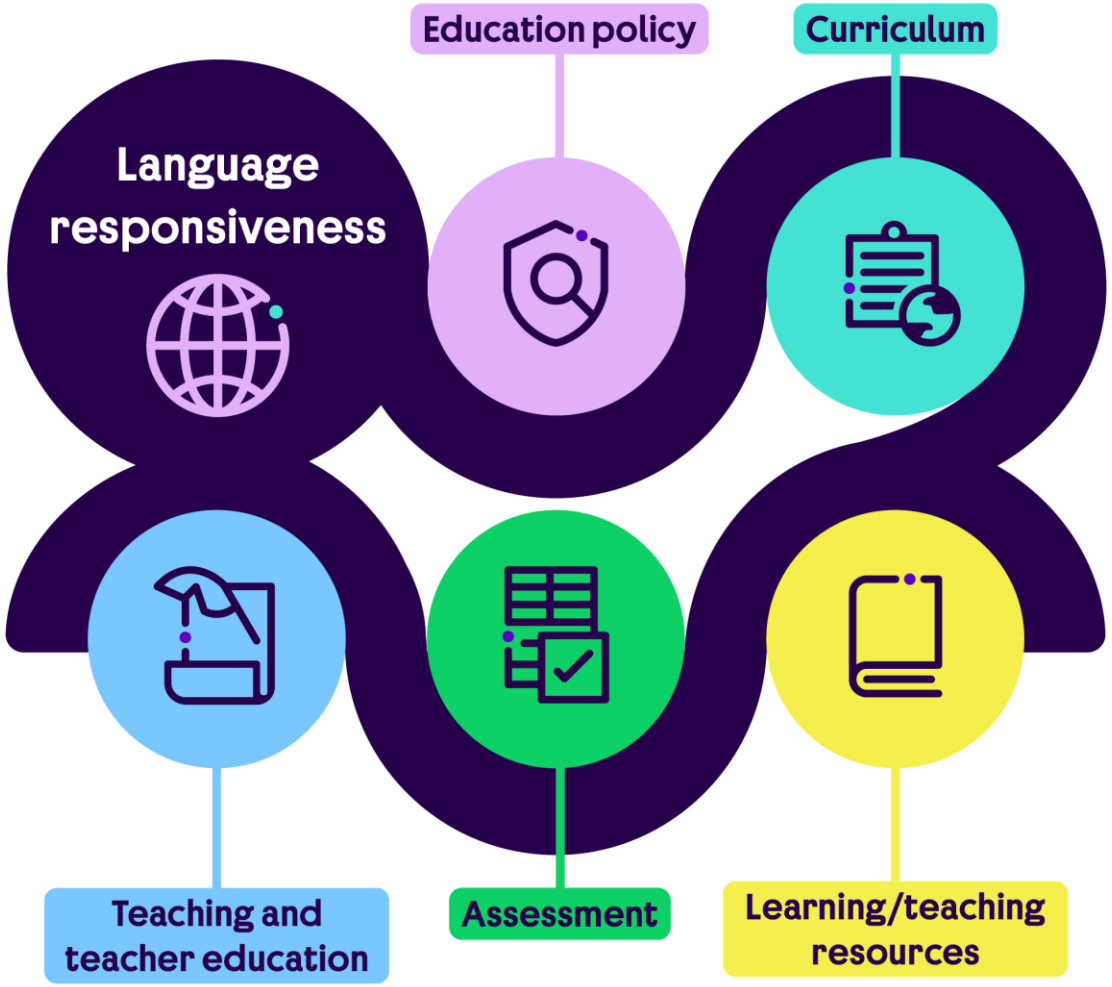
The British Council's position

- We recognise the global demand for English, while taking account of equity and multilingualism.
- We do not prescribe one model: choices belong to local stakeholders.
- We support contextually appropriate language-in-education policies.
- We promote language-responsive education.



The British Council's position

Language-responsive education responds to learners' languages, language needs and language development, so that language supports learning rather than becoming a barrier to educational success.



Education policy

- Place language at the heart of educational success.
- Align the system with learners' language development.
- Plan gradual transitions to a new language of learning and teaching.
- Provide adequate resources, trained teachers and support for education stakeholders.

Curriculum

- Review curricula through a language lens.
- Make the language demands of learning explicit.
- In CLIL / EMILE or bilingual programmes, make subject goals and language goals explicit.

Learning and teaching resources

- Help learners access subject content and develop the language needed to understand and discuss it.
- Use glossaries, visuals, scaffolded texts and simplified instructions.
- Use familiar languages strategically to support access to the curriculum.

Assessment

- Take learners' language development into account.
- Use formative assessment to check understanding.
- Make summative assessment more accessible and flexible where needed.



Teaching practices and teacher education

Adopt language supportive pedagogical approaches:

- Use clear teacher talk, visual support and scaffolding.
- Use familiar languages strategically to support understanding, participation and learning.
- Teach academic language and subject-specific vocabulary explicitly.

Train teachers in language-supportive pedagogies.

Call to action

1. Engage in open, evidence-informed conversations about language.
2. Consider how to respond to language across education systems.
3. Explore curriculum and assessment reform with linguistic considerations.
4. Prioritise teacher professional development grounded in language-responsive approaches.
5. Connect this emerging thinking with plurilingualism, inclusion and democratic participation in Europe.



Putting our position into practice across Europe



TeachingEnglish: Including learners' languages

Use your learners' existing languages to support their learning of English and discover how valuing and celebrating home languages in the classroom enhances learning while promoting inclusion and equity.



Spain: The Bilingual Education Programme

Education policy

- Our educational context values linguistic diversity.
- Plurilingual competence is a key competence.

Curriculum development and support

- Our curricular guidance values learners' full linguistic repertoires.
- We encourage a whole-school approach to language and literacy development.

Teacher education

- Our training programme puts the learner at the centre, promoting multilingual scaffolding to access the curriculum and support learning.
- We encourage teachers to help learners transfer skills and understanding across languages and areas of learning.



Poland: The Empowerment Programme

In **2023**, we published the report *Empowering Education: Understanding Teachers' Needs in Multicultural Classrooms*, exploring the needs of the education system in response to growing classroom diversity.

In **2024**, we developed the *Teaching English in Multicultural Classrooms* training programme for teacher educators, and teachers. Today, the programme continues to support pre-service teacher education through partnerships with two higher education institutions.

In **2025**, we launched *Teaching for Resilience – Global Community of Practice*, an online collaboration initiative for teachers working in multilingual classrooms in Poland, Armenia and Uganda.

In 2026 we are launching a new pilot project *Building Resilience in Schools: Strengthening Our Capacity to Navigate a Diverse World*



Germany: Our work across the 16 federal states

Teacher training

- We work at scale with state teacher training institutes through face-to-face and online sessions led by British Council and UK ELT consultants.
- We also widely promote our global online TeachingEnglish training courses and webinars.
- Our main themes this year and next include *Using inclusive practices* as well as *Using multilingual practices*.

Insights and research

- Our current research project in Germany focuses on language and migration, and culturally responsive pedagogy.
- The initial report will follow on the TeachingEnglish website in the first quarter of 2027.



Read our position paper:



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Language-responsive education

The British Council's position on inclusive language policy and practice

www.britishcouncil.org/research-insight

Feedback



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