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The Teaching of Foreign Languages in Some Countries of the European Union - Organization and Evaluation

By Petya Vasileva Oppezzi
Thrace University

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The Teaching of Foreign Languages in Some Countries of the European Union - Organization and Evaluation

Petya Vasileva Oppezzi

Summary- Promoting the mastery of language skills is one of the determining factors for the success of the integration process in the United Europe, which also determines its policy in the educational space. Learning a foreign language means not only effective communication between citizens of different countries, but also getting to know the culture of the community to which they belong. Along with the creation of a favorable language environment among EU member states, attitudes of respect, understanding and acceptance of others and their diversity are formed.

The article presents a theoretical study based on an in-depth study of literary and Internet sources on the linguistic situation, linguistic minorities and foreign language education in some countries belonging to the European Union. The main emphasis is on analyzes related to the organization of training, the status of the languages studied and the evaluation of the obtained results.

Keywords: teaching, foreign language, organization, assessment, european union.

I. Introduction

The encouragement of language competences has been considered one of the determining factors for the success of the integration process in Europe, therefore the European Union has always promoted language learning in the context of European integration.

The Community's first actions in this direction come from the need to create a single market within which the free movement of people, capital, products and services can be realized. True free movement of people would not be possible if citizens of individual countries can not communicate with each other. For this reason, mastering foreign languages is a high priority requisite for the implementation of this idea.

Already in the 1976 Resolution of the Council and the Ministers of Education [1], the study of at least one foreign language by European students is indicated as necessary, as well as, for foreign language teachers, some living experience in the country of the language they teach. This Resolution formed the basis for the "LINGUA programme", which was launched in 1990, followed by the "SOCRATES programme"[2]. The aim of both programs was to improve the quality and quantity of language teaching in the European Union. These programs enable foreign language teachers to study abroad, students to work in joint educational projects with foreign schools or to benefit from foreign scholarship.

In another program - LEONARDO - one of the key aspects is the development of language skills in the professional environment through pilot projects and transnational exchange programs. [2] The same basic concept of the importance of acquiring language skills for all European citizens, as a prerequisite for taking advantage of new professional and personal opportunities, is confirmed in the European Commission's 1995 White Paper on Education, Training, Teaching and Learning. These milestones became a prerequisite for the European Parliament to declare 2001 the European Year of Languages.

In this context, the present paper was prepared, based on a study of national reports prepared for the implementation of the project "L'enseignement des langues étrangères en milieu scolaire en Europea" for language teaching in some countries of the European Union, as well as in other documentary sources. The countries represented were selected mainly in relation to two parameters: relevance of foreign language teaching and completeness of documentation.

a) Languages in European states

Article 126 of the Maastricht Treaty (1992) explicitly refers to the linguistic and cultural diversity of European education systems as one of Europe's assets. In fact, if we consider the 27 EU member states, only 16 of them have a single official language, the rest have 2 to 5 official languages and each of them has the status of an official state language. In addition, in some countries there are a number of minority or regional languages that often assume official language status, although limited to the territory where the minority in question lives.

In Finland, for example, there are two official languages: Finnish and Swedish, each of the two language communities has its own school network (from pre-school to university level), and in communities where the two languages coexist, schools for each of the two communities are required, although all students study both languages in schools.

Author: Master speech therapist, Doctoral student at Thrace University, Stara Zagora, Faculty of Pedagogy, Department of "Special Pedagogy", Bulgaria. e-mail: petya.oppezzi@abv.bg

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Belgium and Spain occupy a very special position in terms of language structures. In Spain, Basque, Catalan and Galician complement Castilian, which is the first official Spanish language and has a major role as a language of instruction. In Belgium the presence of four language areas is established by federal law: all pupils have the right to be educated in the official language of their area, but they must also be provided with mother-tongue education in pre-school and primary education. Belgium is the only country that uses the number of families, rather than the number of pupils, as a criterion for establishing this type of training.

Italy is the country with the most languages- approximately 34 native living spoken languages and related dialects.[3].

b) Organization of foreign language training

In all EU countries it is compulsory to teach at least one foreign language to learners. The only country where this is not mandatory is Ireland, but in fact English is taught in all schools. The age at which the first foreign language begins to be learned in almost all countries is between 8 and 11 years. The exceptions are Luxembourg, Norway and Austria, where foreign language education starts at the age of 6, and in the Flemish Community and in Belgium – at the age of 12.

Most European countries require the study of two foreign languages as compulsory subjects. Only Spain, Portugal, the German and French-speaking parts of Belgium and Ireland have not introduced a compulsory second language. The educational level at which the second foreign language is introduced differs from country to country: in Belgium, Greece, France, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Austria, Finland and Sweden it is in compulsory education, in Norway it is in secondary education, and in Iceland and both languages are studied from the primary level of education. Educational institutions are obliged to include foreign languages in compulsory elective subjects. In official documents, the range of languages offered as a compulsory first foreign language is usually very limited - between 4 and 6 languages. Exceptions to this average value are: Austria – 8 languages, France – 12 languages, and in Spain and Finland there are practically no restrictions and theoretically all languages can be studied. In other countries, students cannot choose the first foreign language because English is compulsory; in the German-speaking community in Belgium, French is compulsory, in Luxembourg - German, and in Iceland - Danish. Of the official languages in the European Union, English is permanently present in all countries as a first or second compulsory foreign language. French and German are also part of the range of languages offered in a large number of countries. Spanish and/or Italian are present in school curricula in France, the Netherlands, Austria, Portugal and Sweden. The obligation to comply is to offer at least one of the official languages of the European Union.

c) Teachers and their recruitment

The introduction of the foreign language at the primary level faced all European countries with the same problem - that of recruiting foreign language teachers. In principle, in all European countries at the primary level of education, only one teacher is responsible for teaching all subjects, incl. and in the foreign language, but sometimes finds support from other teachers - specialists in a certain subject, including and in a foreign language. In the upper course of study, the teacher must have a protected specialty in the specific foreign language he teaches. [4]

d) General objectives and methodologies of foreign language training

General objectives can be grouped into the following categories:

1. Learning a foreign language has as its main purpose its use as a means of communication, which favors the acquisition of general communication skills;
2. Teaching a foreign language gives each student the opportunity to build his own social and cultural identity, by discovering other cultures and provokes values such as tolerance and respect for others;
3. Teaching a foreign language develops a stronger motivation to learn by realizing the many personal and professional advantages that language knowledge provides.
4. Encouraging the student's learning and personal development.

These are two global goals that must be set not only in the teaching of foreign languages, but also in all subjects. For foreign language teachers, it is the ability to use the knowledge and experience gained in language learning and the ability to use it effectively. For students, it is the opportunity to be able to reflect on how they learn languages and finding the right working methods and techniques.

As for personality development, language teaching should develop social skills, ability to concentrate and persistence. Students must have a positive attitude towards foreign languages, with real motivation for their own learning. The process of communication and the pleasure of being able to express themselves in a foreign language should increase their self-esteem. Knowing foreign languages provides an opportunity for personal and professional development.

As for methodologies, most programs offer methodological recommendations, referring to the freedom of teaching. What all programs have in common is the communicative methodical approach. In this perspective, the teaching of grammar, pronunciation

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and vocabulary is carried out in accordance with the objectives of communication, using a variety of material in terms of content in order to maintain students' continuous interest.

Another very strong common point between all programs is the use of new technologies as a source of information, as a means of communication and as a tool for independent work.

e) Communication: the four macro-competencies

In order to be able to communicate in a foreign language, it is necessary to have mastered a whole series of communication skills. Most programs structure these types of skills as listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

Listening: All the communication objectives related to this competence can be summarized in the following general formulation: to be able to listen so as to understand different types of messages, using a variety of strategies in heterogeneous communication situations.

Speaking: Here again there are common goals in the different countries' curricula, although in Denmark the emphasis is on "understanding and explaining texts of different kinds" and the German curricula emphasize that students must be able to find situations that enable them to speak the foreign language.

Reading: There are two learning objectives related to reading. The first refers to the type of reading, the strategies and techniques used to understand a written message, and the second to identify special features of the text, such as its form and content.

Writing: The goals of writing are roughly the same in all programs - to achieve the ability to convey grammatically correct written messages with different types of content, which is significantly more difficult for students than speaking.

f) Communication skills: structural aspects of language

In order to be able to communicate in a foreign language, some knowledge related to the structure or content of the language is required. Three main areas can be identified in foreign language curricula: grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary.

Grammar: Most programs contain grammatical structures as well as didactic guidelines for how teachers should teach grammatical elements in accordance with the communicative skills to be acquired.

Pronunciation: Many programs insist that the pronunciation be as correct as possible, thus avoiding communication errors.

Vocabulary: Most of the programs articulate specific vocabulary content goals that students should be able to master. They identify the need to acquire a basic vocabulary for communication in primary education, with this lexical base gradually expanding as education progresses. At the end of the training, students should have a rich vocabulary with many synonyms, antonyms, homonyms, specialized terms, etc.

g) Assessing students

Students' foreign language skills are often examined through national surveys, and assessment is usually done through national tests. This assessment shows the level of proficiency in the different foreign languages that are studied in the individual countries, as well as the difficulties in the different communicative areas that the students have, especially in written expression.

II. Foreign Languages in Some EU Countries

The present research examines foreign language learning in some EU countries according to several criteria: language situation, linguistic minorities, foreign languages studied, organization of foreign language teaching and assessment.

a) Austria

i. *The language situation of the country*

The official language in the country is Austrian German, but Austro-Bavarian Alemannic is also recognized languages. The state also recognizes the languages of various linguistic minorities in some parts of the country: Slovenian in Carinthia, Croatian and Hungarian in Burgenland, Czech and Romanian. [5]

ii. *Linguistic minorities*

The right to education in the mother tongue is a right of linguistic minorities. During the first three years of primary school, education is bilingual, evenly split between German and Slovenian. From the fourth year of primary school and secondary general education, teaching is in German.

The same rules apply to the Hungarian and Croatian minorities. Education is divided equally between German and Hungarian or German and Croatian during the first four years of primary school. In secondary school, students can study the taught material in Croatian or Hungarian. Education in minority languages is free.

iii. *Organization of foreign language training*

The teaching of English as a compulsory subject is introduced for all students at the age of 6 - the 1st year of schooling and continues until the last year of the general education degree. The teaching of a foreign language as an optional subject is offered to all students from the 3rd school year to the end of secondary education. Languages that can be studied optionally are Russian - for students aged 9 and over, French, Italian or Spanish - for students aged 14 and over. [6]

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iv. *Evaluation*

The evaluation methods are defined in the "Student Evaluation Regulations", and the obtained results are evaluated on a scale from 1 to 5. The most important thing in the evaluation is the degree of achievement of the set goals. All foreign languages studied by the students are noted in the certificate for the completed study cycle.

b) Belgium

i. *The language situation of the country*

The linguistic situation is complicated by the fact that Belgium is divided into language regions and has three official languages: German, French and Flemish. Education is the responsibility of these communities, who manage it independently of each other. Brussels is in a special situation - it is an autonomous region, but since it is bilingual (French and Flemish), it is "under the influence" of both communities. The Belgian education system is regulated by the Pacte Scolaire of 29 May 1959, which sets out some basic principles, including the free choice of school and language of instruction. The federal authority guarantees compliance with this pact, but the organization of education is decentralized at the level of language communities. [7]

ii. *Linguistic minorities*

The Federal Law on the Language Regime in Education of 1963 has determined that in municipalities where linguistic minorities speak a language other than the official languages, they have the right to study it, but only in pre-school and primary education. In Belgium, the number of families, not the number of students, is considered the criterion for deciding to introduce minority language classes. This criterion applies only at pre-school and primary level, as secondary school students cannot claim a minority language course.

iii. *Organization of foreign language training*

Some schools, in the context of curriculum autonomy, start teaching a foreign language in the first 4 years of primary education as a compulsory subject. According to the state curricula, the study of a foreign language as a compulsory subject begins for all students in the 5th grade of primary school and continues throughout the secondary general education level. Optional second foreign language training is offered to all students from 14 to 16 years of age. Added to this is the opportunity to study a third foreign language as an optional subject. There are also specialized foreign language schools that offer bilingual education to students aged 5 to 15. There are no procedures for access to these institutions.

One of the three national languages - Flemish, French and German - are often offered as a first foreign language to a foreign language community. Currently, in the French community, English is often offered as a first language, but in Brussels Dutch remains mandatory. Learning foreign languages can be summarized as follows:

- first foreign language: Dutch, English or German;
- second foreign language: one of the official languages + Spanish, Italian, Arabic;
- third foreign language: one of the official languages + Russian.

iv. *Some initiatives taken in schools*

The decree of July 1998 provides that primary schools can organize certain courses and didactic activities in sign language in a foreign language, with the choice of English, German or Dutch.

Another initiative is an exchange between classes to allow some students to do internships of one to three weeks in the country of the language being studied. Languages considered are English, German, Dutch, Italian and Spanish.

v. *Evaluation*

The teacher gives a lot of advice and helps the students in finding the most suitable method of learning, as well as in the intelligent use of dictionaries. Students should be aware that vocabulary knowledge does not happen overnight and that it must be cultivated. Learning words related to subject areas is learned in communicative situations through practice. The communication goals sought require some creativity on the part of the student. Grammar is approached in a spiral fashion, following an inductive path through the regular application of appropriate exercises. In order to avoid the fear of making mistakes, formal tests and assessments of knowledge of grammar, vocabulary and spelling are not recommended.

c) Finland

i. *The language situation of the country*

The official languages of Finland are Finnish and Swedish. About 93% of the population speak Finnish as their mother tongue, and about 6% speak Swedish. Public authorities are obliged to provide services in both languages for the needs of the Finnish- and Swedish-speaking population. Both language groups have the right to education in their mother tongue, have their own institutional network from preschool to university level, and all students study the official languages at school.

ii. *Saami-speaking population*

Saami is a language spoken as a mother tongue by about 1,700 people (0.03% of the population). The Sami-speaking population lives in Lapland, Northern Finland, and according to the Constitution, they have the right to preserve and develop their own language and culture. The Sámi regions have cultural autonomy, permitted by law since January 1996. Sámi can be taught in primary, general and vocational upper secondary education, it can be taught as a mother

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tongue or as a foreign language. Saami language can also be studied at university level. In addition, Finnish universities have places reserved for Sami-speaking students, and in this way the aim is to provide them with access to higher education.

iii. *Rom population and language*

The Constitution guarantees the Roma population the right to preserve and develop their own culture. According to the legislation, the Romani language can be taught as a mother tongue or used as a language of instruction in primary and secondary education, but municipalities are not obliged to provide education in the Romani language. It is planned to teach the Romani language in order to promote education among the Romani population and support their language and culture through the preparation of teaching materials in the Romani language and the organization of training for teachers and cultural mediators.

In Finland, with the adoption of the new Basic Education Act in 1998, primary education is compulsory for all children residing in the country. The aim of the training is to prepare immigrants for integration into the education system and Finnish society, to support their cultural identity and to ensure functional bilingualism so that they can express themselves in Finnish (or Swedish) in addition to their mother tongue.

iv. *Organization of foreign language training*

The main curriculum of preschool education for 6-year-olds does not include the subject "foreign language". During primary education, all students must learn at least two languages other than their mother tongue, one of which must be official (Swedish or Finnish depending on the student's mother tongue). It is also possible to study languages as optional subjects. Usually, the first compulsory language starts at the age of 9 (3rd school year) and the second at the age of 13 (7th school year). The first optional language is offered in the 5th academic year and the second in the 8th. The upper secondary school curriculum includes two compulsory languages, one of which must be the official non-mother tongue.

Apart from the obligation to organize education in the two official languages, the legislation does not prescribe which foreign languages must be taught in schools. Although in theory any language can be taught, English is the most widely studied language. Languages offered to students in general upper secondary schools are: English, Swedish, Russian, German, French, Spanish, Italian, Latin, Finnish, Greek, Portuguese, Estonian, Hungarian, Chinese, Japanese and Sami. The flexibility of study is one of the main features and students, especially at the high school level, are free to organize their studies.

v. *Evaluation*

The National Curriculum provides guidelines for assessing students in all subjects. Student assessment is aimed at promoting learning and developing self-assessment skills. Assessment is individual and takes into account the developmental stage and competencies of each student. Students receive a report at the end of each school year showing the languages studied and the duration of the course. During the first 7 years of primary education, assessment can be qualitative or quantitative. In subsequent years, the evaluation is quantitative, but supplemented with a textual commentary. The scale used ranges from 4 to 10.

d) Italy

i. *Language situation of the country*

Towards the fourteenth century, a process of linguistic unification began based on the Tuscan language, thanks to the work of three great authors: Francesco Petrarch, Giovanni Boccaccio and Dante Alighieri, who used a mixture of Tuscan and Sicilian dialects in his "Divine Comedy". Due to the immense popularity of the work, its language gradually became the "lingua franca" for the population of United Italy. In the sixteenth century, writers adopted the same linguistic model, and in the seventeenth century the number of readers expanded thanks to the scientific prose of Galileo Galilei with a renewed vocabulary - clear and elegant. [8] Language unification took place in the 20th century, under the influence of many factors, radio and television broadcasts being decisive.

Despite the spread of standard Italian, Italy still represents a linguistic identity characterized by dialects and linguistic varieties that place it among the countries with a high index of linguistic diversity. [9]

Italian was first declared the official language of Italy on October 15, 1925.

The Constitution of the Republic of 1946 did not mention Italian as an official language, but in 1999, in Art. 482 the official language is Italian, and regional or minority languages were recognized and protected by the same article.

ii. *Linguistic minorities*

The languages of Italy represent one of the richest and most diverse linguistic heritages within Europe. Each of the country's twenty regions is characterized by a local dialect. In addition, in these regions there are communities of ancient settlements with a mother tongue other than Italian and for this reason they represent so-called linguistic minorities. However, Neapolitan, Venetian, Sardinian, Friulian, Sicilian are considered separate languages and not dialects. In the regions of Campania (administrative center Naples) and Sicily, official communication and educational processes are carried out entirely in Italian, but in everyday life the population continues to

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communicate entirely in their local language, therefore Neapolitans and Sicilians are considered bilingual. [10]

iii. *Organization of foreign language training*

Regarding primary education, Italy's profile shows lower results than many other countries when it comes to the organization and teaching of the foreign language. These results are due to the lack of a coherent curriculum, the lack of regular monitoring and explicit requirements to achieve a level of language proficiency. This is linked to other problems that have a direct impact on language provision throughout the educational sphere in Italy [11] both at the level of teaching and at the level of teacher training.

iv. *Foreign languages studied*

In primary education, the only foreign language offered is English. The presence of a second foreign language in junior high schools contributes to the increase of linguistic wealth. At the upper secondary level, however, English again dominates. More languages (mainly French, German and Spanish) are offered only in educational institutions where the main purpose is the study of foreign languages.

v. *Evaluation*

The problems that have a negative impact on language learning in education, such as the lack of foreign language training for primary teachers and the lack of language assessment culture in Italy [12], also negatively affect teachers' attitudes towards foreign language assessment tests at all school levels.[13] The evaluation criteria are: monitoring the interlocutor's speech; interview comprehension; maintaining the conversation in the presence of language deficiencies; maintaining a conversation on a certain topic and changing the topic; ability to start and end a conversation; describing, even approximately, one's personality; choosing a speech style suitable for the interlocutor and the situation; creating, maintaining and changing dialogue according to one's own desires and interests.[14] Italy is one of the few countries that requires students to have reached, at the end of high school, at least the B2 level for first and second foreign languages.

e) Greece

i. *Language situation of the country*

Greek is the official language of the state and of education. The Greek language is the modern form of the ancient Greek language and includes all forms of all dialects and local variations. Greek is the language of instruction in all official educational institutions in primary, secondary and higher education. [15]

ii. *Linguistic minorities*

The Muslim minority living in the Thrace region consists of three ethnic groups: 50% of this minority are of Turkish origin, 35% are Pomaks (indigenous people who speak a Slavic dialect and practice Islam) and 15% are Roma. Each of these groups has its own spoken language and traditions and is therefore defined as a religious minority. The Greek state provides the necessary number of schools for the bilingual minority (Turkish and Greek) in the region of Thrace. Students who are part of the Muslim minority are educated in either bilingual or Greek schools. The choice is at the discretion of the parents. Turkish is only taught in schools for the Muslim minority. 50% of the curriculum is taught in Turkish and the remaining 50% in Greek according to1923 Treaty of Lausanne the Turkish minority has special right in educational autonomy. Certificates are issued in Greek. [16]

iii. *Organization of foreign language training*

Until 1992, compulsory foreign language education began at the age of 12 (1st year of lower secondary education). From 1992-93, the teaching of a foreign language as a compulsory subject was introduced for all students in the fourth year of primary education and continued until the end of secondary education. The study of two foreign languages as compulsory subjects begins for all students at the age of 12 and continues until the end of secondary education.

iv. *Foreign languages studied*

The Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs determines the foreign languages officially offered to all students. They are as follows: primary education: English, junior high school: English, French, German and high school: English, French, German. The foreign language chosen by students in the first year of secondary school is taught during the three years of high school. A second foreign language is offered to all high school students and is included in the compulsory electives.

v. *Evaluation*

The purpose of assessing the foreign languages studied is to monitor and control the achievement of the goals set in the curricula. At the end of the school year, students receive grades as in the other studied subjects and are not issued specific certificates for mastering a foreign language.

f) Luxembourg

i. *Language situation of the country*

Luxembourg is a small country of about 400,000 inhabitants located in the heart of multilingual Europe. Traditionally, the Grand Duchy has been a place where cultural and socio-political influences meet. French speaking, German speaking and to a lesser extent English speaking. This multilingualism is partly related to the presence of a high percentage of immigrant and frontier workers. The country is officially trilingual, but the national language is Luxembourgish, a Franco-Moselle dialect that is the language of the entire population of Luxembourg, but it is rarely used in writing, mostly

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German, French and increasingly English. The national press is usually in German, with some articles in French. Most books and movies are in German or French. The language of legislation is French, and the administrative and judicial languages are French, German and Luxembourgish. [17]

ii. *Organization of training*

Added to these three languages are "immigrant" languages (especially Portuguese, to a lesser extent Italian, Spanish, etc.). The need to switch from one language to another is part of the daily life of all residents of the country.

In school, the use of the three languages takes place from the earliest years. Luxembourgish children are monolingual until primary school (although television allows them to have a passive knowledge of German and French) as pre-school education is in Luxembourgish. The national language is considered auxiliary and German is the language of literacy.

In the second term of the second year of basic education, the oral teaching of French begins, and the written language is introduced from the third year. From the second or third year of secondary education, English is introduced. High school graduates have a good knowledge of German, French and English. [18]

iii. *Evaluation*

Basic level: In primary education, assessment takes place at different times of the school year through control tests. Secondary level: Assessment takes place during the school year through periodical tests. The evaluation criteria and methods are defined for the different levels and for the different languages. [19]

g) Norway

i. *Language situation of the country*

Norwegian (includes spoken dialects and the written languages Bokmål and Nynorsk) and Sami (includes Northern Sami, Pipe Sami and Southern Sami) are spoken in Norway. Of the languages mentioned above, only the students who speak Sami are truly bilingual, according to the definition of the term. Bokmål and Nynorsk are written languages of instruction for the remaining students. [20]

ii. *Linguistic minorities*

Saami can be used as a language of instruction in schools throughout the country (Saami and Norwegian have identical status). Saami is offered from elementary to intermediate level (ages 6 to 19). Many students learn Sámi, for some it is their mother tongue and for others it is a second language. Some students prefer it as an elective in elementary, junior high or high school.

Sámi language is offered as an additional subject in some teacher training colleges and universities, but they must be fluent in both Sámi and Norwegian. All trainings are free. The state provides exceptional support for bilingual schools. [21]

iii. *Organization of training*

The teaching of a foreign language as a compulsory subject starts for all pupils at the age of 6 (first year of primary school), which is English, as Norway is very close geographically to English-speaking societies and has cultural, historical and linguistic ties with them. At lower secondary level, German and French are included throughout Norway, plus Finnish and Russian in some areas. At the high school level, English, German, French, Spanish, Russian, Italian and Japanese are studied. [22]

iv. *Evaluation*

The curriculum does not address assessment. Students are assessed with two assessments - for oral skills and for written skills. Self-assessment is an important part of continuous assessment in support of the learning process and as a source of awareness on the part of the student of his own competence.

h) Portugal

i. *Language situation of the country*

Portuguese is the main official language in the country, and in 1999, the Miranda language was recognized as official, which is practically a Southern Leon dialect.[23] Since then, it has become an extracurricular elective, according to the wishes of families and students. Its status as an official language helps increase interest in its teaching at university level as well.

Portugal has minority languages spoken by people from African and Central and Eastern European countries. In primary school, extracurricular lessons are officially provided for students whose mother tongue is not Portuguese, the majority of whom are from the former Portuguese colonies. As part of the SOCRATES program, supporting materials for its teaching have been developed with a view to improving the educational and social integration of students who are not native speakers of the language. These materials include:

- bilingual test - Portuguese, Cape Verdean and Guinean Creole and English versions;
- evaluation form for the use and teaching of Portuguese as a non-native language;
- educational kit.

In schools where there are communities with a large number of children from minority ethnic groups, there is an experience of teaching the relevant foreign language through a "cultural mediator" in order to promote their social integration.

Important recognition of the Portuguese language is given by the United Nations in 2020 - the World Portuguese Language Day is celebrated annually on May 5. [24]

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ii. *Organization of foreign language training*

The teaching of foreign languages is not provided at the pre-school level. In the first year of primary school, learning a foreign language is not compulsory. The study of a foreign language during the 4 years of study must be in accordance with the development of the curricula.

In the second level of basic education, the study of a foreign language begins as an integral part of the curriculum. In all schools, a foreign language must be offered: English, French or German for 4 hours a week of 50 minutes each. In the next level of education, in addition to the continuation of the first foreign language, the study of a second foreign language is introduced, and Spanish is added to the existing possibilities. By the end of secondary education, students learn at least two foreign languages. In some areas, study in a third foreign language is also provided. [25]

iii. *Evaluation*

At the preschool level, assessment is qualitative.

The aim of the assessment of pupils in primary education is to monitor the achievement of the general objectives established at national level for each stage of education and of the specific objectives in relation to foreign languages.

The assessment becomes formative (systematic and continuous: this type of assessment is descriptive in the first stage and qualitative in the second and third) and summative (at the end of each period, year and level) - this type of assessment is based on a scale from 1 to 5. In the end of the third level has a general test. The results of this test are taken into account for the final assessment at the end of compulsory education. Summative assessment is carried out and administered by the school at the end of each period into which the academic year is divided, on a scale of 0 to 20.

i) Spain

i. *Language situation in the country*

According to the Spanish constitution, the official language of the state is Castilian, and all Spaniards have the obligation to know it and the right to use it. [26] In the autonomous communities, the other Spanish languages are official in accordance with the legislation of the communities. Since the creation of the autonomous communities, Castilian has always been the official language in 11 of the 17 communities, and the remaining 6 (Balearic Islands, Basque Country, Catalonia, Galicia, Autonomous Regions of Navarre and Valencia) have a second official language.

ii. *Linguistic minorities*

In recent years, increasing importance has been given to the other official languages of the respective autonomous communities as a means of education. The obligation to teach children Castilian and the regional language of the autonomous community is ensured in different ways by each community.

In the Basque Country, children are not assigned to different schools based on their mother tongue. They can follow one of the three existing language models: Castilian, Basque or Castilian and Basque as the language of instruction. In all three cases, Castilian language and literature, Basque language and literature and foreign languages are always taught in the language itself.[27]

In Catalonia, Catalan is the language of instruction at the non-university level. At the end of compulsory education, students must be able to express themselves correctly in both languages. In Galicia, the mother tongue of the majority of students is chosen as the language of instruction in pre-school and in the first level of primary education. From the second level to the last year of high school, the subjects taught in one of the two languages are established by decree. [28]

Escuelas Oficiales de Idiomas (specialized language schools) offer teaching in all official languages, regardless of geographic location.

iii. *Organization of foreign language training*

The teaching of a foreign language as a compulsory subject begins at the age of 8 and continues until the end of secondary education. A second foreign language starts at the age of 12 and is a compulsory option until the end of secondary education in all schools. A third foreign language can also be studied in case the school decides to offer it as an elective. The specialized language schools Escuelas Oficiales de Idiomas represent a widespread language learning network. Most of the students attending these schools receive two intermediate and advanced level certificates: Certificado del Ciclo Elemental and Certificado de Aptitud respectively in the chosen foreign language.

There is no list of foreign languages to learn, so in theory any language can be taught. However, English, followed by French, German, Portuguese and Italian, are the most studied languages.

Escuelas Oficiales de Idiomas offer 22 languages, such as Arabic, Chinese, Danish, Dutch, Greek, Italian, Japanese, Romanian, Russian, etc. and experimentally Finnish, Irish, Korean and Swedish.

The time allocated to teaching compulsory foreign languages is usually three hours a week in most autonomous communities. At the age of 10, the annual scheduled hours are 85. At the age of 13 and 16, students study a compulsory foreign language for at least 105 hours. For the elementary cycle of Escuelas Oficiales de Idiomas, the minimum hours per year are 360. [29]

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iv. *Evaluation*

Student assessment is carried out continuously from a global and formative point of view, taking into account the set goals. The legislation specifies the special assessment. The assessment criteria, applicable to the whole country, are valid for the four main skills: grammar, socio-cultural domain, affective and cognitive domain. The subject "foreign language" is included in the official documents at the end of both levels. [30]

III. Conclusions

Learning foreign languages is included in the education systems of all countries around the world. Mastering and using different linguistic systems in communication opens doors to different cultural horizons and creates many advantages in people's lives. [31]Of all the language areas studied, primary and secondary education are those where the greatest efforts are made to promote multilingualism. However, in early foreign language learning and in the further and higher education, media, public services and business sectors, the results of the LRE project study show that the officially declared responsibility of European countries to support multilingualism still needs to implement specific action and practices at the local and institutional level.

Most European countries also provide language support for newly arrived immigrant students. Determining the most appropriate types of support for newly arrived immigrant students entering the host country's education system for the first time is an important first step in knowing how to meet their needs. Currently, in around a third of European countries there are central recommendations on the need to test the language of instruction for newly arrived pupils, while in the rest of Europe schools have autonomy and freedom to establish their own assessment procedures to admit newly arrived pupils. A measure to support newly arrived students is the offer of separate classes, in which intensive training in the language of instruction is provided in order to quickly prepare students for entry into ordinary classes. Many countries choose to integrate newly arrived immigrant students directly into mainstream (age-appropriate) classes, offering additional language support if needed.

Almost all countries provide additional language training courses for immigrant students, and more than a third of European education systems offer these students personalized training or a personalized curriculum of studies.

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