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**BILINGUAL EDUCATION FOR
ROMANI CHILDREN: THEORY AND
PRACTICE**

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BILINGUAL EDUCATION FOR ROMANI CHILDREN: THEORY AND PRACTICE

This paper examines bilingual education as a means of improving educational attainment among Romani children. The paper begins by discussing how bilingual education fits with the international legal framework concerning language education for persons belonging to minority groups. Drawing on current thinking regarding language acquisition, the paper then sets out some key theoretical linguistic constraints to be taken into consideration in the context of education policy design, focusing primarily on the age of onset of acquisition (AOA). Two possible bilingual education models, Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) and Developmental Bilingual Education (DBE), are then presented and compared. There follows a brief discussion of current trends in language education policy for Romani children, focusing on the EU framework for National Roma Integration Strategies and its implementation in member states. Finally, a case study of the Amare Rromentza bilingual kindergarten pilot scheme in Romania is considered in light of the theoretical background. The paper concludes that bilingual education for Romani children can have very positive results in practice and merits more serious consideration among policymakers.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The Romani¹ minority is one of the most vulnerable and marginalised groups in Europe. Recent data from the European Union's (EU) Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) indicate that 80% of Roma live below the at-risk-of-poverty threshold in their respective countries, that one in three Roma lives without running water, one in 10 without electricity, and one in four in a

household that faced hunger at least once in the previous month.² This low level of social inclusion reflects below-average levels of labour market integration: the current employment rate among working-age Roma is 30%, compared to an average of 70% across the EU in 2015.³ 63% of Roma aged between 16 and 24 years old are not in employment, education or further training,



compared to an EU average of 12%.⁴ This limited level of labour market integration is widely attributed to insufficient levels of education among the vast majority of working-age Roma.⁵ For this reason, improvement in educational attainment is consistently highlighted as a crucial factor in Roma inclusion strategies and remains a high priority at international level.⁶

Key issues with regard to educational attainment among Roma include widespread segregation, absenteeism, and high dropout rates.⁷ Another common, though less frequently mentioned, limiting factor concerning educational attainment among Roma is language competence. While some Roma are native speakers of the majority language(s) of their country of residence, many grow up with Romani⁸ as their (only) home language. A recent study has shown that Romani-speaking pupils in Slovakia achieve significantly lower average scores in all subjects compared to their Slovak-speaking peers, a performance deficit equivalent to three or four years' schooling.⁹ The study also indicates that 80 to 95% of Romani-speaking pupils in Slovakia do not acquire 'basic cognitive skills and competences', compared to around 20% of their Slovak-speaking peers, while over 50% have to repeat one or more years of primary school, compared to around 2% of their Slovak-speaking peers.¹⁰ While a range of socio-economic factors may also have had a bearing on these results, it seems likely that language competence played a significant role. The issue of majority language competence has been highlighted by some observers. For example, a report for the Roma Education Fund notes that 'the language barrier for a part of the Roma population is not acknowledged or addressed'.¹¹ Furthermore, in order to reduce discrimination and educational disparities between Roma and non-

Roma, the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) has recommended that states should 'provide Roma pupils in need of it with preparatory and additional instruction in the official language(s)'.¹²

This paper examines bilingual education as a means of addressing the issue of majority language competence and, in turn, of improving educational attainment among Romani children. The paper begins by discussing how bilingual education fits with the international legal framework concerning language education for persons belonging to minority groups. Drawing on current thinking regarding language acquisition, the paper then sets out some key theoretical linguistic constraints to be taken into consideration in the context of education policy design. Two possible bilingual education models, Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) and Developmental Bilingual Education (DBE), are then presented and compared. There follows a brief discussion of current trends in language education policy for Romani children. Finally, a case study of the Amare Rromentza bilingual kindergarten pilot scheme in Romania is considered in light of the theoretical background. The final section presents a summary and some more general thoughts on the implications for further research and policy development.

II. INTERNATIONAL LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The right of persons belonging to minority groups to learn their minority language, linked to the maintenance and development of a distinct cultural identity, is enshrined in a number of international and European legal instruments.¹³



These instruments also consistently emphasise the importance of learning the relevant official or majority language(s) as means of integration and participation in broader political, economic, social, and cultural life.¹⁴ At the international level, Article 5(1c) of the UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education provides that ‘it is essential to recognise the right of members of national minorities to carry on their own educational activities, including [...] the use or the teaching of their own language’, provided ‘that this right is not exercised in a manner which prevents the members of these minorities from understanding the culture and language of the community as a whole and from participating in its activities, or which prejudices national sovereignty’.¹⁵ Similarly, while Article 4(3) of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities (hereinafter the UN Minorities Declaration) provides that ‘states should take appropriate measures so that, wherever possible, persons belonging to minorities may have adequate opportunities to learn their mother tongue or to have instruction in their mother tongue’, the Commentary to the UN Minorities Declaration states that ‘since persons belonging to minorities, like those belonging to majorities, have a duty to integrate into the wider national society, they need also to learn the official or State language(s)’.¹⁶ At the European level, the Preamble to the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (hereinafter the Language Charter), which provides for wide-ranging measures for the learning of minority languages, states that the ‘protection and encouragement of regional or minority languages should not be to the detriment of the official languages and the need to learn them’.¹⁷ This is

further reinforced in Article 8 of the Language Charter, according to which measures in the field of education should be taken ‘without prejudice to the teaching of the official language(s) of the State’.¹⁸ Similarly, Article 14 of the Framework Convention on the Protection of National Minorities (the Framework Convention) provides that opportunities for being taught or receiving instruction in a minority language shall be made available ‘without prejudice to the learning of the official language or the teaching in this language’.¹⁹

The notion that persons belonging to minority groups should learn, in addition to their respective minority languages, the relevant official or majority language(s) in their state of residence is thus firmly established within the international legal framework. This framework therefore creates a dual obligation on the part of states to provide education for persons belonging to minority groups in both minority and majority languages.²⁰ An obvious way for this to be implemented in practice is through bilingual education. The explanatory report to the Framework Convention states that ‘bilingual instruction may be one of the means of achieving the objective’ of Article 14 concerning the learning of minority and majority languages.²¹ Moreover, the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention (ACFC) has stated that the Framework Convention ‘presupposes the encouragement and support for bilingualism’ and has encouraged states parties to develop ‘bi- or multilingual teaching models as part of the mandatory school curriculum’.²² Multilingual education as means of facilitating the learning of both minority and majority languages has also received support from the OSCE HCNM.²³



III. BILINGUALISM AND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

Bilingualism may be defined simply as competence in two languages in oral and/or written forms.²⁴ The aim of bilingual education is therefore the acquisition and development of competence in two languages both orally and (ideally) in writing. Concerns are sometimes raised that the development of biliteracy, i.e. competence in two writing systems, may confuse bilingual children and therefore adversely affect their literacy acquisition.²⁵ This could be particularly relevant for Roma children in, for example, Serbia, where Cyrillic script is used for Serbian and Latin script for Romani.²⁶ However, research indicates that children are able to differentiate their writing systems even at a very young age.²⁷ Moreover, some studies indicate that bilingualism can have cognitive benefits for children with respect to literacy, as well as in terms of metalinguistic awareness.²⁸

Language acquisition remains a highly contentious subject and it is worth noting from the outset that minimal consensus exists among scholars working in this field. It is widely accepted, however, that there are two broad categories of language acquisition: first language (L1) acquisition and second language (L2) acquisition. L1 acquisition is an innate, unconscious process which ultimately leads to the development of native language competence, i.e. complete grammatical knowledge.²⁹ Some children acquire just one language from birth through monolingual first language (1L1) acquisition, while others acquire more than one through bilingual first language (2L1) acquisition. Research has shown that both 1L1 and 2L1

acquisition lead to the development of ‘full knowledge’ of the grammatical system(s) of the language(s) and thus of native competence.³⁰ L2 acquisition, in contrast to L1 acquisition, is a (largely) conscious process which does not lead to the development of native language competence.³¹ The factors which give rise to this distinction between L1 and L2 acquisition are the source of much debate. However, the age of onset of acquisition (AOA), i.e. the age at which a child is first exposed to the language(s) in question, is widely considered to be a key factor. According to the popular Critical Period Hypothesis, there exists a ‘limited developmental window during which native-like language attainment is possible’.³² This is often attributed to an ‘age-related decline in neural plasticity’ linked to the maturation of the brain, which reduces its capacity to acquire language(s).³³

Drawing on evidence from a range of linguistic and neuroimaging studies, Meisel has suggested that crucial changes take place at around both AOA 4 and 6–7.³⁴ On this basis, he posits the existence of two types of L2 acquisition, namely child second language (cL2) acquisition, starting from around AOA 4, and adult second language (aL2) acquisition, starting from around AOA 6–7.³⁵ The potential for achieving near-native competence is considerably higher with cL2 acquisition than with aL2 acquisition.³⁶ There exists insufficient evidence to address the question of whether successive language acquisition at or prior to AOA 3 is necessarily 2L1 acquisition, but the differences are likely to be subtle.³⁷ In summary, following Meisel, there are a total of four types of language acquisition, 1L1, 2L1, cL2, and aL2, the latter three of which involve the development of bilingual competence. The distinction between these latter three types of



language acquisition appears to correspond to the AOA, which determines, to a greater or lesser extent, the level of competence that can ultimately be achieved: broadly speaking, the earlier the AOA, the higher the attainable level of language competence.

In order to maximise the attainable level of language competence for Romani children, and thereby minimise the impact of language competence on educational disparities between Romani and non-Romani children, it seems reasonable to work on the basis that the goal of bilingual education for Romani children should be at least cL2 and ideally 2L1 acquisition. Romani children should therefore enter bilingual education programmes before the age of 6 and ideally before the age of 4, i.e. at pre-primary level. This supports the joint UNESCO and Council of Europe guidelines on inclusive early childhood care and education for Roma children, which highlight the importance of language development in pre-primary education.³⁸

IV. BILINGUAL EDUCATION

There exists a wide variety of models of bilingual education, arising from diverse socio-political circumstances and addressing a broad range of learner needs and policy aims.³⁹ One common model aimed at 1L1 minority language speakers is the Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) programme, also known as the early-exit programme, which usually begins at pre-primary level and gradually introduces the L2, i.e. the majority language, over a period of 2 to 3 years with the aim of allowing pupils to then enter mainstream, monolingual classrooms.⁴⁰ Pupils first learn to read and write in their L1 and then in the L2.⁴¹ TBE programmes are considered to be

significantly better than non-bilingual programmes and their use has been supported by UNESCO and UNICEF; they are also the most common type of bilingual education programme in the United States.⁴² However, longitudinal studies indicate that they are less effective than other bilingual programmes in terms of ensuring that pupils achieve equivalent levels of competence compared with their monolingual majority-language peers.⁴³ TBE programmes are also criticised for pushing pupils into mainstream monolingual classrooms too early, as well as for segregating pupils prior to their inclusion in mainstream schooling.⁴⁴ This latter issue would be of particular concern in the case of Romani children, for whom segregation in education is already a considerable barrier. In addition, the approach of TBE programmes essentially treats the minority language as a hindrance to be overcome and is therefore often considered to propagate a negative perception of the minority language and identity.

Developmental Bilingual Education (DBE) programmes also begin at pre-primary level, but, in contrast to TBE programmes, continue until at least the end of primary school.⁴⁵ By gradually introducing the L2 while continuing instruction in the L1, DBE aims to facilitate the development of full bilingualism and biliteracy and is therefore considered a much stronger model than TBE.⁴⁶ Longitudinal research indicates that pupils in DBE programmes achieve educational parity with their monolingual majority-language counterparts.⁴⁷ DBE programmes also typically aim to foster among pupils a positive perception of their cultural heritage and ethno-linguistic identity.⁴⁸ This would be particularly important for Romani pupils, who face widespread discrimination on the basis of this identity. In principle, in the context of bilingual education for



Romani children, DBE may therefore be considered a more favourable model than TBE.

V. CURRENT TRENDS IN EDUCATION POLICIES FOR ROMA

In recent years, some progress has been made with regard to language education policies for Roma. Measures have been introduced across Europe to facilitate the learning of Romani. In Austria, migrant pupils' mother tongues, including Romani, can be taught as an optional subject either in additional classes or as part of the mainstream curriculum.⁴⁹ The Finnish government provides annual funding of €75,000 for the 'Romani language nest' immersion programme, while Romani is also taught at the University of Helsinki, which offers certification for Romani language teachers.⁵⁰ In Romania, there is an increasing use of Romani at all levels of education, with the language now being taught in over 300 schools.⁵¹ Romani language and literature have recently been included as subjects in the Slovakian school-leaving qualification.⁵² Finally, in Sweden, the government has recently initiated a programme to allow all Romani children to receive education in Romani, including the development of teaching materials in Romani.⁵³ Measures have also been introduced across Europe to facilitate the learning of the relevant majority language(s) among Roma. The Bulgarian government has introduced a two-year obligatory pre-school programme, which includes language training for children if needed.⁵⁴ In Denmark, there has been a shift away from segregation towards individual support, including language support, within mainstream education.⁵⁵

In France, the Andatu project in Lyon aimed to improve the social inclusion of Roma with a range of activities including French language courses.⁵⁶ Other measures to assist pupils in overcoming languages barriers have been introduced in Austria, Germany, Ireland and Slovenia.⁵⁷ However, the measures outlined above are not conceived as part of a truly bilingual education model and bilingual education is in fact largely absent from education policies for Romani children. For example, the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies (NRIS), in which education is highlighted as one of four priority areas, makes no mention of bilingual education and the issue is thus hardly addressed in member states' individual NRIS submissions.⁵⁸ A rare exception to this general trend is a bilingual kindergarten pilot scheme which started in Romania in 2004. This pilot scheme is the focus of the following case study.

VI. CASE STUDY: BILINGUAL KINDERGARTENS IN ROMANIA

In Romania, there exists a bilingual school system which aims to facilitate the intensive learning of foreign languages, such as English and French, but a similar model has not been provided for Romani on a national basis.⁵⁹ The bilingual system in Romania has therefore been characterised by Matache & Oehlke as an 'example of a universal policy that is not fully sensitive to minority rights and needs'.⁶⁰ Over 8 percent of the Romanian population are Roma, a large number of whom speak Romani.⁶¹ A report for the Roma Education Fund notes that the 'lack of bilingual education in the Romanian education system prevents Roma children from accessing education and negatively



influences their school achievements'.⁶² While bilingual Romani-Romanian learning materials exist, these have not been widely distributed and many teachers are not trained to use them in the classroom.⁶³ However, the NGO Amare Rromentza has piloted a bilingual kindergarten scheme which could provide a model for bilingual pre-school education for Romani children. The project aimed to facilitate the acquisition of Romanian among the children and to develop their competence in Romani, as well as to improve their perception of Romani identity.

The scheme began with the establishment of a bilingual kindergarten for a Kalderash Romani community in Sărulești in the county of Călărași, the first such kindergarten in Romania. The project was led by the NGO Amara Rromentza and funded by UNICEF. The scheme was approved by the Călărași County School Inspectorate, meaning that the bilingual kindergarten was a public kindergarten and therefore the teacher's salary and building maintenance were covered by the public school authority.⁶⁴ The kindergarten teacher was a native speaker of Romani and qualified teacher with experience of working with Romani children.⁶⁵ The teacher was jointly chosen by the project coordinator from Amara Rromentza, the Roma School Inspector from Călărași County School Inspectorate, and another experienced Romani teacher. In addition, a Romani mother from the community was employed as a teaching assistant and mediator for the duration of the project.⁶⁶ The children selected to take part in the scheme were chosen on the basis of family income, the number of pre-school children in the family, and the parents' interest in enrolling their child in the kindergarten.⁶⁷ The bilingual kindergarten opened on 15th September 2004 with 20 Romani children

between the ages of 3 and 6.⁶⁸ The primary focus of the kindergarten was on the acquisition of Romanian through instruction in Romani. The mainstream pre-school curriculum was adapted for the bilingual setting and focused on topics relating to aspects of Romani history and culture.⁶⁹ All teaching materials used were bilingual.⁷⁰ In addition, tailored extra-curricular activities were organised, such as a Christmas celebration during which the children sang songs and recited poems in Romani.⁷¹ The initial pilot was deemed a success by Amara Rromentza, who in 2005 received further funding from UNICEF to expand the scheme to include two more kindergartens, one in Brateiu, Sibiu County and the other in Toflea, County Galați.⁷² The scheme expanded to include six kindergarten groups in 2007.⁷³ The programme was subsequently expanded further in 2009 to 2011 to include around 800 children at 40 different kindergartens in the counties of Iași, Bacău, Călărași, and Buzău as part of the 'Quality in education – a step to equality' project supported by the European Social Fund.⁷⁴ In the 2012-2013 school year, the number of kindergartens offering bilingual teaching had dropped to around 20.⁷⁵

Amara Rromentza's bilingual kindergarten programme has been highlighted as a good practice example by, among others, the European Roma Integration Good Practice Exchange and Policy Network (ERNE) and the Soros Foundation Romania.⁷⁶ Programme stakeholders reported that the results were 'impressive', including improvements in pupil attainment, more successful transition to primary schooling, and improved relations between teachers and Romani families.⁷⁷ According to an assessment by Minority Rights Group International, the bilingual kindergarten project 'contributed to making the school environment more recognisable and



appealing to Roma communities'.⁷⁸ Moreover, a World Bank report has highlighted the link between attendance of bilingual kindergartens in Romania and an increase in school participation among Romani children, as well as the transmission of a positive perception of linguistic and cultural identity, linked to improved self-esteem, and promotion of cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue.⁷⁹

In light of the linguistic theory discussed earlier, a clear strength of the programme is that it largely introduces children to the majority language at pre-primary level, i.e. prior to AOA 6-7, thereby facilitating, in principle, (at least) cL2 acquisition and thus increasing the attainable level of competence in Romanian compared to starting at primary level. Other important strengths include the involvement of an L1 Romani teacher and mother from the community. A potential limitation of the scheme is that the programme essentially conforms to the TBE model discussed above. While effort has clearly been made to transmit a positive image of the Romani language, Romani children only have 2 or 3 years to develop their Romanian and have minimal opportunity beyond that to further develop their Romani. In Romania, tuition in Romani as a mother tongue is offered on an optional basis for the first four year groups at primary level.⁸⁰ In addition, lessons in Romani language, history, and culture of one hour per week are available from years one to 12.⁸¹ However, in 2011, only 10% of Romani pupils chose attend these lessons or receive education in Romani.⁸² Therefore, while it is possible for children to continue to learn both Romani and Romanian at primary school, the current offer is too limited to facilitate the development of full bilingual competence. The Committee of Experts on the Language Charter has encouraged the

Romanian authorities 'to continue to develop a comprehensive offer of Romani teaching', and it would seem sensible for this to be carried out in the context of a more comprehensive bilingual education programme.⁸³

VII. CONCLUSIONS

In summary, majority language competence presents a barrier to educational attainment for monolingual speakers of Romani. One possible solution to address this issue could be the provision of bilingual majority-minority language education for monolingual Romani-speaking children. This approach would allow states to fulfil their dual obligation vis-à-vis language education in light of the relevant international and European legal instruments in this field, namely to provide persons belonging to minority groups with the opportunity to learn both the relevant minority language, in the interests of persevering and promoting a distinct cultural identity, and the relevant majority language, in the interests of facilitating integration. In light of current thinking regarding language acquisition, bilingual education for monolingual Romani-speaking children should begin at pre-primary level, ideally before the age of 4 and at the latest before the age of 6 or 7. This would maximise the potentially attainable level of competence in the majority language. Ideally, bilingual education programmes should follow the Development Bilingual Education model in order for children to develop a high level of competence in both languages, as well as to foster a positive perception of their minority linguistic heritage. The application of this model would, however, need to be carefully



managed in order to avoid the further segregation of Romani schoolchildren. The Amare Rromentza bilingual kindergarten pilot scheme indicates that pre-primary bilingual education for Romani children can have very positive results in practice

and therefore merits more serious consideration among policymakers.



Notes

¹ For the sake of convenience, and following a common convention in academic publications, the terms ‘Romani’ and ‘Roma’ are used in this paper to cover a range of groups referred to by themselves and others by names including Gens du voyage, Gypsies, Kalé, Manouches, Roma, Sinti, and Travellers. Much of the complex debate surrounding ‘Romani’ identity, for example concerning the question of whether they can be considered a single ethnic group, is, in a sense, irrelevant here. Because it is solely concerned with the issue of language, the paper focuses exclusively on native speakers of Romani (see note 8) and thus treats ‘Roma’ as a purely linguistic group, without ignoring the fact that this is by no means the only criterion by which ‘Roma’ can be defined. On the broader issues of ‘Romani’ identity cf. Matras, Y. (2013), Scholarship and the politics of Romani identity: Strategic and conceptual issues, *European Yearbook of Minority Issues*, Vol. 10, pp. 211-247.

² European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (EU FRA) (2016), Second European Union minorities and discrimination survey (EU-MIDIS II): Roma – selected findings, p. 9.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 19. Employment rate calculated for Roma men and women aged between 20 and 64 years old, including self-employment and occasional work.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

⁵ Cf., for example, The World Bank (2010), Economic costs of Roma exclusion, p. 1.

⁶ Cf., for example, European Commission (2011), An EU framework for national Roma integration strategies up to 2020, COM(2011)173, p. 4; Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) (2013), Decision no. 4/13 enhancing OSCE efforts to implement the Action Plan on improving the situation of Roma and Sinti within the OSCE area, with a particular focus on Roma and Sinti women, youth and children, MC.DEC/4/13, p. 3; European Roma and Travellers Forum (ERTF) (2015), Strategic plan 2016-2020, p. 11.

⁷ Cf. ERTF (2015), Strategic plan 2016-2020, p. 11.

⁸ For the sake of convenience, and following the convention in contemporary linguistics, the term ‘Romani’ is used in this paper to cover the group of dialects spoken by Roma, which are generally considered to constitute a single language (cf. Matras (2004), *Romani: A linguistic introduction*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 1). The term ‘Romani’ is an adjective derived from the noun *řom*, the term historically used by speakers of the language to refer to themselves (*ibid.*). Speakers also refer to their language as *řomani čhib* (‘language of the *řom*’), *amari čhib* (‘our language’), and *řomanes* (‘in a *rom* way’), among many other names (*ibid.*).

⁹ Bloem, S. & Brüggemann, C. (2016), Student performance and inequality in Central and South Eastern Europe: Cross-country comparison and case study on Romani-speaking students in Slovakia, *Roma Education Fund: Working Paper No. 5*, p. 17. The study analyses data from the 2012 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). The study uses the term ‘Romani-speaking’ to refer to pupils whose home language is Romani.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 18, 20. ‘Basic cognitive skills and competences’ are considered equivalent to proficiency level 2 within the OECD PISA 2012 framework (cf. OECD (2015), PISA 2012 assessment and analytical framework, pp. 79, 113, 122).

¹¹ Jigou, M. & Surdu, M. (2007), *Advancing education of Roma in Romania: Country assessment and the Roma Education Fund’s strategic directions*, Budapest: Roma Education Fund, p. 39.

¹² European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) (2011), General Policy Recommendation (GPR) No. 13 on combating anti-Gypsyism and discrimination against Roma, CRI(2011)37, p. 6.

¹³ See: Article 5(1c) of the 1960 UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education; Article 4(3) of the 1992 United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities; Article 8 of the 1992 European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages; and Article 14 of the 1995 Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities.

¹⁴ On the relationship between majority language learning and integration cf., for example, Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (ACFC) (2012), Thematic commentary no. 3: The language rights of persons belonging to national minorities under the framework convention, ACFC/44DOC(2012)001 rev, § 80; OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM) (1996) The Hague recommendations regarding the education rights of national minorities, § 1; OSCE HCNM (1998), The Oslo recommendations regarding the linguistic rights of national minorities, p. 14; OSCE HCNM (2012), The Ljubljana guidelines on integration of diverse societies, pp. 52-56.

¹⁵ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) (1960), Convention against Discrimination in Education, Article 5(1c).



- ¹⁶ United Nations (UN) (1992), Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities, adopted by General Assembly resolution 47/135 of 18 December 1992, Article 4(3); UN (2005), Commentary of the working group on minorities to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities, E/CN.4/Sub.2/AC.5/2005/2, § 61.
- ¹⁷ Council of Europe (1992), European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, European Treaty Series No. 148, Preamble.
- ¹⁸ *Ibid.*, Article 8.
- ¹⁹ Council of Europe (1995), Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, H(95)10, Article 14.
- ²⁰ Cf. High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM) of the OSCE (2012), The Ljubljana guidelines on integration of diverse societies, p. 52.
- ²¹ Council of Europe (1995), Explanatory Report to the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, H(95)10, § 77.
- ²² Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (ACFC) (2006), Commentary on education under the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, ACFC/25DOC(2006)002, p. 25; ACFC (2012), Thematic commentary no. 3: The language rights of persons belonging to national minorities under the Framework Convention, ACFC/44DOC(2012)001 rev, p. 25.
- ²³ Cf. OSCE HCNM (2012), The Ljubljana guidelines on integration of diverse societies, p. 54-56.
- ²⁴ Cf. the discussion in Butler, Y. G. (2013), Bilingualism/multilingualism and second-language acquisition. In: T. K. Bhatia & W. C. Ritchie (eds.), *The handbook of bilingualism and multilingualism*, 2nd edition. Oxford: Blackwell, p. 111-112.
- ²⁵ Cf. Bassetti, B. (2013), Bilingualism and writing systems. In: Bhatia & Ritchie (eds.), *The handbook of bilingualism and multilingualism*, p. 654.
- ²⁶ Cf. Kepeski, K. & Jusuf, Š. (1980), *Romani gramatika – Romska gramatika*. Skopje: Naša Kniga.
- ²⁷ Cf. Kenner, C. (2004), *Becoming biliterate: Young children learning different writing systems*. Stoke-on-Trent: Trentham Books.
- ²⁸ Cf. Bialystok, E. (2013), The impact of bilingualism on language and literacy development. In: Bhatia & Ritchie (eds.), *The handbook of bilingualism and multilingualism*, pp. 624-648.
- ²⁹ Cf. Meisel, J. M. (2011), *First and second language acquisition: Parallels and differences*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Clark, E. (2016), *First language acquisition*, 3rd edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. ‘Grammar’ in this sense refers to the phonology, morphology, and syntax of a given language.
- ³⁰ Meisel, (2011), *First and second language acquisition*, p. 241.
- ³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 234-238.
- ³² Butler (2013), Bilingualism/multilingualism and second-language acquisition, p. 123. Cf. also Penfield, W. & Roberts, L. (1959), *Speech and brain mechanisms*. Princeton: Princeton University Press; Lenneberg, E. H. (1967), *Biological foundations of language*. New York: Wiley; Singleton, D. & Lengyel, Z. (eds.) (1995), *The age factor in second language acquisition: A critical look at the critical period hypothesis*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters; Meisel (2011), *First and second language acquisition*.
- ³³ Pallier, C. (2007), Critical periods in language acquisition and language attrition. In: B. Köpcke et al. (eds.), *Language attrition: Theoretical perspectives*, Amsterdam/Philadelphia: Benjamins, p. 155. Cf. also Meisel, (2011), *First and second language acquisition*, p. 203.
- ³⁴ Meisel, (2011), *First and second language acquisition*, p. 205-212.
- ³⁵ *Ibid.*
- ³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 221. Cf. also Abrahamsson, N. & Hyltenstam, K. (2009), Age of onset and nativelikeness in a second language: Listener perception versus linguistic scrutiny. *Language Learning*, 59(2), pp. 249-306.
- ³⁷ Meisel, (2011), *First and second language acquisition*, p. 213.
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