

Glossary

This glossary includes some key terms that can be useful when exploring multiple languages in the classroom.



BILINGUAL CHILD

A child who can use two languages. The term bilingual is commonly used also to refer to trilingual and multilingual children. Being bilingual does not mean being fully fluent in both or all of the languages in the child's repertoire.

MULTILINGUAL CHILD

A child who can use three or more languages.

HERITAGE LANGUAGE SPEAKER

An individual who is raised in a home where a language other than the dominant community language is spoken.

HERITAGE LANGUAGE SCHOOL / COMPLEMENTARY SCHOOL

Schools that teach heritage languages (also referred to as "community languages"). These schools normally operate separately from the compulsory education system and they tend to be run during weekends.

SIMULTANEOUS BILINGUAL/ MULTILINGUAL CHILD

A child who developed two/more languages at the same time from a young age. Both languages are acquired as first languages.

SEQUENTIAL BILINGUAL CHILD / SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNER

A child who developed an additional language after the first.

EAL

The acronym EAL stands for English as an Additional Language. This label is used in English medium schools to refer to learners whose first language is not English. In the American system the acronyms ESL (English as a second language) and ELL (English language learners) are used.

BILITERACY

Literacy in two languages

CODE SWITCHING

A common practice of bilingual/multilingual speakers that involves using more than one language or language variety within the same sentence or the same conversation.

TRANSLANGUAGING

A practice to allow children to use children's full linguistic repertoire. Teachers using translanguaging in class allow them to speak, write, translate and use all the languages they know to support and enhance their learning.

LANGUAGE ATTRITION

The loss of a language. It can occur in children and adults as a result of a reduction in use and exposure over a period of time.

METALINGUISTIC AWARENESS

The ability to reflect upon and manipulate the structure of language at the phonological, morphological, syntactic and lexical level. In simpler terms, is awareness of how language functions.