

Advancing Multilingual Education in the Republic of Moldova: Policies, School Practices, and the Role of Higher Education

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Abstract

This paper studies the development of multilingual education in the Republic of Moldova, with a particular focus on how national policies, school practices, and higher education institutions interact in the current reform context. The study aims to examine Moldova's linguistic and cultural diversity and to explain why multilingual education has become a strategic priority for inclusion, social cohesion, and European integration. It reviews early approaches to linguistic diversity in schools, the role of the Education Code (2014), and the 2023 amendments that officially introduced the concept of multilingual education. Special attention is given to the multilingual education pilot launched in 2025–2028, highlighting its objectives, methodological foundations (CLIL, translanguaging, plurilingual approaches), and implementation challenges, particularly regarding teacher readiness, resources, curriculum adaptation, and assessment. The article also discusses the contribution of “Ion Creangă” State Pedagogical University through teacher education, professional development, and applied research, showing higher education as a key driver of sustainable multilingual reform.

Keywords

Multilingual education, language policy, linguistic diversity, intercultural competence, CLIL, translanguaging

Introduction

In the context of growing linguistic and cultural diversity across Europe, multilingual education has increasingly become a central issue for educational policy and practice. In the Republic of Moldova, multilingualism is not a new phenomenon but a characteristic shaped by historical, social, and demographic factors. The coexistence of Romanian as the state language alongside minority and regional languages such as Russian, Gagauz, Ukrainian, and Bulgarian creates both challenges and opportunities for

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inclusive education. Within this framework, multilingual education is increasingly seen as a strategic response to issues of equity, social cohesion, and democratic participation.

Recent educational reforms in Moldova, particularly the amendments to the Education Code in 2023, formally introduced the concept of multilingual education and marked an important shift in educational thinking. This policy development reflects alignment with European principles that promote linguistic diversity, intercultural dialogue, and learner-centred approaches. However, implementing policy into classroom practice remains complex and requires institutional support, teacher training, and methodological changes.

Against this background, the present study explores the interaction between language policy, school practices, and higher education in advancing multilingual education in the Republic of Moldova. Special attention is given to the role of “Ion Creangă” State Pedagogical University as a key actor in teacher education, applied research, and professional development, highlighting how higher education institutions can support sustainable multilingual reform.

Methodology

The study adopts a qualitative and descriptive-analytical methodology designed to examine multilingual education as a policy-driven and practice-oriented movement in the Republic of Moldova. The study is grounded in document analysis, including national education legislation, policy frameworks, strategic programmes, and international guidelines related to multilingual and inclusive education. This approach allows for a systematic examination of how multilingual education is conceptualised at the policy level and how it is framed within broader European educational discourse.

In addition, the research incorporates a case-study approach focusing on the contribution of “Ion Creangă” State Pedagogical University to the implementation of multilingual education. Institutional initiatives such as teacher-training programmes, professional development activities, applied research projects, and the work of the Language–Education–Multiculturality Laboratory (LEM) are analysed to illustrate how theoretical principles—such as CLIL, translanguaging, and plurilingualism—are translated into educational practice. This qualitative case study highlights institutional capacity-building and innovation within higher education.

Complementary data are drawn from surveys and reflective reports collected during professional development activities involving teachers participating in the multilingual education pilot. These data provide insights into teachers’ attitudes, perceived readiness, and professional needs. The

combination of policy analysis, institutional case study, and practitioner perspectives ensures methodological triangulation and strengthens the validity of the findings by linking macro-level policy with educational practice.

The main aim of the research is to analyse how multilingual education is conceptualised, implemented, and supported in the Republic of Moldova, with a particular focus on the role of higher education institutions in facilitating inclusive and sustainable educational reform. The study seeks to explore the extent to which national language policies, school-level practices, and teacher education initiatives interact to promote linguistic inclusion, intercultural competence, and social cohesion.

To achieve this aim, the research pursues the following objectives: to examine the policy framework regulating multilingual education in the Republic of Moldova; to analyse school practices and pilot initiatives related to multilingual instruction; to investigate the contribution of “Ion Creangă” State Pedagogical University to teacher preparation and professional development for multilingual classrooms; to identify key challenges and opportunities in implementing multilingual education from a practitioner perspective.

The study is guided by the research hypotheses that assumes that multilingual education, when supported by coherent policy frameworks and teacher training, contributes to greater educational inclusion and social cohesion in linguistically diverse contexts; higher education institutions play an important role in bridging the gap between multilingual education policy and classroom practice through teacher education, applied research, and professional support structures.

Multilingualism as a Contemporary Educational Imperative

In the twenty-first century, using more than one language has become part of everyday life. Travel, migration, and online communication bring people with different languages and cultural backgrounds into regular contact (Gilstein, 2023). As a result, schools across Europe and elsewhere now teach students who speak different languages. Multilingual and multicultural education have therefore become practical answers to this growing diversity rather than special or short-term measures (European Commission, 2025). From both European and global viewpoints, multilingual education is seen as an approach that accepts *language diversity* as a lasting social fact and aims to give all learners fair access to education (UNESCO, 2024).

European and international bodies often point out that language is closely tied to who people are, where they belong, and how they take part in

society (Barbosa, 2023). *The Council of Europe of the European Union, UNESCO, and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights* all see multilingualism as both a shared democratic value and a daily need in diverse societies. The concept of plurilingualism introduced by the Council of Europe, that suppose the fact that people use different languages for different tasks and at different levels throughout their lives. This view challenges the belief that speaking only one language is normal and urges schools to value learners' whole language range, including minority and migrant languages.

From a *psycho-educational point of view*, the work of *Jim Cummins* shows clearly that growing up with two or more languages brings strong cognitive, social, and school-related gains (Cummins, 2005; 2017). Supporting learners' home languages and respecting their language identities are, in this view, basic conditions for educational inclusion and fairness. Multilingualism should therefore not be treated as an optional extra, but as a core need for schools that aim to be fair, democratic, and forward-looking. Cummins' research highlights that bilingual and multilingual development is linked to *greater mental flexibility, stronger critical thinking, and better problem-solving skills*. It also supports cognitive transfer between languages, which helps learners gain new knowledge, improve learning strategies, and achieve better school results.

Today, multilingualism is more and more seen as a strength rather than a burden. In schools, it can help build social bonds by supporting inclusion and shared understanding among students from different language groups (UNESCO, 2024). When schools respect and use pupils' home languages, learners from minority groups are more likely to feel seen and accepted. Multilingual learning also opens space for contact between language groups, which can lower prejudice and social gaps. In this way, togetherness grows not by removing difference, but by learning how to live with it in common learning spaces.

From a *social angle*, multilingualism is closely tied to community cohesion and inclusion in education. As Michael Byram explains, learning more than one language supports the growth of intercultural competence, understood as the mix of knowledge, attitudes, and skills needed to act as a bridge between cultures (Byram, 1997). In this sense, the multilingual school does more than teach language forms. It creates space for real exchange between cultures and helps shape active, responsible citizens in a democratic society.

Multilingual education also plays a key role in *democratic citizenship* (Szabo, 2024). Taking part in public life depends on access to language, above all the state language, while respect for minority languages helps build

trust and social balance. School systems that support both strong skills in the state language and the use of minority languages allow people to take part fully in society without giving up their language roots. This balanced path reflects a democratic view of citizenship based on fairness, shared rights, and respect for difference.

At the European level, multilingualism is firmly set as a core value and as a key tool for social and cultural integration. Policy texts such as the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (1992) and the European Commission's Strategy for Multilingualism (2007) confirm every citizen's right to learn and use more than one language, while also stressing the role of language diversity in building social cohesion. In the same spirit, the goal known as "mother tongue + 2" promotes strong skills in the home language alongside at least two foreign languages, as a way to support democratic participation, mobility, and Europe's shared future.

These questions matter greatly in the Republic of Moldova, where language diversity has grown out of history and political change. Moldova is home to several national minorities, including Gagauz, Russian, Ukrainian, and Bulgarian groups (Minority Rights Group 2023). Its Soviet past and the language choices made after independence have led to tension between strengthening Romanian as the state language and protecting minority languages. In education, both separate minority-language schools and strict one-language models have shown clear limits, either by slowing social mixing or by pushing minority students to the margins.

For these reasons, the study of multilingual education in Moldova is well grounded. As the country moves closer to European values, reform of the education system has become a key goal (Stocker, 2025). The European Union's language policy, which supports diversity, inclusion, and lifelong language learning, offers an important guide in this process.

The Need for Multilingual Education in the Republic of Moldova

The need for multilingual education in the Republic of Moldova is shaped by pedagogical, social, civic, and economic factors. From a pedagogical perspective, multilingual education is supported by strong evidence of cognitive and academic benefits (Solcan and Burea, 2025). Research shows that using more than one language enhances cognitive flexibility, problem-solving, and attention (Cummins 2005). Learners who develop skills in multiple languages often show better performance in reading, writing, and critical thinking across subjects (TESSA 2024). In Moldova, where many children grow up in multilingual environments,

education that builds on these experiences can turn linguistic diversity into an academic advantage.

Valuing the mother tongue is especially important for learning outcomes. When students are taught in a language they understand well, particularly in the early years, they develop stronger literacy skills and a better understanding of subject content. These skills can later support learning in the state language and additional languages. When the mother tongue is ignored or undervalued, students may struggle academically and lose confidence (Atkinson 1987). Multilingual education recognises the first language as a foundation for further learning, helping reduce achievement gaps and promote equal educational outcomes, while also supporting more inclusive teaching practices. Linguistically diverse classrooms encourage learner-centred approaches that adapt to different needs and learning paths (Cummins, 2017; UNESCO, 2024; Solcan and Burea, 2025). Such practices benefit all students by increasing engagement and participation, not only those from minority backgrounds.

Social and civic reasons strengthen the case for multilingual education. Schools are spaces where attitudes toward diversity are shaped. By exposing students to different languages and cultures, multilingual education promotes mutual understanding and respect. Regular interaction in diverse classrooms helps challenge stereotypes and supports the development of tolerance and peaceful coexistence, which are essential in societies with complex historical and linguistic divisions. In a plural society, unity cannot be built through uniformity. Instead, it requires recognition of multiple identities within a shared civic framework. By combining respect for linguistic diversity with common civic values, multilingual education allows minority learners to feel included while strengthening their sense of belonging to the state.

Economic and mobility considerations provide additional justification. In a globalised economy, multilingual skills and intercultural competence are increasingly valuable in the labour market. Moldova's strong links to migration, cross-border work, and international cooperation make language skills a practical asset. Multilingual education prepares students for wider employment opportunities and supports both national and international mobility (CMI 2025). Proficiency in the state language remains necessary for access to higher education, public services, and civic life, while additional languages expand opportunities beyond national borders. In this context, multilingual education supports this balance by promoting additive multilingualism, where learning new languages does not replace existing ones.

Last but not least, multilingual education is also economically efficient. Education systems that fail to support linguistic diversity often face higher dropout rates and long-term social costs. Inclusive approaches help reduce underachievement and strengthen human capital. For Moldova, investing in multilingual education is a cost-effective strategy that supports sustainable development.

Linguistic and Cultural Diversity in Moldova

The Republic of Moldova is characterised by significant linguistic and cultural diversity shaped by historical border changes, migration, and political transformations. Language in Moldova is closely connected to identity and belonging, making it a main issue in education. To analyse multilingual education, one has to understand the country's national minorities, their regional distribution, and the historical legacy of language practices (Young European Ambassadors, 2022). National minorities represent an important part of Moldova's population and are officially recognised by the state through constitutional and legislative frameworks. According to the National Bureau of Statistics (2024), the largest groups include Ukrainians – 4.9%, Russians – 3.2%, Gagauz – 4.2%, Bulgarians – 1.6%, and Roma – 0.4%, alongside smaller communities such as Poles, Jews, and Belarusians. These groups differ in size, geographic concentration, and social status, which strongly affects their access to language education (Demographics of Moldova, 2026). Ukrainians and Russians are the most numerous and are spread across urban and northern or eastern regions. Most Gagauz people live in the Autonomous Territorial Unit of Gagauzia in southern Moldova, where political autonomy supports the protection of language and culture. Even though the region recognises Gagauz as a language alongside Romanian and Russian, schools retain from using it as a language of instruction (Burea and Solcan, 2025, p. 193). On the other hand, Minority Rights Group (2018a) states that the Bulgarian people who live in Taraclia uphold the Bulgarian language and culture education in schools as individual subjects. The lack of teachers and materials is probably why these schools do not use Bulgarian for all subjects (Minority Rights Group International, 2018). The Roma community is more scattered across the country. They often face strong social marginalisation, and many Roma students deal with poverty, discrimination, and limited access to quality education. This includes support for learning in their mother tongue (Minority Rights Group, 2018b).

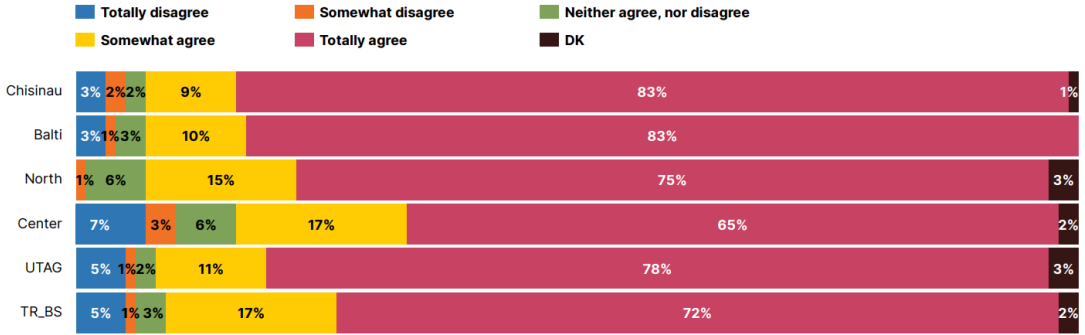
School language patterns largely mirror these demographic realities. Moldova's education system mainly operates in Romanian or Russian instruction. Russian-speaking schools are common in cities and often enroll students from diverse ethnic backgrounds because they offer minority

languages, such as Gagauz, Bulgarian, and Ukrainian. However, these languages are still taught as separate subjects rather than as full languages of instruction. These schools often lack resources, trained teachers, and weak institutional support (Benchechi, 2025). Multilingual education, therefore, develops unevenly and often depends more on local capacity than on a clear national strategy.

Regional variation also shapes how schools use language. Chişinău and other larger cities have a high linguistic diversity. Romanian and Russian operate side by side in schools and serve mixed student populations. Rural areas usually have only one language of instruction, although migration and demographic changes increase diversity there little by little. Schools in these contexts have to adjust to change on their own, which leaves gaps between official language policies and everyday educational practice.

There is a clear vision of society regarding Moldova’s multilingual character. It is a widely shared understanding across Moldova that the country is linguistically diverse, with multiple languages spoken (Lingobarometru - Moldova, 2024). At the question “Do you agree that Moldova is a multilingual country?” most respondents from all six regions expressed strong agreement with this view.

Figure 1: Perceptions of Moldova as a Multilingual Society



(Source: Lingvobarometrul Chişinău, 2024)

The highest levels of total agreement were recorded in Chişinău and Bălţi (83%), suggesting that linguistic diversity is especially well acknowledged in urban areas. The North region also shows a high level of agreement (75%), although here a slightly larger number of respondents expressed neutral views or disagreement. In the Centre region, total agreement is comparatively lower (65%), with more respondents indicating that they “somewhat agree” (17%) or remain neutral (6%) (see Figure 1). In the southern parts of the country, Gagauzia (78%) and

Taraclia/Basarabeasca (72%) also demonstrate strong agreement, although neutral and dissenting responses appear more frequently than in Chişinău or Bălţi. Despite small regional differences, the data clearly show that the idea of Moldova as a multilingual country is broadly recognised and accepted across society.

Early Attempts at Multilingual Education in Moldova.

The first responses to linguistic diversity in Moldova's education system developed gradually after independence and before the launch of formal multilingual education pilots (Gagauzia Dialogue 2021). These early approaches were not part of a coherent strategy but emerged from existing structures and immediate needs. They reflected efforts to preserve access to education, respond to minority concerns, and strengthen the role of the state language within a complex linguistic environment shaped by historical bilingualism.

One major pre-pilot approach was the continued operation of minority-language schools, most notably Russian-medium schools inherited from the Soviet period (OSCE 2005). These schools remained widespread, particularly in urban areas and regions with large minority populations, and served students from various ethnic backgrounds rather than exclusively ethnic Russians. For minority communities, they provided stability and access to education in a familiar language during a period of social change. However, these schools functioned as parallel institutions, limiting interaction between students from different linguistic backgrounds and reinforcing separation rather than integration.

A second early approach involved the introduction of Romanian as a second language in minority-language schools (Government of RM 2021). Policymakers recognised the need to support minority students in learning the state language when Romanian became increasingly important for higher education, employment, and civic participation. This marked an important shift toward inclusion, but the implementation was uneven. Romanian was often taught using methods designed for native speakers, and teachers lacked training in second-language instruction. Teachers often lacked specialised training in second-language pedagogy, and appropriate teaching materials were scarce, particularly in rural and minority-dense regions. As a result, learning outcomes varied significantly. Many minority students completed compulsory schooling with limited functional proficiency in Romanian, constraining their educational and professional opportunities.

Optional mother-tongue education represented a third strand of early multilingual practice. In regions with concentrated minority populations,

languages such as Gagauz, Bulgarian, and Ukrainian were offered primarily as optional subjects within the curriculum. In Gagauzia, limited autonomy enabled local authorities to support language and culture through education, though implementation was constrained by limited resources and teacher availability. Bulgarian and Ukrainian language instruction similarly depended on regional demand and external support, including cultural and educational assistance from kin-states.

The Education Code and the Shifts in Educational Thinking

The Education Code adopted in 2014 represented a turning point in Moldova's approach to education. It emerged as a response to long-standing issues such as linguistic diversity, uneven educational results, and limited interaction between social groups. Through this reform, schools were reconceptualised as environments meant to foster inclusion, fairness, and social cohesion. The Code guaranteed equal access to education for all learners, irrespective of language, ethnicity, or social background, while recognising that students do not start from the same position and therefore require different forms of support. It also affirmed the right of national minorities to maintain and develop their languages and cultures within the public education system, acknowledging diversity as an enduring characteristic of Moldovan society.

In line with European educational trends, the Code encouraged a move away from traditional, teacher-led instruction toward learner-centred and competence-based approaches. Greater emphasis was placed on active participation, communication, and critical thinking. At the same time, the reform aimed to address the social separation often produced by language-based schooling by promoting shared educational standards and more inclusive learning settings, without diminishing linguistic and cultural differences. Special consideration was given to minority and socially vulnerable learners, whose weaker academic outcomes were closely linked to restricted access to higher education and employment. As a result, early intervention and differentiated instruction were framed as responsibilities of the education system as a whole.

This reform trajectory was reinforced in 2023 through amendments to the Education Code that formally introduced the concept of multilingual education. Defined as instruction carried out in two or more languages, intending to develop effective communication skills in both Romanian and the learner's mother tongue, this change marked more than a simple terminological update. It reflected a broader policy shift in which multilingual education came to be recognised as a structured and legitimate educational approach, one that supports both linguistic inclusion and social integration.

The Multilingual Education Pilots in Moldova: Design and Objectives

On September 18, 2025, the Ministry of Education and Research approved the regulatory framework for the implementation of a multilingual education pilot in the Republic of Moldova. (Gagauzia Dialogue 2025). Launched by the Ministry of Education and Research, the pilot tests new approaches to language use, teaching methods, and institutional cooperation, serving as a preparatory phase for future system-wide reform. The initiative targets selected primary and lower secondary schools in linguistically diverse regions where Romanian is not the main language of instruction, including areas such as Cahul, Ungheni, and Gagauzia. Participation is voluntary, with schools chosen based on readiness, teacher motivation, and community support. Implementation is planned in stages between 2025 and 2028, allowing for gradual testing and adjustment.

Instruction combines Romanian, the local mother tongue, and an international language—usually English or French—following an additive multilingual model that builds on students' existing linguistic resources. Methodologically, the pilot draws on European practices, particularly Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), alongside plurilingual and translanguaging approaches that support meaningful learning, participation, and reduced language anxiety (Zemach, 2024; Haynes, 2025).

Intercultural education is embedded across the curriculum, with learning materials reflecting Moldova's cultural diversity and promoting dialogue and critical thinking. The pilot's implementation has strong institutional support. The Ministry of Education and Research leads coordination, offers guidance, and monitors progress. At the same time, higher education institutions contribute through teacher training, research, and professional development. The National Center for Multilingual Education at the "Ion Creangă" State Pedagogical University plays a particularly important role by focusing on CLIL, translanguaging, and intercultural teaching methods. The pilot also has international partners, such as the *OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities*, *Eurac Research*, and the *Martti Ahtisaari Peace Foundation*, all of which contribute expertise, policy advice, and comparative experience. Sweden provided financial and technical support, mainly through the "Gagauzia Dialogue" project, to help build local capacity, train teachers, and engage key stakeholders.

Case Study: The Implementation of Multilingual Education in Schools

In the context of current educational reforms in the Republic of Moldova, “*Ion Creangă*” State Pedagogical University has proven to be a key institution to support the present and future needs of the national education system. Responding to the growing demand for well-prepared teachers and corresponding professional development, the university plays an active role in the implementation of multilingual education policies and inclusive pedagogical practices.

An important contribution in this area is made through the *Language – Education – Multiculturality Laboratory (LEM)*, (*Laboratorul Limbă – Educație – Multiculturalitate (LEM)*), recently initiated, which serves as a hub for applied research and pedagogical innovation. Within LEM laboratory, students and academic staff engage in translanguaging activities, multilingual educational projects, and the development of bilingual teaching materials designed for schools in linguistically diverse and minority-language regions. These initiatives are closely connected to classroom needs and provide practical guidance for teachers working in multilingual school environments.

The university also facilitates professional and academic dialogue through events such as the international conference “*Multicultural Education as a Formative Space for Values Education*.” This forum offers opportunities for reflection on language policies, inclusive pedagogy, and the role of languages in shaping European identity. By bringing together perspectives from different disciplines and educational contexts, the conference promotes intercultural dialogue, teachers' experience exchange, and strengthens the university's role in advancing educational communication and language education at the national level.

With this in mind, it is worth noting that „Ion Creangă” State Pedagogical University has long-standing experience in implementing a *multilingual approach* in teacher education.

Reflecting on the early initiatives, one milestone was achieved in 2013, when the University won a project funded by AUF (Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie). This project brought together a strong international partnership involving the Technical University of Civil Engineering of Bucharest (Romania), Université Paris Nanterre (France), and „Ion Creangă” State Pedagogical University of Chișinău (Republic of Moldova), through the *Faculty of Foreign Languages and Literatures*. As a result of this productive collaboration, a Master's degree programme was launched: *Didactics of Non-Linguistic Disciplines in French and English*.

The main objective of this programme was to prepare teachers to teach general school subjects through a foreign language, namely French and English. At that time, Moldova had a considerable number of bilingual schools, especially in regions such as Bălţi and Chişinău, where several subjects were taught in French.

Aligned with Moldova's evolving multilingualism policies and supported by the success of this initiative, the University continued to expand its multilingual teacher-training programmes. In 2024, it launched a new Master's programme entitled *Didactics of Non-Linguistic Disciplines in English and German*, and in 2025, thanks to another valuable collaboration with Romanian universities, it initiated the Master's programme *Integrated Content and Foreign Language Learning for Primary and Preschool Education – Didactics of Non-Linguistic Disciplines in English*.

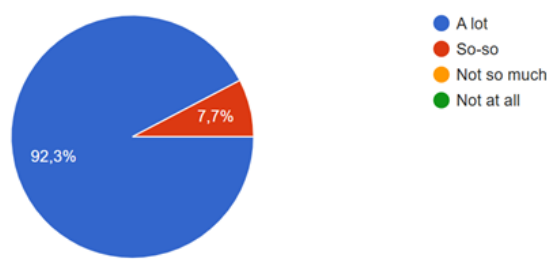
Going back to the Ministry of education pilot program, that is still just starting out, many challenges deal with teachers' preparation, curriculum, and didactic resources development. Many teachers in the pilot are used to one language or to limited bilingual skills, and they often do not have much experience with methods like teaching subjects in a second language or using multiple languages in the classroom. Even if teachers are motivated and confident in more than one language, teaching subjects while also helping students learn the language requires new skills and a totally different way of thinking.

Although national policies support multilingual education, many schools do not have enough textbooks and materials in minority languages. Teachers often have to create or modify their own resources, which takes time, a bigger budget, and leads to differences in quality between classrooms. These problems could be worse in subjects that follow strict national standards and exams, where teachers feel pressure to meet existing requirements. Assessing students adds another complication. Traditional tests usually focus on how well students know the official language, which can make it hard to fairly evaluate their knowledge of other subjects when they are learning in multiple languages. Teachers might find it difficult to assess student progress in ways that do not disadvantage students who are less fluent in the main language, Romanian.

Despite these constraints, most teachers involved in the pilot express a positive attitude toward the initiative. During professional development activities organised or supported by the university, participating teachers demonstrated strong interest and clear awareness of the need for multilingual approaches in schools serving minority-language students. According to the data reflected in the diagrams, 92.3% of respondents

recognised the importance of multilingualism for social cohesion in Moldova, indicating a strong alignment between educational practice and broader societal needs.

Figure 2: The Teachers` Attitude towards Multilingual Education

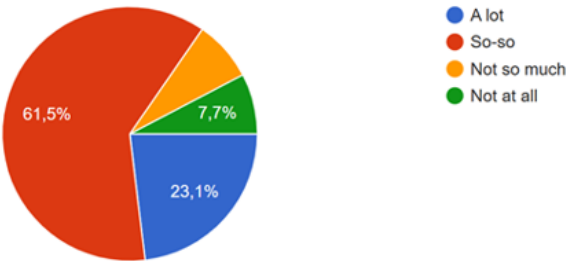


(Source: Authors' own elaboration based on data obtained through a structured questionnaire administered to teachers, 2025)

At the same time, the data highlights a clear need for further professional support. When asked about their readiness to work with pupils from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds, only 23.1% of teachers reported feeling well prepared, while 61.5% described their level of preparedness as moderate. These figures confirm that positive attitudes alone are not sufficient and that sustained training, methodological guidance, and institutional support are essential for successful implementation.

Figure 3: The Teachers` Readiness to Work with Pupils of Different Ethnicities

I feel prepared to work with pupils from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds.



(Source: Authors' own elaboration based on data obtained through a structured questionnaire administered to teachers, 2025)

Through these complementary directions—internationalisation, digital innovation, continuous professional development, and applied research—„Ion Creangă” State Pedagogical University demonstrates its capacity to translate multilingual and translanguaging principles into educational

practice. In doing so, it contributes to the development of a pedagogical culture grounded in respect for diversity, intercultural cooperation, and plurilingual competence, which are increasingly central to the contemporary Moldovan education system.

Taken together, these efforts—ranging from initial teacher education and ongoing professional development to applied research and the creation of collaborative learning spaces—show how *“Ion Creangă” State Pedagogical University* helps connect educational policy with everyday classroom practice. The case study suggests that the university does more than simply adapt to ongoing reforms. It actively supports teachers in developing the skills and confidence needed to work in multilingual and multicultural classrooms, thus making a sustained contribution to a more coherent and inclusive education system in the Republic of Moldova.

Conclusion

Studying how different languages and cultures are taught in the Republic of Moldova shows that while there are some big challenges, there are also many opportunities for positive change. Since Moldova is diverse through languages like Gagauz, Russian, Ukrainian, Bulgarian, and more, schools need to do more than just teach them, but also help students feel connected, proud of their community, and respectful of others. Learning in a multicultural way is a good idea to reduce social divisions and help all students succeed.

The past efforts made in the educational system proved that some methods worked and others were a good starting point, but required improvement. The new pilot projects can make education more inclusive and equal, while also bring Moldova closer to European standards for respecting minority rights and focusing on students' needs. The pilot program, in its first phase, mainly targets primary and secondary schools but the efforts of the Ministry of Education and its international partners can hopefully make it succeed and be implemented at a larger scale.

At the same time, before large-scale systemic changes are introduced, policymakers must take into account the realities faced by teachers. These include the need for additional training, support in managing increased workloads, adaptation of curricula and assessment practices, limited teaching resources, weak coordination between institutions, and persistent societal attitudes toward language and identity. In this context, higher education institutions play a crucial role. Through initial teacher education, continuous professional development courses, applied research, and collaborative learning spaces, *Ion Creangă State Pedagogical University* contributes directly to preparing teachers for multilingual and multicultural

classrooms and supports them in translating policy objectives into classroom practice.

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