What matters for language learning? The questionnaire framework for the PISA 2025 Foreign Language Assessment

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WHAT MATTERS FOR LANGUAGE LEARNING? THE QUESTIONNAIRE FRAMEWORK FOR THE PISA 2025 FOREIGN LANGUAGE ASSESSMENT

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Abstract

For the first time, PISA 2025 will assess foreign language skills on a global scale. This paper provides a framework for collecting policy and contextual information on foreign language learning from students, parents, teachers, school principals and government officials. The framework will be used to guide the PISA 2025 Foreign Language Assessment questionnaire development, and to interpret and to produce policy-relevant analyses based on the data on 15-year-old students' proficiency in foreign languages. For academics and practitioners, this paper provides a comprehensive picture of the factors influencing foreign language learning, based on an in-depth review of the international literature and past assessments in this area, and on discussions with experts in the field and OECD countries. The framework is centred around four policy domains: Government and school policies, Students and learning, Teachers' training and profile, and Teaching practices. In addition, the framework addresses two transversal topics that overlap these four policy domains: Information and communication technologies, and the Use of the target language for instruction in other subjects.

Résumé

Pour la première fois, PISA 2025 proposera une évaluation globale des compétences en langues étrangères. Le document ci-présent fournit un cadre pour le recueil d'informations politiques et contextuelles sur l'apprentissage des langues étrangères auprès des élèves, des parents, des enseignants, des directeurs d'école et des représentants gouvernementaux. Il sera utilisé pour guider l'élaboration du questionnaire et pour interpréter les données sur les compétences en langues étrangères des élèves de 15 ans qui seront recueillies par l'évaluation en langues étrangères PISA 2025 ainsi que pour produire des analyses pertinentes pour les politiques sur la base de ces données. Pour les chercheurs et les praticiens ce document fournit une image complète des facteurs influençant l'apprentissage des langues étrangères. Cette image est basée sur une étude approfondie de la littérature internationale et des évaluations déjà existantes dans ce domaine, ainsi que sur des discussions avec des experts dans le domaine et avec les pays de l'OCDE. Le cadre théorique est structuré autour d'un ensemble de notions appartenant à quatre domaines d'action : Politiques gouvernementales et scolaires ; Élèves et apprentissage ; Formation et profil des enseignants ; Pratiques pédagogiques. En outre, deux thèmes transversaux sont abordés dans ces quatre domaines politiques : Les technologies de l'information et de la communication et l'Utilisation de la langue cible pour l'enseignement d'autres matières scolaires

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1.1. Overview

Due to globalisation, technological innovation and human migration, being able to communicate in more than one language has become a key skill in today's world. Knowing other languages is associated with better career opportunities, and has important economic benefits for individuals and economies (Canadian Heritage, 2016[1]; European Commission, 2012[2]; Isphording, 2015[3]; Ahuja, Chucherd and Pootrakool, 2006[4]; Garrouste, 2008[5]; Ginsburgh, Melitz and Toubal, 2017[6]; Fidrmuc and Fidrmuc, 2015[7]).

Learning foreign languages also allows individuals to understand the complexity of cultures and languages, and to learn about other world views. These are important prerequisites for active participation in a globalised world. Therefore, learning a foreign language can enhance intercultural skills and global co-operation, and lead to new and innovative ways of thinking and working across cultures (Curtain and Dahlberg, 2004[8]; Gudykunst, 2003[9]; Marian and Shook, 2012[10]; Council of Europe, 2018[11]; Fisher, 2012[12]; Porto, Houghton and Byram, 2018[13]). Over the past few decades, education systems around the world have striven to respond to this challenge, emphasising the importance of teaching and learning foreign languages in the curricula.

For the first time, the PISA 2025 cycle will provide policy makers and educators with an assessment of 15-year-old students' foreign language proficiency (see Box 1 for a review of terminology used throughout this paper). This first foreign language assessment cycle will assess English, which is the most commonly taught foreign language in schools around the world (Ammon, 2015[14]). It will focus on three skills: speaking, listening and writing. Future PISA cycles may gradually cover more languages and skills.

The PISA Foreign Language Assessment aims to improve foreign language teaching and learning, and guide policy decisions. It will do this by comparing how students learn languages, and by identifying best practices in teaching and learning foreign languages around the world. To accomplish these goals, the PISA Foreign Language Assessment will include a set of questions in the PISA teacher, student, school and parent context questionnaires, and in a system-level questionnaire asking for information on foreign language teaching and learning from policy officials.

This paper presents the framework of the PISA 2025 Foreign Language Assessment context questionnaires. It illustrates the policy and contextual information that can be used to interpret the data on students' proficiency in foreign languages and produce policy-relevant analyses, structured around a set of potential explanatory variables (constructs). These constructs set the directions for questionnaire development. However, due to space limitations not all constructs in this framework will be included in the PISA context questionnaires. Therefore, to guide the

questionnaire development this framework indicates the relative policy relevance of each construct based on the feedback from prominent experts in the field and a network of national experts nominated by PISA countries and economies (see section 1.5).

For academics and practitioners, this paper provides a comprehensive picture of the factors influencing foreign language learning and proficiency inside and outside school, at the student, parent, teacher, school and system levels. This is based on an in-depth review of the scientific literature, a review of past foreign language learning international assessments and surveys, and on the input received from prominent experts in the field and from policy makers.

Box 1. Terminological notes

Following the terminology used in the PISA Foreign Language Assessment, this framework uses the term "foreign languages" to denote all modern languages that are formally taught in school settings, other than the main language of schooling, which is defined as the language of the PISA reading test. The considerations and the analysis in this paper apply in general to second language (L2) learning. This is intended as the learning of a language after at least one language (L1) has been acquired (see Lightbown and Spada (2013[15]) for more details on the definition of L2 learning).

Throughout this document, the following terms will be used:

- the target language is the language of the PISA foreign language assessment; in PISA 2025, the target language will be English, but using a general terminology will make it easier to adapt this framework to other languages that may be tested in the future

- the reading test language is the language of the PISA reading assessment, consistent with the terminology used throughout the PISA Assessment and Analytical Framework (OECD, 2019[16])

- other foreign languages are other languages that students study at school and are different from the target and reading test languages.

For the sake of simplicity, the skills of reading comprehension, spoken production, listening comprehension and written production will be referred to as reading, speaking, listening and writing, respectively.

Following the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) (Council of Europe, 2001, pp. 4-5[17]), multilingualism is defined in this framework as "the knowledge of a number of languages, or the co-existence of different languages in a given society". Plurilingualism (see section 4.3) is defined as the ability to communicate effectively with a particular interlocutor, simultaneously using a variety of linguistic and cultural skills to do so.

1.2. Framework content

The framework is divided into four main policy domains (Figure 1.1). Each policy domain contains the sections presented in the second part of this paper, which, in turn, include a number of constructs. The categorisation of the constructs into four domains (which is to some extent arbitrary) is only meant to simplify the exposition; it does not affect the description and policy relevance of the constructs or the development of the questionnaire. For example, "languages learned at school" is included in the setting for target language teaching in Figure 1.1 because it includes languages as compulsory subjects and also languages used as a medium to learn other subjects. However, the choice of which languages to study is primarily a student choice in many education systems. Therefore, the policy domains should not be seen as mutually exclusive, but rather as interconnected (for example, through the constructs they potentially share).

Each domain can include both policy levers over which schools and governments have direct control and contextual/external factors defining or constraining policy over which schools and governments have little control (OECD, 2003[18]; OECD, 2018, p. 14[19]). The main outcome of interest is foreign language proficiency, and the main goal of the analysis will be to relate proficiency to policy levers, controlling for the relevant contextual factors. However, other constructs in this framework can also be (or contain) outcomes of interest in themselves (e.g. respect and openness towards people from other culture and language background, construct (22); and intrinsic motivation to learn the target language, see construct (17)).

Figure 1. The framework

Policy domain 1: Government and school policies
Section 2.3.1: The setting for target language learning at school
(1) Onset of target language learning at school
(2) Intensity of target language learning at school
(3) Target language class size
(4) Languages learned at school
Section 2.3.2: The school environment
(5) Availability of foreign languages
(6) School enrichment activities for target language learning
(7) Target language remedial lessons at school
(8) School resources for foreign language teaching

Policy domain 3: Teachers' training and profile
Section 2.5.1: Human resources
(24) Target language teaching experience
(25) Target language teacher and staff availability
(26) Teachers' initial education and qualifications
(27) Teachers' in-service training
(28) Teaching specialisation
Section 2.5.2: The teacher
(29) Teachers' visits to other language communities
(30) Teachers' attitudes related to target language teaching
(31) Teachers' target language proficiency

Policy domain 2: Students and learning
Section 2.4.1: Student background, environment and family support
(9) Language background
(10) Parents' target language proficiency
(11) Family support in target language learning
(12) Family and peers' perceptions and attitudes related to the target language
(13) Family and peers' perceptions and attitudes related to target language lessons
(14) Target language exposure through the media
(15) Students' visits to other language communities
(16) Face-to-face exposure to and use of target and foreign languages outside of school
Section 2.4.2: Learner's attitudes, motivations and behaviours
(17) Students' motivation for target language learning
(18) Students' perceived level of proficiency
(19) Students' attitudes towards target language learning at school
(20) Time spent on target language study, homework and other structured learning activities outside of school
Section 2.4.3: Intercultural and multilingual environments and target language learning
(21) Linguistic and cultural diversity in the community
(22) Respect and openness towards people from other culture and language backgrounds
(23) Pluricultural and plurilingual education

Policy domain 4: Teaching practices
Section 2.6.1: Teaching approaches and methods
(32) Teaching the four communicative skills
(33) Teaching linguistic knowledge: Grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary
(34) Teaching literature and cultural knowledge
(35) Group and collective learning activities in the classroom
(36) Translanguaging
(37) Use of the target language during foreign language lessons
(38) Teacher's talking time
(39) Joint learning of language- and non-language-related content
(40) Teaching materials used for target language teaching
(41) Use of teaching materials
(42) Use of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages
Section 2.6.2: Assessment practices
(43) Existence of system-level target language assessments
(44) Assessment for learning

Transversal topics
Section 2.2.1: Information and Communication Technologies
Section 2.2.2: Use of the target language for instruction in other subjects

The policy domain "government and school policies" presents a broad characterisation of target language learning in an education system and its schools. It encompasses the general setting for foreign language learning at school (e.g. target language teaching onset and teaching time) and the school environment (e.g. school resources and activities). The constructs in this domain can be strongly influenced by the government regulatory framework and by school decisions, although they also depend on the interaction between these regulations and other contextual and policy factors.

"Students and learning" reviews a variety of student characteristics and behaviours, and their association with other constructs in the framework and with foreign language proficiency and learning. It contains constructs related to the students' background and the environment where they live (e.g. language background, family support and daily exposure to the target language outside of school); their motivations and attitudes (e.g. motivation to learn the target language and attitudes towards other cultures), and their behaviours (e.g. time spent on homework or engagement with a variety of media in the target language). Many of the constructs included in this section represent contextual factors that are difficult to modify (e.g. language background), but there are also areas more susceptible to policy intervention (e.g. remedial lessons).

"Teachers' training and profile" relates to the characteristics of the target language teaching workforce and to the main policies to train and employ this workforce. For example, the section on human resources addresses issues of training, qualifications and the specialisation of teachers. The section on the teacher contains constructs such as "teachers' target language proficiency" and "teachers' visits to other language communities". Governments usually have some control over this policy domain, either in the short term (e.g. in-service training) or in the longer term (e.g. criteria to become a target language teacher, affecting staff availability in the course of years).

"Teaching practices" refers to what happens in the classroom. Governments and schools can influence this domain through guidelines and recommendations. However, their ability to influence teaching practices may depend on the implementation of their policies and regulations. Teaching practices include the use of broad teaching approaches (e.g. communicative language teaching) as well as more specific methods (e.g. letting students work in groups) and evaluation practices.

The remainder of section 1 presents in more detail the scope of this framework and the methodology used to develop it. Section 2 presents the constructs depicted in Figure 1.

1.3. Relationship with the general questionnaire PISA framework

Questions related to foreign language learning and proficiency will be asked in addition to the other questions included in the PISA context questionnaires. The PISA context questionnaires framework (OECD, 2019[16]) indicates a set of

constructs, divided into domain-general (also called more briefly "general") and domain-specific. General constructs are important for understanding differences in achievement that are not tied to a specific subject area. Domain-specific constructs are those with a strong expected relationship to student experiences, outcomes, and teaching and learning factors tied to a specific content area.

The foreign language context questionnaires framework covers domain-specific constructs tied to foreign language learning. General constructs (possibly affecting foreign language learning) are discussed in the PISA context questionnaires framework (OECD, 2019[16]) and (when referring to teachers) in the TALIS conceptual framework (Ainley and Carstens, 2018[20]). Therefore, general constructs (e.g. student socio-economic status) are not covered in this framework, except when a specific and direct relationship with foreign language learning (e.g. language background) is suggested.

1.4. Methodology

The constructs included in this framework were identified and defined through a four-step process. First, the theoretical framework and/or the questionnaires for the main international comparative studies of foreign language learning that were conducted (or planned) in the past have been studied to identify relevant domain-specific concepts (Table 1). Of these studies, SurveyLang (European Commission, 2012[21]) was of particular significance as it was conducted recently and its proposed instruments, target age and competencies assessed are similar to those of the PISA foreign language assessment.

Table 1. International comparative studies of foreign language learning

Survey	Data collection years	Institution	Participating systems	Age group	Languages assessed	Type of instruments
The survey of English as a foreign language (The IEA Six-subject survey) (Lewis and Massad, 1975[22])	1970-1971	International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA)	10	14-year-old students and students in the final year of lower secondary school	English*	Proficiency test (reading, listening, writing, speaking) Questionnaires (students, teachers, school principals)
The Language Education Study (Peter Dickson and Alister Cumming, 1996[23]; IEA, 1993[24])	1990 (partial execution)	IEA	25	15-18 year-old students (planned)	English, French, German and Spanish	Proficiency test (never conducted) Questionnaire (system-level)
The European Survey on Language Competences (SurveyLang) (European Commission, 2012[21])	2011	European Commission	16	Lower (final year) or upper (second year) secondary students	English, French, German, Italian and Spanish	Proficiency test (reading, listening, writing) Questionnaires (students; teachers; school principals; system-level)
The Early Language Learning in Europe (ELLiE) (Enever, 2011[25])	2007-2010	British Council	7	7-8 year-old students in primary education	English, French and Spanish	Qualitative interviews (students; teachers; school principals) Questionnaire (students; parents; system-level)
The Eurydice Key Data on Teaching Languages at School in Europe (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2017[26])	2017	European Commission	34	Primary to upper secondary education (ISCED1 to ISCED3)	All languages	Questionnaire (system-level)

* The IEA Six-subject survey also included an assessment of French (Carroll, 1975[27]) with eight participating education systems. The set-ups of the English and French assessment studies present a substantial degree of similarity (Cumming, 1996[28]), due to the close cooperation between the committees developing them, and the decision to adopt the same basic design (Lewis and Massad, 1975[22]).

Second, a review of the scientific literature was conducted to refine the constructs and to check whether some important constructs had been overlooked by the projects listed above. A first version of the framework was completed describing the constructs identified through the first two steps.

Third, the constructs were revised based on the feedback received from national representatives from 13 PISA countries and economies and from 5 independent experts with substantial expertise in the learning of foreign languages (see Annex A). These experts gave written feedback on the framework, and subsequently met in Paris to discuss the framework and feedback on 15-17 May 2019.

Fourth, the draft framework (which may still undergo minor revisions before the assessment takes place) was further revised based on the feedback received from an extended group of 14 independent experts with substantial expertise in the learning of foreign languages (see Annex A); an internal peer review within the OECD; and further inputs from country delegates participating in the PISA Governing Board meeting in September 2019.

1.5. Determination of the policy relevance of the constructs

As seen in the previous sections, this framework covers a wide range of topics. However, the questionnaires will have considerable length restrictions. Therefore, the policy relevance of the constructs will be one of the deciding factors when choosing which constructs to incorporate into the questionnaires, together with technical criteria related to questionnaire design. PISA-participating countries and economies will be involved in selecting the constructs to incorporate into the questionnaires.

This paper proposes a tentative classification of the policy relevance of the constructs as "essential" or "relevant" (constructs deemed not relevant for policy analysis are excluded).[1] The policy relevance was derived in the following way:

- the authors identified and described in the first draft of this paper a list of constructs affecting foreign language proficiency and learning (section 1.4)

- a survey was sent to all PISA-participating countries/economies to rate the relevance and comment on the constructs included in the first draft of this paper; five independent experts gave additional comments

- experts and representatives of countries/economies met in Paris and, based on the aggregate country ratings, assessed the policy relevance of each construct; the resulting policy relevance is reported in this paper.[2]

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[1] PISA countries/economies were asked to rate each variable as "essential", "relevant" or "not directly relevant". These ratings were described to countries/economies as follows. "Essential" means that excluding this variable from the [context] questionnaires seriously undermines the interpretability and/or usefulness of the data produced through the PISA Foreign Language Assessment. For example, you may rate a context variable "essential" because you think that without this information it will not be possible to compare the proficiency scores across participating countries. Or you may rate a variable on teaching or school practices as "essential" because your country is implementing a major reform involving this variable, and this is one of the key motives for you to participate in the PISA Foreign Language Assessment. "Relevant" means that this variable is of interest for your country. This could be because it enhances the interpretability of the data or because it can inform the national policy debate. For example, a variable is relevant if it has been brought up in national policy discussions by the media, unions, experts or public authorities. In addition, a context variable can be relevant if it helps comparing the proficiency scores across countries. "Not directly relevant" means that this variable can be excluded from the [context] questionnaire without important consequences on the comparability of the proficiency scores or on their usefulness to policy analysis. For example, a variable is not directly relevant if you do not think it relates to target language learning or proficiency, and you cannot think of any insightful analysis that could be conducted with it.

[2] This rule for the determination of construct policy relevance has three exceptions. Constructs (22) and (23) (rated as "relevant" in this framework) were part of a list of constructs on "intercultural and interdisciplinary capabilities and their relation to foreign language proficiency" that received low ratings in the survey. PISA countries/economies provided substantial and constructive input to revise the construct at the Paris workshop, and concluded that the constructs would be relevant or essential after the revision. Construct (38) (rated as "relevant" in this framework) did not receive a rating through the survey because it was not included in the first version of the framework. Workshops

The decision on the policy relevance of each Construct was reached at the meeting by consensus, meaning that all participants agreed with the decision. In total, 13 countries and economies rated the constructs or participated to the assessment of the constructs' relevance at the meeting in Paris.[3]

1.6. Structure of the framework presentation

The following sections of this framework discuss the policy domains, each containing a number of subsections associated to a policy question and a group of constructs as illustrated in Figure 1.1. For each construct discussed in the following sections, the following elements are reported:

- a basic description

- the way the construct can be expected to be associated with foreign language learning or to other constructs in the framework

- the levels at which the construct can be measured (student, parent, teacher, school or system; see section 1.3)

- a policy-relevance rating based on the preferences expressed by PISA-participating countries/economies interested in the PISA foreign language assessment (section 1.4).

The latter two elements (measurement level and policy relevance) are reported in a summary table below the introduction of each section.

The suggested measurement levels are based on the description of each construct and on the opinion of the experts who reviewed the paper. A construct could be measured at one level, but also (when allowed by space constraints) at multiple levels. The latter option could allow for an assessment of the correspondence between policies and practices, or for improving the accuracy of the measurement by using multiple measures to capture the same construct ("triangulation" (Heath, 2015, p. 639[29])). This framework does not offer specific recommendations on this issue, and the suggested measurement levels are only indicative.

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participants did not consider this construct necessary, considering it as implied by other constructs in the framework. However, it has been included in the current draft following the recommendation of several reviewers.

[3] The survey was returned by Chile, Colombia, the Flemish Community of Belgium, France, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Switzerland, Ukraine and the United Arab Emirates. Representatives from Colombia, the Flemish Community of Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Switzerland and the United Arab Emirates participated in the workshop in Paris. The PISA Governing Board, which comprises all countries/economies that participate in PISA, welcomed the framework and the ratings at its meeting in September 2019.

2. Transversal topics: ICT and the use of the target language for instruction in other subjects

Language learning across countries and economies is affected by broad trends that interact with the constructs included in this framework and contribute to shape them. Two particularly important ones are the diffusion of ICT and the use of foreign languages for instruction in other subjects. These two broad trends have been considered transversal topics, and integrated in the discussion of constructs throughout this framework.

2.1. Information and Communication Technologies

Can the use of ICT, both at school and outside school, support target language learning?

A variety of technological resources (directly or broadly related to ICT), with the potential to support foreign language learning, has been developed in the past decades (Garrett, 2009[30]; Butler, Someya and Fukuhara, 2014[31]; Garton, Copland and Burns, 2011[32]; Al-Mahrooqi and Troudi, 2014[33]; European Commission, 2014[34]; Laakkonen, 2011[35]). Examples range from computer labs to instructional software, social media, pedagogical and leisurely games, and so on. These resources have had an impact on teaching in the classroom, on the school environment, and on learning outside school.

Elements related to ICT are included in different constructs throughout this framework. For example, the availability of ICT tools for teaching at school is included in construct (8); the question whether teachers receive training on their utilisation is included in construct (27); the actual use of ICT tools for teaching is discussed in construct (40) and (for group and collective learning activities) in construct (35). As another example, student exposure to the target language outside school through "new media" (social media, web platforms, streaming services, computer games, language-learning apps, etc.[4]) is included in construct (14).

2.2. Use of the target language for instruction in other subjects

Is student proficiency in the target language, and in other subjects, affected by attending programmes in which the target language is used for instruction in non-language-related subjects?

In many school settings, students are taught all subjects (e.g. mathematics, history or science) in one language (the language of instruction), except for one or a few

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[4] This list of tools is presented as an illustrative example. It does not aim to be comprehensive, nor to include the most widely used or researched tools. There is an enormous number of ICT tools already available to teachers and learners, and their design and names changes across users and evolve through time.

foreign language classes that are taught using (at least partly) the foreign language itself. In contrast, some education programmes use more than one language for teaching non-language-related subjects. For example, in a programme in which Arabic is the language of instruction, mathematics may be taught in English; in a Spanish education programme, students may learn history in French. Such programmes can fall into different categories according to their specific characteristics for example Content and Language Integrated Learning, bilingual programmes, and other types (e.g. content-based language instruction, integration of content and language, theme-based language teaching, and content-infused language teaching (Lasagabaster, 2008[36]; Nikula, 2016[37]). Different programmes may define and implement these categories in different ways.

Programmes in which the target language is used as a medium of instruction for other subjects can have a direct impact on students' proficiency by increasing students' exposure to the target language and giving them rich contexts in which to practice it. In addition, programmes in which multiple languages are used for instruction are thought to instil an international mindset in students; boost motivation to learn other foreign languages; and foster implicit and incidental learning by focusing on meaning and communication (Lasagabaster, 2008[36]; Cambridge Assessment, 2017[38]; Mehisto, 2012[39]; European Commission, 2014[34]).

However, some researchers have also warned on potential negative effects on equity of educational outcomes of programmes in which foreign languages are used to teach other subjects, because students enjoying more family support are more likely to enrol in and complete these programmes (Bruton, 2013[40]; Pérez Cañado, 2016[41]; Nikula, 2016[37]). Another concern for policy makers is that these programmes could also potentially harm student learning, as students may fail to understand or make progress with some subject-related content because of the language barriers they face (Nikula, 2016[42]; Marsh, Hau and Kong, 2000[43]). In practice, programmes in which the target language is used as a medium of instruction for other subjects are institutional settings that can be very different from each other. Their effect on learning probably depends on a number of institutional, regional and other factors (Annex B).

The use of the target language for instruction in other subjects has been included in the discussion throughout this framework. The inclusion of questions about whether more than one language is used for instruction is included in construct (4), and construct (2) on target language teaching time can provide information on the amount of school time students spend in subjects taught in the target language. Constructs (26) and (27) include specific questions about the training of staff teaching other subjects in the target language. In addition, construct (28) covers information about the main specialisation of teachers (including teaching a content subject in the target language). Construct (39) encompasses whether teachers purposely integrate the learning of non-language-related content (e.g. mathematics or history) and the learning of the target language.

3. Government and school policies

Government and school policies frame the environment in which students learn. This policy domain contains the constructs related to the general setting for target language teaching (section 3.1) and the school environment (section 3.2). Measuring the constructs in this domain would help understand the political context of the educational institutions in an education system, and its relationship with students' target language proficiency.

3.1. The setting for target language learning at school

What is the general framing for target language learning at school and how does it relate to students' proficiency?

This section includes four constructs related to the age at which students start learning the target language at school, the hours dedicated to learning, the size of target language classes, the language of instruction, and what other languages, if any, students have studied at school (Table 2).

The general framing for the teaching and learning of the target language, and for other languages of instruction, is often determined by a number of system- and school-level policies, guidelines and practices. The constructs included in this section are among those over which governments have the highest degree of control. Therefore, it is important for policy makers to understand the constructs most strongly associated with students' language proficiency. These constructs also help map the overall regulatory framework in countries/economies participating in the PISA foreign language assessment.

In addition to the information collected through the student, teacher, school and parent questionnaire, the system-level questionnaires could include specific questions on differences in the teaching of listening, reading, writing and speaking skills, e.g. about the grades in which the teaching of different skills are introduced.

Table 2. List of constructs: The setting for target language learning at school

Construct	Policy relevance	Level of measurement
(1) Onset of target language learning at school	Essential	Student; system
(2) Intensity of target language learning at school	Essential	Student; teacher; school; system
(3) Target language class size	Relevant	Teacher; school; system
(4) Languages learned at school	Essential	Student; school; system (availability and supply of foreign languages)

(1) Onset of target language learning at school

There is great variation among countries in terms of the age at which students begin learning foreign languages in school. The differences between countries reflect different priorities between subjects but also different considerations about what starting age is the ideal time to maximise learning opportunities and finding the

right balance with the resources invested. One of the key questions for the PISA foreign language study will be to map out these differences between countries and investigate their impact on learning outcomes.

Learning onset is widely thought to influence students' proficiency in the target language, although the nature of this effect is debated. The early literature on this topic suggested that it is better for students to start learning foreign languages as early as possible (Hartshorne, Tenenbaum and Pinker, 2018[44]). Across European education systems, earlier onset of foreign language learning at school is generally associated with higher proficiency in foreign languages, particularly for writing (European Commission, 2012[45]). Wilden and Porsch (2016[46]) found that early onset had a positive impact (mediated by German reading skills) on reading and listening skills in foreign languages for a sample of German students.

However, some of the literature argues that, while the "as early as possible" model fits some forms of language learning (e.g. improving immigrants' language learning in a new linguistic environment), it may not always apply to students' learning a foreign language in their native language environment. Research on Catalan schools suggests that students who started learning foreign languages later acquire communication skills faster than earlier starters for a given amount of study time (Muñoz, 2006[47]). Pfenninger and Singleton (2017[48]) found similar results in Switzerland, and suggest that the "ideal" starting age depends on contextual factors and individual competencies, attitudes and socio-emotional factors. The role of contextual and individual factors in early foreign language acquisition has been stressed by several authors (Murphy, 2014[49]; Gaonac'h and Macaire, 2019[50]). Children's development of linguistic competencies in their own languages, for example, influences their ability to acquire associated foreign language competencies (Murphy, 2014[49]). Analysing the relationship between the onset of target language learning at school and student proficiency could provide important evidence to inform national policies and priorities.

(2) Intensity of target language learning at school

"Intensity of target language learning at school" relates to the amount of in-class time allocated to target language learning and (when applicable) to learning other subjects in the target language (see section 2.1). This can also be expressed as a proportion of students' total classroom time (across all subjects). A strong correlation between the intensity of learning at school and proficiency has been found since the earliest international surveys on foreign language proficiency (Carroll, 1975[27]; Lewis and Massad, 1975[22]). In other subjects, spending more time in classroom lessons is associated with higher proficiency (see OECD (2016[51]) for science). The relationship between classroom time and target language proficiency is likely to be mediated by several factors related to the quality of learning input and teaching, including teaching practices, availability of teachers and student attendance. In addition, Larson-Hall (2008[52]) found that for a sample of Japanese students the intensity of learning mediated the relationship between the onset of target language learning at school and foreign language proficiency.

It is important to collect information on the intensity of target language learning at school for the current school year and, in principle, also for the students' previous years in education. Such detailed information could be obtained through system-level questionnaires, but it would be more difficult to elicit from individual respondents. In that case, simpler questions (e.g. whether the amount of target language learning time has changed in recent years) could be included in student questionnaires.

(3) Target language class size

"Target language class size" is the number of students attending a typical target language class. In general, there is no evidence of a robust relationship between class size and student learning across countries (OECD, 2016[51]). However, some studies argue that smaller classes could help teaching and learning foreign languages (Aoumeur, 2017[53]). This can be justified by the role of student participation in certain foreign language teaching approaches (in particular, the communicative approach discussed in section 6.1). For example, it could be easier to introduce learner-centred teaching or use pair work and group work in smaller classes (Garton, Copland and Burns, 2011[32]). Therefore, it is important to track, at the system level, whether education systems have introduced policies specifically to reduce the size of target language classes, for example to stimulate student interaction.

While PISA already collects information on class size, it could be useful to collect this information specifically for target language classes, as it may differ from the size of classes in other subjects. On average across 48 countries and economies participating to the OECD Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) survey, lower secondary teachers reported that there were 24 students in a typical ("target") class they taught (OECD, 2019[54]) (Table I.3.78). Foreign language teachers reported a slightly smaller class size (23 – the difference between foreign language and other teachers is statistically significant). In particular, foreign language teachers were more likely to teach small classes with less than 20 students. This was reported by 37% of foreign language teachers, as compared to 28% of other teachers (see Annex C for the methodology underlying this estimation).

(4) Languages learned at school

"Languages learned at school" are all the languages that the student has learned or is learning at school, whether the target language, other modern foreign languages, or ancestral and ancient languages (e.g. Latin, Greek or indigenous languages that are not widely spoken). Languages learned at school include:

- languages studied as a subject (e.g. a few hours a week are devoted to study Japanese as a foreign language – the most common approach in most education systems)

- languages used to teach other subjects (e.g. English is used as a medium of instruction in history classes in a German school; see section 2.1). When the

target language is used to teach other subjects, it is particularly relevant to know which subjects (e.g. science or history).

Which languages students learn depends on their (or their parents') preferences, but also on curriculum prescription and the availability of language classes in schools (construct (5)). Learning additional languages can affect target language proficiency by teaching students general strategies that can be applied to the target language, for example, negotiate meaning with others, or use context for understanding. It may be associated with other general language competencies and attitudes (e.g. "multicompetence" (Rothman, Cabrelli and De Bot, 2013[55]); "multilingual competence"; "language awareness") that are valued in a comprehensive approach to language learning (Kelly, 2019[56]; Council of the European Union, 2019[57]). The number of modern and ancient foreign languages learned is positively associated with foreign language proficiency test scores across European education systems, especially for reading and writing (European Commission, 2012[45]).

3.2. The school environment

What makes schools effective in fostering target language learning?

This section discusses what schools have to offer to students learning the target language and (for some constructs) other foreign languages. It covers the availability of foreign language courses, enrichment activities, and resources for teaching and learning (Table 3). These constructs are of direct interest to policy makers and educators. School management determines these constructs within the constraints posed by the availability of resources and by government regulations. Governments, in turn, can influence schools (especially public schools) through a variety of regulatory, organisational and financial levers. As compared to the other questionnaires, the system-level questionnaire could include more detailed questions on the regulatory environment, for example about who decides which languages are a compulsory part of the curriculum.

Table 3. List of constructs: The school environment

Construct	Policy relevance	Level of measurement
(5) Availability of foreign languages	Essential	School; system (policies and guidelines)
(6) School enrichment activities for target language learning	Essential	Student; teacher (participation); school (availability); system (policies and guidelines)
(7) Target language remedial lessons at school	Relevant	Student (participation, reason for attending); school (availability)
(8) School resources for target language teaching	Essential	School; system

(5) Availability of foreign languages

"Availability of foreign languages" refers to the choice of foreign languages available to students (independently on the languages they actually study, which is discussed in construct (4)). Student choice is constrained by which languages are offered for study, and which are compulsory for students to learn (both elements

should be measured). At the school level, a wider availability of foreign languages could signal efforts to emphasise foreign language learning, for example, if the school has a specialist foreign language profile. This could have a general influence on motivation and attitudes of students, teachers and parents at the school.

(6) School enrichment activities for target language learning

"School enrichment activities for target language learning" refers to a range of extracurricular activities that can be organised within the school environment to stimulate interest in the target language and target language learning. These include, for example, target language competitions, debate clubs and simulations (e.g. model United Nations), enrichment lessons, visits to the school by students from other language communities, and various projects related to target language learning. They could also include setting up environments where communication with students outside the classroom happens in a foreign language (for example, communication with teachers or in a canteen, direction signs). Those opportunities can facilitate target language learning by improving the "learning conditions" (Lightbown and Spada, 2013[15]) of students in the school. Across education systems that participated in the PISA 2015 survey (OECD, 2016[51]), students in schools offering science competitions were, on average, more proficient in science and more likely to expect to work in a science-related occupation than other students.

(7) Target language remedial lessons at school

"Target language remedial lessons at school" refers to opportunities offered by schools to low-performing students for additional lessons in the target language. Students may attend them voluntarily or because they are required to do so, which could affect their motivation (Carroll, 1963[58]). The association between attending remedial lessons and target language proficiency is expected to be negative at the student level, as students attend them because they are less proficient (in contrast to enrichment activities; construct (6)). At the school and system levels, the availability of remedial lessons could reduce the number of low-performing students.

This construct would be considerably more useful for policy analysis if it measured not only for the current year, but also for previous years (how long a system of target language remedial lessons has been in place in a school; or how long a student has attended remedial lessons).

(8) School resources for target language teaching

"School resources for target language teaching" refers to the availability of financial resources (e.g. budget for student exchange visits), goods (e.g. target language books, DVDs) and ICT tools (both in terms of physical infrastructure, e.g. computer labs, and software related to foreign language learning, teaching and assessment (Garrett, 2009[30])). This can refer to actual availability, but also to identified constraints. The available resources can support teaching and school activities,

provided that teachers make effective use of the materials available at the school (see constructs (40) and (41)).

The availability of ICT resources influences the opportunity to learn the target language through ICT, and is associated with students' proficiency in foreign languages across European education systems (European Commission, 2012[45]). The availability of school resources for target language teaching is also of interest because it can be related to equitable opportunities to learn the target language. For example, across education systems that participated in the PISA 2015 survey, students from lower socio-economic backgrounds tended to be in schools with less educational resources (OECD, 2016[59]).

4. Students and learning

Students' support, motivation, opportunities and ability to learn foreign languages are influenced by a large variety of factors. This policy domain includes the constructs related to students' background, environment and family support (section); their attitudes, motivations and behaviours (section 4.2); and the relationship between target language learning and intercultural and multilingual environments (section 4.3).

4.1. Student background, environment and family support

How is target language learning affected by students' background and their experiences outside of school?

Students' proficiency in the target language depends not only on their learning at school, but also on their background and environment. Some students may speak the target language at home with their family, or be in an environment where they have other opportunities to use it, thereby improving their proficiency. Opportunities to travel abroad are also very different across countries, schools and families. In addition, families may offer support with homework, or simply by transmitting to their children positive attitudes and motivations towards target language learning.

Some of the constructs discussed in this section (Table 4) are of direct policy relevance as they can be changed by governments or schools. For example, student visits to other language communities can be organised by schools. Other constructs are more important to inform students and parents, such as parents' support for target language learning. In addition, some constructs provides essentially contextual information for comparing proficiency data across students and countries (e.g. language background).

Table 4. List of constructs: Student background, environment and family support

Construct	Policy relevance	Level of measurement
(9) Language background	Essential	Student; parent
(10) Parents' target language proficiency	Relevant	Parent
(11) Family support in target language learning	Relevant	Student; parent
(12) Family and peers' perceptions and attitudes related to the target language	Relevant	Parent; teacher
(13) Family and peers' perceptions and attitudes related to target language lessons	Relevant	Parent; teacher
(14) Target language exposure through the media	Essential	Student, parent (actual exposure); system (policies and widespread practices)
(15) Student visits to other language communities	Relevant	Student, parent (actual experiences); system (opportunities)
(16) Face-to-face exposure to and use of target and foreign languages outside of school	Essential	Student; parent

(9) Language background

"Language background" is the set of languages used by the student at home and with closely related individuals, particularly family members. It is important to know which languages the student has been exposed to at home and how proficient he or she is in each language (and skills, e.g. listening, speaking). Measures of students' language background would also allow for identifying the diversity of languages spoken in a school.

Language background can influence students' target language proficiency in at least three ways. First, some students may speak the target language at home, with a direct effect on their level of proficiency.

Second, learning different languages during childhood provides metalinguistic insights that change the way children think about language (Barac and Bialystok, 2010[60]). Multilingualism can enhance the acquisition of additional languages, especially if learners possess a high level of literacy in the languages they have used since childhood (Cenoz, 2003[61]). In addition, multilingual children could have more positive attitudes than other children towards language learning in general (Brown, 2007[62]).

Third, the language(s) spoken since childhood can influence target language learning (Brown, 2009[63]), and even interfere with it (Amirabadi and Razmjoo, 2017[64]; Derakhshan and Karimi, 2015[65]; Brown, 2009[63]), depending on the proximity amongst these languages (Derakhshan and Karimi, 2015[65]; Lindgren and Muñoz, 2013[66]). Therefore, language background can also be looked at in conjunction with the information provided by indices of proximity across languages available in the literature on comparative linguistics (Isphording and Otten, 2014[67]; Lindgren and Muñoz, 2013[66]).

(10)   Parents' target language proficiency

"Parents' target language proficiency" is related to the parents' language skills and mastery of the target language. This construct can be measured, for example, through parents' self-assessed proficiency or the reported difficulty in performing

some tasks in the target language (e.g. reading a newspaper article); and through proxy factors (e.g. use of the target language at work, the target language teaching onset for parents). The available evidence suggests that parents' target language proficiency is positively associated with higher proficiency in foreign languages amongst students in Japan (Yoshitomi, 1990[68]), but also across European education systems (European Commission, 2012[45]; Bonnet, 2002[69]; Lindgren and Muñoz, 2013[66]). Being proficient in the target language can make it easier for parents to help children with homework and with target language learning through leisure activities. In addition, the proficiency of parents could change students' perceptions of and attitudes towards the target language (Yoshitomi, 1990[68]). For example, proficient parents could be role models for their children, indicating that learning the target language is realistic and useful. Proficient parents may also be able to offer their children more exposure to the target language.

(11) *Family support in target language learning*

"Family support in target language learning" refers to the help given (by family members) and received (by the student) at home specifically for target language learning. This support could include help with homework and preparing for tests, and practicing the target language together. Students can benefit from support from parents and siblings, but also from the extended family (e.g. aunts and uncles) (Cumming, 2012[70]).

Families play an important role in fostering academic and non-academic success for students (OECD, 2019[16]), for example by developing students' self-confidence. Parental involvement in homework does not seem to be robustly associated with student attainment (possibly because it is associated with lower student achievement, or because of limited content or pedagogical knowledge), but it still fosters positive learning-related attitudes, ideas and behaviours in students (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2001[71]). The effect of family support on target language proficiency is also likely to depend on other factors included in this framework, for example language background and parental target language proficiency.

(12) *Family and peers' perceptions and attitudes related to the target language*

"Family and peers' perceptions and attitudes related to the target language" refers to perceptions and attitudes that can directly or indirectly affect students" own perceptions, with a potential effect on target language learning (Bartram, 2018[72]). It includes the perceived difficulty in learning the target language; and the perception of usefulness (or uselessness) of the target language for young people.

(13) *Family and peers' perceptions and attitudes related to target language lessons*

"Family and peers' and attitudes related to target language lessons" refers to a variety of feelings, attitudes and opinions with respect to target language lessons at school. It includes the degree of satisfaction with the target language teacher and the teaching methodology, and their perceived effectiveness in improving students'

proficiency. Parents' perceptions and attitudes can directly or indirectly affect students' own perceptions, either positively or negatively. Family, friends and peers are all major influences on students' attitudes towards language learning (Bartram, 2018[72]).

(14) *Target language exposure through the media*

"Target language exposure through the media" refers to the way and amount of time students consume media in the target language outside of school, either with the purpose of learning or for leisure. "Media" refers to both "traditional media" (television, books, radio, magazines, etc.) and "new media" (social media, web platforms, streaming services, computer games, language-learning apps, etc.). Media content can be presented in the target language in different ways (e.g. it can be dubbed or subtitled in the target or local language).

Questions could distinguish between different media channels. This would allow for differentiating amongst media-related activities that provide opportunities to develop passive or active language use: target language listening (e.g. listening to songs or watching a video series); speaking (e.g. engaging in some types of games or in video-calls); reading (e.g. reading books or blogs); writing (e.g. e-mails, chatting on line); or interaction (which could involve several of the activities listed above). It would also allow for investigating the relative benefits of visual and aural content (for example, Kim and Kim (2011[73]) find that upper secondary Korean students have a visually oriented learning style, well-suited to visual learning aids, such as books and videos).

Across European education systems, there is a strong positive association between students' target language exposure through traditional and new media, and target language proficiency (European Commission, 2012[45]). Researchers have found a positive association between using English-language games and scores in English proficiency tests amongst children of different ages in Japan (Butler, Someya and Fukuhara, 2014[31]) and Sweden (Sylvén and Sundqvist, 2012[74]). Exposure to media could influence language learning even unconsciously, as can exposure to music in the target language (Grant, 2012[75]). In addition, exposure through the media could be influenced by the students' target language proficiency, as more proficient students would find it easier to consume media in the target language.

Exposure to and use of the target language through various media can be influenced by both personal or social habits (e.g. a disposition towards enjoying cultural content in the original language, without dubbing) and policies and practices by private and public bodies (e.g. a specific policy to broadcast movies in the target language or with target language subtitles on public television channels).

(15) *Students' visits to other language communities*

"Students' visits to other language communities" refers to experiences for students' travel to other language communities where they can practice the target language. Collaborating and interacting with other speakers are fundamental elements of foreign language learning processes (Donato, 1994[76]; Lantolf, 2000[77]; Lightbown

and Spada, 2013[15]). These could include holiday trips, family visits, short-time immersion programmes and school trips (including school exchange visits). Information should be collected on the type of trip, whether the target language was used, and on the length and frequency of the trips, as the simple fact of travelling to another linguistic community does not ensure an opportunity to practice the target language. Visits to other language communities can provide an opportunity to practice the target language even if it is not the community language, as long as the target language is used for communication as a *lingua franca* (for example, English is widely used by tourists and exchange students in non-English speaking countries).

(16) *Face-to-face exposure to and use of target and foreign languages outside of school*

"Face-to-face exposure to and use of target and foreign languages outside of school" refers to use of opportunities to interact in person with other people in the target language (excluding visits from or to other language areas). This can include the frequency of talking with tourists, speaking face-to-face with friends and family, or interacting with peers in the target language. Many people encounter foreign languages in their everyday surroundings; for example, in 2007, around 90% of Finns reported hearing foreign languages in their environment, with English as the most commonly heard language (Leppänen et al., 2011[78]). This could increase motivation (construct (17)), by helping learners imagine themselves as target language users. In addition, face-to-face interactions in the target language provide opportunities to improve listening, speaking and communication skills.

4.2. Learners' attitudes, motivations and behaviours

What are students' attitudes, motivation and behaviours towards the target language and target language teaching, and how are they related to proficiency?

Attitudes, motivations and behaviours (Table 5) related to the target language function as a dynamic system, interacting with each other over time and in complex ways (Dörnyei, 2010[79]). They depend on a variety of factors, from the broad social and economic context, to individual cognitive abilities, possibilities and potentials, as well as to the process of learning itself (Dörnyei, 2005[80]; Mercer, 2011[81]). Many of these factors are outside the control of schools and national governments. Nonetheless, they are the context in which learning takes place, and must be taken into account when comparing proficiency across countries.

Attitudes, motivations and behaviours, however, can also be modified by education policies and teaching practices. They can even be recognised as an outcome of the education process itself, as stimulating interest and curiosity can be considered a goal of education. For example, interest in the presence of foreign languages in one's daily life and in their speakers' socio-cultural world is an official learning target in the Flemish Community in Belgium (see e.g. Flemish Ministry of Education and Training (2019[82]) for primary education). This makes the relationship between teaching practices, school and national policies on the one

hand, and learners' attitudes and motivation, on the other, an interesting policy question in itself.

Table 5. List of constructs: Learners' attitudes, motivations and behaviours

Construct	Policy relevance	Level of measurement
(17) Students' motivation for target language learning	Essential	Student
(18) Students' perceived level of proficiency	Relevant	Student
(19) Students' attitudes towards target language learning at school	Essential	Student
(20) Time spent on target language study, homework and other structured learning activities outside of school	Essential	Student (self-reported time); parent (observed time); teacher (recommended or ideal time, frequency of assigning homework)

(17)   Students' motivation for target language learning

In foreign language acquisition, "motivation" refers to "the extent to which the individual works or strives to learn the language because of a desire to do so and the satisfaction experienced in this activity" (Gardner, 1985[83]); it is one of the main correlates of student-language learning (Dörnyei and Skehan, 2003[84]). In recent years, interest has grown in measuring skill-specific motivation (see for example Lee, Yu and Liu (2018[85]) for writing), which could be of particular interest.

Motivation includes extrinsic and intrinsic orientations. Intrinsic orientations are reasons to learn the target language that are connected with the inherent pleasure and interest in learning the language, for example because of the satisfaction of individual curiosity or the enjoyment of learning the language (which could be related to teaching approaches and methods; section 6.1). Extrinsic orientations are reasons that are instrumental to consequences, such as earning high grades, working in a stimulating career, being admitted to prestigious universities, or traveling across cultural boundaries (Noels et al., 2003[86]; Melzi and Schick, 2012[87]).

Based on the "L2 motivational self system" framework (where L2 means second-language learning), items on what students would like to become in the future also seem important for capturing motivation. This framework identifies three primary sources of motivation to learn a language (Dörnyei and Chan, 2013, pp. 438-439[88]): the ideal L2 self (i.e. "the person we would like to become"), stimulating an internal desire to learn; the ought-to L2 self, representing social pressures (e.g. finding a job, avoiding parental disappointment) to learn the foreign language; and the actual experience of learning, which can be more or less or less enjoyable.

Studies from China, Hungary, Iran and Japan show that the ideal self is a stronger predictor of motivation than the ought-to self (Taguchi, Magid and Papi, 2009[89]). In China, the ought-to self predicts motivation better than in other countries (Taguchi, Magid and Papi, 2009[89]), but a study of young learners in Hong Kong still found no correlation between ought-to self measures and English and Mandarin grades (Dörnyei and Chan, 2013[88]).

(18)   *Students' perceived level of proficiency*

"Students' perceived level of proficiency" is a self-assessment of students' own level of proficiency in the various language skills in the target language. This construct should be based on the same definitions of proficiency used for the PISA 2025 cognitive proficiency assessment. Students can assess their own proficiency by stating what they can do through a self-assessment tool (e.g. following or giving a talk on a familiar topic (Council of Europe, 2001[17]; 2018[90])) or by providing a global self-assessment, both of which have been found to be correlated with actual proficiency (Berns, de Bot and Hasebrink, 2007[91]). However, the ability of students to assess their own proficiency cannot be assumed, and it varies across genders and countries (Denies and Janssen, 2016[92]). The perceived level of proficiency could affect students' attitudes and motivation towards learning the target language. Results from the IEA six-subjects study in the 1970s found an association at the student level between low self-perceived English proficiency and time spent learning English relative to other subjects (Lewis and Massad, 1975[22]).

The ability to self-assess can be considered a learning goal in itself as it is important to stimulate self-directed and lifelong learning (Little, 2005[93]; Denies and Janssen, 2016[92]). This ability can be proxied by the distance between self-assessed proficiency and the actual proficiency measured through the PISA foreign language test.

(19)   *Students' attitudes towards target language learning at school*

"Students' attitudes towards target language learning at school" includes subject-specific anxiety and self-concept, which have been shown to be strongly related to student proficiency (OECD, 2016[59]) (*PISA 2022 Assessment and Evaluation Framework*, forthcoming). They can also include the perceived difficulty (European Commission, 2012[45]) of target language learning, which is negatively associated with proficiency across European education systems (European Commission, 2012[45]). Students' attitudes can be assessed relative to those of other students (e.g. perceived difficulty), but also to those regarding other subjects.

Given that PISA measures subject-specific attitudes for other subjects (self-concept, anxiety), it is advisable to measure attitudes towards the target language using scales that are as close as possible to those used for the other subjects. In addition, given that proficiency is measured separately for each communication skill, it could be useful to measure at least one of these subject-specific attitudes for each of these skill (e.g. specifically for speaking, or for reading).

(20)   *Time spent on target language study, homework and other structured learning activities outside of school*

"Time spent on target language study, homework and other structured learning activities outside of school" refers to time spent on study, homework and structured target language learning activities outside the classroom, and to the regularity of these activities. This includes ordinary homework and study, collaborative assignments, as well as preparation for tests and assessments or group work on

assignments. Time spent learning the target language through other structured learning activities (e.g. private tutoring or target language learning camps) should also be included, separately from homework and classroom-related study.

Study and homework can supplement classroom activities, and existing studies find a modest positive association with student academic achievement (Cooper, Robinson and Patall, 2006[94]), even though this association is less strong for Asian countries (Fan et al., 2017[95]). However, the direction of the empirical association between this construct and target language proficiency is not clear *a priori*. Students struggling to reach the level of proficiency required in their class may study more, resulting in a negative association between time spent on study and homework, and proficiency. A negative association between proficiency and time spent studying outside of school has been observed for science, for example (OECD, 2016[51]).

Other target language learning activities, such as private tutoring, can also be undertaken by low-performing students to catch up with their peers. However, such activities are increasingly offered to students as supplementary learning opportunities by parents who can afford it (see (Nunan, 2003[96]) for the case of the Asia-Pacific region; and Cronquist and Fiszbein, (2017[97]), for Latin America). Therefore, it could be useful to measure not only current target language activities outside school, but also whether the student has been involved in such activities in the past.

4.3. Intercultural and multilingual environments and target language learning

What is students' understanding of intercultural and multilingual environments, and how is it related to their proficiency?

In many countries and communities, society is becoming increasingly diverse, for example through the influx of immigrants and the rise of new, complex forms of citizenship and belonging (OECD, 2019[98]). The expansion of mobility is making the world increasingly multilingual (Jenkins, 2017[99]; King, 2017[100]). Cultural awareness and the ability to interact respectfully with people from different backgrounds can help diverse cultures live peacefully in close proximity and find solutions to common problems. This increase in diversity is prompting policy makers and educators to find ways to teach young people how to challenge biases and stereotypes towards other cultural and language backgrounds through intercultural dialogue (OECD, 2019[98]; Council of Europe, 2008[101]).

Foreign language learning may be related to the understanding and appreciation of intercultural and multilingual environments in a variety of ways (Table 6). Students' appreciation of cultural and linguistic diversity may be enhanced by the study of a foreign language, both through the understanding of the challenges and benefits of speaking different languages and through exposure to foreign language content (e.g. literature, news) related to other cultures. In addition, a deeper appreciation of cultural and linguistic diversity can motivate students to learn foreign languages (Della Chiesa, 2012[102]). Therefore, intercultural and

multilingual competencies are both an input into and an outcome of the process of language learning (an example was given in section 4.2: interest in foreign language speakers' socio-cultural world is a learning target in the Flemish Community of Belgium).[5] In addition, languages enjoying the status of a *lingua franca* (whether English or other languages (Pütz, 1997[103])) are often used for intercultural communication. Negotiating meaning between people from different cultures therefore becomes an essential component of learning and using the language (Jenkins, 2017[99]; Seidlhofer, 2011[104]).

Table 6. List of constructs: Intercultural and multilingual environments and target language learning

Construct	Policy relevance	Level of measurement
(21) Linguistic and cultural diversity in the community	Relevant	Student; parent; system
(22) Respect and openness towards people from other culture and language backgrounds	Relevant	Student
(23) Pluricultural and plurilingual education	Relevant	Student; teacher; school; system

(21)   *Linguistic and cultural diversity in the community*

"Linguistic and cultural diversity in the community" relates to the variety of languages and cultures that students can experience within their communities. It is a characteristic of the community (not of the student, in contrast to constructs in section 4.1). This construct includes the proportion of people who speak a language different from the local language at home or who come from other countries, as well as the number of languages and dialects spoken in a certain region. It can also include information on relationships with target or foreign language-speaking countries (e.g. if there are many foreign tourists, or if multilingualism is encouraged as a national or regional policy). Being exposed to a multilingual or multicultural environment can change students' attitudes towards and perceptions of foreign languages, positively influencing their motivation to learn the language (Burstall, 1975[105]; Norton and Toohey, 2001[106]; Lightbown and Spada, 2013[15]).

(22)   *Respect and openness towards people from other culture and language backgrounds*

"Respect and openness towards people from other culture and language backgrounds" involves sensitivity towards, curiosity about and willingness to engage with other people and other perspectives on the world ("openness"); and positive regard and esteem for cultural and linguistic differences based on the judgement that they have intrinsic importance, worth or value ("respect") (adapted from OECD (2019[107]), p. 175). This construct is based on the concept of respect and openness to other cultures described in the PISA Global Competence

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[5] The relationship between foreign language learning and intercultural understanding (to which this section refers) is distinct from the relationship between foreign language learning and interest in a specific culture (see the notion of "foreignness" of English as a *lingua franca* (Seidlhofer, 2011[104])). The latter relationship arises if interest in a certain culture motivates students to learn an associated language (or if learning the language deepens their interest in a related culture).

framework (OECD, 2019[107]). This construct should emphasise the willingness to engage with interlocutors who are not only culturally, but also linguistically different (see, for example, "facilitating pluricultural space" (Council of Europe, 2018, p. 122[90]), and emphasise interactions within the students' environment (rather than a mere interest in "exotic" experiences (OECD, 2019[107])).

Knowing more than one language is arguably related to dispositions towards other cultures (OECD, 2019[107]). Openness towards dissimilar others and a willingness to approach them are parts of "international posture", a concept positively associated with foreign language learning motivation and proficiency (Yashima, 2002[108]; 2013[109]). Respect and openness towards people from other cultures and language backgrounds could both influence students' target language learning and be influenced by it (for example, if they are integrated in foreign language learning at school; see next subsection).

(23) *Pluricultural and plurilingual education*

"Pluricultural and plurilingual education" refers to educational activities in school and in the classroom to educate students about cultural and language diversity, and especially about the diversity that can be experienced in the students' communities. This diversity includes, for example, the presence of multiple languages, dialects, religions and lifestyles. School and classroom activities can include:

- Activities to develop students' plurilingual and pluricultural communication capabilities (Heugh, 2018[110]) in the classroom, for example:
    - through their inclusion amongst the learning goals of the teaching of the target language or other subjects (European Commission, 2015[111])
    - through teaching the concept of *lingua franca* and its role for intercultural and global communication (Seidlhofer, 2011[104]; Graddol, 2006[112])
- promoting initiatives to learn about the traditions of different cultural groups or pluricultural events at school
- encouraging or creating opportunities for multilingual students to make use of their full linguistic repertoire in the school environment (e.g. through heritage or mother tongue-language teaching (Cummins, 2005[113]; European Commission, 2015[111])).

Pluricultural and plurilingual education have been part of foreign language learning theory and practice for a very long time (Ollivier, 2019[114]). They could be related to students' target language learning by increasing students' respect and openness towards people from other cultures and language backgrounds (see previous section). In addition, this construct is also related to "linguistic and cultural diversity in the community", as schools in culturally diverse environments need to encourage intercultural sensitivity and help students move away from ethnocentric world

views towards tolerance, acceptance, respect and appreciation of other cultures (OECD, 2019[107]).

5. Teachers' training and profile

Teachers play a fundamental role in learning. Their training and hiring are major investments for governments, making it essential to understand what makes an effective foreign language teacher. Around 18% of teachers around the world are foreign language teachers. Foreign language teachers have a different profile from others: for example, they are better prepared for teaching in multicultural contexts and more likely to have studied abroad (OECD, 2020[115]).

This policy domain is related to human resource policies (section 5.1) and teacher characteristics (section 5.2). Consistent with the scope of this framework, this domain covers domain-specific constructs tied to foreign language learning. Therefore, some important constructs related to teaching in general (e.g. collaborative practices (Ainley and Carstens, 2018[20])) are not discussed.

An intuitive choice to measure constructs in this domain is often through the teacher questionnaire. However, an important analytical constraint of this approach is that it will not be possible to link responses to the teacher questionnaire with information on student proficiency (limiting the analysis to associations at the school or system level). This consideration will have to be kept in mind (together with other technical considerations) when choosing how to measure these constructs through a combination of different levels of measurement (student, teacher, school, system).

5.1. Human resources

How do policies on teaching staff hiring and training affect target language learning?

Governments and schools shape the teaching force through the regulations, incentives, policies and practices they put in place. Different requirements and expectations can apply to the training of target language teachers, their recruitment and their subject specialisation. Incentives of various types can be provided to hire and retain staff with different characteristics (e.g. teaching assistants or more-experienced teachers). These policies can influence teaching effectiveness and therefore student learning. They also affect the attractiveness and accessibility of the profession to potential teachers and, in turn, the availability (or scarcity) of teaching staff.

Human-resource policies must fit the broad context and the teaching approaches used in a particular country or school. For example, in various historical periods Korea and Japan invested massively in teacher training to tackle shortages of foreign language teachers (Chang, 2012[116]), while other educational systems may have more than enough candidates for the available jobs. In addition, some specific forms of training may be required for teachers using the target language to teach other subjects (section 2.1).

The system-level questionnaire could collect information on human resources in primary to upper secondary education, as all these levels could affect the cumulative learning of 15-year-old students. In addition, the system-level questionnaire could ask whether there are differences in human-resource policies related to foreign language and other teachers. This information is related to several of the constructs presented in this section (Table 7), and it would provide a broader context for their interpretation.

Table 7. List of constructs: Human resources

Construct	Policy relevance	Level of measurement
(24) Target language teaching experience	Essential	Teacher
(25) Target language teacher and staff availability	Essential	School; system
(26) Teachers' initial education and qualifications	Essential	Teacher (actual training received); school, system (guidelines and regulations)
(27) Teachers' in-service training	Essential	Teacher (actual training received); school, system (guidelines and regulations)
(28) Teaching specialisation	Essential	Teacher (actual taught subjects); school, system (policies and guidelines)

(24) *Target language teaching experience*

"Target language teaching experience" refers to the number of years of experience and the type of experience that target language teachers have. This includes the number of years teaching the target language, both in general and to the age group that is currently being taught. Teaching experience could be positively associated with student language learning, for example if teachers learn how to adapt to different classes and address common linguistic mistakes made by students. However, the association could also be negative if, for example, more-experienced teachers are slower in adopting new teaching practices.

A moderately positive association between teacher experience and student achievement has been found in the United States across different disciplines (Hanushek and Rivkin, 2004[117]; Leigh, 2010[118]). Across European education systems, the duration of teachers' placement in the same school or the number of languages they taught in previous years is not strongly associated with students' target language proficiency. However, teachers' experience in target language teaching was positively associated with proficiency in the SurveyLang study (European Commission, 2012[45]).

(25) *Target language teacher and staff availability*

"Target language teacher and staff availability" indicates the extent to which target language teaching personnel is available for covering the planned long-term needs, temporary vacancies and short-term replacements. Teaching-staff shortage can lead to employing unqualified staff for teaching the target language, with a negative impact on learning.

Teaching staff can include:

- teachers (i.e. personnel with the required qualifications to teach the target language)

- auxiliary staff (i.e. teaching assistants) with high proficiency in the target language. This type of staff is widely used, for example, in the implementation of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) in Spain, but they could be used to help teachers in any programme. Highly proficient teaching assistants can improve the learning process by making target language communication in the classroom more authentic and by reacting quickly to oral or written production (Bruton, 2011[119]; Dafouz and Hibler, 2013[120])

- other auxiliary staff (e.g. technical staff for language labs).

Besides the number or presence of teaching assistants, it is also important to collect information on their role (regular school staff or staff coming through special arrangements, such as exchange and guest programmes), and on whether they received some training or induction when (or prior to) starting their assignment in the school.

(26) *Teachers' initial education and qualifications*

"Teachers' initial education and qualifications" refers to the education and training the target language teacher undertook to become a teacher (independent of whether the teacher is specialised in the target language or was trained as a general teacher). This encompasses degrees, post-graduate certifications and specialisations and any training required to become a target language teacher. Information could be collected on:

- level of training

    o required ISCED level for target language teachers

    o requirements related to certificates or degrees, such as a requisite for the degree and additional specialisation courses in the field of target language studies, general education or other subjects (particularly for teachers teaching other subjects in the target language; Section 2.1 and European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice (2017, p. 91[26]))

- content of the training

    o general pedagogical knowledge

    o target language proficiency

    o target language-specific teaching and assessment practices (Coombe, Troudi and Al-Hamly, 2012[121]) related to the age group being taught

    o experience in the classroom

> o for teachers involved in teaching other subjects (e.g. mathematics or science) in the target language, methods for supporting target language learning while delivering instruction in another discipline.

Across the 33 countries and economies with available data from TALIS, most lower secondary education teachers are qualified with a single credential for studies in subject-matter content (and possibly other subjects) and pedagogy (OECD (2019[54]), Table I.4.12). Overall, the same is true for foreign language teachers, but with important differences at the system level (OECD, 2020[115]). In some education systems, particularly those experiencing teacher shortages, many teachers do not complete any formal teacher education (see Cronquist and Fiszbein (2017[97]) for a discussion of this problem in Latin American countries). Among TALIS countries and economies, the share of lower secondary teachers without a formal qualification for the subjects they are teaching is particularly large (and not significantly different for foreign language and other teachers) in Saudi Arabia (10%) and Mexico (8%).

Teacher training, especially when combined with practical experience, is expected to increase teachers' effectiveness in the classroom. Previous research has shown that teachers' educational attainment (i.e. the highest level of education obtained) is not robustly related to students' foreign language proficiency across European education systems, perhaps because of the limited variation amongst these education systems. In contrast, research suggests that having a specialised certificate for teaching the target language is positively associated with students' language test scores (European Commission, 2012[45])

(27) Teachers' in-service training

"Teachers' in-service training" refers to continuing professional development (Cordingley et al., 2015[122]) that target language teachers undertake as part of their job, because it is required, incentivised or simply offered by the school or other organisations (e.g. the ministry or the teachers' union). It can be attended in person or on line. In-service training could play an important role for developing the skills and competencies to teach foreign languages (Garton, Copland and Burns, 2011[32]), but it remains inadequate in many countries (Prapaisit de Segovia and Hardison, 2008[123]; Nunan, 2003[96]). On average across OECD countries and economies, 82% of lower secondary education teachers reported that in-service training and development activities (e.g. courses or seminars) had an impact on their work. Reporting a positive impact of training is highly correlated with teachers' job satisfaction and self-efficacy in most TALIS-participating countries and economies (OECD, 2019[54]). When properly designed, in-service training can also be a tool to improve the implementation of the government's education policies in the classroom (Rixon, 2017[124]).

It is important to measure whether the following elements were included in any in-service training:

- foreign language-learning pedagogy, including training aimed at improving teachers' assessment literacy (see sections 6.1 and 6.2)

- improving teachers' target language proficiency

- using teaching materials and infrastructure, including ICT, for target language teaching. For analytical purposes, the materials included in this construct should be aligned with those included in "school resources for target language teaching" (construct (8)) to understand how closely training and availability are related

- for teachers involved in teaching other subjects (e.g. mathematics or science) in the target language, methods for supporting target language learning while delivering instruction in another discipline (see section 2.1). It is important to investigate if their training focuses on language pathways or on the specific methodology for using a foreign language for instruction in other subjects.

Research has suggested that a didactic model in which facilitators simply tell teachers what to do, or give them materials without giving them opportunities to develop skills and inquire into their impact on pupil learning is not effective (Cordingley et al., 2015[122]). The following information could help better understand teachers' motivation and usefulness of training:

- whether teachers found the training beneficial and it can help reshape their teaching style (i.e. they can apply what they have learned)

- whether attendance was voluntary or obligatory, and whether any incentives were linked to it (e.g. voluntary, but required or instrumental for promotions or salary increases).

Given the nature of in-service training as a form of training over teachers' careers, it is important to ask teachers not only about the training received in the current year, but also in the past few years.

(28)   *Teaching specialisation*

"Teaching specialisation" refers to the range of subjects taught by teachers or that teachers have taught in the past, and for how long, as courses teachers teach may be determined by the needs of the schools that employ them. Teachers can be classified in one of four categories:

- teaching the target language only (specialised in the target language)

- teaching the target language and other foreign languages (specialised in foreign languages)

- teaching the target language and other subjects (different from foreign languages)

- teaching a content subject in the target language (see section 2.1).

In addition, teachers who are not specialised in the target language can only teach the target language as their main subject (the one on which they spend the largest portion of their working time), as a secondary subject (if there is another subject on

which they spend more time), or on an equal basis with another subject (dual specialisation).

More-specialised teachers have more opportunities to understand and learn to tackle the specific challenges students face when learning the target language. Therefore, there may be a positive association between teacher specialisation and target language learning. However, within some education systems there may be very little variation in teaching specialisation, as the subjects that can be taught are often regulated at the national level.

5.2. The teacher

Are teacher characteristics, attitudes and behaviours associated with student target language learning?

This section deals with the characteristics, attitudes and behaviours of teachers that could be important for foreign language learning (Table 8). These characteristics, attitudes and behaviours are embodied in the teachers or they depend on their personal choices. Therefore, governments and schools do not control them directly. However, the constructs in this section are highly relevant to policy makers because governments and schools can influence them in different ways, including in recruitment and training policies or by offering incentives of various types.

Table 8. List of constructs: The teacher

Construct	Policy relevance	Level of measurement
(29) Teachers' visits to other language communities	Relevant	Teacher; school, system (funding and incentives)
(30) Teachers' attitudes related to target language teaching	Essential	Teacher; student; school
(31) Teachers' target language proficiency	Essential	Teacher (actual proficiency); system (guidelines and expectations)

(29)   Teachers' visits to other language communities

"Teachers' visits to other language communities" refers to experiences through which teachers have the opportunity to interact in the target language with people from other language communities, by teaching or collaborating with colleagues in other language communities, through tourism, training, family visits, etc. Through this interaction, teachers can potentially develop linguistic and intercultural communicative competencies (Cuenat, Bleichenbacher and Frehner, 2016[125]).

An earlier study indicated that across European education systems, there is not a robust relationship between generic stays abroad by teachers and their students' proficiency (European Commission, 2012[45]). However, stays abroad are heterogeneous and their relationship with language learning could depend on the type of activities in which teachers were engaged. Therefore, it is important to measure not only the occurrence of the visits, but also their duration and relation with the target language (e.g. full immersion in a target language country; or interacting in the target language with non-native speakers in a country with a

different language). It could also be useful to know whether these visits were preceded by or followed-up with specific training or discussions with colleagues or school management.

As compared to other types of stays abroad, exchange visits include learning and sharing of teaching practices, pedagogical knowledge, and other information related to teaching in a structured way. Therefore, exchange visits and more generic stays in other language communities should both be measured as they can affect teachers' language proficiency and attitudes towards target language teaching; they can also have a direct influence on target language teaching practices. At the school and national levels, it is relevant to measure the existence of resources for teachers' travel for didactic purposes (e.g. funding related to international programmes).

(30)   *Teachers' attitudes related to target language teaching*

"Teachers' attitudes related to target language teaching" refers to a variety of attitudes specifically related to the teaching of the target language (as distinct from perceptions originating from classroom management and the dynamics between students and teachers). This construct includes enjoyment in and perceived difficulty of teaching the target language, but also whether teachers think certain teaching approaches are effective (see section 6.). Teachers' attitudes towards the target language class can affect students' attitudes and motivation (Horwitz, 1990[126]; Kern, 1995[127]; Stern, 1983[128]) and therefore potentially influence language learning.

(31)   *Teachers' target language proficiency*

"Teachers' target language proficiency" refers to teachers' language skills and mastery of the target language. Teachers' low proficiency (and possibly the associated low confidence) with the target language can hinder student learning (Butler, 2004[129]; Garton, Copland and Burns, 2011[32]; Nunan, 2003[96]) and hinder implementation of the communicative teaching approach (Kuchah, 2009[130]). For example, in the context of English teaching, low target language proficiency has been identified as one of the key barriers to English learning in Latin American countries (Cronquist and Fiszbein, 2017[97]).

However, recent research suggests that target language teachers not only need general language proficiency but a specialised subset of language skills required in the classroom context (e.g. "English-for-Teaching", a bounded form of English for Specific Purposes used in the classroom (Freeman et al., 2015[131])). The idea is that the language proficiency should help in managing the classroom, understanding and communicating lesson content, and assessing students and giving feedback.

Measuring target language proficiency without testing teachers is a serious challenge. A realistic approach could include:

- Generic self-assessment items, following a similar approach as that described for perceived student proficiency (construct (18)).

- Self-assessment items on using the target language in a classroom setting. Examples could include giving instruction to students on how to carry out exercises; keeping order in the classroom; and explaining grammatical issues in the target language.

- Proxies of general target language proficiency such as having earned education degrees in the target language (and posterior validation of these degrees by refresher trainings and certificates); having lived in target language-speaking communities for a long period (e.g. more than one year); or having spoken the target language since childhood. For example, in Japan and Korea programmes to attract highly-proficient teachers from English-speaking communities (such as the Japan Exchange and Teaching programme in Japan and the Korea English Teacher Training Assistant programme) have played an important role in foreign language teaching (Chang, 2012[116]).

6. Teaching practices

This domain discusses current practices and pedagogical thinking. This policy domain is related to teaching approaches and methods (section 6.1); assessment practices (section 6.2); and the use of the target language for the instruction in other subjects (section 2.1).

Measuring current teaching practices is important to understand the landscape of target language teaching in an education system. However, current teaching practices are not always the same as the past practices students have been exposed to (and past practices are difficult to recollect and measure). This could weaken the relationship between current practices and student proficiency.

TALIS provides evidence that, in many education systems, foreign languages are taught in a different way than other subjects. This evidence does not imply or suggest that foreign language teachers teach in ways that are more or less adequate, modern or effective than other teachers. However, it does provide support for the need to improve the understanding and gather domain-specific evidence of how foreign languages are taught across education systems.

For example, among the 4 cognitive activation teaching practices measured in TALIS (see OECD (2019[54]), Figure I.2.1), foreign language teachers are significantly less likely than other teachers to report to frequently "give tasks that require students to think critically" (by 10 percentage points); "ask students to decide on their own procedures for solving complex tasks" (by 8 percentage points); and "present tasks for which there is no obvious solution" (by 6 percentage points). In contrast, they are significantly more likely (even though by just 1 percentage point) to report to "have students work in small groups to come up with a joint solution to a problem or task", on average across TALIS countries and economies (see Annex C for the methodology underlying this estimation).

6.1. Teaching approaches and methods

What are the most effective practices for teaching a foreign language?

Teaching practices are an important determinant of learning. For example, across the education systems that participated in PISA 2015, the percentage of science teachers with a major in science was not related to students' proficiency. In contrast, the way science is taught was related not only to science proficiency, but also to how much students value scientific enquiry and to their expectations of working in a science-related occupation (OECD, 2016[51]). The same holds true for (foreign) language learning: the role of the language teacher is central in guiding the students to successful learning (Black and William, 2009[132]; Turner and Purpura, 2015[133]). This section discusses both teaching approaches (broad characterisations of teaching practices reflecting a global understanding of how a language should be taught) and methods (the practical realisation of these approaches in the classroom) (Harmer, 2007[134]).

There is a wide variety of foreign language-teaching practices around the world (Garton, Copland and Burns, 2011[32]). However, research and theory do not define a single "best" way of teaching languages. There is still some controversy, for example, as to whether instruction should be based on a focus-on-forms approach (systematically teaching grammatical features following a structural syllabus), or a focus-on-meaning approach (stimulating learning of linguistic features through communicative activities based on a task-based syllabus (Ellis, 2005[135]). In addition, practices in the classroom do not always follow research ideas or official guidelines (Garton, Copland and Burns, 2011[32]; Renandya et al., 1999[136]).

Traditionally, teaching tended to be teacher-centred, putting the teacher as the expert, instigator and administrator while the student was a passive recipient (Taylor, 2002[137]). In contrast, over the past few decades, education has moved towards a learner-centred approach. In this approach, the teacher's goal is to help students set their own learning goals, manage the content and process of their learning and communicate progressively with peers, also by using ICT tools (Laakkonen, 2011[35]). It is argued that this increases the focus on the needs, circumstances and interests of the learner, improving learning (Lathika, 2016[138]; European Commission, 2017[139]).

The learner-centred approach is particularly relevant to foreign language learning, since active participation gives students opportunities to practice their communicative skills (Sánchez Calvo, 2007[140]). Therefore, the use of a more or less learner-centred approach is a central theme throughout this section. For example, construct (32) describes Communicative Language Teaching, an approach to student learning that is more learner-centred than traditional teaching. Construct (41) about the use of teaching materials stresses the adoption of practices involving students in the learning process. Group activities, having students use the target language and teacher's talking time (constructs (35), (37) and (38) – see Table 9) also provide ways to measure the extent to which students participate in class. However, it is also important to discuss more traditional teaching practices such as teaching linguistic knowledge (construct (33)).

The system-level questionnaire could collect information about guidelines for language-teaching approaches and methods in primary to upper secondary education (as all these levels could affect the cumulative learning of 15-year-old students). Recommending a didactic approach at the national level for teaching a foreign language has a strong impact on classroom practices, even though some studies point to a gap between curriculum policy and classroom practice (Graves and Garton, 2017[141]).

Table 9. List of constructs: Teaching approaches and methods

Construct	Policy relevance	Level of measurement
(32) Teaching the four communicative skills	Essential	Student, teacher (teaching practices); school, system (policies and guidelines)
(33) Teaching linguistic knowledge: Grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary	Essential	Student, teacher (teaching practices); school, system (policies and guidelines)
(34) Teaching literature and cultural knowledge	Essential	Student, teacher (teaching practices); school, system (policies and guidelines)
(35) Group and collective learning activities in the classroom	Essential	Student, teacher (teaching practices); school, system (policies and guidelines)
(36) Translanguaging	Relevant	Student, teacher (teaching practices); school, system (policies and guidelines)
(37) Use of the target language during foreign language lessons	Essential	Student, teacher (teaching practices); school, system (policies and guidelines)
(39) Teacher's talking time	Relevant	Student, teacher (teaching practices); school, system (policies and guidelines)
(39) Joint learning of language- and non-language-related content	Essential	Student, teacher (actual practices); school, system (policies and guidelines)
(40) Teaching materials used for target language teaching	Essential	Student, teacher (classroom practices); school, system (policies and guidelines)
(41) Use of teaching materials	Essential	Student, teacher (classroom practices); school, system (policies and guidelines)
(42) Use of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages	Essential	Student, teacher (classroom practices); school, system (policies and guidelines)

(32)   Teaching the four communicative skills

"Teaching the four communicative skills" refers to the frequency of and amount of classroom time dedicated to teaching students to use the four communicative skills of speaking, writing, reading and listening. This focus on the four skills is a fundamental aspect of the "Communicative Language Teaching" approach. This approach emphasises students' ability to make meaning in different contexts rather than focusing on linguistic knowledge, and aims to develop both productive and receptive skills (Graves and Garton, 2017[141]; Roca Gris, 2015[142]). It also emphasises the integration of the teaching of different skills, for example through activities joining listening and writing or reading and speaking.

Given that proficiency in different skills will be assessed, it could be particularly useful to measure the recurrence and amount of time accorded to the use of each communicative skill (writing, speaking, reading, listening) by itself or in combination with others. It can be expected that prioritising a certain communicative skill during classroom activities would lead to higher proficiency in that skill.

(33)   Teaching linguistic knowledge: Grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary

"Teaching linguistic knowledge: Grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary" refers to the frequency of, and amount of time dedicated in the classroom to teaching structural aspects of the target language ("forms"). Placing emphasis on linguistic knowledge means planning activities and using materials specifically targeted at improving students' pronunciation, and the knowledge of grammar and vocabulary

in themselves. This type of exercise entails an emphasis on (for example) grammatical patterns, verbal tenses or vocabulary, sometimes decontextualised from a situation of communication. The type of knowledge gained through these tasks is usually referred to as "metalinguistic knowledge" (Roca Gris, 2015[142]), or knowledge *about* the language. Some authors and practitioners consider certain types of decontextualised activities (e.g. flashcards or grammar analysis) as an important means of improving morphological and syntactic knowledge in a context of limited exposition to foreign languages (Hilton, 2019[143]).

Improving grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary is an important goal of both communicative language teaching and the "teaching linguistic knowledge" approach. However, while in communicative language teaching these goals are pursued through an emphasis on communicative skills and the content of communication (e.g. improving vocabulary through listening to a radio show, without necessarily verifying that the new words have been memorised), in the latter approach more attention is given to the linguistic forms in themselves.

(34)   *Teaching literature and cultural knowledge*

"Teaching literature and cultural knowledge" refers to the frequency of, and amount of time dedicated to, teaching literature and cultural creations (e.g. songs, movies) of target language-speaking communities when teaching the target language. This approach can be combined with different levels of emphasis on linguistic knowledge and the four communicative skills, as both linguistic knowledge and the four communicative skills can be learned while teaching culture and literature. The emphasis on literature and cultural knowledge has been shown to be positively associated with students' foreign language test scores across European education systems (European Commission, 2012[45]). In addition, understanding the culture of target language countries can enhance intercultural communication in the target language (Ali, Kazemian and Mahar, 2015[144]).

(35)   *Group and collective learning activities in the classroom*

"Group and collective learning activities in the classroom" refers to the frequency, dedicated time, and type of group activities to learn the target language through interaction with peers in the classroom or for class (e.g. collaborative homework). This variable can measure the size of the groups (pairs or larger) and the level of student autonomy (only limited interaction following a structured template; or more independent work, including researching answers to a question autonomously as a group), and also the use of ICT in these activities. It is important to understand whether the focus of such activities is on language learning or on using language for learning (i.e. to research specific information on a topic on line, filtering it and then reporting).

The interaction and negotiation of meaning that typically occur in group work, when students can autonomously express themselves, are important factors in learning a new language (Brown, 2007[62]; Farrell, 2001[145]). Collaborative activities using a foreign language can also develop mediation capacities, as

students have to collaborate to construct meaning, or facilitate interaction with peers, especially in mixed-level group activities (Council of Europe, 2018[90]).

Group and collaborative learning activities are the basis for the communicative language teaching approach (Graves and Garton, 2017[141]; Renandya et al., 1999[136]), and they can be particularly important if opportunities to practice the target language outside of school are scarce.

(36) *Translanguaging*

"Translanguaging" refers to a teaching approach through which the teachers allow other languages spoken by the students to be used to shape understanding and to be included in foreign language teaching and learning (Alby and Léglise, 2018[146]). Translanguaging has greater relevance in multilingual contexts where minority-language or immigrant students are present in the classroom. In these contexts, students and teachers can better use their "continua of biliteracy", drawing from multiple and dynamic varieties of languages and literacies (Hornberger and Link, 2012[147]).[6] Translanguaging uses all the linguistic resources of the student to maximise understanding (Baker, 2011[148]; Lewis, Jones and Baker, 2012[149]). It is important to understand if translanguaging happens in the classroom, and if it is allowed or encouraged.

The simultaneous use of multiple languages in the classroom is thought to lead to broader and deeper knowledge of language and subjects (Williams, 1996[150]). This approach is also believed to be particularly beneficial for bilingual and multilingual students, as a way to learn and develop language skills using their own resources (Meier and Conteh, 2014[151]). Allowing and encouraging students to speak their other languages is also a way to value and preserve their linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

(37) *Use of the target language during foreign language lessons*

"Use of the target language during foreign language lessons" indicates the extent to which students practice the target language in the class, but also the extent to which teachers use it to teach (e.g. the frequency of activities involving the use of the target language, or the proportion of time students and teachers speak in the target language as opposed to reading-test language).

Group work and conversation in the target language, as well as writing fictitious e-mails or reading newspaper articles in the target language, are ways for students to use the target language during lessons. According to recent research, teachers' use of the target language in the classroom includes three distinct aspects: managing the classroom, understanding and communicating lesson content, and assessing students and giving feedback. For example, giving instructions in the target

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[6] This is in contrast to situations in which the dominant language within a community is used systematically in foreign language teaching (e.g. because of low teacher proficiency in the target language), potentially hindering students' development of communicative skills, such as speaking and listening.

language as opposed to the language commonly used amongst students is one of the most important requirements of the communicative skills teaching approach (Garton, Copland and Burns, 2011[32]).

(38)   *Teacher's talking time*

"Teacher's talking time" is the amount of time during which the teacher's talks in the classroom while students listen. The teacher can use talking time to explain concepts or manage the classroom, in the target or other language. Teacher's talking time leaves less time to students to practice oral participation and interaction. For example, in some education settings in western China, the large majority of talking time is reserved for teachers and very few students initiate a question in class (Liu, 2016[152]).

(39)   *Joint learning of language- and non-language-related content*

"Joint learning of language- and non-language-related content" applies only to education programmes where the target language is used for instruction in other subjects (section 2.1). It refers to the extent to which teachers purposely integrate the learning of non-language-related content (e.g. mathematics or history) into the learning of the target language. In other words, this construct refers to the "communication" element of Coyle's (1999[153]) framework for effective learning through a foreign language, i.e. using language to learn while learning to use language. The measurement of this construct may involve asking whether the target language is also a subject of teaching in the lessons of other subjects; and if students are encouraged to ask for the help they need to learn the language, as recommended by experts (Mehisto, Frigols and Marsh, 2008[154]).

(40)   *Teaching materials used for target language teaching*

"Teaching materials used for target language teaching" refers to materials that are used in class and for homework or assignments, and to how often they are used. For analytical purposes, the materials included in this construct should be aligned with those included in "school resources for target language teaching" (construct (8)) to understand how closely use and availability are related. Teaching materials can be divided into three categories:

- textbooks
- ICT tools, such as online platforms, video-sharing websites, foreign language learning software, computer applications and computer-assisted language learning (a tool consisting of online environments where learners can communicate with foreign language speakers, but also online apps, game-based learning, etc. (European Commission, 2014[34]))
- other material such as DVDs, whiteboards, radio and teacher-prepared material.

Some materials may fit some teaching methods better than others. For example, ideally materials for improving students' communicative abilities should be

"authentic" (i.e. produced for reasons other than language teaching) and allow meaningful communication in the target language (Brown, 2007[62]; Graves and Garton, 2017[141]; Farrell, 2001[145]). Questions on which teaching materials are used should allow to identify at least some types of materials that are inherently authentic (e.g. movies, news items or blogs in the target language).

ICT tools are becoming an increasingly important part of foreign language lessons, and students need to learn to use these tools for their own future (Al-Mahrooqi and Troudi, 2014[33]; Motteram, 2013[155]; Farr and Murray, 2016[156]). However, no robust evidence has been found across European education systems linking student target language proficiency with the use of ICT in the classroom, multimedia language labs, virtual learning environments, the availability of software for language assessment, or use of ICT devices and web content for teaching (European Commission, 2012[45]).

According to the latest data from TALIS, the use of ICT for class work across TALIS countries and economies increased over the past years (OECD, 2019[54]). In 2018, 62% of lower secondary foreign language teachers reported frequently or always letting students use ICT for project or classwork, compared to 57% of other lower secondary teachers (OECD, 2020[115]). However, the data also suggest limited preparation and support available for teachers. Only 60% of teachers reported having received training in the use of ICT for teaching as part of their formal education or training (OECD (2019[54]), Table I.4.13), and this proportion was 2 percentage points lower among foreign language teachers than among other teachers (OECD, 2020[115]).

(41) *Use of teaching materials*

Interactive use of teaching materials refers to the way in which teaching materials are used in the classroom. This can differ in two important ways:

- There could be more or less interaction amongst students (or between students and teachers) in using the materials proposed by the teacher. For example, teaching materials may be used to give a lecture to students, illustrate linguistic concepts, or present cultural content (e.g. showing a movie to the class). Alternatively, they could be used in more interactive ways, for example if students discuss the material in groups or present to the class content drawn from the teaching materials. For example, teachers can use ICT tools to stimulate students' active participation (e.g. interactions with other students on line) or to support their own teaching (e.g. organising their lesson through a PowerPoint presentation), fulfilling different functions in the language-learning process.

- Teachers may adapt their use of textbooks or other materials designed for educational purposes based on their teaching approach and on the class level. For example, they can propose exercises that are based on textbook content but different from those appearing in the textbook. Alternatively, they may use content and exercises as proposed in the materials without adaptation.

Teachers adapting the materials or using them interactively follow a more learner-centred approach, with potentially beneficial effects on student learning (Cruz Rondón and Velasco Vera, 2016[157]).

(42)   Use of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages

"Use of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages" refers to the use of the Council of Europe's standardised framework (CEFR) (Council of Europe, 2018[90]; Council of Europe, 2001[17]). The CEFR is widely recognised as "the most important reference document in the fields of language learning, teaching, and assessment, both in Europe and beyond" (Barni and Salvati, 2017, p. 417[158]). For example, it is also used to define standard and competencies in the majority of Latin American countries (Cronquist and Fiszbein, 2017[97]) and (with some adaptations) in Japan and a number of ASEAN countries (Foley, 2019[159]). This construct analyses whether teachers use the CEFR for diagnosing students' competence, for teaching (preparing activities, setting goals, etc.) or for evaluation. It is also important to analyse if teachers were trained, during initial or in-service training, to use such frameworks. Teachers' training and use of the CEFR for different reasons (teaching, evaluation, etc.) have been found to be positively associated with language proficiency across European education systems (European Commission, 2012[45]). If other frameworks of reference (e.g. the China Standards of English, Jin et al. (2017[160])) are relevant to education systems participating in the PISA Foreign Language Assessment, questions on their use could also be included.

6.2. Assessment practices

Can national and school target language proficiency assessments improve students' target language learning and proficiency?

The assessment of students' learning and competencies can provide information to students, teachers, governments and other stakeholders of what students have learned and where they stand. This is essential information for (re-) directing the learning process. Students can use this information to change their learning behaviour, teachers to plan their classes, and governments to design education reforms. Assessment can affect teachers' attitudes, teaching content and classroom interactions (Cheng, 2005[161]); when the assessment is "high stakes", for example university entrance exams, it can define the content and performance objectives of education programmes (and it can also affect students' motivation to learn the target language). This section discusses classroom and system-level assessments, and how they can be used to improve student learning. The related question of teachers' assessment literacy is briefly discussed in constructs (26) and (27) (Table 10).

Table 10. List of constructs: Assessment practices

Construct	Policy relevance	Level of measurement
(43) Existence of system-level target language assessments	Essential	System
(44) Assessment for learning	Essential	Teacher, student (classroom practices); system (policies and guidelines)

(43)   Existence of system-level target language assessments

"Existence of national target language assessments" indicates whether standardised assessments are in place to monitor students' target language proficiency across the education system. It also takes into consideration assessments in the form of system-level exams that evaluate students' acquisition of curricular content or key competencies.

It is important to determine the scope of these assessments, i.e.:

- whether they are national (e.g. as in China (Zheng and Liying, 2008[162]) or France (Ministère de l'Education Nationale et de la Jeunesse, 2019[163]), or regional (e.g. by province or state, as in Canada (Volante and Ben Jaafar, 2008[164]) or the USA) or some combination, as in Spain (Ministerio de Ciencia, 2018[165])

- whether all students are required to take them (and whether to progress to a different level, e.g. to graduate or enter higher education) or just a subsample (e.g. as in the National Assessment of Educational Progress in the USA to gather system-wide information for policy making (National Center for Education Statistics, 2018[166])

- the purpose of the assessment (placement of students into specific programmes or levels, diagnosis of skills attainment, language certification, admission to tertiary education, etc.)

- whether they are based on the curricula taught in schools (e.g. as in China (Zhou and Ito, 2011[167]) or Taiwan (The College Entrance Examination Center, 2019[168]) or intended to function independently of curricula as proficiency tests (e.g. like the International English Language Testing System or the Test of English as a Foreign Language)

- the grades in which students are assessed

- whether there is a level in the target language students are expected to reach in these tests (whether this level is aligned with the CEFR or not)

- whether they comprehensively address all of the language skills (and how they are weighted) or just some of them (some education systems may choose to assess only some skills because of financial constraints; e.g. in 2016 in the *Comunidad de* Madrid in Spain, oral skills were withdrawn from some diagnostic tests in primary education to reduce costs (Enever, 2018[169]))

- whether preparatory activities have been undertaken to prepare to "impact by design", through supporting stakeholders in the testing process, providing them with comprehensive information and monitor and evaluate results (Saville, 2012[170]).

These assessments could affect language proficiency by providing the national and local governments with information used to improve and target their education policies, even if the tests if do not exactly match the learning goals stated in the curriculum.

(44) *Assessment for learning*

Assessment is "the act of collecting information and making judgements on a language learner's knowledge of a language and ability to use it" (Brindley, 2003[171]). On its own, this is not sufficient for improving learners' proficiency. The information collected must also provide information on how to improve student performance, and the signals it conveys must be acted upon. The UK-based Assessment Reform Group defined "assessment for learning" as "the process of seeking and interpreting evidence for use by learners and their teachers to decide where the learners are in their learning, where they need to go and how best to get there" (Wiliam, 2011, p. 10[172]).[7] The interpretation of student-performance evidence and its use to help learners progress are also the fundamental elements in the definition of "learning oriented assessment" (Jones and Saville, 2016, p. 2[173]).

Based on this definition, understanding whether assessments are used to support learning requires information about the assessment itself and on how it is used (Wiliam, 2011[172]). It is necessary to know how, how often, by whom and with what consequences proficiency in the target language is assessed at school. Assessments can be conducted by teachers, peers and the individual students themselves, with different modalities (e.g. vocabulary or grammar tests, project work, essay writing, dialogues, self-assessment and records (Faustino, Kostina and Vergara, 2013[174]; Brown and Hudson, 1998[175]; Council of Europe, 2001[17])). Teachers should provide constructive and encouraging feedback (Jones and Saville, 2016[173]), and the information provided by the assessment should feed back into their teaching and course planning (Wiliam, 2011[172]; Faustino, Kostina and Vergara, 2013[174]). This implies that teachers understand how to use assessment results (Fulcher, 2012[176]; Hasselgreen, 2005[177]; Coombe, Troudi and Al-Hamly,

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[7] As a concept, "assessment for learning" is related to (and sometimes used interchangeably with) formative assessment. Assessment is formative when the information on student performance is used to adapt teaching to meet students' needs (Black and Wiliam, 1998, in Wiliam (2011, p. 9[172])). Formative assessment is usually contrasted with summative assessment or "assessment of learning", which "aims to summarise learning that has taken place, in order to record, mark or certify achievements" (OECD, 2013, p. 140[188]). This framework adopts a broad definition of "assessment for learning" which avoids the distinction between formative and summative assessment. This distinction is not clear, practically and conceptually. There are strong complementarities between the two types of assessment, and formative assessment can be used for summative purposes (and vice versa) (Wiliam, 2011[172]; OECD, 2013[188]; Jones and Saville, 2016[173]).

2012[121]), which can be part of their initial or in-service training (constructs (26) and (27)).

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Annex A. PISA 2025 Foreign Language Assessment Background Questionnaires Framework Expert Groups

Annex A lists the members of the expert groups who were involved in developing the PISA 2025 Foreign Language Assessment Background Questionnaires Framework. The expert group was involved in all the phases of the framework development. Members of the extended expert group were involved on an occasional basis to review the framework or consult the OECD in other ways.

Expert group

Kathleen Graves

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University of Reading

United Kingdom

Elsa Fernanda González

Autonomous University of Tamaulipas

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Kulaporn Hiranbuara

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Icy Lee

Chinese University of Hong Kong

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Patsy Lightbown

Concordia University

Canada

David Marsh

University of Jyväskylä

Finland

Nicola McLelland

University of Nottingham

United Kingdom

Lisa Maria Muller

Chartered College of Teaching

United Kingdom

Annex B. Student learning in programmes in which multiple languages are used for instruction in other subjects

The variety of names to denote education programmes using more than one language for teaching in non-language-related subjects gives an indication of the diverse historical and institutional settings where these programmes have been applied. As far as 5 000 years ago, a foreign language (Sumerian) was used by the Akkadians in the Middle East to learn theology, botany and zoology (Hanesová, 2015[178]; Mehisto, Frigols and Marsh, 2008[154]); in Meiji-era Japan, Kanbun (a form of classical Chinese) was used in private academies to learn history, Confucian ethics and other subjects (Mehl, 2003[179]).

More recently (in the 1960s), so-called "immersion" programmes were created in the French-speaking community of Quebec (Canada) through which, on a voluntarily basis, English-speaking students learned school subjects in French. The goals were for students who spoke English as their native language to reach a high level of proficiency in French speaking, reading and writing; while reaching normal achievement levels throughout the curriculum (including the English language), and learning to appreciate the traditions and culture of both French- and English-speaking Canadians. This type of programmes became relatively common in the United States as well (Potowski, 2007[180]).

In Europe, content- and language-integrated learning (CLIL) started to gain ground after a European Commission's recommendation on learning three languages at school: the native language of the student plus two European languages (European Commission, 1995[181]). In 2006, CLIL type provision was already part of mainstream school education in the great majority of European countries at primary and secondary levels (European Commission, 2006[182]). Following Nikula, Dalton-Puffer and García (2013[183]), the European Commission (2014, p. 3[34]) defines CLIL as "an educational approach in which a foreign language is used as the medium of instruction to teach content subjects for mainstream students".

Even within a country or region and given an overall pedagogical approach, programmes using more than one language for teaching in non-language-related subjects could differ in many ways. For example, they could differ in the languages taught (e.g. French, Chinese, Arabic); in the subjects that are taught through these languages (e.g. history, mathematics); in the overall amount of hours through which the various languages are learned; and in the characteristics of the students who enrol in them. Given the wide differences across programmes using more than one language for teaching in non-language-related subjects, it does not surprise that the scientific literature does not find an unequivocal answer to the question of how they impact student learning.

Across European education systems, whether or not schools offer CLIL programmes was not robustly associated with average school target language proficiency (European Commission, 2012[45]). However, other research suggests

that CLIL positively affected spoken production and interaction in Spain (Nieto Moreno de Diezmas, 2016[184]). In addition, some research suggests that the effectiveness of using foreign languages for instruction in other subjects may have a different effect on different foreign language skills. For example, Dallinger et al. (2016[185]) find that German students attending history instruction in English showed greater progress than other students in English listening comprehension, but not in general English skills.

Early research on programmes in which a second language is used for instruction also claimed their potential for equitable education, on the ground that they "open doors on languages for a broader range of learners". However, in a number of educational contexts, researchers observed a strong selection of students from higher socio-economic background, as well as more motivated and language-proficient students, into these programmes (Bruton, 2013[40]; Pérez Cañado, 2016[41]; Nikula, 2016[37]). In addition, some studies reviewed by Bruton (Bruton, 2013[40]) show that students with learning difficulties are more likely to drop out from this type of education. These phenomena could potentially induce a streaming of motivated and proficient students into bilingual, CLIL or immersion programmes, with an adverse effect on traditional education.

Another concern for policy makers is that these programmes could also potentially harm student learning, as students may fail to understand or make progress with some subject-related content because of the language barriers they face. For example, in 2012, the Malaysian government dropped the ETeMS programme (English for Teaching Mathematics and Science) that it had introduced in 2002 because of concerns that it was negatively affecting mathematics and science learning (whether that was the case is still debated (Nor, Aziz and Jusoff, 2011[186])). Marsh, Hau and Kong (2000[187]) find large negative effects of English-immersion programmes on learning other subjects for upper secondary students in Hong Kong. In contrast, Dallinger et al. (2016[185]) find no relationship between using a foreign language as a medium of instruction and students' learning other subjects, consistently with most literature on this subject (Nikula, 2016[37]).

Annex C. Analyses on the sample of foreign language teachers participating to the OECD TALIS Survey

This chapter presents some results from an analysis on the sample of foreign language lower secondary teachers in the OECD 2018 Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS). This sample is composed by teachers who reported to teach modern foreign languages in two different questions of the survey questionnaire.

With reference to the wording of the TALIS questionnaires, the analysis considered foreign language teachers those who:

- Reported that they taught "modern foreign languages (includes languages different from the language of instruction)" to any student in the school and year in which the survey took place

- *And* reported that they taught "modern foreign languages (includes languages different from the language of instruction)" during a particular class chosen from their teaching schedule (the "target class", i.e. the first lower secondary education class they taught in the surveyed school after 11 a.m. on the Tuesday prior to the day they participated in the survey).

The analysis consisted in replicating some indicators published in the *TALIS 2018 Results (Volume I)* (OECD, 2019[54]) and then recalculating these indicators for foreign language teachers. The table/figure number from *TALIS 2018 Results (Volume I)* is always reported in the text. In one case (proportion of teachers in classes smaller than 20 students) the indicator from the *TALIS 2018 Results (Volume I)* has been adapted, so no table or figure number is reported for that specific indicator.

Only some selected results from these analyses are reported in this chapter. The expression "significant differences" refers to differences between foreign language and other teachers that are statistically significant at the 5% confidence level.