

LANGUAGE POLICY AND LANGUAGE PLANNING

At Múltiplo International School, working with language is central to the full development of the student and the objectives of our school community. Therefore, for the teaching-learning process to be successful on all fronts, students, teachers, staff, and families co-construct the policies that guide our work. This document, then, aims to align expectations, practices, and objectives related to the multilingual and multicultural profile that our school co-constructs and continuously expands.

It is important to highlight that the language policy and language planning are presented here in an integrated way, considering that the former establishes the institutional principles and the latter the actions that demonstrate and consolidate the policy.

To address these points, this document is organized into:

1. Institutional principles and actions;
2. Conceptual principles of language development;
3. Pedagogical principles of language development;
4. Community principles and actions.

1. Institutional Principles and Actions

Below, we present the institutional and pedagogical principles that guide our actions as a school community.

A) Multilingualism is a right.

Our school is located in a country whose official language is Portuguese, used in the subjects of the national school curriculum, guided by the National Common Curriculum Base (BNCC). However, the international mindset that is built in our school also involves encouraging and including the languages spoken by our students in our daily lives. Aiming to promote the formation of global citizens, the mother tongues, heritage languages, and additional languages of students are respected and welcomed and, whenever possible, included in the school routine.

However, Múltiplo International School offers excellent English language teaching. For this reason, English is the language chosen for circulation and socialization within the school, understood as a responsibility of the entire community. In order to create a space with possible transit for students of different origins, we have established some guidelines to strengthen the use of

English in classes and in the common areas of the school. Below are the linguistic guidelines that should be followed in order to continuously build a multilingual environment within our school community.

- **English is the official lingua franca for communication and integration in common spaces.** Building the linguistic landscape of our school is everyone's responsibility. Some of the actions to promote this goal are: (i) encouragement through educational environmental signage (such as posters and reminders of the use of English in the environments, except for classes linked to the Brazilian curriculum, socio-emotional and health support areas, as well as food areas, where students can choose which language they prefer to communicate in); (ii) making available a school glossary with the most recurring terms in this environment as a way to support students and other members of the school community who do not yet feel confident in expressing themselves in English.
- **Your language is also our responsibility.** The development and maintenance of the students' mother tongue and culture is the responsibility of the school community. No type of discrimination or exclusion will be tolerated, since diversity is an element that constitutes all forms of human expression. Whenever possible, the school encourages students to maintain and develop their language of highest proficiency through partnerships with families, opportunities for cultural sharing, and pedagogical practices that value linguistic diversity. In the Diploma Programme, if a student's language of highest proficiency is not offered by the school, Múltiplo may support them in completing the School-Supported Self-Taught Language A component, in accordance with the International Baccalaureate (IB) standards. When appropriate and feasible, the school may also guide and support access to courses offered by IB-authorized providers, such as Pamoja Education, in order to broaden learning opportunities and ensure that the student can develop their best language throughout the program.

B) All teachers are language teachers.

Regardless of the subject taught, grammatical and spelling accuracy and expression should be understood as everyone's responsibility. One of the actions our school is already implementing is the use of an integrated rubric for language assessment in all subjects, whether in English or Portuguese.

C) It's always time to learn and ensure equal access to the English language.

Although fluency in English is a prerequisite for admission to our school, we know that each student has different opportunities and paces for access. For this reason, after the placement test for new students in our Múltiplo community,

families and school management will develop an action plan with a schedule of expectations to ensure that each student receives in-school or out-of-school language support.

2. Conceptual Principles of Linguistic Development;

In June 1996, the Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights was established at a [PEN](#)¹ meeting with the support of UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization). Its 52 articles highlight the consideration of linguistic rights as fundamental human rights that, in order to be effectively guaranteed, require the conditions for their exercise.

Therefore, when discussing institutional language policies, it is essential that we have clarity about what we understand as linguistic development and what conditions we offer for its implementation. The Language Policy of Múltiplo International School promotes a harmonious convergence between the approach of the International Baccalaureate (IB), via Mark Halliday's systemic-functional theory, and our Montessori tradition. We understand that language develops in an integrated way with the environment, where educational environmental signage acts as a tool for self-education and self-regulation for our students. Furthermore, aligned with Montessori lessons of grace and courtesy in practical life, the use of English as a lingua franca in common spaces is experienced by students not as an imposition, but as a practical exercise in empathy, inclusion, and social responsibility, ensuring that communication is a bridge to building a global mindset and peace.

The systemic-functional theory (Halliday, 1994) is of interest as a conceptual principle mainly for three reasons, detailed below, with parallels to Montessori pedagogy.

A) Halliday's tripod of language learning argues that language development occurs in three simultaneous ways, enabling a transdisciplinary approach – characteristic of the IB Learner Profile.

1. Learning language, Prepared environment and concrete materials

Language acquisition – learning vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation and its rules in English (regardless of the language). For Halliday, language is learned through use. In Montessori, the Prepared Environment and Concrete Materials are designed so that the child explores and absorbs knowledge actively.

2. Learning through language and Cosmic Education.

Language is a vehicle for knowledge construction – the student uses language to understand science, history, mathematics, and to investigate the world (inquiry-based learning). In turn, Montessori's cosmic education proposes that all

¹ PEN is an organization that defends freedom of expression among nations.

things in the universe are interconnected and that children should explore the world in a holistic and transdisciplinary way.

3. Learning about language and the Absorbent Mind/Sensitive Periods

Understanding how language works in different contexts – understanding that the way we talk in the hallway with a friend is different from how we write a scientific report or a poem, developing a critical linguistic awareness.

Maria Montessori identified that the child goes through a sensitive period for language, demonstrating a natural and fascinating interest in words, structure, and the functioning of communication. In turn, when Halliday talks about "learning about language" (understanding the context, the appropriateness of speech, and the impact of words), this aligns directly with the refinement that Montessori proposed in the transition from the Absorbent Mind to the Rational Mind (in the second stage of development). The student becomes aware of their social role through speech.

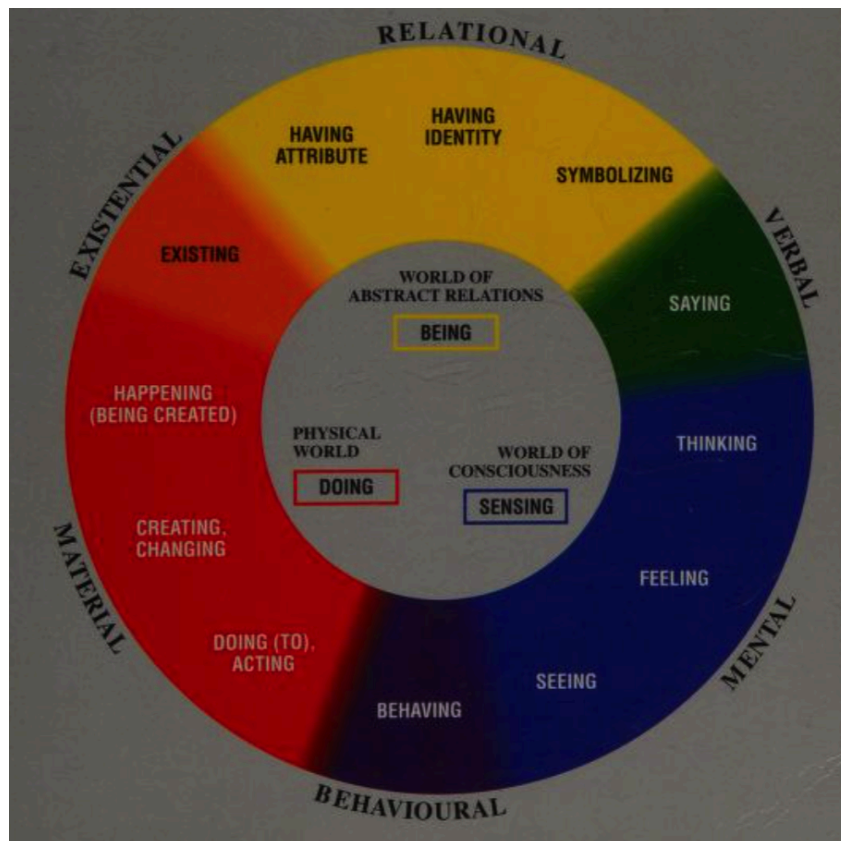
B) Language as a builder of meaning (functional view)

For Halliday, language is not just an abstract set of correct or incorrect grammatical rules, but a resource for constructing meaning. We choose words and structures based on what we want to communicate, to whom, and in what context. Like the IB, our Montessori tradition rejects rote memorization and decontextualized teaching. In the Montessori method, language is an extension of practical life and self-education: the child manipulates words and understands their functions to act actively in the environment. We learn language to intervene in the world, express our ideas, and take responsibility for building a more harmonious society.

C) Social Context and Global Mindset

Halliday's systemic-functional theory views language as a "social fact." Cultural context and situation shape how we communicate. As IB seeks to educate global citizens who demonstrate empathy and intercultural understanding, Halliday's theory validates multilingualism: it recognizes that students move through different social contexts and use different languages to construct their identity. This perspective converges directly with cosmic education and the education for peace of the Montessori tradition. By understanding that language is a collective heritage of humanity, our students are encouraged, through daily practices of grace and courtesy, to move between English (as a lingua franca that unites the global community) and their mother tongues (as an expression of their identity and history). Thus, multilingualism is experienced as an element of interconnection, mutual respect, and acceptance of diversity.

Finally, by way of illustration, let us consider the "transitivity wheel" or "transitivity system" that organizes Halliday's systemic-functional grammar view. According to the author, it is the tool our mind uses to map and make sense of our experiences in the world, which are divided into different "processes" (verbs) that express who does what, for whom, and under what circumstances.



Source: Halliday, Mark, 1994.

Communicative practice in our institution is based on the wheel of transitivity, understood as a semiotic resource through which our students map and give meaning to their social experiences. The formulation of our educational environmental signage (corridor posters), for example, is intentionally planned based on this model, balancing material processes (collaborative actions and the use of English as a lingua franca), mental processes (attitudes of empathetic listening and respect for mother tongues), and relational processes (consolidation of the identity of global citizens). This discursive approach converges with the refinement of language proposed by the Montessori tradition, in which grammatical structure ceases to be an end in itself and becomes a conscious instrument of self-education, coexistence, and cultural mediation.

3. Pedagogical Principles of Linguistic Development;

Beyond institutional and pedagogical principles, it is important to highlight the pedagogical principles of our school, which understands that success in linguistic and academic development is promoted through an integrated cycle of four critical pedagogical dimensions. These dimensions guide teaching practice in designing learning experiences that transform language into a living resource for meaning-making (Halliday), respecting the student's pace and autonomy (Montessori):

A) Activating Prior Understanding

Our faculty always seeks, whenever possible, to connect new concepts and linguistic structures to prior experiences, cultural repertoire, and the student's existing linguistic knowledge. For Halliday, this refers to the student's cultural and situational context, where meaningful learning occurs when the new input makes sense within the world map the student already possesses. For Montessori, this activation connects to the concept of the absorbent mind and the preparation of the rational mind. The teacher acts as a guide who observes the student's level of development and current interest, using what they already master as a basis for new explorations.

B) Methodological Scaffolding (Scaffolding Meaning)

In our teaching-learning routine, we seek to use strategies and tools such as graphic organizers, visual stimuli, tactile resources, pedagogical differentiation, and work in small groups to help the student perform tasks that he or she cannot yet perform completely independently. In Halliday's view, this is seen as a necessary support for the student to move safely between the different processes of the wheel of transitivity (material, mental, and relational), allowing him or her to understand and produce complex discourses. For Montessori, pedagogical scaffolding is the essence of the prepared environment and Montessori concrete materials, structured with "error control" and the isolation of difficulties, serving precisely as a physical and conceptual support that allows the student to move towards independence.

C) Linguistic Expansion (Extending Language)

We intentionally offer opportunities for students to encounter, practice, and internalize a progressively more sophisticated, structured, and formal vocabulary, migrating from everyday language to Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP). For Halliday, this is the materialization of the concept of learning about language and learning through language, already pointed out in this document. Students expand their potential for linguistic choices to adapt to different academic and social contexts. From a Montessori perspective, we see the process of linguistic refinement in which the school stimulates the "appetite for complex

words and concepts," offering a rich environment where academic Portuguese and English develop through scientific investigation and rational imagination.

D) Affirming Identity

We value the promotion of a safe socio-emotional and cultural environment that values, respects, and welcomes all languages and origins of students. The goal is to strengthen self-esteem, the feeling of belonging, and promote additive multilingualism, in which the aim is not to replace the mother tongues of our students, but to integrate them into new languages. Thus, with Halliday, we recognize language as the main factor in the construction of identity and a social fact: validating our student's language is validating their existence and their voice in the school community. With Montessori, we see the practical application of education for peace and the lessons of grace and courtesy. By designing informative environmental signage that encourages English as a lingua franca in the hallways, but guides openness and respect to listen to colleagues in other languages, we are teaching peaceful coexistence and respect for individuality. Positive self-image and mutual respect are the basis for the development of the global citizen who will transform society.

4. Institutional Principles and Actions

A) Dynamic and Collaborative Action

Our institution's language policy is a living, practical, and constantly evolving document. It is developed and reviewed collaboratively by a committee that includes all community stakeholders: teachers, pedagogical leadership, families, students, and librarians. This periodic review ensures that the guidelines keep pace with sociocultural transformations and the emerging needs of our school community.

B) Involvement of community agents and shared responsibility

In our view, the success of our students' linguistic development lies in the principle of shared responsibility (teachers, students, staff, and families). The school actively involves families in mapping and planning the students' linguistic profile, ensuring a shared vision of academic and formative goals.

C) Language teaching and learning fronts

Our goal is to continuously structure fronts dedicated both to strengthening the mother tongue and to proficiency in the foreign/additional language, promoting additive multilingualism and a sense of curricular belonging. In this sense, we

seek to promote continuous actions to achieve this goal, such as: customized learning approaches to enable theoretical learning and community/curricular belonging; offering language leveling classes; lectures and language immersion weeks for teachers and staff during the curricular planning and language policy review phases.

D) Institutional Committee and Student Union Role

This document is managed by an institutional committee, composed of representatives from the pedagogical team and school management, responsible for collecting data, analyzing practices, and proposing adjustments. This committee conducts periodic reviews of the policy, considering evidence collected in meetings with families, academic results, and emerging demands from the community.

Below, you can see the actions planned by each of the committees in our school community involved in the continuous development of our language policy.

Institutional Committee on Language Policy	
Element	Description
Structure	Composed of pedagogical coordination, IB coordination, and teaching staff.
Objective	To continuously monitor, evaluate, and revise language policy, ensuring coherence between language development and pedagogical practices.
Responsibilities	- Analyze data from students and families - Identify emerging language needs - Propose pedagogical and institutional adjustments - Ensure alignment with IB and BNCC (Brazilian National Curriculum Base) - Develop and implement a unified institutional language rubric, applicable to different areas of knowledge, focusing on the development of students' academic language.
Instruments of action	Planning meetings, training weeks, analysis of academic data, collaborative development of assessment instruments.
Evidence	Internal reports, meeting minutes, pedagogical action plans, and documented and applied institutional rubrics.

Student Union	
Element	Description
Structure	Represented by the Student Union, with the participation of high school students.
Objective	To ensure that students are actively listened to regarding their linguistic, academic, and sociocultural needs within the IBDP context.
Responsibilities	- To highlight difficulties related to the use of the language of instruction

	- To contribute insights into the linguistic load of the subjects - To participate in discussions about inclusive and equitable practices - To collaborate in promoting initiatives that value multilingualism
Instruments of action	Regular meetings with the coordination team, student assemblies, and institutional feedback sessions.
Evidence	Minutes of meetings, records of suggestions, action plans of the student union.

Participation of families and the school community as a whole.	
Element	Description
Structure	Participation through institutional processes (admission, meetings, workshops, and ongoing communication).
Objective	To collect information about the linguistic profile of students and promote alignment between school and family regarding the demands of the IBDP (Brazilian Institute of Linguistic Development).
Responsibilities	- To inform the student about their linguistic repertoire during the admission process - To participate in meetings and training sessions - To support the development of academic language in the home environment - To contribute with feedback on linguistic needs
Instruments of action	- Admission forms (language profile) - Periodic meetings with supervisors - Lectures and workshops explaining the IBDP - Immersion sessions throughout the academic year
Evidence	Completed forms, attendance lists, meeting records, shared support materials.

Having knowledge of these actions, we suggest that at least four structured interaction sessions be held with families (or family representatives from each class) throughout the school year, ensuring continuous monitoring of students' linguistic development and alignment with the academic demands of IBDP.

We provide a work schedule below.

Step	Action	Frequency	Objective	Connection with IBDP
Admission	Language Profile Form	1 time (upon enrollment)	Map the student's linguistic repertoire and use of languages in the family context	Identify possible support needs for learning an additional language
Start of the school year	Initial meeting with families (IBDP Orientation)	Once a year	Present the program structure and academic expectations	Explain the IBDP's linguistic requirements, including formal written production, Extended

				Essay (EE), and Internal Assessments (IA)
1st semester	Training workshop for families	1 time per semester (2nd year)	Supporting families in understanding the linguistic development of students	Guiding them on how to support reading, writing and organization of ideas required in Special Education and Advanced Learning
Throughout the year	Follow-up meetings (individual/group)	2 times a year	Share academic and linguistic progress	Monitor the development of academic language skills necessary for EE and A
Throughout the year	Thematic lectures / immersion meetings	1 to 2 times per year	Discussing multilingualism, identity and inclusion	Relating sociocultural aspects of language to academic performance at IBDP
End of the school year	Reflection and feedback meeting with families	Once a year	Collect feedback and evaluate institutional practices	Support adjustments to language policy based on demands observed in the development of EE, IA and other academic productions

Conclusion

In short, the actions promoted by the language department in our institution transcend the technical and academic mastery of languages: they form the basis for building a truly connected and co-responsible school culture, promoting an international mindset. By aligning systemic-functional theory with our Montessori tradition, we transform communication into a daily exercise of active citizenship. In this way, by adopting English as an inclusive lingua franca and embracing multilingualism with empathy, our students understand that language is the ultimate tool for social intervention. Thus, a community is consolidated in which responsibility for the world we live in, care for, and build is fully shared by all.