

**MULTILINGUAL PEDAGOGY IN FINNISH EDUCATION:  
AN ANALYSIS OF THE NATIONAL CORE CURRICULUM  
FOR BASIC EDUCATION AND TEACHER EDUCATION IN  
THE UNIVERSITY OF JYVÄSKYLÄ**

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<p>Tiivistelmä - Abstract</p> <p>Globalisoituvassa maailmassa monikielisyys voidaan nähdä niin voimavarana kuin myös yksilön vahvuutena ja monipuolisena resurssina. Maahanmuuton ansiosta monikielisten oppilaiden määrä on lisääntynyt Suomen kouluissa. Kysymys kuuluukin, millaisia valmiuksia tulevaisuuden opettajilla eli nykyisillä opettajaopiskelijoilla on liittää omaan pedagogiseen ammattitaitoonsa monikielisyyttä sekä kielitietoisuutta.</p> <p>Tutkimukseni tarkastelee Suomen perusopetuksen opetussuunnitelman perusteita (Opetushallitus: 2014) monikielisen pedagogiikan näkökulmasta. Lisäksi tutkin millaisia valmiuksia opettajaopiskelijoille mahdollisesti annetaan Jyväskylän yliopiston opettajankoulutuslaitoksella. Tutkin eritoten, miten monikielisyden sekä kielitietoisuuden käsitteet tuodaan esille perusopetuksen opetussuunnitelman perusteiden (Opetushallitus, 2014) sisällöissä, sekä miten monikielinen pedagogiikka on läsnä opettajankoulutuksen sisällöissä. Aineiston analyysi noudattaa laadullisen tutkimuksen periaatteita, joten keskityn tutkimuksessani havainnoimaan aineistosta nousevia erilaisia ilmiöitä sekä niiden välisiä merkityksiä.</p> <p>Tutkielmani tulokset osoittavat monikielisen pedagogiikan olevan yksi keskeisimpiä sisältöjä nykyisessä perusopetuksen opetussuunnitelmassa sekä Jyväskylän yliopiston opettajankoulutuksen kulmakivistä. Kuitenkin, jotta nämä asiat tulisivat laajemmin tietoisuuteen, tarvittaisiin opettajien yhteistyötä sekä laajamittaista rakenteiden muutosta yhteiskunnallisella tasolla.</p>	
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION.....	4
2	MULTILINGUALISM IN FINNISH EDUCATION .....	5
2.1	Multilingualism and multilingual pedagogy .....	5
2.2	Finnish National Core Curriculum for Basic Education and its purposes .....	7
2.3	Language Awareness and Multilingual Pedagogy in the context of teacher education .....	9
3	THE PRESENT STUDY.....	12
3.1	Research questions and aim of the study .....	12
3.2	Data and data collection.....	12
3.3	Methods of analysis .....	14
4	FINDINGS .....	15
4.1	Multilingualism in Finnish national core curriculum for basic education .....	15
4.2	Multilingual pedagogy in teacher education in the University of Jyväskylä.....	18
4.3	Connections between the two data.....	21
5	CONCLUSION .....	24
	BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	26

In our modern world, due to increased immigration numbers, schools and classrooms are more diverse than ever before. In the Finnish context, the migration gains of Finland grew for the second year in a row in the year of 2020 (OFS, 2021). Consequently, these migrant students bring a variety of languages to the classrooms, and often these languages differ from those spoken by their classroom teachers (Garcia, 2008). As Aalto et al. (2019) emphasise “the baseline principle of all education is student-centeredness”, questions can be asked about whether future classroom teachers are able to utilise all the languages of their pupils. How are future teachers able to include multilingual pedagogical practices into their teaching? These issues are usually looked at from the perspective of language teachers in the context of language awareness, which according to the Association for Language Awareness (ALA) signifies “explicit knowledge about language, and conscious perception and sensitivity in language learning, language teaching and language use.” García (2008) argues that because of the increase of multilingual pupils, we should move our focus from only language teachers to all teachers in today’s world. As demonstrated by Repo (2020), this is supported in the Finnish National Core Curriculum for Basic Education, where it is emphasised that every teacher, regardless of their specialty, is a language teacher in their own subject. (EDUFI, 2016) Therefore, it is clear that there is a need to discover diverse approaches on how to prepare future teachers into understanding that language awareness is for language teachers and awareness of language is for all teachers alike (García, 2008).

With this in mind, I wanted to study how Finnish teacher education in the University of Jyväskylä responds to the issues of language awareness and multilingualism by focusing on pre-service classroom teacher education. I interviewed an experienced teacher educator regarding these topics. Furthermore, this thesis explores the Finnish National Core Curriculum for Basic Education, as I wanted to examine how multilingual pedagogy and practices are implemented and supported in the guiding national document.

It is interesting and important to study these issues, as according to Putz (2018) there are only a few studies of multilingualism in the context of curricula (for example Nunan 1988; Leung 2014) and for that reason there is a clear need for research in this area of study. In the Finnish context, there are studies written in this area for example by Putz (2018) and Inha, Halvari & Kuukka (2021).

## 2 MULTILINGUALISM IN FINNISH EDUCATION

In this section the key concepts of multilingualism, multilingual pedagogy, language awareness and teacher education in Finland are explained. Relevant theoretical information from previous research about these subjects are given and connected to the context of the thesis. In the present study the abbreviation “FNCCBE” is used when referring to the Finnish National Core Curriculum for Basic Education (2016). Even though the Finnish version of the FNCCBE was published in 2014, in this thesis the English version that was published in 2016 is used instead.

### 2.1 Multilingualism and multilingual pedagogy

“Multilingualism” is defined by the Merriam-Webster dictionary as the usage and the ability to use several languages equally. A large variety of definitions of the term “multilingualism” have been introduced in previous research. For example, Martin (2018) defines the term “multilingualism” as the ability to speak more than one language but also the individual's decision to identify with different languages in versatile situations. In addition, Okal (2014) defines “multilingualism” as a speaker's capability to express themselves in different languages. Okal (2014) also emphasises that co-existence of several languages, whether official or unofficial, within a society is a demonstration of multilingualism. Another baseline to previous definitions is given by Martin (2018), who clarifies that multilingualism should be seen as a tool to represent the phenomenon where languages are continuously transforming and evolving in social situations. Throughout the present study “multilingualism” is understood by combining the aforementioned definitions and perspectives of Martin (2018) and Okal (2014) as the term indicates both the phenomenon of language usage and also the linguistic resource that every individual has.

Because of globalisation and consequently increased multilingualism, pupils in Finland are more linguistically and culturally diverse than ever before and for this reason, Finland has experienced changes in its educational system (Repo, 2020). As demonstrated by Szabó et al. (2021) multilingualism in Finland is frequently approached via two concepts: language awareness and multilingual pedagogy. In the school context language awareness signifies the

teachers' knowledge of the language of their subject, e.g., the subject-specific knowledge such as the terminology, and its use in education. Additionally, multilingual pedagogy encourages the simultaneous use of various languages in classrooms, thus all of the students' linguistic abilities are used as a resource (Honko & Mustonen, 2018; Moate & Szabó, 2018, cited in Szabó et al. 2021).

As mentioned above, multilingual pedagogy is usually connected to language awareness, as language awareness is part of multilingual pedagogy. According to FNCCBE (2016: 29) language awareness is based on the fact that the central significance of languages is recognised in all actions of the school. This indicates that all languages should be acknowledged and appreciated as well as seen as natural part of the school's working culture. Language awareness highlights the fact that every subject in school has its own language and terminology, and therefore in a language aware school every teacher is both a linguistic model for the students and also a language teacher in their own area of expertise. In language aware education the cooperation between teachers is emphasised (FNCCBE, 2016: 29). In addition, Karppinen and Kyckling (2021) underline the significance of linguistic representation in schools. Because of the increasing number of multilingual learners in Finnish schools, Karppinen and Kyckling (2021) state that it is extremely important to find diverse ways to acknowledge and utilise multilingual practices, such as translanguaging in education. Subsequently, Moate (2017) states that recognising the various and versatile ways to use languages as a resource in education is also an example of language awareness.

For the purpose of the present study, "multilingual pedagogy" is viewed as a variety of pedagogical methods where teachers are aware of and acknowledge their students' languages and linguistic abilities and utilise multiple languages in their teaching in order to help the learning of their students. Several papers have been written that emphasise and support multilingual pedagogy in education, for instance Catalano and Hamann (2016), Hélot and Laoire (2011), Iman and Pietilä (2018) and Okal (2014). As Iman and Pietilä (2018) state the students' possible linguistic diversity should be viewed as a resource and improving learners' awareness of their linguistic abilities supports their learning. Similarly, Catalano and Hamann (2016) demonstrate that multilingual pedagogy acknowledges all the opportunities and advantages that students' linguistic repertoire could have, if supported by linguistically

sensitive teachers. Kirsch et al (2020: 73) highlight that linguistically responsive teachers have an excellent knowledge base for teaching multilingual learners. On the other hand, it is equally important to remember, as demonstrated by Okal (2014), that multilingual pedagogies are beneficial for every student, not just those who are multilingual. For instance, a supportive learning environment where more than one language is present not only strengthens the students' intellectual flexibility and creativity, but also develops the acquisition of intercultural communication and interaction skills (Okal, 2014).

Many scholars encourage teachers to use multiple languages in classroom environments. As an example, Moate (2016) describes that using languages within education is an excellent opportunity to cultivate understanding of different cultures. Appreciating diversity contributes to the understanding of multilingualism and to the recognition of value that versatile viewpoints and languages have (Moate, 2016). As discussed above, understanding the diversity of students' languages can be the key element in supporting students' learning as noted by Hélot (2016, cited in Kirsch et al. 2020: 20), who illustrates that teachers should have an open-minded stance concerning all languages present, and utilise students' linguistic resources in their pedagogical practices. In fact, not only do multilingual pedagogy approaches improve cognitive learning but also recognise the importance of emotions and motivation (Kirsch et al, 2020: 19). Consequently, the need for multilingualism-sensitivity in curriculum development is encouraged (e.g., in Cummins, 1986, cited in Kirsch et al., 2020: 51). Moreover, as stated by the European Commission (2009, cited in Repo, 2020), societies are required to meet the expectations of multilingual learners, and therefore prioritise language awareness and multilingual pedagogy when developing their educational policies.

## **2.2 Finnish National Core Curriculum for Basic Education and its purposes**

In Finland all education is based on the laws and amendments of Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture (MEC) and those are valid on the national level. Further, the Finnish National

Agency for Education<sup>1</sup> (EDUFI), an independent administration under the supervision of the MEC, is in charge of preparing and putting into action the documents containing Finnish National Core Curriculum for Basic Education (EDUFI, 2016). FNCCBE (2016) is the current guideline in comprehensive education. It contributes the foundation for teaching in all Finnish schools (Honko & Mustonen, 2018: 4). For context, the Finnish curriculum was modernised in Finland in 2014 and it was written in Finnish. The FNCCBE was translated into English version in 2016. The contents in both versions are identical. As presented in the FNCCBE (2016: 9), the aim of basic education is to provide high quality of teaching for pupils, and to create learning conditions that support the growth, interest, motivation, and development of the pupils.

In order to understand how Finnish education works, it is necessary to understand the content of the core curriculum. The FNCCBE (2016) introduces the general objective of education, and enhances the different values, goals, and methods for learning. One significant aspect of the FNCCBE, is that it also describes the aims and objectives of specific subjects such as mathematics and arts (EDUFI, 2016). Another key point is raised by Lavonen (2017), who states that the FNCCBE specifies aims, objectives and core competencies in each subject and the cross-curricular topics. Even though the curriculum lists primary concepts in each subject, it is not obligatory, but a suggestion to be modified by the teachers (Lavonen, 2017). This is demonstrated in EDUFI's official statements (2022) about the FNCCBE, where local curricula are highlighted. As stated by EDUFI (2022) the FNCCBE is the shared baseline that provides the common foundation for education that enhances equality in education throughout the country. Each education provider uses the basis of FNCCBE and modify its contents for local needs and interests. EDUFI (2022) emphasises that the curriculum provides active and flexible support for teaching and learning.

Regarding the core curriculum, EDUFI (2022) states that the purpose of the FNCCBE is to allow school culture and school pedagogy to enhance, and to improve the quality of the learning process and outcome. EDUFI (2022) illustrates this clearly within the FNCCBE; the objectives and contents in each subject are connected to the school culture. Underlying values and

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<sup>1</sup> Formerly known as “The Finnish National Board of Education” or FNBE. Previous research and studies use different citations, more recent papers use EDUFI

conception of learning are highlighted. Equally important function for these guidelines, according to EDUFI (2022) is “to guarantee that the knowledge and abilities of Finnish pupils will remain at a strong level in the future”. Further, the teacher's purpose, according to EDUFI (2022) is to help and guide the pupils for lifelong learning, which can be achieved by acknowledging the individual differences in learning and modifying their teaching for each individual pupil. Therefore, the FNCCBE is also used as a pedagogical guideline in Finland in order to develop its education and teaching methods (EDUFI, 2022). In Finland teacher education is based in the curricula of each university that provides teacher education, and those curricula are designed on basis of the FNCCBE.

### **2.3 Language Awareness and Multilingual Pedagogy in the context of teacher education**

Certainly, language awareness and multilingual pedagogy are essential parts of multilingual education. But as these phenomena are relatively new, it is necessary to question how Finnish teacher education programs prepare future teachers for understanding multilingual and language aware pedagogical practices. In fact, Jalkanen (2011) asks if the modern teacher educational structures support the need for multilingual expertise of the future or of the past. García (2008) states that because of the complexity of multilingualism, teacher education programs have to do more than just adjust the old practices that they have done in the past. As Jalkanen, Pitkänen-Huhta and Taalas (2012:17) suggest, the teacher educators have to provide teacher students with concrete examples of how traditional instruction can be adjusted and connected to the concrete needs of the present. Furthermore, García (2008) points out that most teacher education programs disregard the linguistic diversity of schools and educate the future teachers as if all students are going to be “native speakers of the dominant language of the nation” (García, 2008). For this reason, it is important to consider teacher education profoundly and to see the developmental needs of teacher education.

Mikkola (2017: 214) underlines that development of teacher education requires nationwide measures such as societal changes in attitudes towards multilingualism. Usually these are

complicated and demanding issues that the teacher education programs have necessarily not prepared for. As Jokinen et al. (2013) point out, the issue is in the lack of in-service training for teachers within the subject of multilingualism and multilingual pedagogy. Villegas (2018) states that the lack of preparation in multilingual pedagogies for teachers will affect the academic outcomes and future life chances of their students. Villegas (2018) strongly emphasises that all teachers, not just language teachers or bilingual teachers, must be prepared and trained for today's linguistically diverse and enriched classrooms. Not providing future teachers with the appropriate preparation also raises concerns about educational equity (Villegas, 2018). It is important to acknowledge that according to Sahlberg (2011) and Niemi, Toom and Kallioniemi (2012) (cited in Lavonen, 2017), the promotion of educational equality has been a crucial objective of Finnish education policy. As declared in the Finnish Basic Education Act 628/1998 "the aim of education shall further be to secure adequate equity in education throughout the country" (FBEA 628/1998: 1). Moreover, according to Mikkola (2017: 214) the purpose of teacher education is "to ensure that teachers with expertise and competence are available on all educational levels" which in the context of educational equality and multilingualism indicates the availability of linguistically responsive teachers.

Overall, considering multilingual pedagogical practices in teaching supports educational equality. As Bergroth et al. (2021) explain, multilingual pedagogy in practice not only indicates the use of multiple languages in all school subjects, but it also requires an understanding of how teaching can be enhanced and modified for all learners. According to Bergroth et al. (2021) the generalisation of multilingual pedagogies demands reconceptualising the role of language and its possibilities in all education - teachers and teacher educators alike have to be aware of the language within their own subject but also of the languages present in surrounding classrooms and in the lives of students outside school context. Bergroth et al. (2021) further highlight that there is a large need for in-service training about multilingual pedagogies in order to develop professionally.

As stated by Kansanen (2003: 86), the purpose of teacher education programs is to secure the competence of teachers and provide the necessary qualities and experience to ensure lifelong teaching careers. For these reasons it is important to reflect how in-service teachers feel about these issues for the benefit of their professional growth. In their research, Jokinen et al. (2013:

61) mentioned that when estimating the importance of different skill requirements for teachers in the future, most participants in their study emphasised the general pedagogical preparedness - however the importance of multilingual and multicultural competence was also highlighted. In addition, Jokinen et al. (2013; 61) noted that the participants in their study felt that even though there is further training available regarding teaching multilingual children, they still do not have the appropriate abilities to modify their teaching to the needs of those students. Similarly, the results of Jalkanen, Pitkänen-Huhta and Taalas (2012: 15) study report that neither the teacher participants nor the teacher educator participants of their study believe that the current in-service training meets the needs of multilingual students. These results of previous research further demonstrate that the required linguistic and cultural knowledge for teaching multilingual students might be limited or non-existent and that is why the development of teacher education is needed.

### **3 THE PRESENT STUDY**

#### **3.1 Research questions and aim of the study**

The aim of this study is 1) to analyse teacher education in the context of multilingual pedagogy and how the ideology executed in FNCCBE meets the reality of actual class teacher education in the University of Jyväskylä. Further, the aim of this study is 2) to examine how multilingual education is promoted in the FNCCBE and in what ways it is included in teacher education practices in the University of Jyväskylä, in order to illuminate the relevance of these topics and show how they are carried out. For these reasons, the study concentrates on the following questions:

1) How is multilingual pedagogy presented in the current Finnish National Core Curriculum for Basic Education (2016)?

2) In what ways does pre-service teacher education in the University of Jyväskylä provide teacher students opportunities for developing their skills in multilingual pedagogy?

#### **3.2 Data and data collection**

Altogether, the data consist of the Finnish National Core Curriculum for Basic Education (2016) - document and of an interview with a teacher educator in the University of Jyväskylä. The FNCCBE was researched thoroughly in order to collect the relevant data for the purpose of this study. The FNCCBE is not analysed in its entirety however, but only the parts and references that include multilingualism or multilingual pedagogy are analysed in this study. The original FNCCBE is published in 2014 in Finnish, but the English version published in 2016 was used in this thesis.

In the present study, different modes of the same document, the FNCCBE were used; the printed book and the PDF-files published on the internet that are available for everyone free of charge. Despite being consistent, the two modes were used for different reasons. Even though

the digital publication provides an easy access to information and a simple way to handle and mark down appropriate findings, there are some problems with it. For instance, the e-book version does not include page numbers within the text and moving back and forth between pages was challenging. Hardcover book version, on the other hand, has page numbers and it functions in an acceptable way. Then again, collecting single pieces of data and taking notes was more difficult, and therefore I had both the digital and the hardcover version of the FNCCBE at hand.

This thesis also includes an interview as a data set and as a data collecting method and has one (1) participant. The whole interview took approximately 35 minutes. The interview was organised with a contact meeting and was recorded with Zoom and with a mobile phone. The data is an audio recording. The participant was chosen and interviewed because of their expertise of the subject and their professional stance, they are an experienced teacher educator and teacher in the University of Jyväskylä. As there is only one participant, the results cannot be generalised to all universities in Finland as they bring up only one perspective of the subject. This study seeks to collect data which might help future studies realise different standpoints, for example raise awareness of the issues under research.

The format of the interview was semi-structured and therefore falls into the category of naturalism. Naturalism in interviews, according to Silverman (2014; p 173) means that the purpose is to generate data that gives legitimate and authentic insight about certain phenomena or people's experiences (Silverman, 2014; p 182). To achieve the naturalist standard, I, as the interviewer, asked open-ended pre-planned questions and offered the opportunity for the participant to express their viewpoints, observations, and experiences. Before the interview I explored themes and contents that could be relevant for the purpose of interview and discussion. The participant was asked to give consent to the interview, and also permission to use the contents of the interview in the present study. During the interview, questions based on the theoretical framework and also questions that are associated directly to the pre-service teacher education in University of Jyväskylä were asked. The interview was conducted in Finnish and the data collected from the interview are transcribed and translated into English.

In addition, as Hirsjärvi and Hurme (2011) explain, an interview is a great method for when

the researcher wants to juxtapose the issues raised in the interview to the theoretical framework found. Further, Hirsjärvi and Hurme (2011) explain that wanting to deepen the knowledge about certain phenomena is a reasonable motivation to conduct an interview. As I want to deepen my understanding of multilingualism in Finnish education system, the interview is therefore a suitable method to collect data.

### **3.3 Methods of analysis**

This is a qualitative study, and the analysis of the interview and the FNCCBE will be conducted by using qualitative content analysis. Qualitative content analysis is used in research when the focus of the data is on the content of the data. According to Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2018) the characteristics of qualitative research are empirical and for example can be based on observations. In qualitative research, the collection of data and methods of analysis are emphasised and qualitative data and topics in qualitative research are not measured, in contrast to quantitative research (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2018). Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2018) also highlight that all kinds of theoretical premises can be modified within qualitative content analysis. This is the most suitable method for my study as I want to explore the phenomenon of multilingual pedagogy in the context of curriculum and pre-service teacher education in order to discover possible similarities or connections between the two. Subsequently, the analysis focuses on how multilingualism and language awareness are presented in different contexts in the FNCCBE and how the findings can be connected to the theoretical framework. Some particular excerpts are analysed more precisely since they are emphasized within the text more frequently than others.

The participants answers were shortened in the English transcription but in a way where the contents of the answers stay intact. In the transcription the participant was pseudonymised and some specific references (e.g., personal information about the participant) were removed, so that the participant cannot be identified from the data.

## 4 FINDINGS

So far, the background of this study has focused on multilingual pedagogy, Finnish teacher education and has briefly explained how FNCCBE operates. The following section, “Findings”, will combine the three aspects and discuss how multilingualism is visible in the FNCCBE, and what implications it could have on teacher education. First, I demonstrate findings from the FNCCBE by focusing on certain phenomena, such as how multilingual pedagogical practices are implemented in certain subjects within the document. Similarly, the data collected from the interview is analysed in the second part of this section. Finally, a comparative analysis between the two data collected organises similarities and differences within the findings of the two subsections.

In FNCCBE the terms “plurilingualism” and “multilingualism” were both used. Throughout this thesis “multilingualism” has been used, so I will continue to use it to be more coherent.

### 4.1 Multilingualism in Finnish national core curriculum for basic education

In its entirety, multilingualism and multilingual education are highlighted in the FNCCBE. The FNCCBE acknowledges the multilingualism of a community but also of an individual member of the community. This is illustrated clearly in FNCCBE (2016; 29); “*One manifestation of cultural diversity is multilingualism. Each community and community member are multilingual*”. Multilingual pedagogy and language awareness are linked in the FNCCBE to language education and emphasised as cultural diversity of schools. As Hélot and Ô Laoire (2011) explain, pedagogical choices that emphasise using several languages in versatile situations, rather than implementing the separation of languages, should be encouraged. The excerpt below further supports this statement:

*Excerpt 1: “Parallel use of various languages in the school’s daily life is seen as natural, and languages are appreciated. A community with language-awareness discusses attitudes towards languages and linguistic communities and understands the key importance of language for learning, interaction, and cooperation and for the building of identities and socialisations. -- In a language-aware school, each adult is a linguistic model and also a teacher of the language typical of the subject they teach.” (FNCCBE, 2016: 29)*

In general, the FNCCBE accentuates teaching that supports multilingual and multicultural competence. Ennser-Kananen, Ilkkanen and Skinnari (2021: 6) point out that the linguistic and

cultural identities of pupils are supported definitely throughout the FNCCBE. Furthermore, the FNCCBE demonstrates that the diverse linguistic backgrounds of pupils should be utilised, and multilingualism should be viewed as a resource in teaching and learning. Excerpts two (2), three (3) and four (4) confirm these statements:

(2): *“The pupils are guided to become aware of the multi-layered linguistic and cultural identities they and others have. Teaching and learning support the plurilingualism of pupils by utilising all languages.” (FNCCBE, 2016: 110)*

(3): *“Plurilingualism is utilised as a resource. The diverse linguistic background of the pupils is taken into consideration in the teaching and learning of mother tongue and literature as well as in other subjects.” (FNCCBE, 2016: 115)*

(4): *“The pupils’ interest in the linguistic and cultural diversity of the school community and the surrounding world is supported, and they are encouraged to communicate in authentic environments. At school, the pupils are guided to appreciate other languages, their speakers, and different cultures.” (FNCCBE, 2016: 135)*

Additionally, excerpts five (5) and six (6) below also demonstrate how the FNCCBE prioritises multilingual education and how using languages in versatile situations in and outside school enhances the pupils’ language proficiency and multiliteracy. Similarly, these excerpts corroborate the ideas of Aalto, Mustonen, Järvenoja & Saario (2019) who explain that Finnish Core Curriculum emphasises multilingual awareness as a natural part of school life, including learning and teaching. Multilingual pupils are encouraged to utilise all the languages they know in versatile manners and situations and in all school functions (Aalto, Mustonen, Järvenoja & Saario, 2019).

(5): *“Plurilingual competence develops at home, at school and during leisure time. --The basic principle of language instruction at school is using languages in different situations. It strengthens the pupils’ language awareness and parallel use of different languages as well as the development of multiliteracy. The pupils learn to make observations -- and interaction practices in different languages, to use the concepts of language knowledge --, and to utilise diverse ways of learning in different subjects.” (FNCCBE, 2016: 109, 170)*

(6): *“The objective is to guide the pupils to appreciate different languages and cultures and to promote multilingualism, thus reinforcing the pupils’ linguistic awareness and metalinguistic skills. School work may include multilingual teaching situations where the teachers and pupils use all languages they know.” (FNCCBE, 2016: 90)*

Language awareness in FNCCBE is referred to, as stated by Moate and Szabó (2018), a key component in presenting language in and throughout education. In addition, the perspective that every teacher is a language teacher in their own subject is recognized and highlighted as demonstrated in excerpt seven (7):

*(7): Each subject has its own language -- The languages and symbol systems of different fields of knowledge open up different [perspectives] viewpoints to the same phenomenon. The instruction progresses from everyday language to the language of conceptual thinking. In a language-aware school, each adult is a linguistic model and also a teacher of the language typical of the subject they teach.” (FNCCBE, 2016: 29)*

Another important finding from the FNCCBE regarding language awareness, reflects those of Honko and Mustonen (2018: 4) who state that language aware working principles should promote and enhance learning and the equality within the common school culture. This principle is emphasised clearly in excerpts eight (8) and nine (9):

*(8): “The purpose of the steering of basic education is to ensure the equality and high quality of education and to create favourable conditions for the pupils’ growth, development and learning.” (FNCCBE, 2016: 9)*

*(9): “Preconditions for providing instruction of different subjects -- are language awareness of instruction and an approach that takes language pedagogy into account. -- An illustrative and concrete approach, pupil-centred working approaches and interaction are highlighted in instruction.” (FNCCBE, 2016: 94)*

Interestingly, one striking observation that emerged during analysing the data was that even though language awareness is highlighted clearly in education and in all subjects as excerpt seven (7) indicates, there were no language aware aspects mentioned in other than language subjects, i.e., mathematics. In contrast to excerpt seven (7), language awareness is linked to only language education. In the FNCCBE (2016: 213-250) “*Growing into cultural diversity and language awareness*” is elevated as one of the headlines of core objectives in the instruction of every language other than Finnish. For each subject other than a language subject, there were mentions of objectives in knowing the terminology and essential concepts, but they were not directly considered as practising language awareness. For example, in FNCCBE (2016: 263), one specific assessment criteria for environmental studies states that “*--the pupil is able to describe the related phenomena using key concepts -- of environmental studies*”, which is a reference towards the language awareness within the subject, without indicating that it is a language aware practice.

As mentioned above, language awareness is directly related to language education in the FNCCBE. The correlation between language subjects in school and language awareness is not surprising though, as language awareness is part of every school subject, and therefore all language subjects also. But concerning foreign languages other than English, the excerpts 10 and 11 below demonstrate how FNCCBE takes them into account.

(10): *“The pupils learn [the Sami] language through language use situations -- that are characteristic of their age group. The task of instruction of [Sami] language and literature is to support, develop and enhance language awareness and linguistic observation skills and to strengthen the pupils’ linguistic identity.” (FNCCBE, 2016: 117)*

(11) *“The pupils learn [the Roma] language through language use situations -- that are characteristic of their age group. The task of instruction of [Roma] language and literature is to support, develop and enhance language awareness and linguistic observation skills and to strengthen the pupils’ linguistic identity.” (FNCCBE, 2016: 120)*

As these two examples demonstrate, the purpose of teaching in language education is to enhance and support the pupils’ language awareness and linguistic identities, which is something that is highlighted throughout the document. As declared by the European Commission (2019: C189/16) “Language-awareness in schools could include awareness and understanding of the literacy and multilingual competences of all pupils. Schools may distinguish between different levels of multilingual competence, depending on every learner’s circumstance, needs, abilities and interests” which, according to these data findings, is supported in the FNCCBE profoundly.

#### **4.2 Multilingual pedagogy in teacher education in the University of Jyväskylä**

The present study was designed to discover what kinds of opportunities pre-service teacher education in the University of Jyväskylä provides teacher students for developing their skills in multilingual pedagogy. First, themes discussed during the interview concerned multilingualism and language awareness and how they are present in the department of education in the University of Jyväskylä. Further, how the attitudes towards these issues might have changed over the years was also discussed. Regarding multilingualism, the participant reflected that for some reason a lot of people from multilingual backgrounds will not end up as students in the teacher education programs in the University of Jyväskylä.

(12) *“Well, I must say that multilingualism appears in the teacher education of the University of Jyväskylä very little. I myself have only encountered a few candidates with immigrant backgrounds in suitability interviews. And if some of them do apply, they somehow get eliminated and won’t end up as students in our department. In this regard, multilingualism as a resource does not get realised with teacher educators in any way.”*

As excerpt 12 demonstrates, the participant mentioned that because of aforementioned reasons, multilingualism appears only a little, and does not get realised accordingly with teacher

educators. On the other hand, the participant mentioned that multilingualism in teacher education is mostly visible in the source materials that are in English.

*(13): "Multilingualism appears in a lot of materials we read and deal with in English. But what always shocks me is that there are still quite many teacher students who come to study with weak English language skills, and it just makes me wonder how language teaching in schools produces these kinds of results still in the current decade that we live in. However, weak language skills could be a good motivator for why these people should come to study in the University of Jyväskylä."*

However, as excerpt 13 demonstrates, the participant raised concerns about the overall linguistic abilities of pre-service teacher students. This broadly reflects the observations of Hildén and Kantelinen (2012: 169) who state that even though in-service classroom teachers are professionals in pedagogy, they do not necessarily have enough expertise and knowledge in any foreign language themselves, or additionally know how to use multiple languages in their teaching. The participant in this study however suggested that the weak language skills could be the right motivation for applying into the teacher education programs of University of Jyväskylä. This indicates that studying in these programs in the University of Jyväskylä would improve the linguistic abilities, and therefore it is encouraged to apply to study.

Regarding language awareness, the participant stated that overall people view it positively, but the term is still unclear and undefined, even though the term appears within the studies a lot. Over the years, the conception of language awareness has evolved and in the subject teacher studies it varies with every teacher and their own pedagogical choices.

*(14): "Then with language awareness, I suppose people view it positively - but as a term it is still an undefined and unclear matter in our department. And everyone defines it differently. But it is a term that has been around in our studies a lot. It was actually grounded in 2005 -- and it has evolved through the years. Now in subject teacher studies different teachers collaborate and take different roles in connecting their own pedagogies. But I am afraid that even though there has been a big ambition to get it included coherently and smoothly in all our studies, there is still a lot of work to be done. In classroom teacher education, there is LAMP- orientation [students who specialise in Language Awareness and Multilingual Pedagogy] but it doesn't affect those teacher students who do not apply to that certain orientation. Something that is badly unfinished is how we could implement these issues comprehensively into the multidisciplinary studies of teachers which would be possible, but it would require a lot of resources."*

As shown in excerpt 14, the participant feels that there are still a lot of adjustments to be done in order to implement these concepts smoothly into all teacher student studies. Subsequently, the participant states that in multidisciplinary studies, which are for classroom teachers, executing these issues is badly unfinished and it would require a lot of resources in order to

implement them comprehensively. This exemplifies a common issue, which according Szabó et al. (2021) is a question of too slow decision making when comparing to the changes that are happening in the society.

Regarding the education on these themes within the pre-service teacher education, the participant mentioned that in the University of Jyväskylä, a website for educational purposes has been designed for the purpose of promoting Language Awareness systematically in the department of education.

*(15): "What raises knowledge about multilingualism and especially about Language Awareness is a website called "Language aware pathway in teacher education". This website was completed only last summer. There are language awareness activities provided to each academic study year implemented into the website. In addition, language awareness perspective is connected to each practical teacher training that the students have. Our students also write their own teacher growth folder, where they answer specific questions about language awareness. I would argue that with these practices, the promotion of these issues [language awareness etc.] is systematic, purposeful, and visible in our department."*

The department of education in the University of Jyväskylä has invested in providing versatile material for teacher students, and one demonstration of this is another website called "On a journey with a multilingual student" that is published in Finnish. The website provides lots of diverse material in multimodal panels, such as videos and audio tracks with concrete methods and practices for implementing multilingual pedagogy and language awareness into teaching. In addition, the website offers advice on how teachers could support the involvement and multilingual identity of every student (Aalto, Mustonen, Järvenoja & Saario, 2019). The participant explained during the interview why the department of education decided to create the website and for what purpose it was made. The purpose of it is to have high quality material available for everyone, pre-service teacher students and teacher educators alike, which is important in order to spread awareness more easily.

*(16): "The idea behind it is that the teacher educators [in the university of Jyväskylä] wanted to provide material that was not locked up somewhere, but that every basic degree teacher student could use. Then it was decided that the material should be made with high quality and available online for free. In our university there was an education initiative that provided enough resources to make the website possible."*

Finally, the discussion moved onto the participant's perceptions of teachers' abilities to put multilingual pedagogy into practice. As excerpt 17 demonstrates, the participant feels that unfortunately in some schools, teachers do still not acknowledge the multilingualism of classrooms and pupils. The interviewee states that some teachers do not see the importance of

the linguistic identities that their students could have, but then also explains that the acknowledgement might be an issue of insecurity.

*(17): “There is a particularly good expression in the Finnish language “kokemus opettaa” (“experience teaches”) but unfortunately that is not true in many cases. In fact, there might be schools [in Finland] where over the years there have been a lot of multilingual students but even still the teachers will not acknowledge or consider the native languages of the students. I also have interviewed teachers who do not see the relevance of why these languages are important and how they could support the multilingual identities of these students. Also, if a student has weak Finnish skills, then they might become “invisible” when it comes to class activity. They don’t get to participate, and the teacher does not have the ability to include them in the activities. It can become an insecurity for the teacher and that insecurity has an effect on the willingness to approach the student. Certainly, there are huge differences in schools, but education in these issues has not registered well.”*

As shown in the excerpt above, these issues are different in different schools, but overall, the knowledge about these matters are not well known. However, as the following excerpt (18) shows, the participant states that the blame is not on the individual teacher, but on the corporate culture of a school.

*(18): “In addition, I think this should be a part of the school's corporate culture, and individual teachers cannot be blamed. These issues should be discussed within the school community level, and they require long term cooperation between teachers, construction of practices and internal function inside school which could help the teachers to view the different subjects from contrasting perspectives. So, it is a big problem.”*

This example further supports the ideas of Bergroth et al. (2021) who state that for multilingual pedagogy to become a norm, more profound and systematic changes have to be made to the whole educational system. The participant mentioned this to be a big problem, which again is consistent with the statements of Bergroth et al. (2021) who point out that solving these issues are challenging, because they require a shared understanding among higher education institutes and teachers alike.

### **4.3 Connections between the two data**

Together, these findings provide meaningful insights about multilingualism in the FNCCBE and in the teacher education programs in the University of Jyväskylä. Further the findings predict how multilingual pedagogy might be carried through education to the future generations. One of the most striking parallels between the FNCCBE and the data collected from the interview was that both highlighted cooperation between teachers and versatile

learning functions in order to improve multilingual pedagogy in education. Practices that use versatile resources to produce communication and interaction are also emphasised in both data sets. Notably, the content in the following excerpt from the FNCCBE is mentioned 17 separate times within the document, which again highlights the importance of the aforementioned statements.

*FNCCBE: "Cooperation between teachers is needed in order to meet the objectives of multilingual and language education. Play, music, gamification, and drama are used to provide the pupils with opportunities for experimenting with their increasing language proficiency and also dealing with attitudes. A versatile range of communication channels and devices are used in the instructions." (FNCCBE, 2016: 214-426)*

*Interview: "Well the collaboration between teachers should increase. We have a lot of practices already, but a more phenomenon-driven studying where subjects would become integrated better; multilingual and language aware pedagogies would fit in nicely. Overall, the methods that activate the students. So, practices that support interaction and the usage of several multimodal resources produce more profound learning, understanding and capabilities to formulate thoughts. "*

Additionally, when asked about the FNCCBE, the participant reflected how multilingual pedagogy and language awareness are prioritised in the core curriculum, but the guidelines for implementing language aware aspects in i.e., assessment should be defined better.

*Interview: "Well it definitely is one of the cornerstones of the core curriculum so yeah it is certainly noted. But that alone is not enough. Finnish Agency for Education could give better guiding principles. More pedagogical perspective is needed [for example] regarding how language awareness could be implemented, especially in assessment and how it could be equal. The Finnish Agency of Education has not provided enough instructions on the practices of assessments and that is one issue where more practical models would be needed."*

The example above is parallel to the data collected from FNCCBE. Every mention of multilingualism, multilingual pedagogy or even to language awareness are almost superficial, as the guidelines and specifications for instruction practices are not explained thoroughly. For example, the following excerpt from the FNCCBE states what needs to be done in order to enhance the pupils' language awareness and multilingualism, but it does not clarify it or give more instructions on how the teacher could implement this in concrete class situations.

*FNCCBE: "The pupils increase their language awareness by observing spoken language and becoming familiar with written language through listening and reading - the pupils' multilingualism and parallel use of languages is taken into account." (FNCCBE, 2016: 120)*

However, as mentioned in the theoretical framework, even though following and following the FNCCBE is mandatory, it is more of an ideological situation for school to be in. Each school can interpret the concepts of FNCCBE for their own needs, for instance the concept of language awareness in each subject is different depending on the local focus in curricula. Furthermore, according to Hildén and Kantelinen (2012: 168) the FNCCBE supports the pedagogical freedom of teachers. By leaving room for modification, every teacher can adjust their teaching styles and practices according to every individual student's need and circumstances (Hildén & Kantelinen, 2012: 168). It is possible, therefore, that this is one of the reasons why the FNCCBE gives a broad outline of each objective and theme, rather than listing everything in detail.

## 5 CONCLUSION

The purpose of the present study was to examine how multilingual pedagogy is presented in Finnish national core curriculum and also teacher education in the University of Jyväskylä. As the findings in the previous section show, the relevance of multilingual pedagogy is acknowledged: multilingual and language aware aspects are reinforced in different functions of Finnish education. One of the more significant findings to emerge from this study was that in order to support the linguistically diverse classrooms, the individual teachers have to be prepared. As Villegas (2018) states, the lack of preparedness is usually the biggest issue why multilingualism might still be viewed as difficulty rather than as a resource. Equally, the participant reflected to issues within the corporate cultures of schools, and issues such as lack of knowledge in language aware and multilingual teaching, should be discussed within the school community level.

Additionally, mirroring these issues to teacher education, the uncertainty within policies and teachers' own abilities might also be one factor in why multilingual pedagogy might be unfamiliar or insecure. According to Honko and Mustonen (2018) one solution is to emphasise that all teachers should have the expertise and knowledge to create multilingual and language aware learning environments and all teacher education programs should prepare all teachers for supporting their students' linguistic resources. This is clearly supported in the FNCCBE (2016), where the statement that "all teachers are language teachers within their own subject" is accentuated. What can be observed from the findings is that the cooperation between different subjects and teachers are necessary preconditions for multilingual and language aware education to succeed. Further, this is supported by Cummins (2017: 113) who notes that working collaboratively and promoting instruction that transfers across different languages increases students' metalinguistic competence and overall enhances their academic development.

To reach a conclusion from the findings of the present study and from previous research, it is clear that solving issues on these matters require nationwide structural changes. As it was mentioned in the theoretical framework, there is a considerable need for in-service training about multilingual pedagogy. In fact, Luukkainen and Pulkkinen (2017: 252) state that the

Trade Union of Education in Finland has demanded that teacher education programs should provide more opportunities to specialise in teaching multilingual students. Although, as demonstrated by the participant, in the teacher education programs in the University of Jyväskylä there are actually lots of practices that promote multilingual and language aware dimensions of education. Websites such as “On a journey with a multilingual student” and “Language aware pathway in teacher education” are concrete materials that help teacher students in the University of Jyväskylä to develop their skills in multilingual pedagogy.

Contrary to expectations, this study did not find an explanation why in the FNCCBE language awareness is not defined more profoundly in subjects other than language subjects. As the participant in my interview points out, there is a need for further information and clarification regarding these issues within different aspects of teaching, such as assessment and instruction in different subjects. This is an important issue and further research should be undertaken to investigate how language awareness could be implemented in the present and future curricula. Another standpoint that should be focused on in future research would be to compare the opinions of pre- and in-service teachers from different parts of Finland about these issues. The present study provides interesting views of the phenomena of multilingual pedagogy in the context of curriculum and teacher education, but clearly more research within these themes is needed in order to fully understand the stance of multilingual education in Finland.

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