EXPLORING ONE'S MULTILINGUAL LANGUAGE AWARENESS – A MATERIAL PACKAGE FOR REMEDIAL FOREIGN LANGAUGE TEACHING

Titta Pentikäinen
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Department of Language and
Communication Studies
University of Jyväskylä
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Faculty	Department
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Author	
Titta Pentikäinen	

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Abstract

Oppilaiden kielitietoisuuden ja monikielisyyden tukeminen ovat perusopetuksen opetussuunnitelman perusteista (OPH 2016) kumpuavia tavoitteita, jotka eivät rajoitu pelkästään kielten luokkahuoneisiin, mutta niiden merkityksen voi sanoa korostuvan kieltenopiskelussa. Niitä kehittämällä voi myös auttaa oppilaita, jotka syystä tai toisesta kokevat kieltenopiskelun vaikeaksi tai epämotivoivaksi. Esimerkiksi metakielellisten ajattelutaitojen tai oman monikielisen varannon hyödyntämisen kehittyminen voi johtaa kieltenopiskelun sujuvoitumiseen, ja kieliin tai niiden käyttöön liittyvien asenteiden ja ennakkokäsitysten työstäminen voi parantaa opiskelumotivaatiota.

Tämä sivututkielma sisältää opettajan oppaan kielitietoisuutta ja omaa monikielisyyttä kehittävään tukiopetuskokonaisuuteen. Sen tavoitteena on kielitietoisuuden ja henkilökohtaisen monikielisyyden viitekehyksistä lähtien lähestyä tukiopetusta totuttua kokonaisvaltaisemmin tähdäten pitkäkestoisiin ja oppilaan toimijuutta kehittäviin tuloksiin.

Materiaali koostuu viidestä eri teemasta, joista kukin muodostaa oman noin 45 minuutin opetustuokion. Jokainen tuokio sisältää lämmittelytehtävän, varsinaisen aihetta käsittelevän harjoitteen ja kokoavan päätöstehtävän. Kaikissa tehtävissä tärkeässä osassa on kommunikaation kautta tapahtuva pohdiskelu ja reflektointi kielitietoisuuden herättämiseksi.

Materiaali pyrkii olemaan sovellettavissa vaihteleviin tarpeisiin; vaikka se on tehty englannin opetusmateriaaliksi, voi sitä hyvin soveltaa myös esimerkiksi ruotsin tukiopetukseen. Se ei myöskään ole suunnattu tietylle ikäluokalle, vaan soveltuu erityisesti kaikille yläkoulun luokille. Sovellettavuus onkin yksi materiaalin vahvuuksista, mutta toisaalta se jättää paljon vastuuta materiaalin soveltamisesta sitä käyttävälle opettajalle.

Keywords	
language awareness, multilingualism, plurilingualism, material package, remedial teaching	

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Additional information	

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1   INTRODUCTION

All pupils in the three final years of Finnish basic education are – at least theoretically – multilingual. They are learning at least two additional languages in school and part of them have language knowledge from outside of school context as well. However, there are pupils who face challenges in learning one or more additional languages. The reasons for these challenges vary from one pupil to another. For instance, some might have dyslexia or other learning difficulties while others might have challenges with motivation or self-regulation.

Teachers can use several methods to support the pupils with these challenges. Raising language awareness (LA), for instance, can help pupils acknowledge and understand language and its use. It might even support motivation as the pupils become aware of the reasons for grammar instruction, for instance. Another useful method is to use a multilingual approach to language learning by comparing the similarities of different languages and thus helping the learners to use their whole multilingual repertoire to learn other languages.

Even though methods such as described above can be useful for all learners, it is sometimes effective to direct them to the learners with specific challenges in FL learning. The Finnish National Core Curriculum for Basic Education (NCC) (2016: 61) names remedial teaching as one of the forms of support defined in the Basic Education Act and it is probably the most commonly used support form carried out outside of regular lessons. NCC (2016: 72-73) states that remedial teaching should provide pupils with different and versatile approaches to learning the content. It also allows different flexible teaching arrangements to meet the pupils' needs.

Thus, this thesis will apply multilingualism and language awareness as methods in short-term remedial teaching. Both multilingualism and LA are extensive terms that can and have been interpreted in different ways by different scholars and other users. In this thesis, I understand multilingualism most importantly as a personal resource of a learner. The meaning of LA in this work is mostly related to James and Garrett's (1991: 12-17) definition of the five domains of LA: affective, social, power, cognitive and performance. In the following chapters, I will define both terms in more detail.

Even though language awareness and multilingualism can be discussed separately, there is a clear connection between them and one could say that they mutually support one another. NCC also mostly discusses the two together, for instance when introducing the principles that guide the development of school culture (p. 28). In addition, NCC acknowledges the two as the main aims of language education together with multiliteracy (p. 324).

The material package attached to the thesis is a teacher's guide to remedial teaching. It consists of five units that approach challenging language learning and use situations through a method that aims in developing language awareness and activating the multilingual resources of the pupil.

In the following chapters 2 and 3, I will first define language awareness and multilingualism and discuss them from the perspective of language education. In chapter 4, I will introduce the framework of the material package. I will discuss the starting points and aims of the material, specify its target group, and discuss the structure and content of the material. Finally in chapter 5, I will discuss the implications and challenges of the material package.

2 LANGUAGE AWARENESS IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE EDUCATION

Language awareness has been an interest in the field of language learning at least since the 1980's as it became a pedagogical initiative in mother tongue learning in the UK (Finkbeiner & White 2017: 5). Currently it is strongly present in the Finnish basic education context as NCC calls for "a community with language awareness" or "a language-aware school" (NCC 2016: 28). In this chapter, I will first discuss different approaches to defining LA and the definition I rely on in the material package. Then I will discuss LA as an approach to teaching and learning languages.

2.1 Defining language awareness

Language awareness as a term might first seem self-explanatory with the meaning of being aware of language. However, one might ask what then is referred to by *being aware* and *language.* Different research traditions have had their own perspectives on the definition. First, cognitive psychology and psycholinguistics study LA from the perspective of metalinguistic awareness. Second, the tradition of language pedagogy understands LA as involving more than merely the structure of language and includes the perspective of developing LA through education. The third tradition relates LA into a societal context and often relates to multilingualism (Dufva 2018). In the following, I will introduce the three different – yet partly overlapping – descriptions that all divide LA into smaller units in order to define it.

James and Garret (1992: 12-17) divide LA into five parallelly existing domains. First, the *affective* domain includes attitude and motivation towards language and language learning. It refers to the role of LA in raising interest towards language learning and thus leading into better achievements. Second, the *social* domain refers to the aim of LA in preventing social conflicts related to different languages and their use. Third, the *power* domain refers to the role of language and language use in power relations

within societies and it aims at raising the learners' awareness of this problematic issue. Fourth, the *cognitive* domain refers to the cognitive processes of language use and learning. Finally, the *performance* domain includes the assumption that LA improves the learners' ability to use language (Garrett & Cots 2013: 384).

Van Lier (2004: 99) defines language awareness as awareness of language by its user or a perceptual experience of it as a contrast to simply using it. He introduces a model of five levels of language awareness. The first level, *affordance,* refers to the relationship between a language user and a language element in their environment. As an example of this Van Lier gives the relationship between a baby and the mother's voice. The second level, *awareness, attention and focusing*, refers to focusing attention to linguistic features. It might be the result of the first level, but it is also possible that someone else draws one's attention to the feature. The three following levels differ from the former two in that they include metacognitive awareness of language. Level 3a, *practical awareness, control, creativity, play and argument*, includes, for instance, playing with language and manipulating linguistic expressions. The following level 3b, *discursive awareness, metalinguistic knowledge, formal analysis and technical control*, results mostly of education and includes an understanding of structures and functions of a language. The last level, *critical awareness*, refers to a critical observation of the social and political aspects of language.

Andersen and Ruohotie-Lyhty (2019) focus on language awareness as practical actions that occur in the classroom. For this purpose, they introduce a model of the five dimension of language awareness which they have adapted from the definitions of Van Lier (2004) and Smith (1995, cited in Andersen & Ruohotie-Lyhty 2019). First, *acknowledging language* refers to attention being on the form or on the connection between form and meaning instead of communication. Second, *linguistic creativity* means playing with the meaning, form or the connection of the two, thus ignoring the conventional norms of language use. Third, *metalinguistic knowledge* refers to the knowledge of the conventions of language use and to language as a system. Fourth, *metalinguistic thinking* refers to consciously reasoning and reflecting on language that can result from explicitly learned metalinguistic knowledge or from implicitly acquired sense on language. Last, *the attitudes towards language and language communities* is derived from the Finnish National Core Curriculum for Basic Education (2014). Discussing attitudes will help pupils understand the value of language on an individual as well as on a community level. They believe that the five dimensions are dynamic and parallelly existing in the actions of language learners. Furthermore, they state that learners' awareness of the different dimension can be supported through school instruction.

In this thesis, I rely mostly on the definition by James and Garret but also on the one by Andersen and Ruohotie-Lyhty since I regard them as most applicable in

foreign language learning. I understand LA as consisting of different dynamic domains or dimensions that exist parallelly. Thus, different actions and activities in the classroom can support and develop the different domains of LA.

2.2   Language awareness approach to teaching languages

The development of LA has been reported to enhance language learning and use, relations with other people and understanding of the possibility to use language for exercising power in a questionable manner (Kalaja & Pitkänen-Huhta 2020: 343). Therefore, it is reasonable to support the development of LA in foreign language instruction. The effects of LA on foreign language learning and methodologies aiming to enhance LA have also been researched in numerous studies.

The effects of language awareness on foreign language learning have been studied for instance in several intervention studies where a focus group has received language instruction that focuses on language awareness. Sierens et al. (2018: 69) reviewed 40 studies conducted in 1995-2013 focusing on the effects of language awareness programs in schools. They investigated how effective LA intervention programs are regarding the affective, social, power, cognitive and performance domains as well as the impact of the duration of the programs and the categories of participating students on the reported effectiveness. Based on their data, they state that LA intervention programs have somewhat positive effects on learners' attitudes towards linguistic diversity and on minority students' validation of their multilingualism in the school context. Some studies also indicated slight improvement in the awareness of the power relations related to different languages and their use. In most studies, participating LA activities improved the metalinguistic and metacognitive skills of the students. The impact was even stronger when focus was particularly on these skills. Instead, participation in comprehensive LA interventions did not prove to improve learners' language learning. An exception to this were programs using contrastive analysis as a metalinguistic method of teaching which proved to have a positive impact on the written L2. Contrastive analysis in terms of LA intervention programs refers to learners analysing the contrasts and similarities between different languages (James & Garret 1992: 6).

The active role of the learner can be regarded both as a requirement for the effectiveness of an LA pedagogy and the aim of such pedagogical approach. In Robinson's study (1995: 337), the learners who looked for and found rules themselves achieved better than those, who were given the rules by their instructor. This indicates that the active role of the learner is important for a language awareness program to be effective. Dufva (2018) defines learner's active agency as an aim for LA instruction so that the learner would start observing, reflecting and comparing language on their

own initiative and thus finding similarities, differences and new perspectives. This idea corresponds with the findings of the meta-analysis by Sierens et al. (2018: 69), which indicates that learners with weaker LA benefit more from LA interventions.

The learning outcomes of an LA programme are also affected by the choice of which features of language are focused on (Svalberg 2007: 290). Svalberg cites studies by Gass, Svetics and Lemelin (2003) and Hulstijn and de Graaf (1994) as she states that focus should be laid on more complex features, as learners usually are able to notice more simple rules themselves. As discussed above, Sierens et al. (2018: 69) found in their meta-analysis that instruction was more effective when there was a clear focus on the skills in question. This indicates that it is important for the instructor to have a clear idea of what needs to be supported and focus on the most complex parts of those features of language.

Svalberg (2007: 292) states that a methodology can be regarded as an LA approach when it concerns consciously stimulating engagement with language and falls under a constructivist framework. The aim is to support the learner's knowledge of any of the five domains of language introduced by James and Garret: affective, social, power, cognitive or performance. To achieve this, learner engagement with the language is essential. She summarizes the characteristics of LA teaching methodology based on Borg's (1994, cited in Svalberg 2007: 290-291) classification as following:

1. It involves an ONGOING INVESTIGATION of language as a dynamic phenomenon rather than awareness of a fixed body of established facts.

2. It involves learners in TALKING ANALYTICALLY about language, often to each other.

3. It considers essential the INVOLVEMENT of learners in exploration and discovery.

4. It aims to develop not only the learners' knowledge about and understanding of language but also their LEARNING SKILLS, thus promoting learner independence.

5. The aim is to involve learners on both a COGNITIVE and an AFFECTIVE level.

Dufva (2018) introduces a method that aims to develop pupils' LA and to encourage them in learning languages. The method uses a linguistic problem-solving task to activate learner's implicit multilingual knowledge and it was tested in a small-scale study by Dufva and Salo (2015, cited in Dufva 2018). The participants were Finnish seventh grader pupils, who all had been learning English and Swedish and some of them had been learning French as well. None of them had been learning German, but they were given a short text excerpt with pictures in German. Their task was to translate some parts of the text. The participants used, for instance, the pictures and the numbers appearing in the text as a resource for interpreting the text. They could translate sentences like "The father swims and plays badminton", which consist of

words that resemble their English and Swedish equivalents. When asked, they were also able to identify the masculine and the feminine pronouns for third person singular in the text. In addition, the participants who had been learning French as well, were more confident with their reasoning and paying more attention to the similarities between different languages.

3 MULTILINGUALISM IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE EDUCATION

There is certainly no doubt of multilingualism existing throughout our society. Even the constitution of Finland defines the country officially bilingual and aside of that, different languages coexist in our society and among different individuals in it. Schools are no exception to this: there is at least individual multilingualism in every school, and language instruction also aims at raising multilingual citizens. In this chapter, I will first discuss the definition of multilingualism and how it is understood in this thesis. Then I will discuss multilingualism in foreign language classroom and as an approach to teaching and learning languages.

3.1 Defining multilingualism

Even though multilingualism seems to have gained growing attention in the globalizing societies, it is not a new phenomenon. It could rather be stated that whereas before people might have been affected by multiple neighbouring languages, a higher mobility of people in our society has changed the nature of multilingualism so that there might be a rather great number on languages from all over the world present in a single community. The use of the term is varied, and it is used to refer to somewhat different phenomena by different users.

One way to examine the concept of multilingualism is to divide it into individual and societal. Individual multilingualism refers to the individual person's linguistic repertoire of two or more languages. It may result from growing up in a multilingual environment acquiring several languages simultaneously or from learning or acquiring another language or languages later in life, for instance in school. Individual multilingualism can be defined through the proficiency of multiple languages or through the use of multiple languages in everyday life. A related concept is the division into balanced and unbalanced multilingualism, which refers to how close an individual's

proficiencies in different languages are (Cenoz 2013: 5-6). European Council, among others, uses the term *plurilingualism* instead of individual multilingualism and defines it as "the dynamic and developing linguistic repertoire of an individual user/learner" (Council of Europe 2020: 30). Further terms related to individual multilingualism or plurilingualism are, for instance, *bilingualism* and *trilingualism* that can be regarded as instances of multilingualism. Bilingualism refers to an individual's linguistic repertoire of two languages as the term itself suggests, but it can be – and was more often earlier – used as a synonym for multilingualism. Equally, *trilingualism* refers to a linguistic repertoire of three different languages (Cenoz 2013: 5, 7). Societal multilingualism, instead, refers to a society where multiple languages are used. Individual and societal multilingualism often exist simultaneously as it is likely to find multilingual individuals in a multilingual society, but it is also possible to be monolingual in a multilingual society or vice versa.

Chapella and Hunston (2015: xiv) define multilingualism "as the use of languages that are not originally from nearby geographical areas" and add that they include both social and individual dimension into their consideration. Thus, they observe multilingualism as connected to globalization excluding a more traditional multilingualism of neighbouring languages coexisting in society.

In this thesis, I refer to multilingualism mostly as a feature of an individual person. I regard a person as multilingual if they at least to some extent or in some contexts have proficiency or use more than one language. I consider all the languages the individual uses a part of their multilingual repertoire, no matter whether the languages are used actively in the individual's everyday life or if their use is mostly limited to, for instance, school context.

3.2   Multilingualism in the foreign language classroom

In the Finnish curriculum for basic education, all pupils start learning a foreign language in the first grade and the second national language (Swedish or Finnish) in the sixth grade. In addition, it is possible to start learning additional languages in the fourth and/or in the eighth grade. This means that all Finnish children become multilingual in school at the latest and that their linguistic repertoire consists of at least three languages when they end basic education. In addition to this, many children possess language proficiency acquired outside of the school context. Still, the individual multilingualism of pupils does not automatically mean that language instruction in school would be multilingual. Instead, traditionally languages have been taught in isolation with the notion that the use of all but the target language interferes with its learning. In the Finnish basic education context, however, Finnish (as the assumed L1) has been present in foreign language instruction and teaching materials. Especially

grammar instruction has traditionally been given in Finnish. However, as Kalaja & Pitkänen-Huhta (2020: 341) point out, this shows a monolingual bias that acknowledges only the majority language of society as the L1 and ignores other first languages that might appear in the classroom. Recent international trends suggest a more holistic approach and welcome first languages and other languages to a foreign language classroom when necessary, but keeping the target language as the medium of instruction (Cenoz & Gorter 2015: 6).

3.2.1 Multilingualism as a pedagogical approach

There is support to such multilingual trend in research concerning the mutual effects of learning L1, L2 and L3. All three languages influence one another and not only in the direction of first acquired languages influencing languages learned after them. In addition, it has been found out that when learning an L3, learners tend to rely more on L2 than L1, especially when the L2 and L3 are typologically different from the L1 (Jessner 2018: 261). In the Finnish context, this is often the case as the most common L1 (Finnish) is typologically far from the most learnt L2 (English) and L3 (Swedish).

Among others, Jessner (2006: 125) calls for implementation of a pedagogy where different languages are being taught acknowledging each other and attention is directed to the commonalities of those languages – especially when the target languages are related. This kind of programmes have already been investigated in several studies. For instance, in a multilingual intervention study Corcoll (2013:36) found out that using a multilingual (English, Spanish and Catalan) approach to teaching English as an L3 to second graders with Spanish and Catalan as their L1 and L2 did not result in better achievement in an English test in comparison to the control groups. Instead, the intervention proved to be beneficial to the motivation and self-esteem of the learners as well as their language awareness in terms of improving their ability to reflect on and discuss language learning and use. Another intervention study by Leonet, Cenoz and Gorter (2020) aimed to find out whether cross-linguistic instruction in derivational morphology affects learners' morphological awareness and the learners' perception of their multilingual repertoire. The participants were fifth or sixth grade pupils who spoke Spanish, Basque or both as their mother tongue and attended a school using Basque as the main language of instruction and having Basque, Spanish and English as school subjects. The results of the study indicated that translanguaging pedagogy can help developing both learners' perception of their multilingual repertoire and their morphological awareness.

Focus on Multilingualism is a holistic approach that includes the whole linguistic repertoire of the learner and the relations between the different languages of the repertoire in the research and teaching of languages. This way it aims at the use of all linguistic knowledge of the learner in supporting further language learning. Focus on

Multilingualism approach includes translanguaging pedagogy and observing the communalities of different languages learned at school to support the development of the learners' metalinguistic awareness. The aim of the holistic approach instead of learning different languages separately is that the different languages and the methods to learn and use languages could support each other and thus enhance all language learning (Cenoz & Gorter 2011: 360). Cenoz and Gorter (2011:361) believe that Focus on Multilingualism has two advantages in comparison to traditional language instruction. First, learners' all language learning works as a resource for learning other languages as well. Second, a methodology that utilises translanguaging resembles more authentic language use situations of multilingual speakers.

The programmes and approaches discussed above mentioned the use of *translanguaging pedagogy* or *pedagogical translanguaging*. It is a concept also more widely associated with multilingual language instruction. Juvonen and Källkvist (2021: 1) define pedagogical translanguaging as "teaching approaches that involve the intentional and planned use of student multilingual resources in language and content subjects." Pitkänen-Huhta (2021: 240) points out that pedagogical translanguaging or at least some forms of it, such as translating and comparing languages, is actually not a new method in foreign language instruction but what is changing is the notion of the learners as a linguistically homogenous group who thus would share common linguistic repertoire. This change can then inflict challenges for foreign language teachers who are willing to use pedagogical translanguaging.

3.2.2 Becoming multilingual and being multilingual

Cenoz and Gorter (2015: 5-6) place research on multilingual education on a continuum between becoming multilingual and being multilingual. Education on becoming multilingual refers to supporting learners in acquiring languages to broaden their linguistic repertoire, whereas education on being multilingual refers to supporting the multilingual identity and its use in all learning of the learners with already existing multilingual repertoire. The research closer to the end of becoming multilingual is close to traditional research on second language acquisition and often focuses on scaffolding, use of L1 or translation as methods of target language instruction and target language or L2-medium instruction. Instead, the research closer to the end of being multilingual is connected to sociolinguistics and often focuses on the development of multilingual identities, translanguaging and natural communication. However, becoming and being multilingual can take place simultaneously (Block 2015: 236).

In the foreign language classroom, this division could mean that the target language instruction itself aims at the pupils becoming multilingual. To support the pupils in being multilinguals, teachers can acknowledge the pupils' multilingual repertoires and encourage them to use the whole repertoire also when learning additional

languages. Thus, supporting the pupils' in being multilingual will likely benefit them learning even new languages.

In this thesis, the focus is more on supporting the learners in becoming multilingual. However, I acknowledge that in most classes there are also pupils who are already multilingual and therefore supporting them in being multilingual is not ignored. Thus, the aim is to support the pupils' development as multilinguals and their use of the metacognitive and communicative skills they have acquired previously.

4 FRAMEWORK OF THE MATERIAL PACKAGE

In this chapter, I will discuss the foreign language teaching material package that is a teacher's guide to remedial teaching focusing on supporting pupils' LA and multilingualism. First, I will discuss the starting points and aims of the material. Then I will move on to specifying the target group and finally discuss the structure and content of the teacher's guide.

4.1 Starting points and aims

Language awareness and multilingualism both have been common topics of research concerning language learning in the 21st century and they both appear NCC. As NCC is the primary guideline for the work of educators in Finnish basic education institutions, it defines the frames for this teaching material as well. NCC even acknowledges the connection between multilingualism and LA:

The objective is to guide the pupils to appreciate different languages and cultures and to promote bilingualism and plurilingualism, thus reinforcing the pupils' linguistic awareness and metalinguistic skills. School work may include multilingual teaching situations where the teacher and the pupils use all languages they know (NCC 2016: 86).

NCC also states that language instruction at school "strengthens the pupils' language awareness and parallel use of different languages" (NCC 2016: 324).

NCC introduces language awareness as one of its key concepts concerning not just languages but all subjects and stating that every teacher is a teacher of the language of their subject. NCC does not explicitly define what language awareness means, but it is stated that "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 socialization" (NCC 2016: 28). This definition of a language aware

community acknowledges first the awareness of attitudes towards languages, which reflects how NCC discusses LA and cultural and linguistic diversity as closely related to each other. Second, it acknowledges the awareness of language as a tool of learning, which is related to metalinguistic knowledge especially in the foreign language context. Third, it acknowledges the awareness of the social meaning of language through interaction and communication. Finally, it refers to the awareness of language being important for the development of individual identity.

Therefore, in this teaching material, I wanted to combine language awareness and multilingualism as resources or methodologies in foreign language learning and teaching. As the language awareness of a pupil develops, they become more aware of the potential of their multilingual competence and can learn to appreciate both their own multilingualism and that of others. Equally, when the multilingual competence of a pupil develops, it most likely supports for instance the affective, social and cognitive domains (see chapter 2.1) of their language awareness.

I believe that a method that approaches language learning holistically is a very potential tool in remedial teaching as well. Therefore, I created a teacher's guide for remedial teaching that aims in supporting the LA and the individual multilingualism (or plurilingualism) of the pupil. Thus, the aim of the material is to provide a different perspective to foreign language remedial teaching. Instead of focusing on a specific feature of a target language it aims in supporting the learners' language awareness and activating their multilingual competence in order to facilitate foreign language learning.

The material aims in affecting different domains of language awareness to meet challenges in learning foreign languages. Supporting the affective domain of LA helps with motivational problems. In addition, developing the cognitive domain of LA helps learners with learning difficulties and developing the performance domain will help learners to apply in practical use the languages knowledge they possess. A multilingual approach that acknowledges and draws connections between the different languages of each learner will support the development of LA by, for instance, helping the learner to see commonalities between languages and thus to apply their knowledge across different languages.

Even though the material only covers five lessons, the aim is to reach long term results by providing the learners with tools for and perspectives into foreign language learning that they hopefully will apply even after the short remedial course. Thus, the aim is that the pupils will become more agentive in the use of their multilingual repertoire and metalinguistic reasoning.

4.2 Target group

The material package this targeted for the use of foreign language teachers working in grades 7-9 in Finnish basic education schools. It can equally be used by special education teachers at the same school level.

Ideally it is targeted to cooperation between teachers of different foreign languages – most likely they would be an English and a Swedish teacher as these two languages are learned by nearly every pupil in grades 7-9. A cooperative teaching method between teachers of different languages would add value to the use of this material since it would highlight its multilingual nature and both teachers could provide the course with their own professional perspective.

The target group of pupils learning through this material are especially those who struggle with learning of one or more foreign languages in school. Especially when the languages the pupil is learning are related to each other as most often is the case in Finland, where nearly all pupils learn Germanic languages and some Romance languages as well. In addition to those pupils who have learning difficulties, the learners facing challenges with learning-to-learn skills, motivation or self-regulation will most likely benefit from learning through this material.

4.3 Structure and contents

A meta-analysis of the effects of LA programmes in mainstream education (Sierens et al. 2018: 69) demonstrates that the best results were achieved when focusing on metacognitive and metalinguistic skills. Use of contrastive analysis comparing different languages also proved to enhance results in written L2. Therefore, the activities in the teaching material also aim to activate metacognitive thinking and contrastive analysis of the languages of each pupil's multilingual repertoire.

To actively focus on metacognitive and metalinguistic thinking, discussion and reflection are important parts of every unit of the material. An important aim of the improvement of LA is that the pupils themselves will observe and discuss regularities, commonalities and perspectives by reflecting on and comparing language (Dufva 2018). Therefore, each unit starts with a warm-up activity that introduces the topic in a communicative way, which also activates pupils' own ideas and experiences of it.

The main activity of each unit also calls for metalinguistic thinking and activates the multilingual knowledge of the pupil. The activity requires the use of material that is topical for the pupils at the time of the course and the choice of that material is left to the user. The activity itself consists of a set of questions to guide studying the chosen material with the focus on metalinguistic and multilingual thinking. A reason for the

choice of each question is given next to the question. This is both for the use of the teacher but also for the pupils to deepen their metacognitive thinking.

To end each unit, there is a wrap-up activity that either evokes reflection or tests some skills related to the topic. These activities are rather light and short to avoid the units from being too heavy for the pupils.

The five units of the material are called *Exploring texts*, *Getting hold of vocabulary*, *Exploring grammar*, *Overcoming obstacles* and *Expressing yourself*. The first three units focus on the cognitive domain of LA, whereas the latter two units focus also on the performance domain of LA. The division of the first three units into texts, vocabulary and grammar also arises from typical foreign language textbooks: pupils are familiar with studying language with the focus on one or several of those three categories. The fourth unit, Overcoming obstacles, aims at supporting the affective domain aside of the cognitive and performance domains. Finding tools to survive challenging language use and learning situations can improve pupils' confidence and hence contribute to motivation and attitudes. The fifth unit, Expressing yourself, continues with the same thematics but focuses more on the performance domain of LA providing tools to apply one's language knowledge even when it feels limited.

5 DISCUSSION

The idea for this master's thesis originates from two sources: from a practical need and from a theoretical inspiration. In my work as a foreign language teacher, I have noticed that similar challenges appear in the learning of different languages and that the same learners seem to constantly struggle with similar issues. Therefore, I have wished to find a more holistic approach to supporting learners. Now during my English studies, I found a theoretical framework for this holistic approach in language awareness and in a multilingual approach to language learning and teaching. The potential of this framework is well described by Dufva (2018), as she states that with different activities, we can gently push the pupils towards an active agency that can turn implicit knowledge into a conscious resource of language learning. In this context, the implicit knowledge is the multilingual and the unconscious metalinguistic knowledge of the pupil.

Language awareness and multilingualism offer a reasonable framework to be used in basic education since it is stated in the current National Core Curriculum that language instruction must strengthen pupils' language awareness and metalinguistic skills. It is also stated that school instruction must encourage parallel use of and a respect for different languages (2016: 86, 124). Acknowledging pupils' multilingual repertoires and encouraging their use in foreign language learning will not only benefit the learners with specific multilingual repertoires but will likely make all pupils see how different languages can be used to support all learning.

In chapter 2 of this thesis, I discussed some definitions of LA. In the material package I rely mostly on the definition of the five domains of LA by James and Garret (1992: 12-17). The material aims in supporting especially the affective, cognitive and performance domains of learner's LA. The development of the cognitive domain is supported through activities that strengthen pupils' metalinguistic skills as well as through the multilingual comparison of similarities in languages. The performance domain is supported through activities that aim at visualising the pupils' existing language knowledge and finding ways to encourage them to communicate with their

current language skills. All this will then likely strengthen the affective domain –motivation and attitudes; as pupils find ways to perform in the language and become aware of how languages often work similarly, they will most likely develop a more positive attitude towards foreign languages.

In chapter 3, I discussed different definitions of multilingualism and multilingual approaches into language teaching. In this thesis I focus on individual multilingualism – the pupils' multilingual repertoires that they can use when learning other languages. Since I cannot know the range of languages exiting in a potential class using the material, the way in applying multilingualism in it is encouraging pupils to reflect on their own multilingual knowledge when doing the activities.

I wanted to create the material to serve different situations. Therefore, I created a teacher's guide that introduces the holistic method into supporting learners' multilingual language awareness. It leaves plenty of room for the choices of the teacher. I see this both as a strength and a limitation of the teaching material. The strength is that supporting the learners' language awareness and helping them acknowledge the potential of their multilingual knowledge will provide them with long lasting tools for language learning and use. The limitation is, however, that taking in consideration different needs, contexts and learners makes the material somewhat vague.

The material still needs to be developed further. First of all, it has not yet been used in practice; thus, it lacks empirical experimentation. Second, it could be developed further to add even more multilingualism in it. For instance, cooperation between English and Swedish teachers could allow a perspective that acknowledges both most common languages learnt in Finnish schools. Third, it should be considered how to foster LA and support the multilingual knowledge of the pupil even after a short intensive programme like this since the length of a LA programme has been found to correlate with its effectiveness (Sierens et al. 2018: 69).

To conclude, this teaching material is an attempt to find a holistic and a far-reaching method into foreign language remedial teaching by supporting the language awareness and the use of the multilingual resources of each pupil instead of focusing on one specific grammar topic or a set of vocabulary at a time. Improving language awareness and acknowledging one's own multilingual knowledge will not only be beneficial to pupils with specific learning challenges, but they will rather support all pupils into being agentive language learners. Therefore, the activities can well be applied in use with the whole class as well.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: THE MATERIAL PACKAGE

exploring

ONE'S MULTILINGUAL LANGUAGE AWARENESS

a teacher's guide to remedial teaching

Titta Pentikäinen
2022

Contents

Foreword

This teacher's guide approaches remedial teaching from a holistic point of view focusing on language awareness and multilingual knowledge of the learner. It aims to help pupils with different challenges related to language learning to find long lasting tools and methods to facilitate and motivate their learning. To achieve this, it aims to strengthen the pupils' language awareness by activating and supporting their multilingual and linguistic knowledge.

Interaction and exploration are essential tools of the material. The pupils will be explorers on an expedition to language and to their own (maybe subconscious) multilingual and metalinguistic knowledge. The teacher will provide the explorers with compasses and maps with the instruction to use them – but does not make them follow certain paths to reach their destination.

Throughout this expedition, communication is vital. When aiming to raise the pupils' language awareness, it is important that the teacher puts into words the processes taking place during the instruction and most of all the pupils' own realizations. Even more important is communication between pupils. This will help them reflect on their own thinking and provide them with important perspectives from their peers.

Titta Pentikäinen 2022

Structure

The five units of this material are planned for 45-minute remedial teaching sessions, which each have a different focus on language learning. The units are not dependent on each other, so don't hesitate to use them separately as well if it suits you better! Each session consists of three different activities:

Warm Up — A conversational introduction to the topic that aims in activating the pupils' ideas, opinions and knowledge concerning the topic of the unit.

Activity — The main activity makes the pupils work on the topic of the day through a material given by the teacher or chosen together. The activity is given in two columns: WHAT? and WHY?

What?	Why?
The WHAT? column consists of questions to the pupils. They can be given on a worksheet or written on the board. The pupils can be given time to work on some of the questions alone or in pairs or the whole set of questions can be discussed together as a group.	The WHY? column explains the aims of or reasons for each question. They will also guide the teacher to lead the discussion and the pupils' thinking. It is important that also the pupils know why they are asked these questions!

Wrap Up — The wrap-ups are different conversational and partly playful activities that either direct the attention to reflecting the session or practising a learned skill.

Materials needed

You as the teacher will choose the concrete materials you will use for this remedial course – this guidebook will tell you what to do with the materials. However, you will need certain kind of materials that are listed unit by unit below.

I recommend you choose materials your pupils will be using during lessons sometime after this remedial course. That way they will both support the language awareness and the multilingual resources of the learners as well as function as an anticipatory remedial teaching of upcoming challenging topics.

Materials

Unit 1: An upcoming text from the textbook

Unit 2: A vocabulary list that the pupils made themselves during the first unit

Unit 3: An upcoming grammar topic

Unit 4: A practice exam

Unit 5: An essay writing or a video project task

Unit 1
Exploring Texts

When a pupil struggles with foreign language learning or for instance has difficulty in concentrating, seeing a long new text in a textbook or listening to listening comprehension exercises might cause frustration and even willingness to give up and not even try. This unit will help pupils find tools and courage to get started and to pull through those texts.

Aims
To find out ways to get hold of a new text and to find courage to start working on a difficult and long text

Materials
An upcoming text from the textbook that is most likely challenging for the pupils

Warm Up

To begin the process of working with texts, ask the pupils to think of two questions:

1. Why does it feel difficult to start with a new text in the textbook?
2. Think about the other languages you speak or are learning: does it feel the same when you see a new text in different languages?
3. How do you usually start going through a new text?

These questions can be reflected on in pairs, and you can ask the pupils to share their thoughts either directly in the group or more anonymously by writing them on pieces of paper or by using a suitable online tool.

Go through the answers together encouraging discussion: do the pupils share the same struggles? What makes reading different language feel different or the same? Has someone already found good methods to start reading a new text?

Activity

Choose any upcoming text from the textbook in use. While the pupils will use it to practice these skills, they will also benefit from knowing the text already once it will be covered in the classroom.

If the pupils are not allowed to write in their textbooks, preferably make a copy of the text for each pupil to allow them make notes and underline.

What?	Why?
Guess the topic of the text based of the pictures and the title.	-To activate the information provided by the context.
Gather words related to the topic in Finnish/your L1.	-To activate the prior knowledge of the topic.
Translate all previous words you know to English or any other language.	-To activate the vocabulary in English and other languages. -To notice possible resemblances in the vocabularies of different languages.
Read only the first paragraph of the text to see what you understand. The topic, some words, names, numbers...?	-To find the confidence through spotting something familiar. -To learn to use all the existing knowledge such as recognizing proper nouns, even single words, numerals, words related to other languages etc.
Read the whole text to see what you understand. The topic, the genre, some words, names...?	-To find the confidence and to understand the text through focusing on what has been understood instead of what not.
Discuss the text with your partner: what did you understand, what not yet.	-To share and receive knowledge and to learn from a peer.

Scan through the vocabulary list in both languages.	-To receive information about the content of the text through the vocabulary lists.
Underline phrases you don't understand in the text.	-To visualise how much of the text needs more detailed examination.
Make your own vocabulary list of at least 30 words that you don't know from: - the underlined sentences of the text - the vocabulary list (choose words that are most important for the topic of the text) You can write a translation for each word in any language you prefer!	-To consider what is essential. -To make the vocabulary more personal. - To make use of the multilingual re-sources instead of relying on the English-Finnish translations of the textbook.

Wrap Up

To wrap up the topic, start by carrying out a quick poll. The idea is to reflect on what has been done and to remind the pupils that the aim was to find ways to facilitate reading and understanding a text.

Show the pupils the previous tasks and ask them to answer whether they agree or disagree with the following statements (anonymously):

1. There was at least one task that helped me read/understand the text.
2. I think I will try at least one of the tasks in the future with a new challenging text.
3. I learned something new.
4. I still don't feel like I understand the text.

Encourage the pupils to share their answers and reasons for them to share different perspectives in the classroom.

Unit 2
Getting Hold of Vocabulary

Like the texts in foreign language textbooks, the vocabulary lists can seem exhaustingly long for some pupils. Learning vocabulary can also appear complicated due to differences between spelling and pronunciation.

Aims

This unit will offer tools and techniques to get hold of new vocabulary.

Materials

The vocabulary lists pupils made during the previous session. You can consider whether 30 words is a suitable number or if the list should be wider or shorter for your pupils.

Warm Up

To warm up, brainstorm together different ways to learn vocabulary. Gather the ideas on the board. Discuss opinions on the different methods: which do the pupils find good and why, and which would they not use? Do they prefer practising alone or together with someone?

Activity

In this activity, the pupils will be working on the vocabulary lists they made. They will be guided to use metalinguistic and multilingual thinking to find more effective ways to learn vocabulary than by reading the list through repeatedly.

What?	Why?
Are there any words that remind you of similar words in some other language?	-To activate the multilingual resources of the pupil.
Do any of the words have parts that remind you of a word you know (*familiar* reminds me of *family*)? Can you think of or guess a connection between these words (e.g. family is always familiar)?	-To direct attention to connections or logic inside the language that might not appear in their first language. -Linguistic creativity: To create their own associations to connect the form and the meaning of the word.
Do any of the words have prefixes or suffixes you know from some other words (e.g. *un*usual, sad*ness*)? Can you guess what they mean (e.g. *un-* means the opposite)? Do other languages you know have similar prefixes or suffixes (e.g. English *un*usual – Swedish *o*vanlig)	-To direct attention to word formation with the aim of acquiring the regularities. - To direct attention to the structural similarities between the different languages of the pupil's repertoire.
Can you spot what other words in the sentences belong together with the words you picked (e.g. unfamiliar → what is unfamiliar?)? Write down the words in the phrases.	-To direct attention to phrases instead of single words to create associations. -To direct attention to potential idiomatic expressions, phrasal verbs and grammatical features related to the words.
Form true sentences about yourself that contain words from your list.	-To make the language personal; directing attention to what the pupil can personally do with the language.
Sort out the words in different categories. You can use for instance word classes or different themes such as food- or sports-related words.	-To direct attention to either grammatical uses of the words or semantic categories.

Wrap Up

Take a playful test. The pupils may keep their results to themselves or share them with the group and the teacher if they feel comfortable doing so.

Give a short time limit, for instance 90 seconds or two minutes. Each pupil will write down as many words from their own list as they remember. Every English word counts for one point. Every right explanation, translation to any other language or meaningful example sentence counts for one point as well. When the time is out, each pupil checks their own test and counts their points.

After the test, encourage discussion about the results and about the methods used during the session. Did the pupils learn something new? Will they use some methods in the future?

Unit 3
Exploring Grammar

Sometimes covering new grammar content can feel like rocket science or grammar lessons like the most boring thing on earth. It can be especially tricky when the rules do not correspond with the mother tongue and pupils will have to adapt to a new way of thinking of language.

Aims

This unit will help find tools to explore and assimilate grammar information.

Materials

An upcoming grammar topic from the textbook your pupils are using.

Warm Up

Discuss grammar. Ask the pupils to work in pairs and define what grammar is and why it is learnt in foreign language lessons. You can ask them to post their answers anonymously using an online tool or to write them down on sheets of paper so that you can gather them on the board. With the whole group, discuss the definitions, their similarities and differences as well as the reasons for learning grammar.

Activity

The nature of learning grammar topics might differ from one another more than for instance learning vocabularies of different topics. It is completely different to learn irregular forms of the past tense than to learn subordinate clauses. Therefore, this activity leaves more room for the choices of the teacher.

What is essential is first to help the pupils understand the meaning of grammar instruction and to adopt a positive attitude towards it. Second, it is essential to find the possible corresponding grammar structures in the linguistic repertoire of the pupil. Finally, it is important to see the logic or the way of thinking behind the grammar rules. After that, you can work on some exercises together if you wish.
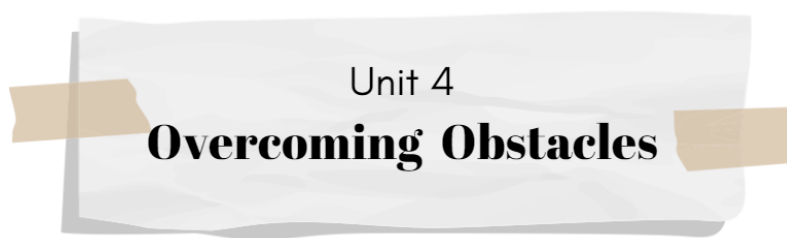
What?	Why?
Read the grammar instruction through. What would you say it is about?	-To direct the attention to the meaning of the instruction.
Are there specific grammar terms used in the instruction (such as verb, tense, conjunction...)? How would you explain them in colloquial language?	-To direct the attention to metalanguage and linguistic speech.
Do the grammar rules resemble some other language? If yes, is there still something different?	-To activate the multilingual knowledge of the pupil.
If the rules don't resemble the rules of other languages you know, can you still see a logic behind them?	-To raise awareness of the logic of the language.
Use colours to highlight the grammar rules and example sentences: what kind of colour codes could you use, what words or phrases could be highlighted with the same colours?	-To direct attention to how the rules work in different practical examples.

Wrap Up

Everyone makes their own explanation of the grammar learnt including example sentences. Ask the pupils to write down their own explanations about the grammar topic with or without looking at their books. If the structure works the same way in one or some other languages they speak, ask them to include translations of the example sentences in those languages. Again, you can ask them to post their answers anonymously using an online tool or to write them down on sheets of paper so that you can gather them on the board.

After this, encourage discussion about the definitions and about making one's own definition. Do the definitions of others help you with understanding the topic? Do you think it helped you to understand the topic when you had to form your own definition? Did you come up with other languages that use same kind of structures?

Unit 4
Overcoming Obstacles

Language learners will surely meet situations where their language skills seem not to be enough for their needs. It is possible that in these kinds of situations the learner gives up and decides not to even try.

Aims This unit aims at raising confidence and finding compensatory strategies for tricky situations.

Materials A practice exam (for instance an old test) – preferably about the same contents the pupils are studying in class at the moment.

Warm Up

Discuss experiences of challenging language use situations:

- Have you had real life language use situations where you have struggled with your foreign language skills? What did you do? Did you ask the others to repeat what they said? Did you find other words to use? Did you try some other language? Did you try to explain a word you didn't know in the language? Did you use gestures or mimic? What did the others do?
- What have you done if you have felt that your language skills are not enough during a foreign language test?

Activity

In the school context, the most challenging language use situations are most likely tests. If a pupil is insecure about their skills and feels powerless in front of a long test they might even underachieve at their own level. This activity aims at finding tools and confidence for those situations.

What?	Why?
Use one colour to highlight the tasks you find easy and another to highlight the ones you find difficult. Discuss with your partner: what makes the difference between easy and hard tasks? Did you agree on what is easy and what not?	-To direct the attention to the individual tasks instead of the test as a whole. -To become aware of what makes something difficult for yourself.
Look at a hard task. Is it hard because you don't understand what you read or because you don't know what to write?	-To deepen the awareness of what makes something feel difficult.
If the language in a task (like reading comprehension or a cloze test) is hard to understand, can you still find something familiar in it? What is it about? Which words do you recognize?	-To remind of the methods learned during the first session: activating prior knowledge of the topic, concentrating on what is familiar, using contextual clues, using multilingual knowledge etc.
If a task asks you to produce language you don't know in English (a single word, a sentence, an essay), what could you do? Can you find help in the other parts of the test? Do you know how to say something that is almost the same?	-To find compensatory strategies. -To use contextual clues.

Wrap Up

Explaining words one doesn't know is a useful skill in practical language use situations. In this activity, the pupils will practice word explanation and revise the earlier learnt vocabulary. Give them a short time limit like two minutes. They will have to explain the words in their own vocabulary lists created during the first session. Their partner will try to guess what they mean. Before starting, agree on what languages are allowed and whether the one who is guessing can have a look at the vocabulary list. When the time is out, the other one of the pair will take their turn explaining.

Unit 5
Expressing Yourself

Some pupils find it challenging to apply their language knowledge when they should, for instance, discuss or produce a written text in a foreign language. To help the pupil to improve their production of a language requires taking into account the current level of the pupil: is it necessary to focus on producing any language at all or on developing the language production into a more versatile expression.

Aims

This unit aims at developing pupils' language production and reflecting on what has been learned throughout the five sessions.

Materials

An essay writing or video project task that deals with topics learned recently.

Warm Up

In this unit, you can reserve more time for the warm-up activity in case you want to focus on spoken language and on language use outside of the classroom.

Ask the pupils to think in pairs how they would express themselves in some tricky situations. Take into account the skills of your pupils when choosing a potential situation: it should be challenging but not impossible for them.

The situations can be, for example, the following:
- You are talking or chatting with a friend in English and they start talking about hobbies. You would like to tell them about your hobby as well. Your friend even gets interested and starts asking you questions about the details of the hobby.
- A friend starts asking you about the school system in Finland. Just translating *alakoulu*, *yläkoulu*, *lukio* and *ammattikoulu* won't tell them enough, so you will have to explain in more detail!

After the pair discussions, encourage the pupils to share their ideas as well as their feelings about such situations in the group.

Activity

This activity will focus on language production as it is often needed in school. Thus, in this activity, the pupils are asked to write a short essay or a sketch a video. As a topic I recommend something related to the themes that have been learnt recently. If the textbook you use provides you with writing test tasks or video project ideas, you can use one of them.

What?

Why?

What?	Why?
Write down words related to the topic in English or in some other language, when you don't remember the English words.	-To activate the prior knowledge of the topic. -To become aware of one's own range of vocabulary about the topic. -To activate the multilingual resources
Plan your text/video using for instance bullet points:	
Think about the things you would have to or want to say, but don't know it in English. What can you do: Use other words? Use words that are nearly the same? Write/say something a bit different instead?	-To find compensatory strategies. -To acknowledge the flexibility of language: there are often alternative ways of expressing yourself.
Think about what you can say about the topic in English even though you did not plan on saying it. Does it suit your text/video?	-To become aware of what you know instead of what you don't: finding confidence.
If writing feels easy, think of ways to make your text/video especially appealing. Could you add some strong adjectives and describe more or add idiomatic phrases? Could you form compound sentences? Think about how for instance social media influencers use language.	-To direct attention to language deeper than on a level of individual words and grammar structures: how language can be used to attract and influence.

Wrap Up

Go briefly through what you have learned during the five sessions of the course. Ask each pupil to write down three things they remember from the course. You can ask them to post their answers anonymously using an online tool or to written them down on sheets of paper so that you can gather them on the board. Finally, each pupil votes for their top two from the list. Gather the votes to make a top list of tools or ideas learned in the course. You can copy the list for the participants as a check list for further learning.