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Title: The Role of Multilingualism and Multiculturalism in English Classes as Envisioned by Student Teachers in Finland

Year: 2025

Version: Published version

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Please cite the original version:

Kalaja, P., & Mäntylä, K. (2025). The Role of Multilingualism and Multiculturalism in English Classes as Envisioned by Student Teachers in Finland. In P. Kalaja, & S. Melo-Pfeifer (Eds.), *Visualising Language Students and Teachers as Multilinguals : Advancing Social Justice in Education* (pp. 241-261). *Multilingual Matters. Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 147. <https://doi.org/10.21832/9781800412101-014>

11 The Role of Multilingualism and Multiculturalism in English Classes as Envisioned by Student Teachers in Finland

Paula Kalaja and Katja Mäntylä

1 Introduction

Finland has two national languages, Finnish and Swedish, and a growing migrant population. In the Capital area, children attending school today speak more than 100 different languages as their first language (L1), including Russian, Estonian, Somali and Arabic; and there are courses where up to 70% of students speak other than Finnish or Swedish as their L1.

Every child starts studying their first foreign language (FL, this is the term preferred in the official documents, see below) in Grade 1 (at the age of seven), and for over 90% of the pupils, the FL is English. In the past two decades education policies in the country have undergone several changes, and this has led to the decline of studying additional FLs (Mäntylä *et al.*, 2021). Thus, even though the country is getting more multilingual through migration, the language repertoires of individual Finns seem to be narrowing down.

As for multilingualism and the multilingual student especially in second language (or additional language, L2) learning environments, a variety of issues has been addressed (e.g. Cummins, 2003; García, 2009; Hornberger, 2003) but there is little research on multilingualism in FL environments, where the language being taught or learnt has no official status or role in the society (see, however, Lo Bianco, 2014). According to Kramsch (2012), education is mostly organised for monolinguals even though the reality around us is multilingual. Furthermore, considering the current understanding of linguistic repertoires, all language users are multilingual possessing different linguistic repertoires also in their L1.

Traditionally, textbooks and other teaching materials in Finland have been designed on the assumption that learners share the same L1, and the languages used in teaching materials have been Finnish or Swedish and the target language (Kalaja *et al.*, 2018). However, *The National Core Curriculum for Basic Education* (grades 1–9) and one for *General Upper Secondary Education* (grades 10–12) (Finnish National Agency for Education, hereafter FNAE, 2014, 2019) consider the raising of awareness of different languages and seeing culture as richness as some of the key values in education in grades 1–12, hence emphasising the role of languages in building sustainability and social justice (for details, see Introduction to this volume). Furthermore, promoting participation and democracy and promoting equity are core areas in the National Core Curriculums (FNAE, 2014, 2019). The emphasis on multilingualism and multiculturalism in the curriculums is strong, and hence, all (language) teachers should take it into account in their teaching. However, language teachers in Finland tend to rely heavily on textbooks and their materials and thus, acknowledging different languages and cultures much depends on the choices and work of each individual teacher.

The study to be reported in this chapter continues our exploration of the possibilities of visual and verbal (or multimodal) narratives in looking forward in time (for a summary, see Kalaja, 2019) or in envisioning the future by student teachers or pre-service teachers. More specifically, we seek to find answers to the following research questions: What role would student teachers assign to multilingualism, and relatedly, to multiculturalism in giving an English class of their dreams after graduation, and secondly, what role would these possibly play in the learning environment and/or teaching materials?

Section 2 provides background to the study by reviewing the notion and role of multilingualism (and multiculturalism) in FL education and contextualises the study within a research project carried out in Finland regarding visions of future FL teaching. Section 3 provides the details of the study and Section 4 its findings, reported as case studies. Section 5 discusses the findings and their implications regarding social justice and equity in FL education.

2 Background to the Study

2.1 Multilingualism in a FL classroom

In the past few years, language education (among other related disciplines) has recognised the multilingual nature of societies as well as of language users' lives. This *multilingual turn* (see, e.g. Douglas Fir Group, 2016; May, 2014; Melo-Pfeifer, 2018) has been accompanied by a discussion about the monolingual bias in FL practices (e.g. Anderson, 2017; Kramsch, 2014; Ortega, 2019).

Multilingualism can be seen as a process rather than a state (de Bot, 2019). This dynamic view of multilingualism (see also Herdina & Jessner, 2002; Cenoz & Gorter, 2021) emphasises the recognition and awareness of multiple languages in our environment and in each language user's life and repertoire. We do not need to use various languages all the time but acknowledging and valuing all languages in an equal manner and measure is essential in multilingual education. As language users we draw on the cognitive, semiotic, sensory and modal means we have available in different contexts and for a variety of purposes. The idea of *translanguaging* or using linguistic repertoires in a fluid manner 'is not simply going *between* different linguistic structures, cognitive and semiotic systems and modalities, but going *beyond* them' (Li, 2018: 23, original emphases). Translanguaging and related terms such as *metrolingualism* (Otsuji & Pennycook, 2009) and *polylingual languaging* (Jørgensen, 2008; for other terms, see also Introduction to this volume) intertwine in a language user's personal history, experiences, attitudes, beliefs, ideologies and environment (Li, 2018). In addition, *plurilingualism* (e.g. Piccardo, 2020) has been added to this list of closely related terms that highlight the dynamic and/or holistic (and multimodal) nature of becoming or being a multilingual individual.

Language teachers have been found to be in a powerful position in either including or excluding languages and their users (Cummins, 2019). Translanguaging as a pedagogic practice is a means to include and recognise all languages, regardless of their role in society, thus empowering their users and promoting social justice and democracy (Li, 2018; Cummins, 2019). On the other hand, opposite teaching practices that hamper using other than the target language or the language of schooling, and suppressing or failing to recognise various languages and their users in the classroom may hinder students' participation (Auerbach, 2016).

The National Core Curriculums (FNAE, 2014, 2019) in Finland emphasise *language awareness* and *multilingualism*. However, at the same time, they present FLs (this is the term used in these documents) each on their own, and this is naturally reflected in the teaching practices at schools: the teaching programmes include, e.g. English, German, Russian, French and Spanish. The learning goals are tied to the given language and its culture(s). Even though the aim is no longer to reach the ideal competence of a native speaker, an individual's knowledge in a specific language is measured against the CEFR proficiency scale with the focus on intelligible communication; much of the recognition of multilingualism or translanguaging practices is left up to the teacher. This is not a Finnish phenomenon, but FL teachers have been found to struggle with the aim of teaching a language and its culture(s), and at the same time, try to convey and practise the principles of translanguaging (Ortega, 2019) or those of plurilingualism (Piccardo, 2020). Furthermore, when one considers various angles to sustainability, including social justice and democracy, language teachers do not necessarily possess enough tools nor time

to consider and take these into account in a systematic way in their teaching (Maijala *et al.*, 2023).

In the context of Finland, some studies have focused on teachers in multilingual classrooms. Linderoos (2016) studied multilingual learners, their guardians and teachers and found that the teachers did not necessarily know about the language backgrounds of their students and/or they did not possess tools to take their L1s into account in the FL classroom. Teachers of English have been reported to find teaching multilingual groups more challenging than those with a homogeneous L1 background (Harju-Autti, 2013), and they do not feel they are prepared to help their multilingual students (Illman & Pietilä, 2018). In all these studies, as well as in a study by Pitkänen-Huhta and Mäntylä (2021), teachers and students alike have been found to value multilingualism. Similar results have also been found in Germany (Ticheloven *et al.*, 2020), The Netherlands (Duarte & Günther-van der Meij, 2020), Sweden (Tholin, 2014) and in Hungary (Navracsics & Molnár, 2017).

The studies above have concentrated on classrooms where learners share an L1. However, in today's world a unitary L1 in a classroom is getting more and more rare, and perhaps when we consider multilingualism in classrooms, we should rather turn our attention to everyday practices, regardless of the L1s or their number. Questions that arise include: how does the appreciation of linguistic and cultural diversity show in everyday practices in a language classroom, and how are teachers equipped to incorporate linguistic equity into their teaching?

The National Core Curriculums (FNAE, 2014, 2019) give English a special role distinct from the other FLs: it is a *lingua franca*. The dominant role of English globally is indisputable, and thus, teachers of English could be considered to have a significant role in conveying the ideals of multilingualism, translanguaging and plurilingualism to their students. As for English as-a-FL classrooms there are very few studies on translanguaging practices. Cenoz and Gorter (2020) point out the discrepancy between the de-contextualised classroom and the multilingual social context in which we live. They also emphasise that all FL learners (and their teachers) are in fact multilingual (or plurilingual) and all FL classrooms have the potential to be multilingual (or plurilingual).

Our project on envisioning – with its three studies – to be summarised below is closely related to the research outlined above.

2.2 A project on envisioning an English class of one's dreams

In the project, we approached student teachers' visions of an ideal class of English from different points of view. We asked our student teachers to envision an English class of their dreams in two modes: verbally and visually. A further requirement was that the class should feasibly be given after graduation from an MA programme. This envisioning (Dörnyei &

Kubanyiova, 2014) was our attempt to maintain the motivation of our students: most of them were only halfway into their studies before qualifying as teachers of English (and possibly other FLs) in the country.

In our first study (Kalaja & Mäntylä, 2018), we wished to find out where the teaching of the language would take place, what would be taught and how. The learning was envisioned to take place either in a traditional or modern classroom or well beyond the classroom or school premises. The contents would vary from teaching by the teacher to learning by the learners or being a joint activity by the two parties involved. In addition, the teaching would either focus on teaching English (including grammar and vocabulary; pragmatics, and communication) or on teaching in English as the medium of instruction to learn about a specific topic or another school subject (Content-and-language-integrated instruction, CLIL).

In our second study (Mäntylä & Kalaja, 2019), we sought to find out what the student teachers envisioned they would teach of the language. The contents fell into five categories, listed in order of preference by the student teachers: (1) communication, (2) culture, (3) metaknowledge about the language (e.g. aspects of sociolinguistics), (4) learning about some other school subjects, and (5) discrete elements of the language as an abstract system, including grammar and vocabulary. Considering the three main aims in teaching FLs in the country, as stated in the National Core Curriculums (FNAE, 2014, 2019), the student teachers seemed to miss one important aim, namely, learning-to-learn skills in their broader sense, including not only practising learning strategies but also being able to take responsibility for their learning, setting aims and being able to assess their own skills in the language, e.g. by making use of the standard rating scales (CEFR) (cf. also Holec, 1981).

In this chapter (and our third study), we will consider a further two issues, namely, multilingualism and multiculturalism and their possible role(s) in classroom interaction and/or in the learning environment and teaching materials in the envisioned future classes of English (for the specific research questions, see Section 1).

3 Research Methodology

3.1 Participants

The participants in this study were student teachers of English ($n = 67$) at a Finnish university. The students were studying English either as their major or minor in a five-year MA programme. A dozen students wanted to become elementary school teachers, qualifying to teach young children English or in English, namely, to offer CLIL courses. In addition, a couple of exchange students attended the course. All the participants had some Pedagogical Studies behind them, although second-year English majors only very little. Some, especially those minoring in English, had also

completed their practical teacher training and/or worked as supply teachers. In sum, the participants were quite a heterogeneous group. No other background information was collected as it was not essential in regard to our research questions.

In their careers, the students or future teachers will be faced with two new challenges: the recent revisions in the aims of the National Core Curriculums (FNAE, 2014, 2019) and the increasing multilingualism and multiculturalism (or plurilingualism) of their students. As qualified language teachers they will have the power to decide what goes on in their language classrooms and hence, to what extent different languages and cultures are introduced to their students and how.

3.2 Data collection and analysis

A task sheet was designed based on ideas from a study by Hammerness (2003), and it was our attempt to explore further the possibilities of *visual narratives* for the purpose of envisioning (Dörnyei & Kubanyiova, 2014). The task sheet consisted of Tasks 1 and 2. Task 1 asked the participants to produce a picture with the title, ‘An English class of my dreams’, to depict a class that they could imagine giving after graduating from the five-year MA programme. The images could be drawn by hand or done on a computer, possibly making use of an image bank, or produced by compiling a collage out of magazine or newspaper clippings. In addition, the participants were asked to comment on the picture, writing a few sentences in response to the question, ‘What would be taking place in your class?’, followed by a justification, ‘Why?’ Task 2 on the reverse side of the task sheet asked the students to consider the envisioned English class in greater detail. This gave the students a chance to elaborate on the target group that they would like to teach, the roles of the teacher and the students, what they would teach and how, where their teaching would take place, and what equipment they wished to use.

The data were collected in the years of 2015 to 2017. The students completed the task sheet in Finnish or in English – as the last home assignment of one of the first professionally oriented courses (5 ECTS) as part of their English studies. The visions were shared and discussed in English during the very last session of the course. The students were asked for their permission in writing to use the data anonymously for research purposes. Tasks 1 and 2 were given as homework in the hope that the students would have a week to reflect on the issues addressed on the course before completing them. However, as is often the case with homework, some left it to the last minute. Of the alternative ways of producing the visual image, most of the students chose to draw a picture by hand and in black-and-white.

The pool of multimodal data was subjected to *qualitative content analysis* (Hennink *et al.*, 2011; Rose, 2016) and coded thematically. The starting point of the analysis were the pictures in which we identified representations

of multilingualism and/or multiculturalism. The verbal data were then consulted for further details and interpretation of the visual data.

4 Findings

We will report the findings of this study in the form of *case studies* or narratives. Our idea is to illustrate the *qualitative variation* in the future classes envisioned by the student teachers regarding multilingualism and/or multiculturalism and their role(s) in envisioning the English class(es) of their dreams. We grouped these into (1) monolingual classes, (2) bilingual classes, and (3) multilingual classes. In addition, we identified two distinct discourses that were often contrasted in the visions: the participants' (partly frustrating) learning experiences in the past and alternative ways of giving English classes in the future.

To contextualise our findings, we will always first describe each 'ideal' class in broad outlines (who would be taught, what, how and where) before focusing on the possible role of multilingualism and/or multiculturalism in the envisioned class.

4.1 Monolingual classes: English

Cases 1 to 3 illustrate monolingual classes where interaction would take place in English.

Case 1 is a second-year English major. She was attending a basic course in Pedagogical Studies. In the class of her dreams (Figure 11.1), the

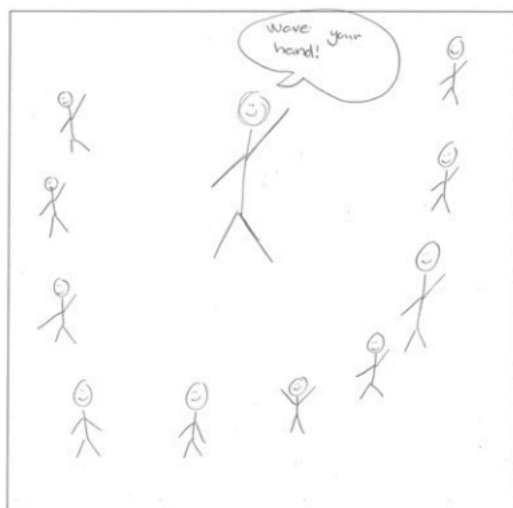


Figure 11.1 A monolingual class envisioned by a second-year English major, attending a basic course in Pedagogical Studies

learners would be grade 3 students, so nine or ten years of age. Thus, they would be beginners in their English studies.

In her class, *English* would be used ‘as much as possible as the target language’ to learn vocabulary and grammar, stresses the student teacher.

On the course that the student teachers were taking, teaching approaches had been reviewed and a few video clips played in class to illustrate them in practice. One of the approaches reviewed was *Total Physical Response*. The approach differs from the others in that the emphasis is on functional or pragmatic aspects of learning an L2, and importantly, listening comprehension would precede immediate oral production (which is often the case in the other approaches). ‘Simon says ...’, a children’s game, is a prime application of its principles. Inspired by the readings and the video clip, the student teacher intended to apply it in the English class of her dreams. She would expect her students to enjoy the game because it would involve physical activity on their part. So, in the first task the student teacher would issue commands and the students would be expected to respond by acting out accordingly. A verbal request by the student teacher ‘(Simon says), wave your hand!’ should be followed by the students’ waving of their hand(s) and without any verbal response to indicate that they would have understood the command (see Figure 11.1). In addition, but unrelated to the teaching approach the student teacher had chosen for the first task, she would have her students complete a second task to memorise vocabulary items based on a pack of picture cards.

Overall, the student teacher kept describing both these tasks in terms of ‘mimicking’, ‘memorising’ and/or ‘rehearsing grammar or vocabulary’, or formal aspects of the language instead of focusing on the functions or pragmatic aspects of using the language. In other words, she had not quite grasped the underlying principles of the teaching approach she had chosen to apply in the class of her dreams.

The teaching/learning would take place in the classroom, its type is left unspecified, however, whether a traditional or a modern one. After further thought, the student teacher points out that it could even take place beyond the classroom walls, namely, outdoors. However, the original idea of the game is that students could eventually take on the role of ‘Simon’ to attain practice in verbalising requests. At any rate, it seems that in this class the teacher would play a major role in running the two tasks (see Figure 11.1) and teaching materials only a minor role.

To sum up, this student teacher had not given much thought to aspects of multilingualism (or related multiculturalism) in envisioning the English class of her dreams.

Case 2 is a Pedagogical Studies major in the final year of her MA studies and about to graduate as an elementary school teacher. As she wished to qualify as a CLIL teacher, she had studied English as her minor (this is a government requirement). She had completed all Pedagogical Studies. She

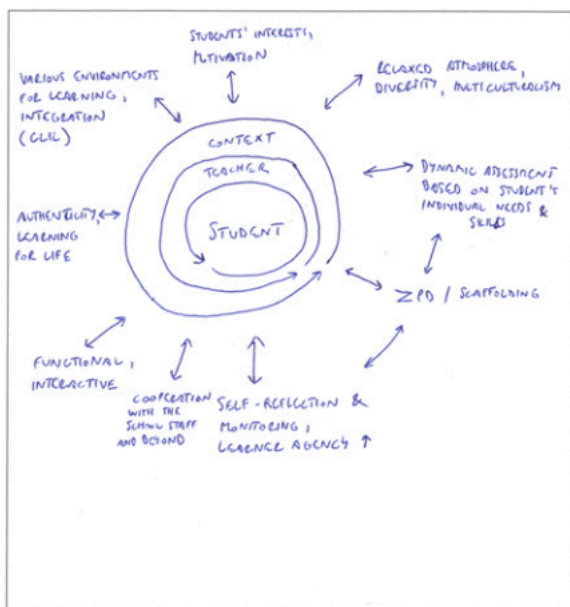


Figure 11.2 A monolingual class envisioned by a Pedagogical Studies major, about to graduate as an elementary school teacher

had some previous teaching experience and had been an exchange student in the UK. In the class of her dreams (Figure 11.2), the learners would be grade 3–6 students, having started their English studies from grade 3.

English would be used for learning about aspects of English, the language, or English-speaking *culture* (note: in the singular) or about some topic or *content* through CLIL.

The student teacher would base her teaching on the needs and interests of her students, and she would adjust her teaching to their proficiency level (or to use more professional terminology, she would apply the principles of the Zone of Proximal Development and Scaffolding in her teaching, drawing on Vygotskian thinking). She would emphasise interaction and communication, learning for life and *multiculturalism* but this is left unspecified: different English-speaking cultures or those of more than one language, possibly including Finnish. Among other things, she would be concerned with the motivation and agency of her students, ensure a relaxed atmosphere in the classroom and be there to make sure her students manage to make progress in learning the language.

The teaching and learning would take place in a *modern* classroom (comparable to the one described visually under Case 6 below) with space for the students to move around or beyond the classroom walls. In the classroom use would be made of games, a smart board, the internet, and drama.

The student teacher characterised her class as ‘partly student-centred and partly teacher-centred’, and being eclectic in her teaching approach (cf. Case 1), and so both parties seem to play important but complementary roles in the class of her dreams, and teaching materials only a minor role.

Overall, this student teacher seems to be the most aware – of all the participants in this study – that as a future professional she would have many more tasks to perform than teaching English and testing or assessing her students’ L2 skills. In addition, her job would involve many more roles depending on whom she would be interacting – not only with her students but also with colleagues, administrators, parents, etc. (see Figure 11.2).

To sum up, this student teacher envisioned *multiculturalism* (related to multilingualism though not explicitly mentioned) to be an issue to be addressed in the English class of her dreams; however, the issue remains unelaborated.

Case 3 is a second-year English major. She was attending a basic course in Pedagogical Studies. In the class of her dreams (Figure 11.3 is described only verbally – for copyright reasons), the learners would be ‘young adults with different cultural and other backgrounds’.

In her class, *English* would be used as a *lingua franca* to learn about different cultures or places visited (or more specifically, to look for and share information about these) and to foster *multiculturalism*, or more

Figure 11.3 (in full colour) consists of a total of six computer-generated pictures, organised in two columns and three rows.

Picture 1 depicts a hiker sitting on a pile of old-fashioned suitcases and holding binoculars. The hiker is looking into the distance through the binoculars.

Picture 2 is a set of 15 street signs, pointing to different destinations (including Paris, Miami, Nassau) and indicating distances to the destinations.

Picture 3 depicts a Minion character and a text ‘I am currently experiencing life at 15 WTF’s per hour’.

Picture 4 describes a group of teenagers on a ferry wearing fancy headpieces that resemble that of the Statue of Liberty, and all with smiling faces.

Picture 5 depicts a group of young people with bows and arrows, practising archery. An adult is overseeing the activity behind the youngsters.

Picture 6 depicts a group of people, represented by Lego characters, standing in the form of a ring, holding hands and all bowing to the centre.

In the right-hand bottom corner, you also find a pin-posted note ‘Learning by doing!’

Figure 11.3 A monolingual class envisioned by a third-year English major, attending a basic course in Pedagogical Studies

specifically, to increase the students' 'knowledge of culture and habits, tolerance of Others, and ability to adapt to circumstances'. Travelling would be the general theme addressed in her class.

The learning would take place beyond the classroom walls or outdoors. The student teacher would have her students visit sights or interesting places, or she would take them on outings (see Figure 11.3). The idea would be to learn about these spots of interest using a variety of techniques by looking for and sharing information (e.g. by occasionally consulting smartphones), personal opinions and experiences by completing various types of tasks, either involving physical activity and/or humour. Some of the tasks could be completed individually, others would require cooperation and/or initial brainstorming. Task outcomes would be shared, e.g. by acting out or by producing drawings or some other artefacts. In addition, the student teacher wished to apply the theory of Multiple Intelligences in her class.

The student teacher would be around to help her students, and she would like to ensure their agency and a friendly atmosphere among them. When working in small groups, the student teacher would visit each, and would rather take on the role of a partner/member than that of an authority figure (namely, that of a teacher) to respect her students' opinions and experience regarding the topics addressed in her 'class'. Every now and then she would like to re-organize the small groups (in other words, they would not be fixed).

While outdoors, various kinds of materials would be available for the students to complete these tasks, such as paper and pencils, glue and scissors, smartphones, and possibly pictures provided by the student teacher.

It seems that the students (and their learning – with an emphasis on learning by doing and hands-on tasks, see Figure 11.3) would play a major role in the future teaching of this student teacher: her task would simply be to make sure that this would be possible in her class. The teaching materials (of various kinds, but excluding textbooks) would play some role, too.

Overall, this student teacher stands out from the rest regarding *multiculturalism* (closely related to multilingualism): she is the only one who managed to elaborate somewhat on this topic, but the languages involved remain unspecified, except for English (or possibly Englishes). In other words, for her multiculturalism is not just a fashionable buzzword to cite; there would be a host of issues that would need to be addressed in her class.

To sum up, this student teacher envisioned multiculturalism to be an important issue when teaching English in the years to come; however, possible multilingualism in classroom interaction remains unelaborated in her vision.

4.2 Bilingual classes: English and Finnish

Cases 4 and 5 illustrate bilingual classes where two languages, namely, English and Finnish, would be used.

Case 4 is a second-year English major. She was attending a basic course in Pedagogical Studies. In the class of her dreams (Figure 11.4), the learners would be 10–12 graders on the grounds that the student teacher simply prefers to teach students of their age (16–18 years).

In her class, *English* would be used as a *lingua franca*. Exchange students, assumed to be native speakers of the language, would be invited to the class, be interviewed by the students, and vice versa. The idea would be to look for and share information about their lives and possibly also about *culture* (or possibly multiculturalism). In addition, this would be a great opportunity for her students to attain practice in oral skills, adds the student teacher. This sharing would take place in small groups to ensure that everybody would get a chance to talk and be encouraged to use English in class and hopefully also in informal gatherings with the exchange students. The student teacher would avoid correcting any mistakes made by her students. In this way, she could ensure an encouraging atmosphere in the classroom.

In contrast, *Finnish* would be used by the students to envision aspects of the class (or for *thinking*, indicated as thought bubbles in Figure 11.4). This would be a great opportunity for them: (1) to get to know exchange students from Britain and the US (the national flags are used as symbols for their countries of origin), (2) to spend some time with them even after

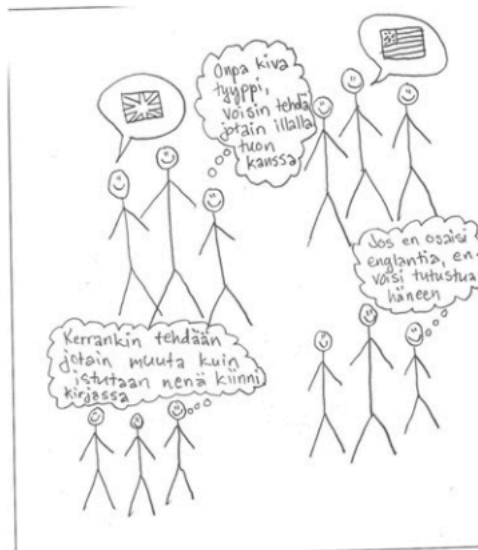


Figure 11.4 A bilingual class envisioned by a third-year English major, attending a basic course in Pedagogical Studies. (Translations from Finnish: 'That's a nice person. I could possibly spend some time with him/her in the evening'; 'For once we're doing something else than sitting still and having our nose in the textbook'; 'If I couldn't speak English, I couldn't get acquainted with them.')

school hours, (3) to get further practice in communicating in English, and (4) to do something else than ‘sitting still and having our nose in the textbook’.

The learning would take place in a classroom; its type, however, is left unspecified, but characterised with ‘an international atmosphere’ thanks to the visit of the exchange students (as the student teacher pointed out) and possibly also in the students’ spare time. The students would play a major role; and the teaching materials only a minor one. The student teacher suggested that pictures about the countries where the exchange students would come from could be used as stimulus for the discussions.

To sum up, this student teacher envisioned bilingualism (or even multilingualism in the sense of more than one variety of English being used in interaction in this class) and consequent bi- or multiculturalism to be issues that would need to be addressed in the English class of her dreams. However, there is a trace of native-speakerism in her vision in that only native-speakers would qualify as visitors to her class (cf. Case 3). In addition, there is a trace of monolingual ideology in that only Finnish (assumed to be the L1 of all the students) would be used for thinking, and the use of the L2 (namely, English) be limited to interaction in her class.

Case 5 is a sixth-year Russian major and English minor. He had spent a longer period in Russia as an exchange student. He had completed all Pedagogical Studies but had no previous teaching experience (e.g. as a substitute teacher). In the class of his dreams (Figure 11.5 is described only verbally – for copyright reasons), the learners could be ‘anybody, from kindergarten to hospice care’.

In his class, *English* would be used ‘for life’, as the student teacher put it. He would have his students make observations of the use of English in different environments. In addition, English would be used for looking for and sharing information and for learning *content* (or CLIL).

Finnish, in contrast, could be used by the student teacher to share aspects of *culture* with his students, assumed to be their shared L1, if deemed necessary. In his opinion, this would be a way of ensuring that his students would gain at least something out of his English class, if not ‘language-wise, then at least culture-wise’. In other words, this would be a way of fostering *biculturalism*.

The learning would not necessarily be confined within the classroom walls (irrespective of the type of classroom, whether traditional or modern). As the student teacher put it, the learning could take place ‘anywhere ... from a convenience store to a mortician and from Instagram to a school kitchen’ (see Figure 11.5). His class would be student-centred, based on the interests of his students and adjusted to their skills, and he would have them learn by doing (e.g. by cooking and paying visits to different places or sights). Overall, his notion of the learning environment is a very wide one, compared with the rest of the student teachers.

Figure 11.5 consists of a set of ten newspaper cuttings, most in full colour.

On the top row you find Cutting 1 with faces of a woman and a man, gazing at opposite directions and with a text 'Stay curious' (in caps). In their minds, you can see human figures performing different actions, e.g. climbing and possibly visiting sights.

Cuttings 2 and 3 relate to the use of social media by mentioning the names of two platforms: Instagram and 'Poster stories'.

Cutting 4 (in the centre) contains a piece of a brick wall with a metal money collection box next to it. On top of the box, there are facial pictures of two men, wearing beards. Between the pictures and the box, there is a text on the wall: 'Support our brothers in jail'. In front of the wall, you find Cutting 5, smaller in size, of a well-built man leaning on a motorbike and a text 'Bandido'.

Cutting 6 (on the right-hand side) is a drawing of a car, and inside there is a female driver and at the backseat, a small child. The driver is smiling. Cutting 7, to the left of Cutting 6, possibly depicts an old-fashioned light switch and a light bulb behind it.

On the bottom row (to the left) you find Cutting 8 with three people. They are bakers wearing similar outfits: white coats and caps. One in the background is cutting bread dough into pieces, one in the front is holding a loaf, and pointing at it, and the third one has his hands behind his back and is listening to what the other person has to say about the loaf that he is holding.

Finally, there is Cutting 9 of an open book (without any title) and a human face behind it, as if the person were reading. To the right of the face, you find Cutting 10: it is a cover of a collection of short stories with the title 'Kummatukkainen nainen' (in Finnish; originally 'Girl with curious hair') by David Foster Wallace, and it depicts a flame burning bright.

Figure 11.5 A bilingual class envisioned by a sixth-year Russian major and English minor with all Pedagogical Studies completed

The materials used for teaching would be authentic, including literature and social media/internet (see Figure 11.5). The students could resort to chalk and blackboard, computers or whatever they wished in completing the tasks in class (e.g. to take notes).

The students seem to play an important role not only in the classroom but, importantly, also beyond the classroom walls, and the teacher would be around to make sure that they would seize every opportunity to learn about the use of English, as indicated by the slogan 'Stay curious' (see Figure 11.5).

To sum up, this student teacher envisioned both bilingualism and biculturalism to be important issues that he should address in the English class of his dreams. In fact, he seemed to consider biculturalism to be even more important than the mastering of aspects of English by his students. Interestingly, he would be prepared to switch codes from English to Finnish to ensure learning in his class but not necessarily realising that this code-switching might also be problematic as some of his students would not necessarily speak Finnish well enough – as their possible L2.

4.3 Multilingual classes: More than two languages

Case 6 illustrates multilingual classes in a limited way: as exposure to more than two languages but not yet as an aspect of classroom interaction.

Case 6 is a fourth-year French major and English minor. She had completed all Pedagogical Studies and had some experience of teaching children. The student teacher would expect the learners in the class of her dreams to be eager to learn, come from a variety of social backgrounds and be able to take responsibility for their learning (Figure 11.6). The student teacher does not specify her target group but judging by the topics (see below) they would probably be 10–12 graders.

In her class, *English* would be used for looking for and sharing information, e.g. about history or visual arts, topics suggested by the student teacher; or for learning *content* (or CLIL). Importantly, as the student teacher noted, ‘the teacher would be the one speaking the least in class’ but she would be around for help or consultation when needed and to ensure interaction among her students.

The students would work on projects related to aspects of *culture* (note: in the singular), based on earlier visits beyond the classroom to



Figure 11.6 A multilingual class envisioned by a fourth-year French major and English minor with all Pedagogical Studies completed

foster *multiculturalism* (however, it remains unclear whether this means learning about different English-speaking cultures or English- and Finnish-speaking cultures compared). The project outcomes would be shared with the rest – in English.

The learning would take place in a *modern* classroom in its design and equipment: the students could work in groups, pairs or as individuals, sitting at desks or on chairs or a couch, or lying on the floor (see Figure 11.6). They could cooperate or work on their own. Scissors and glue, books, games, and modern technology would be available (e.g. tablet computers). The student teacher would favour, among others, games, project work, and variation in her teaching methods.

Interestingly, the classroom would be *multilingual* as a learning environment: posters (e.g. ‘La vie est belle ...’) and project reports in different languages, including French and Spanish, would be posted on the classroom walls (see Figure 11.6). In this way the students would be *exposed* to a few other L2s, while studying English.

Overall, this student teacher was the most specific about the learning environment that she would prefer in teaching English in the future. So, for her the learning environment (or the type of classroom) seems to play an important role, while for the others it played only a minor role or no role at all, being left unspecified verbally and/or visually in their visions.

To sum up, this student teacher envisioned *multiculturalism* regarding English-speaking culture (or possibly cultures) to be an important issue to be addressed in her teaching of English in the future. However, *multilingualism* was only a feature of the learning environment: the students of this student teacher would be exposed to more than one L2 in the classroom (nothing is said, however, of the role of an L1 or possible L1s in her class). In short, multilingualism was not yet an aspect of classroom interaction. In fact, the student teacher seems to have had a strict English-only policy in her class. At any rate, this was the most multilingual class in the whole pool of data (but see Section 5).

5 Lessons Learnt

On the whole, there seemed to be two competing discourses that the student teachers resorted to in envisioning the English class of their dreams visually and verbally. *Discourse 1* seems to be based on teaching as it had been experienced by the participants during their school careers and ten years of formal learning of English before being accepted on our MA programme. The student teachers are thus critical of some traditional teaching practices and principles, including teacher-centredness, ‘having to listen to endless monologues given by the teacher’; heavy reliance on textbooks or ‘having your nose in the textbook’; emphasis on ‘cramming’, or learning by heart; rehearsing formal aspects of the language (namely, grammar and vocabulary); having to sit still at their desks (organised in

rows, making interaction challenging); and finding themselves indoors or confined within the classroom walls. In *Discourse 2* the English class(es) of their dreams would be quite different in some of these respects. Among others, they would like to promote multilingualism and -culturalism, and have students and their agency in the central role. Some of the student teachers relied mostly on Discourse 1 (Case 1), others on Discourse 2 (Cases 3 and 6), and yet others drew on both – to varying degrees.

As for the notion of multilingualism, overall it turned out that the student teachers took (if at all) various, and often quite vague, stances on the role of bi- or multilingual interaction and/or bi- or multilingual resources (including the learning environment and/or teaching materials) as features of the English class of their dreams. Admittedly, the set of Tasks 1 and 2 no doubt limited the approach the student teachers chose to take. Since Task 1 had the title ‘The English class of my dreams’, it did not readily direct the participants to think about other languages as something to be addressed (or used) in their future classes. On the other hand, since the National Core Curriculums (FNAE, 2014, 2019) stress the significance of taking different languages into account and acknowledging students’ linguistic repertoires, the student teachers could have been expected to look beyond English (or its native-speaker varieties) by acknowledging the wide use of English *as a lingua franca* these days. The visions still contained some traces of fairly traditional thinking regarding multilingualism, including the monolingual ideology and native-speakerism.

As for the notion of multiculturalism, the teaching of English is indeed a challenge these days: whose culture or cultures to address – those of the Inner Circle (e.g. Brits or Americans, or other native speakers), or those in the Outer Circle (e.g. Indians, Singaporeans), or in the Expanding Circle (e.g. possibly Finns)? What is British or American culture – even these are far from unified concepts. The status of English as a *lingua franca* complicates the matter further.

Overall, the findings indicate that the more Pedagogical Studies the students had already completed and/or being other than English majors (namely, majors in some other European languages), the more likely their visions tended to indicate:

- greater awareness of English as a *lingua franca*, and thus even non-native speakers could act as models in learning the language, or challenging standard or regional varieties of British and American English as models or norms in teaching and assessing language skills;
- that English could be used for searching and sharing information – as opposed to practising communication or rehearsing formal aspects of the language, such as grammar and vocabulary;
- that English could be used for teaching or learning content, including aspects of culture (multiculturalism) or even other school subjects (CLIL), e.g. history.

These are all in line with the goals set specifically for teaching English in the most recent versions of the National Core Curriculums (FNAE, 2014, 2019), and in which respect the teaching of English differs from that of the other FLs in the country.

The continuing influx of immigrants to Finland from different parts of the world and for a variety of reasons will be a challenge in teaching English in the years to come, regarding, among others: (1) interaction in ELF classes: monolingual, bilingual or multilingual practices; (2) designing of textbooks and other teaching materials, (3) assessment practices, e.g. regarding translinguaging. In addition, these developments should make us reconsider the models or norms of use on different occasions: monolingual (English only), bilingual (English, Finnish) or multilingual? Overall, there is a need to consider which language varieties can serve as models or provide norms for correct use of English: traditionally, teaching English in Finnish schools and textbooks have relied on British English but in the multilingual 'real' world beyond the classroom, learners use and encounter different varieties, drawing on the different languages that they happen to know to different degrees or resorting to other semiotic resources (e.g. gestures).

These broader views are needed to fulfil the aims set out in the current versions of the National Core Curriculums (FNAE, 2014, 2019, for some recent critical comments, see Ennser-Kananen *et al.*, 2023), and, for instance, in the significant role of *sustainability* (for further elaboration, see Conclusion of this volume). In order to be able to participate as an active member of society, to get one's voice heard, and to listen to others, one needs language skills, or to put it in another way – to be a multilingual citizen with a repertoire of languages (and possibly other semiotic resources) that one can draw on in different spheres of life. Also, in focusing on a multilingual perspective in language teaching, we can also enhance awareness of other cultures and languages. Participating and being an active member in society also includes acknowledging others and their positions. To hear everyone's voice, and to guarantee opportunities for learning, working, participating and being, different languages and their equal importance need to be recognised. When talking about ethically sustainable language teaching (e.g. Kuusalu *et al.*, 2021), equity between languages and their users is one of the key issues.

As language educators we need to do our utmost to keep not only ourselves but also our students updated and informed of all these complexities, have them question current (or past) practices and make them aware of the principles and practices of multilingual pedagogies (e.g. Heugh *et al.*, 2019), translinguaging practices (e.g. Cenoz & Gorter, 2020, 2021) and plurilingual education (e.g. Potts & Cutrim Schmid, 2022). In addition, it would be important for us to share with our students the recent developments in *multilingual-izing* or plurilingual-izing TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages, e.g. Raza *et al.*, 2021, 2023) and ELT (English Language Teaching, e.g. Ibrahim,

2023) and the findings of an ever increasing number of empirical studies on the application of these principles in *classroom interaction* with students of different ages and with different multilingual backgrounds (see, e.g. a special issue edited by Taylor & Snoddon, 2013). Furthermore, monolingual assessment practices of language skills and/or content should be considered being replaced with *plurilingual practices* (see, e.g. Melo-Pfeifer & Ollivier, 2024). Case 6 of our study was an attempt by a student teacher to foster elite multilingualism or the study of languages other than English (LOTES) as advocated in the official language policies and national curriculums – in the context of a future class of English. However, the literature reviewed above illustrates the possibilities of taking into account the multilingualism of students – which may differ from that of their teachers – in classroom interaction and assessment practices even within the Finnish educational system in the years to come to advance social justice among the parties involved.

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