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12 Multilingualism in Language Education – Examining the Outcomes in the Context of Finland

Anne Pitkänen-Huhta

Introduction

It is now widely acknowledged that multilingualism in individuals and in societies is the norm rather than the exception. As the Douglas Fir Group (2016: 19) notes, 'multilingualism is as old as humanity, but multilingualism has been catapulted to a new world order in the 21st century'. Multilingualism is thus the state of affairs now, be it age-old or a new phenomenon. Multilingual language use has been studied widely and extensively from various perspectives and it has also received considerable attention in educational contexts (see e.g., Blackledge & Creese, 2010; Cenoz & Gorter, 2011; Kramsch, 2009; Li, 2011; May, 2014). When examining multilingualism in education, especially in the European context, we often focus on describing and analysing it as 'change', but we tend to neglect the consequences of multilingualism. What is also notable in the discussion on multilingualism in education is the here-and-now focus on issues. We tend to overlook the historical perspective on multilingualism (May, 2014) and the many consequences or outcomes of multilingualism already having taken place in the educational systems. To fully understand the current situation and to avoid any unwanted consequences of multilingualism for education, such as restricting the use of home languages at school, we need to analyse more systematically the consequences that we have already seen.

When considering the outcome of multilingualism, we first need to understand what we mean by *multilingualism*. As Cenoz (2013) points out, there are numerous ways of characterizing and defining multilingualism. Multilingualism can be seen as a societal phenomenon (more than one language used in a certain context), as an individual practice (an individual using different languages) or as an ability (a person's knowledge of different languages). The Council of Europe makes a conceptual distinction between societal and individual multilingualism, calling the latter *plurilingualism* (The Council of Europe, 2007). What is important to note, however, is that any characterization is also context-dependent and different aspects of multilingualism get more or less weight in defining what multilingualism means in a certain – broader or narrower – context. Recent discussions in the European context concerning 'growing multilingualism' have mostly focused on 'new multilingualism', i.e. the new languages brought in by migration, which has overwhelmingly been forced but also voluntary, often work-based. What has been ignored in this discussion is 'old multilingualism', i.e. the historical perspective and the fact that most societies have various kinds of layers of multilingualism, which have developed over decades and centuries and may thus be difficult to identify as multilingualism.

In recent years, multilingual language use by individuals is often discussed in the conceptual framework of *translanguaging*. The concept of translanguaging is closely related to other concepts that have attempted to describe multilingual language use. These include *metrolingualism* (Otsuji & Pennycook, 2009), *polylingual languaging* (Jørgensen, 2008) and *translingual practice* (Canagarajah, 2013). Translanguaging has been used to describe language practices that step away from the frames of named languages, often connected to nation states, instead adhering to dynamic use of all multimodal and multilingual resources (e.g., Canagarajah, 2011; Creese & Blackledge, 2010; García, 2009, 2019; Wei, 2017; Cenoz & Gorter, 2019). In addition to its denotation as a complex theoretical construct (see Cummins, Chapter 2, this volume), translanguaging also has more practical denotions that can be identified in the literature. Firstly, it has been used to describe the ways multilingual

individuals use different languages or rather, different linguistic resources. Canagarajah (2011: 401), for example, has defined translanguaging as ‘the ability of multilingual speakers to shuttle between languages, treating the diverse languages that form their repertoire as an integrated system’. Wei (2017) has further characterized translanguaging practices by adding two concepts of translanguaging namely *Translanguaging Space* and *Translanguaging Instinct*. Both of these relate to how multilinguals use language. He defines the former as a space ‘where language users break down the ideologically laden dichotomies between the macro and the micro, the societal and the individual, and the social and the psychological through interaction’ (Wei, 2017: 15) and the latter as an instinct, which ‘drives humans to go beyond narrowly defined linguistic cues and transcend culturally defined language boundaries to achieve effective communication’ (Wei, 2017:16-17).

Secondly, the concept has been used to characterize or to promote certain kinds of pedagogical practices on the basis of how multilingual learners use language (Hornberger & Link, 2012; Paulsrud *et al*., 2017). The origin of pedagogical translanguaging lies in bilingual minority contexts, especially the context of Wales, where the concept of translanguaging actually originates (see e.g., García & Otheguy, 2019). The aim of pedagogical translanguaging has been to offer bilingual learners a space to perform their bilingualism – to be bilingual – in the classroom (García & Otheguy, 2019). Pedagogical translanguaging goes beyond language to issues of power, experience and identity as Wei (2017: 7) proposes:

> By deliberately breaking the artificial and ideological divides between indigenous versus immigrant, majority versus minority, and target versus mother tongue languages, translanguaging empowers both the learner and the teacher, transforms the power relations, and focuses the process of teaching and learning on making meaning, enhancing experience, and developing identity. (Wei, 2017: 7)

For the purposes of this chapter, I follow Hornberger and Link's (2012: 242) definition of translanguaging as 'not only as a language practice of multilinguals, but as a pedagogical strategy to foster language and literacy development'.

In this chapter, I examine the outcome of multilingualism for language education in the specific context of the nation state Finland and if and how the outcomes at different levels are related to pedagogical translanguaging. As pointed out above, multilingualism is a context-bound phenomenon and it is therefore justified to examine a specific context in detail. A thick description of a particular case reveals dynamics and tendencies, which are potentially applicable in other contexts (e.g., Duff, 2008). In this discussion paper, the outcomes of multilingualism are approached through the examination of different layers of organizing language education, and the discussion is divided accordingly into three sections. These are 1) educational policies, 2) policy implementation, and 3) the classroom. The first two sections can be seen to represent the macro levels of education and the third the micro level of education. The first two are related to policies, with the first focusing on how policies outline multilingualism (and translanguaging) and second on how this is potentially realized in implementing the policies. The discussion in each section draws on empirical evidence from different sources. In the first section, the data source is the National Core Curriculum for Basic Education (NCC, 2014); the second section draws on statistics concerning the development of language choices at school (Education Statistics Finland), and in the third section, the empirical evidence comes from teacher interviews (Pitkänen-Huhta & Mäntylä, 2020).

Types of Multilingualism in Finland – Past and Present

Before discussing in detail the consequence of multilingualism to language education in Finland, it is necessary to provide an overview of the linguistic landscape of Finland. According to the census in 2018, Finland has 5.5 million inhabitants (Statistics Finland). At the societal level, Finland is officially a bilingual country with Finnish (majority) and

Swedish (minority) as the national languages. In addition, the linguistic and cultural rights of Sámi, Roma, and Sign Language users are guaranteed in the constitution. When looking at the use of individual languages, the census of 2018 (Statistics Finland) shows that 87.6 % of the population comprise of Finnish speakers (compared to 92.4% in the year 2000), 5.2% are Swedish speakers (5.6% in the year 2000), and 7.1% speak other languages (1.9% in the year 2000). The largest groups of other languages are Russian (79,225 speakers), Estonian (49,691), Arabic (29,462), Somali (20,944), English (20,793), Kurdish (14,054), Farsi (13,017), and Chinese (12,407). Even though the statistics are rather modest compared to many other European countries, the change in percentages has been quite considerable in the past 20 years. It has to be noted also that in the census in Finland, it is not possible to mark two languages as one's first languages, i.e. bi- or multilingualism does not show in the census, as people need to identify one language as the first language.

When examining multilingualism in the Finnish context, I make a distinction between *old* and *new* multilingualism. The old multilingualism comprises, firstly, the official Finnish-Swedish bilingualism at the societal level and secondly, the official status of some 'old' minorities (the Sámi, Roma, and Sign Language). Old multilingualism – even if not often recognized as such – also includes foreign language (FL) education, which can also be considered elite multilingualism (Ortega, 2019; May, 2019). New multilingualism points to the fairly recent phenomenon of multilingualism brought about by increasing mobility and (mostly forced) migration (Ortega, 2019; May, 2019), which has brought a wealth of 'new' languages into Finnish society.

As Finland officially has two national languages, Finnish and Swedish, schooling is also organized in those languages. The relationship between these two languages dates long back in history to the Middle Ages, when Swedish was used (along with Middle Low German and Latin) for official purposes and Finnish was mainly a domestic everyday language (Salo, 2012). The majority-minority constellation has led to parallel educational systems, where the language of schooling is either Finnish or Swedish, but no bilingual

schools are in operation (except for a few schools, which are physically in the same building but students follow different curricula and teaching is organized separately). It has to be noted that in the Helsinki area (the capital) there are also a few schools where the language of instruction is English, French or Russian, for example, even though these languages have no official status in Finland.

Old multilingualism can also refer to minorities that have inhabited Finland for centuries. These include the Sámi ethnic minority and the three Sámi languages spoken in the north of Finland. Since 1992, the Sámi languages have had an official status in the Sámiland in Finnish Lapland. There is Sámi-medium teaching, i.e. instruction in Sámi, only in the Sámi native region but Sámi language teaching can be offered also outside the Sámi native region in the same way as any other language subject is offered. It is also possible to take the Sámi languages examination in the National Matriculation Examination after upper-secondary school.

Another part of old multilingualism is the often overlooked and ignored foreign language (FL) education. Initially, after gaining independence in 1917, ancient or modern languages were only taught in secondary levels of education. First indications of teaching foreign languages in primary schools can be seen in the form of recommendations in the 1950s and 1960s (Takala & Havola, 1983). With the introduction of the comprehensive school, foreign languages become a compulsory part of curricula. These were European languages such as German, English, French, and Russian. In the 1960s, English gradually overtook German in popularity in secondary education (Leppänen *et al*., 2011). Still today, the focus in Finnish FL education is strongly on some European languages, but the whole area of FL education is currently shadowed by growing worry about diminishing language repertoires, which I will return to below.

By multilingualism today, we often refer to what I call in this chapter 'new multilingualism'. By this I mean the new repertoires of languages brought about by new migration, be it forced or voluntary. In terms of language education, for newcomers

preparatory education is typically organized in the first year of their arrival at school and second language teaching is organized either in Finnish or Swedish, depending on the area. Municipalities also organize teaching in the newcomers' first languages (mother-tongue teaching). At the moment such teaching is organized in approximately 50 languages. The metropolitan area around Helsinki has the largest number of different first languages: in some schools as much as 80% of students have a first language other than Finnish or Swedish. There is, however, great variation in how and in how many languages mother-tongue teaching is organized. In 2015, approximately 50% of pupils entitled to first language teaching took part in it (Laakso, 2017).

Old and new multilingualism have led to different ways of acknowledging the languages in the organization of language education. First of all, official bilingualism in society has led to a dual educational system with the two languages kept separate (Paulsrud *et al*., 2020). Moreover, both the majority (Finnish speakers) and the minority (Swedish speakers) have to learn the other language as a compulsory school language, Swedish for Finnish speakers starting in grade 6 (before 2016 grade 7) and Finnish for Swedish speakers typically in grade 1. It has been recognized that there are problems with this system as well and – to put it crudely – the attained skills have not been very good and motivation has mostly been poor, especially for Finnish speakers learning Swedish (e.g., Salo, 2012). Partly to remedy the situation (partly for other language policy reasons) various immersion programmes (esp. Swedish) have been set in the coastal areas in particular (Björklund *et al*., 2014).

Secondly, the old minority language and cultural groups in Finland, including Sámi languages, Roma and the Sign Languages, have guaranteed rights by law. In the past, these linguistic minorities suffered serious oppression (e.g., Keskitalo *et al*., 2014; Pietikäinen, 2012; Lindstedt *et al*., 2009; Ahonen, 2007), but these days more value is placed on preserving minority cultures and the Sámi especially have carried out successful language revitalization programmes in Sámiland (e.g., Olthuis, 2003; Äärelä-Vihriälä, 2017).

Language is increasingly seen as an identity issue and measures have been taken to ensure rights through legislation. But as with any minority group, the situation is still far from ideal and lack of resources, e.g., finding qualified teachers of the Roma language, hinders development.

Thirdly, traditional FL education has also kept all the languages separate in schools. FL education still largely focuses on a limited selection of languages, with some of the European languages being privileged. This can be characterized as elite multilingualism, which can be described as language learning whereby 'people learn new languages by choice, without any material or symbolic threat to their home languages – and often aided by ample support and in the midst of great praise' (Ortega, 2019: 27). English is usually one party in elite multilingualism (Kramsch, 2014; May, 2019) and as most attention is paid to English, this has led to various kinds of English-medium programmes (large-scale bilingual or language-enriched education) in recent decades.

Finally, the new minorities in Finland have considerably enriched the linguistic landscape of schools (e.g., Lehtonen, 2016). The outcome of this new multilingualism largely remains to be seen. So far, the focus in language education has been on second language learning and to an extent on first language (mother tongue) learning. Similar to the old minorities, issues of identity, cultural awareness and belonging have been prominent in policies (see below), but there is still very little evidence of making use of the new languages in the overall planning and management of language education.

Figure 12.1 summarizes the outcome of these four different categories of multilingualism in educational structures in Finland.

Type of multilingualism	Organization

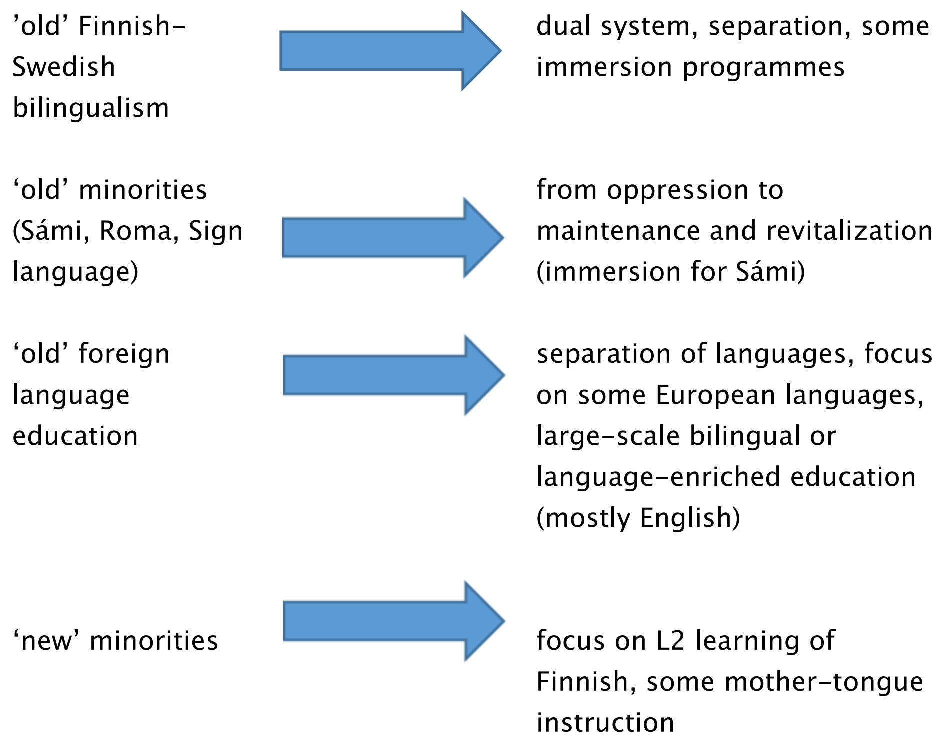

Figure 12.1 Old and new multilingualism as outcomes in education

Outcome of Multilingualism in Organizing and Implementing Language Education

In this section, I examine more closely how old and new multilingualism have led to different kinds of outcomes in organizing language education (summarized in Figure 1 above), with different kinds of societal regulations and investments in educational policies and implementation of policies. I discuss first how multilingualism (and translanguaging) is visible in national language policies, especially in the National Core Curriculum. Secondly, I focus on how multilingualism appears in the implementation of national policies by using FL education as an example. These two can be seen as the macro-levels of organizing language education. Finally, I discuss some micro-level outcomes of multilingualism as seen by FL teachers.

Multilingualism in national education policies

In the Finnish educational system, the core principles and aims of education are outlined in Core Curricula (for pre-primary, basic education and secondary education), which are the responsibility of the National Agency for Education. In addition to the national curriculum, individual schools need to have their own curricula, which are more precise in terms of practical organization of education. The discussion in this section draws on the National Core Curriculum for Basic Education (NCC, 2014), which was recently renewed and has been effective since 2016. For the purposes of this chapter, the curriculum document was examined through the lens of language education, i.e. sections with guidelines concerning language subjects, language groups or other language-related issues were taken under scrutiny in terms of multilingualism and translanguaging.

The curriculum first outlines some general issues related to basic education such as the mission, goal, operating culture, support, student welfare, the general principles of assessment, and the status of minority languages and the different forms of bilingual education. Secondly, there is a description of all the subjects for grades 1–2, for grades 3–6, and for grades 7–9. One of the principles that guides the development of school culture is cultural diversity and language awareness. Thus multilingualism is at least implicitly present throughout the curriculum. There is a strong emphasis on language awareness in all language subjects, including first, second, and foreign language subjects (see also Paulsrud *et al*., 2020). Multiliteracy is mentioned also in relation to other subjects, such as religion, music, and visual arts. Literacy is mentioned as health literacy in health education or as environmental literacy in geography.

Cutting across all subjects in basic education are the transversal competences, which are first described generally and then specified for each of the three groups of grade levels. There are altogether seven transversal competences, with slightly differing emphasis in different subjects. These are *Thinking and learning to learn*, *Cultural competence, interaction and self-expression*, *Taking care of oneself and managaging daily life*,

Multiliteracy, *ICT competence*, *Working life competence and entrepreneurship*, and *Participation, involvement and building a sustainable future*. What is of significance in terms of multilingualism are especially two of these: *Cultural competence, interaction and self-expression* and *Multiliteracy*. Overall, there is thus an emphasis on language, culture and (multi)literacy in the core curriculum.

The curriculum also includes the special section *Special questions of language and culture*, where overall aims and principles of multilingualism and the specific features of different language groups are taken up. The curriculum states explicitly that each pupil's cultural background and language repertoires are taken into account and the pupil's identity development is supported. The specific objective of education is stated as follows:

> 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 teachers and pupils use all the languages they know*. (NCC, 2014: 153, italics added)

Even though the Basic Education Act states that the language of instruction is either Finnish or Swedish, the curriculum gives room for instruction to be given in other languages as well. Thus the principles of translanguaging are given space in the curriculum, although the concept itself does not appear in the document. The official minority languages (Sámi, Roma and Sign language) are mentioned specifically and it is further stated that instruction may be given in another language as well, 'provided that this does not risk the achievement of the objectives set in the core curriculum' (NCC: 155). Thus there is room for bilingual education, but the practical decisions are left to municipalities and individual schools.

The core curriculum also focuses on specific language groups and stipulates the principles concerning the instruction of these groups. The language groups gaining specific attention are the Sámi and Sámi language speakers, the Roma, Sign language users, and

other plurilingual (the term used in the curriculum) pupils. For the Sámi speakers the objective is formulated as 'supporting the pupils in growing into their language, culture and community and giving them an opportunity to embrace the Sámi cultural heritage' and 'to improve the pupils' capabilities for acting in a Sámi language environment, to learn the Sámi language and to study in Sámi' (NCC, 2014: 155). The description of the organization of instruction in the Sámi homeland is clearly more detailed than for the other two minority groups. For the Roma the objective is slightly different from the Sámi, emphasising culture and identity rather than language competence: 'a particular objective is supporting the pupils in developing their identity and awareness of their history and culture […] promotes the preservation of the Roma language and Roma cultural heritage in cooperation with the homes' (NCC: 156). It is further specifically mentioned that an effort is made to organize teaching in the Roma language, but the reality is that it is very difficult to find competent teachers and only a small minority of Roma pupils receive any instruction in Roma. For the sign-language users, the formulation of the objectives is again slightly different from the two other minority groups, with the assumption that sign language is already used by these pupils: 'a particular objective is strengthening the pupils' identity as sign language users and their awareness of their own culture and the sign language community [….] makes use of the sign language community and media' (NCC, 2014: 157). For both the Roma and sign language users there is an emphasis on relying on the home or the community. There is thus an implicit assumption that the schools may not able to provide instruction to all.

The group of the other plurilingual pupils, who could be considered to be the group of newcomers, differs again from the minority language groups discussed above. The following quote states the objectives:

> Plurilingual pupils are encouraged to use the languages they know in a versatile manner in the lessons of various subjects and other school activities. The learning and use of their mother tongue thus support the assimilation of the content in various subjects, and the

> pupils also learn to communicate about the contents of school subjects in their mother tongue. Under the Constitution of Finland, each person living in Finland has the right to maintain and develop their own language and culture. An effort is made to offer the pupils instruction of their mother tongue. (NCC, 2014: 159)

In the case of 'other plurilingual pupils', similarly to sign language users, there is an assumption that the pupils are able to use several languages and they are encouraged to use their resources, i.e. the idea of translanguaging is present but as to how this happens in practice appears to be the responsibility of the pupil and the local practitioners. Similarly to other minorities, the constitutional right to maintain and develop one's own language and culture is highlighted. And again, an attempt is made to provide instruction in everyone's mother tongue, but there is no strict requirement.

A great deal of the responsibility of practical organization of instruction for specific language groups is left to the local level, as the following shows:

> When formulating the curriculum, local special questions related to languages and cultures should be taken into account and decisions should be made on how the instruction is to be organised. The curriculum should be prepared in cooperation with the pupils, the guardians and the relevant linguistic and cultural communities. (NCC, 2014: 161)

This is understandable, of course, but at the same time it gives ground to treat pupils differently depending on the resources and willingness of the municipality and school to invest in newcomers' language teaching and to promoting pedagogical translanguaging.

Multilingualism in the implementation of national policies (Foreign languages as an example)

In this section, I move on to discuss the implementation of national policies with foreign languages as an example. The discussion draws both on the overall organization of languages in the curriculum as well as statistics concerning language choices (Education Statistics Finland). As could be seen on the basis of the discussion above, many ideas from recent research on multilingualism, including translanguaging, have filtered into key documents guiding educational planning and implementation. Unfortunately, the reality rarely matches the ideals of the policy documents, or rather, policies are in the making in actual implementation practices (Saarinen *et al*., 2019). A case in point is the organization of and current changes in FL education in Finland.

Currently, until the beginning of 2020, the languages (foreign and second) in basic education have been divided into compulsory and optional languages (see Table 1 below). Since the 1970s, the first foreign language has started in grade 3 (i.e. at the age of 9). Starting a foreign language is compulsory, but students can choose the language among the ones offered. In practice, however, it is most often English, as most municipalities do not offer other languages at this stage. Only the major cities have a wider selection of languages (typically European languages) on offer. There has been a gradual change to this 'compulsory-in-practice' nature of English as the first foreign language since 1990s, but there are no official guidelines. It has also been possible to offer foreign languages earlier (grades 1 and 2) and some municipalities – often again the major cities – have made use of the option. In 2020, there is a change in effect to this situation, which will be discussed below. In the lower grades of basic education, it is possible to choose another optional foreign language in grade 4 or 5 (depending on local policies). In grade 6, all Finnish speakers start compulsory Swedish. Swedish speakers start compulsory Finnish earlier, typically already in grade 1. Newcomers may choose Finnish or Swedish, depending on the

area (Finnish- or Swedish-speaking) and in practice, newcomers are often exempted from this second language. It is possible to choose two more foreign languages, one in grade 8 and one more in the general upper-secondary school. The typical choice of optional languages is German, French, Russian or Spanish.

Table 12.1 Basic education – languages in the curriculum for Finnish speakers (modified from Nikula *et al.* 2010)

	Grades 1-6 of basic education						Grades 7-9 of basic education			General upper-secondary school	
Year	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9		
LG1 Compulsory	x *	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	typically English
LG2 optional			(x)	x	x	x	x	x	x	(x)	
LG 3 compulsory						x	x	x	x	x	for most Swedish
LG4 optional							(x)	x	x	(x)	
LG5 optional										(x)	

* From 2020 onwards, LG1 starts in grade 1, earlier in grade 3

Even though the possibilities for studying languages in basic education seem broad on paper, in practice the majority of graduates after upper-secondary school have studied only English and Swedish (which is compulsory). Due to many changes, which are not all directly related to languages (e.g., division of subjects in the Matriculation Examination), students choose fewer and fewer languages in their programme and this has led to concern about diminishing language repertoires at the national level. English has kept its position as the most popular choice as the first foreign language with a constant share of ca. 90%. Figure 12.2 shows that the choice for the other (European) languages has been marginal with percentages ranging from 0.3 to 1.3 percent.

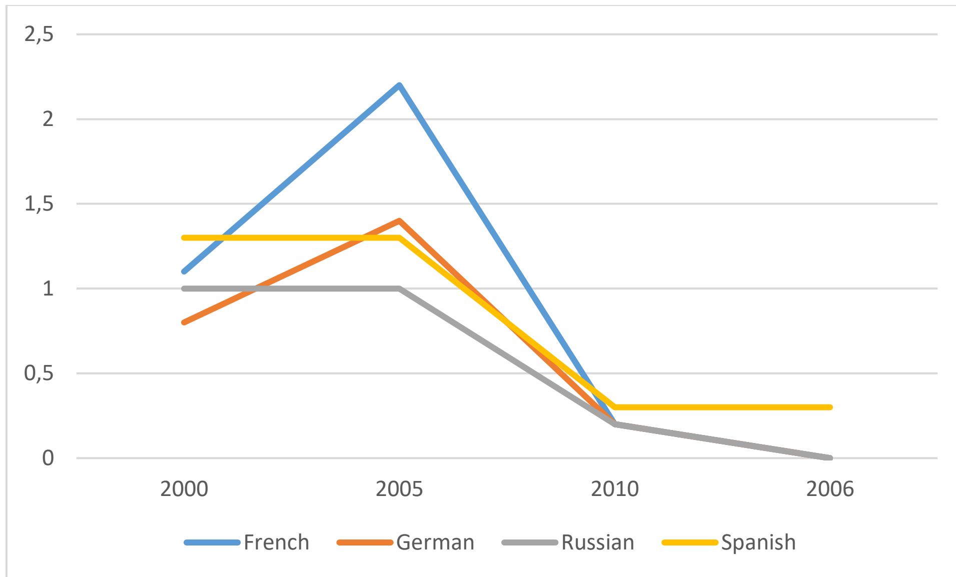

Figure 12.2 LG1 choices (excluding English) from 2000 to 2018

Figure 3 below shows the choices of the second (optional) language. Especially German as a choice has dropped quite dramatically.

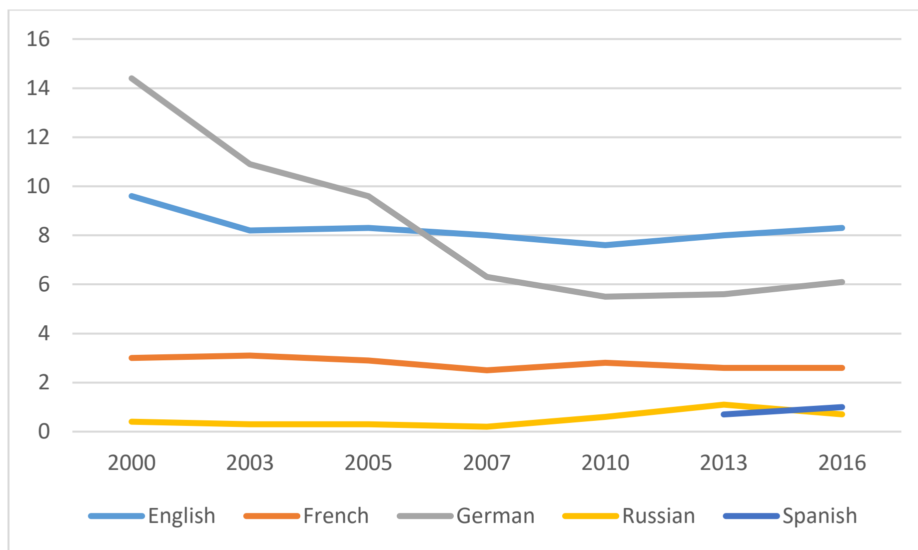

Figure 3 LG2 choices from 2000 to 2018

The concern about diminishing language repertoires led to a national report by the Ministry of Education on the state of language education in the country (Multilingualism as a

Strength, 2017). It gave several recommendations to solve the problem of diminishing language repertoires, but all of them have to pass governmental processes. One of the recommendations was to push the onset of the first foreign language to the first school year. This recommendation has now passed in the government and as of the beginning of 2020, all first graders start their first foreign language. Some municipalities have opted to start the first foreign language at the start of the school year in the autumn of 2019 and others start the language in January 2020, half way through the first school year. One of the aims of the change – along with goals of reaching better learning outcomes with an early start – was to ensure equal access to language learning, as there has been inequality in terms of socioeconomic and geographical factors, i.e. some municipalities or some schools within the municipalities have offered languages earlier than grade 3 and these have mostly been in the major cities and in affluent areas. Another aim was to make families choose a language other than English as the first foreign language. English would then start in grade 3 or 4. As we now have this new situation at hand, it is not possible to give facts about the choices, but there are already some indications. In one mid-sized city, four languages (English, German, French, Spanish) were offered for families to choose in the spring before the start of the first school year in autumn 2019. The minimum size for any language group to start was set at 12 students. The result was that only groups of English were formed. Only a fraction of families would have opted for languages other than English.

To sum up the above discussion, it can be stated that multilingualism may appear in policy documents but the implementation does not always follow the ideals. The aims of broadening the linguistic repertoires in Finland focus mostly on the European languages traditionally taught in schools and could thus be called elite multilingualism. What can also be seen is that measures are needed to maintain or develop multilingualism through FL education, as voluntariness may easily lead to diminishing repertoires. Moreover, there is very little evidence that the rich multilingual repertoires of the plurilingual pupils (as described in the National Core Curriculum), i.e. new multilingualism, would be visible in

organizing education. Their presence in classroom practices will be discussed in the next section.

Micro-level outcome of multilingualism: Multilingualism as a problem in the classroom

The discussion in the previous two sections has shown that the outcomes of multilingualism take different forms at different levels of the educational system. While policy documents might adhere to the most recent understandings of language use, language learning and language practices, the implementation does not automatically follow the policies, as there are numerous practical issues – also those not related to languages – that influence implementation. There is, however, one more level that needs attention, namely the level of practitioners, who live with the consequences of multilingualism and the related policies in their day-to-day professional practices. Therefore, the focus gears next towards language teachers, with FL teachers as an example, and how they deal with new multilingualism in their classrooms.

The discussion in this section draws on interview data with seven teachers of English as a FL (EFL) at different levels of basic education.[1] The focus of the interviews was on how teachers acknowledge and support multilingual learners with migrant backgrounds in their EFL classrooms. The data were analysed using qualitative content analysis (e.g., Krippendorff, 2004; for a full analysis of data, see Pitkänen-Huhta & Mäntylä, 2020). All names appearing in text are pseudonyms and written consent to use the anonymized data for research purposes was received from each participant. For the purposes of this chapter, the data were re-analysed specifically in terms of how multilingualism and translanguaging in the classroom were taken into consideration by the teachers.

The most prominent way of constructing multilingualism was that of *a problem*. This became evident through the various challenges related to multilingualism that the teachers brought up. The teachers had not really consciously considered multilingual learners in their EFL classrooms but they seemed to tackle problems, if any arose. Seeing multilingualism as an asset which would positively influence classroom practices was not evident in the interviews. In the following quote, Paula (teacher of English and Russian) describes the situation in one of her classes:

> niinku mäkin opetan sitä yläkoulun ryhmää niin mä opetan heille englantia, ja tota se on aika hauskaa ja mielenkiintosta ja tosi vaikeeta siis se opettaminen mun mielestä, kun mä tässä kerrankin katoin että mitä siellä ryhmässä oli sillon paikalla, niin siellä seitsemän opiskelijaa jotka kaikki tuli eri maasta ja kaikilla oli eri äidinkieli ja siis se englannin taitotaso myös aivan eri, ett jotkut puhuu niinku hirveen sujuvaa englantia ainaki suullisesti, kirjotustaito saatto olla vähän heikompi ja eräs just oli oppinu kirjottamaan siis yhtään millään kielellä ja englantia puhu jonkun verran suullisesti mutta ei pystyny mitään kirjottaa tai siis pysty kopioimaan
>
> *so I teach that upper secondary group, so I teach them English, and well it's quite fun and interesting and really difficult, the teaching I mean, in my opinion, 'cos the other day I checked who were present in the group then, so there were seven pupils who all came from different countries and all had different first languages and well, the level of skills of English were also all different, some use English very fluently, at least orally, writing skills could be a little weaker, and one had just learnt to write, so in any language, and spoke some English, but could not of course write anything, or could copy only*

This teacher looked at multilingualism strictly from the point of view of English, the target of learning in this class. She mentions the several first languages but focuses merely on English language skills. From that perspective, the constellation of varying proficiency levels was indeed challenging and the challenges were very often the focus in teacher

accounts. This comes up also in the next quote, by the same teacher but now referring to the experiences of a colleague:

> hän on kanssa sano että ihan järkyttävää että taas tuli kolme uutta ja nyt pitäis taas alottaa niitä viikonpäiviä ja numeroita ja värejä ja ja ne muut osaa jo että miten hän nyt niinku sen järjestää että, mut samahan se on siellä valmistavan luokan opettajallakin, kokoajan sinne niiku tupsahtaa porukkaa ja kokoajan pitää eriyttää niinku ihan älyttömästi
>
> *she [a colleague] also said that it was really shocking that once again there were three new ones and now we should start with the days of the week and numbers and colours, and and the others know them already, so that how could she like organize it, but it's the same with the teacher of the preparatory class all the time, there's constantly new people coming in and you have to differentiate all the time like crazy*

The teacher feels that it is challenging for the teacher to be able to cater for all levels of proficiency and differentiate her teaching according to individual pupils' needs. When focusing on the challenges, the issue of ignoring multilingualism also came up. In the following extract, Lisa (teacher of English and Swedish in a Finnish-speaking primary school) ponders whether she should be aware of her pupils' background, thus raising the issue of acknowledging multilingualism or not:

> en oo ihan- en oo, en oo siitä varma enkä koe että mun tarvii sitä sen enempää tietääkään, mut ett ne pärjää sillä suomella niin ett ei meil oo mitään ongelmaa, että joskus niinku kiva kuulla jos joku sanoo- no yks romania kakskielinen sano että tää on sama ku englannissa tää sana ja se on kauheen kiva että ne tuo sillai ite sen esille, mutta mä en haluu sillälailla nostaa ketään että mä nään ihonväristä että toi on erilainen
>
> *I'm not quite- I'm not, I'm not sure and I don't feel that I have to know any more about that [students' background] but that they cope in Finnish and then we don't have any*

problem and that it's sometimes nice to hear if someone says- well there's one Romanian bilingual child who said that this word is the same as in English and it's very nice that they bring it up themselves but I don't want to single out anyone that way so that I would see from the colour of the skin that this person is different

This teacher is unsure whether she even has to know anything about the pupils' linguistic background, unless there is a problem, i.e. the pupil has problems with the Finnish language. The teacher further indicates that she allows natural translanguaging in the class, if the pupils themselves initiate it. Otherwise she does not wish to single anyone out on the basis of different skin colour, for example.

As the previous example showed, translanguging comes up in teachers' talk, too. In the example above, the teacher seems to allow translanguaging in her classroom, but does not actively encourage it. In fact, many practices we might now call (pedagogical) translanguaging, i.e. moving across languages, have always been present in FL classrooms. These include translations and comparisons between languages. Typically these practices have taken place between the target language and the language shared with all learners or another language that the pupils are also studying. The textbooks have typically not encouraged comparisons between any other languages the pupils might know. There has thus been an assumption that the learner group is linguistically homogeneous. The sometimes overwhelming number of different first languages in the FL classrooms today (as became evident in one of the interview quotes above) may pose problems for teachers in terms of promoting translanguaging practices. Consider the following quote by Sirpa, a teacher of English in basic education (secondary level):

esimerkiks just tän virolaisen oppilaan kanssa oli ehkä helpompi tehä sitä vertailua vielä koska oli samantyyliset kielet, mutta sitten taas se on hirveen hankala ett sit näillä muilla on ollu semmoset äidinkielet mistä niinku mulla ei olis pienentäkää hajua, niin sit taas mä en niinku pysty tavallaan sitä kautta auttamaan, että kyllähän sen voi- voin koittaa että

> mieti että miten sä omassa kielessä mut enhän mä pysty sanoon siihen yhtään mitään ku en mä ymmärrä sitä kieltä että onks se sitten loppuviimeks se sama
>
> *for example with this Estonian pupil it was maybe a little easier to compare because the languages are similar, but then again it's extremely difficult with the others who have such mother tongues that I don't have the faintest idea of, so then I cannot in a way help them at all, one could of course – I can of course say that think how it is in your own language but then I cannot say anything about it because I don't understand that language, whether it is the same in the end*

This teacher does not have anything against the pupils comparing English to their own first languages, but what worries her is that she does not know these languages and thereby she feels she cannot help the pupil through translanguaging. There is thus the underlying assumption that the teacher is the only source and support of learning for the pupil. Problems of translanguaging in FL education have been noted more generally as well. Ortega (2019: 32) points out that 'language educators working in foreign language contexts are generally averse to translanguaging because their main concern has always been with maximizing use of the target language during instruction'. The teachers may thus feel that they are not fulfilling their task as teachers of the target language, as was the case in the quote above.

In the classroom, the outcome of multilingualism is naturally context-bound and situated. The above examples from interviews with EFL teachers indicate that new multilingualism is often seen as a problem or it is consciously tackled only if problems arise. There appear to be mixed feelings as to what can and should be done. Natural translanguaging is allowed but the multilingualism of learners is not systematically made use of, for the benefit of all learners. Thus it appears that the ideals of policy documents have not been realized in classroom practices. But this aspect calls for more in-depth research in the classrooms.

Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to discuss the outcome of multilingualism for language education in the context of Finland and to whether the outcomes are related to translanguaging by examining different layers of organizing language education. These were 1) educational policies, 2) policy implementation, and 3) the classroom. The discussion drew on empirical evidence from policy documents, statistics and teacher interviews. As pointed out in the introduction, multilingualism is a context-bound phenomenon and to understand the dynamics of the influences it has on language education, we need detailed examination of specific contexts. Through understanding the outcome of multilingualism – also from a historical perspective – of a specific context reveals tendencies which are helpful in making policy decisions concerning organization and implementation of language education in other contexts. The discussion showed that there are apparent gaps in the continuum from research to policy makers and to practitioners. The conceptual developments in research filter into educational policy documents guiding educational practices, but whether these materialize in implementation is not always self-evident, and how they become realized at the micro level in classrooms is not very well known, as so much responsibility is left at the local level (see also Paulsrud *et al.*, 2020). What also became evident is that when taking a long-term, holistic perspective on how multilingualism is reflected in organizing education, there is a great deal of variation and it seems that different areas of language education (e.g., bilingual education, FL education, minority groups) are in their own silos, which has led to very different kinds of outcomes. In the Finnish context, even the forms of old multilingualism are dealt with differently: there are different degrees of regulation concerning official Finnish-Swedish bilingualism, old minorities and FL education. Then again, issues related to the new minorities are handled through curriculum endorsement and the main responsibility is at the local level and with the practitioners.

I argue, on the basis of the discussion in this chapter, that in addition to the foci on translanguaging as a practice of individual language users and as an educational practice in classrooms, we need a more holistic approach – a *Translanguaging Mindset* – at all levels of language education to create a smooth continuum from top-level policies to implementation and to classroom practices and vice versa. Pedagogical translanguaging is an excellent tool for catering for all learners, irrespective of their linguistic background (Cenoz, 2017), but if micro-level practices are not supported by macro-level organization it is difficult to create collaboration and dialogue between researchers, policy makers and practitioners.

Notes

(1) The data were collected in 2013 by the author and Dr Katja Mäntylä.

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