Are all languages equal? A multilingual perspective on foreign language teaching

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Session overview

- **Activity: Introductions**
- Key notions in language teaching
- Language learning questionnaire
- Place of languages in the classroom
- Language, multilingualism, and ideology
- **Activity:** Happy hour
- Translanguaging
- Teacher identity
- **Activity:** My teacher identity

Introductions

- Finish the following sentences:
  - **I am from…**
  - **I speak…**
  - **If I could learn another language, it would be…**
- Stand up and walk around the room – find 1-3 people you have not spoken to before and introduce yourself using the statements above
- Return to your seat when done

Key notions in language teaching

- **Input** – the language(spoken or written) that the learner is exposed to in the environment (NOTE: the classroom is also considered an environment)
- **Comprehensible input** – language that a language learner can understand; it may be comprehensible in part because of gestures, contextual information, or background knowledge; according to Krashen, comprehensible input is a sufficient condition for language acquisition
- **Compelling input** – input that is so interesting you forget that it is in another language. It means you are in a state of "flow"
- **Output** – the language that the learner produces; according to Swain's comprehensible output hypothesis, output is a necessary condition for language acquisition
- **Interaction** – conversation and other interactive communication; according to Long's **interaction hypothesis** , interaction is a necessary condition for language acquisition
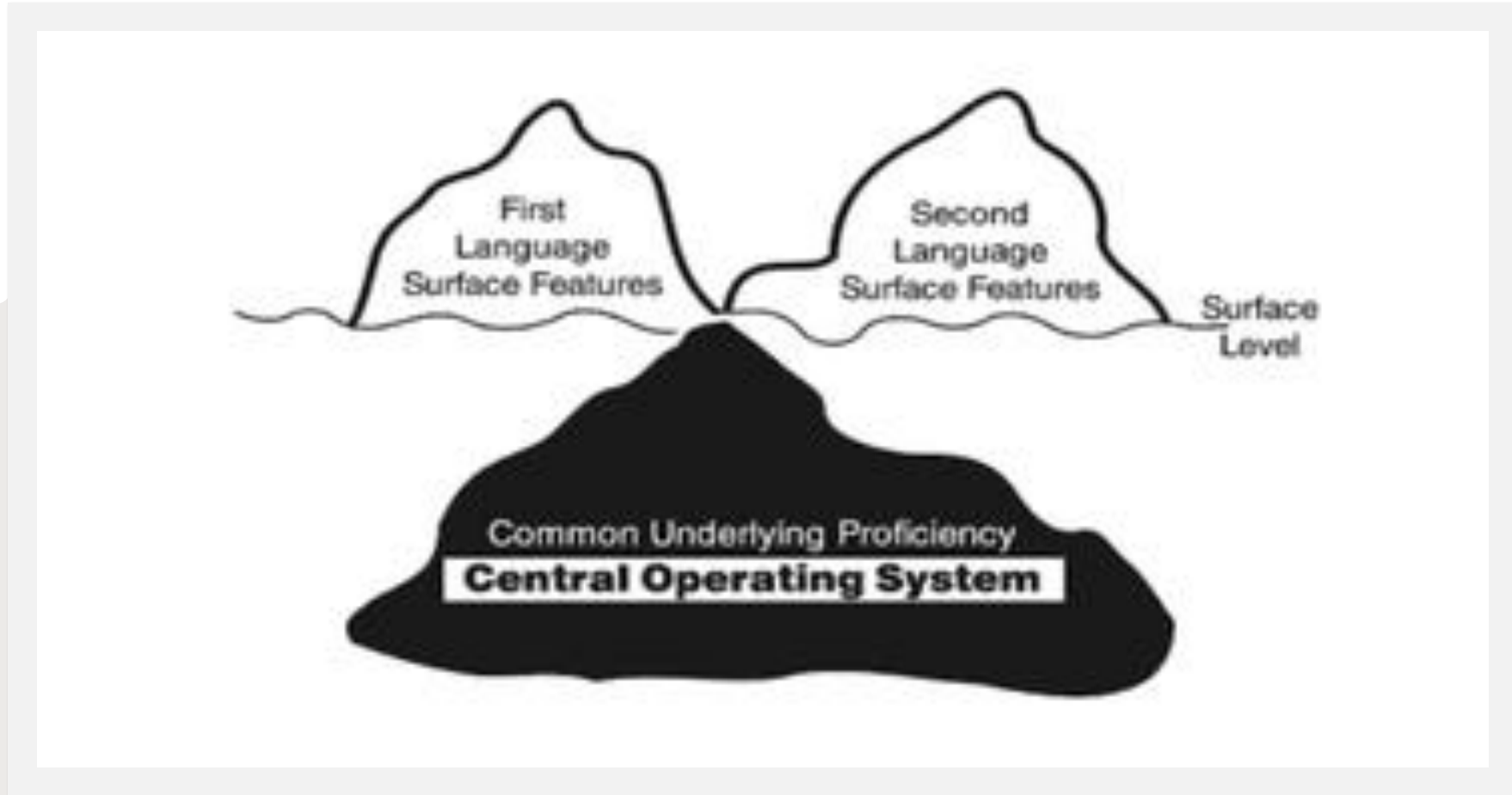
The iceberg model

Language learning questionnaire

- What are your beliefs about language learning and teaching?

- Go through the questionnaire individually

- Then, compare your answers with a partner
  - Discuss any points of disagreement
  - Present arguments/reasons to substantiate your views

Target language vs. other languages in the classroom

For decades, target-language-only approaches have dominated language teaching classrooms around the world

- Monolingual ideologies
- Native-like competence as the ultimate goal

CONSIDER:

- What are some advantages of target-language-only approaches?
- What are some possible disadvantages of monolingual language teaching?

Linguistic diversity around the world

- Multilingualism as a norm
  - 200 nations
  - 6000-7000 languages
    - But more than ¾ spoken by fewer than 1000 people
  - International migration
  - Technological advances
- Europe
  - 1990: 6,8% of the population were migrants
  - 2005: 8,8%
  - 2024: 6,1%
- USA
  - 1990: 9,7%
  - 2005: 13,5%
- France?

Language and power

- Some languages or language varieties (e.g., British or American English, official languages of various countries) are associated with a higher status

- Other languages and language varieties (e.g., minority or vernacular languages such as Sami or non-standard varieties of English such as Appalachian English) enjoy lower status and even discrimination

- Official (state and local) policies can support «weaker» languages, but they can also lead to more discrimination

- **CONSIDER:**
  - **In the Introductions activity, which langauge did you say you would like to learn?**
    - **Why do you want to learn this language?**
   - **Internationally, how «powerful» is this language?**

Attitudes to bi- and multilingualism

Assimilationist discourses

Monolingualism is the ideal/norm that groups/nations should strive for

Only **elective/elite bi-/multilingualism** is valued: speakers of a majority language are encouraged to learn another high-status language (e.g., native speakers of Norwegian learning English)
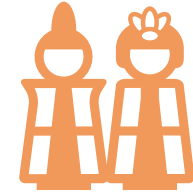
Pluralist discourses

Linguistic and cultural diversity (and **multilingualism**) are accepted as a basic characteristic of an increasingly mobile, global, and diverse world

All kinds of bi-/multilingualism are accepted and valued, including when minority language speakers maintain their **home languages**

Uneven patterns of multilingualism
(de Jong, 2011)

- Double standard of valuing multilingual competence for one group (majority language speakers) while undermining the value of multilingual abilities in other groups (minority language speakers)

- Language and identity
  - Language as an integral part of people's identities that is related to "who they are, where they belong, and their ways in and views of the world" (de Jong, 2011, p. 30)
  - Acculturation – immigrants' identities shift from identification with a minority culture to majority culture
  - Three-generation pattern: the dominant language takes over the majority of domains and functions and pushes out the non-dominant (minority) language by third generation
  - Holistic approach to identities: identities are hybrid and in a constant state of fluctuation – language learners cannot be denied their home languages because it can lead to a loss of identity and self-worth

Multilingualism and diversity as a resource

Benefits of multilingualism:

- Cognitive advantages
- Increased metalinguistic awareness and improved language learning skills
- Identity boost
- Economic advantages (e.g., access to jobs)

Benefits of cultural diversity:

- Building bridges between people and cultures
- Better communication across group and national boundries

Cognitive and linguistic benefits

- Bi- and multilingualism DOES NOT cause delays in cognitive development or language confusion
  - The number of known words in each language can be smaller compared to monolingual speakers, but the total number of known words **exceeds** that of monolinguals
  - Code-mixing is a normal characteristic of multilingual language use
- Multilinguals have a better awareness of how languages work (metalinguistic awareness)
- Early childhood bilingualism can slow down mental decline in older age
- It is important to remember that balanced bilingualism is not a realistic goal for most people

Educational benefits

- Education of linguistically and culturally diverse students should engage their prior/background knowledge
  - Learners benefit from being able to use their entire linguistic and cultural repertoire for learning
- Native language instruction increases academic success and decrease drop-out rates
- The use of students' languages strengthens the relationship between the school and the home and increases the relevance of education

Economic and political benefits

- Multilingualism increases economic competiteveness
  - Consumers prefer online shopping in their native language – multilingual computer interfaces
  - Bilingual workers needed in fields such as medicine and education
- Need for multilingual skills in the military (e.g., intelligence gathering)
- Promoting multilingualism can contribute to peacekeeping – «linguistic equality» can potentially eliminate conflicts

Monopolizing on multilingualism in language classrooms

Multilingualism is a core resource that can help teachers challenge the monolingual bias that still persists in many language classrooms

Consider languages that are typically used for instruction

To provide every student with access to high-quality schooling and equal educational opportunities teachers can:

Promote positive attitudes to multilingualism through linguistically and culturally responsive teaching

Increase their own and learners' awareness about multilingualism

Engage learners' full linguistic repertoires

Activity: HAPPY HOUR

Form groups of three

Each group will receive information about one type of teaching strategy for multilingual language teaching:

- Identity texts

- Translanguaging

Read the information and <u>underline</u> or highlight 3-4 interesting points (10 minutes)

Share what you have learned with the other two group members

(3 minutes each)

Translanguaging:
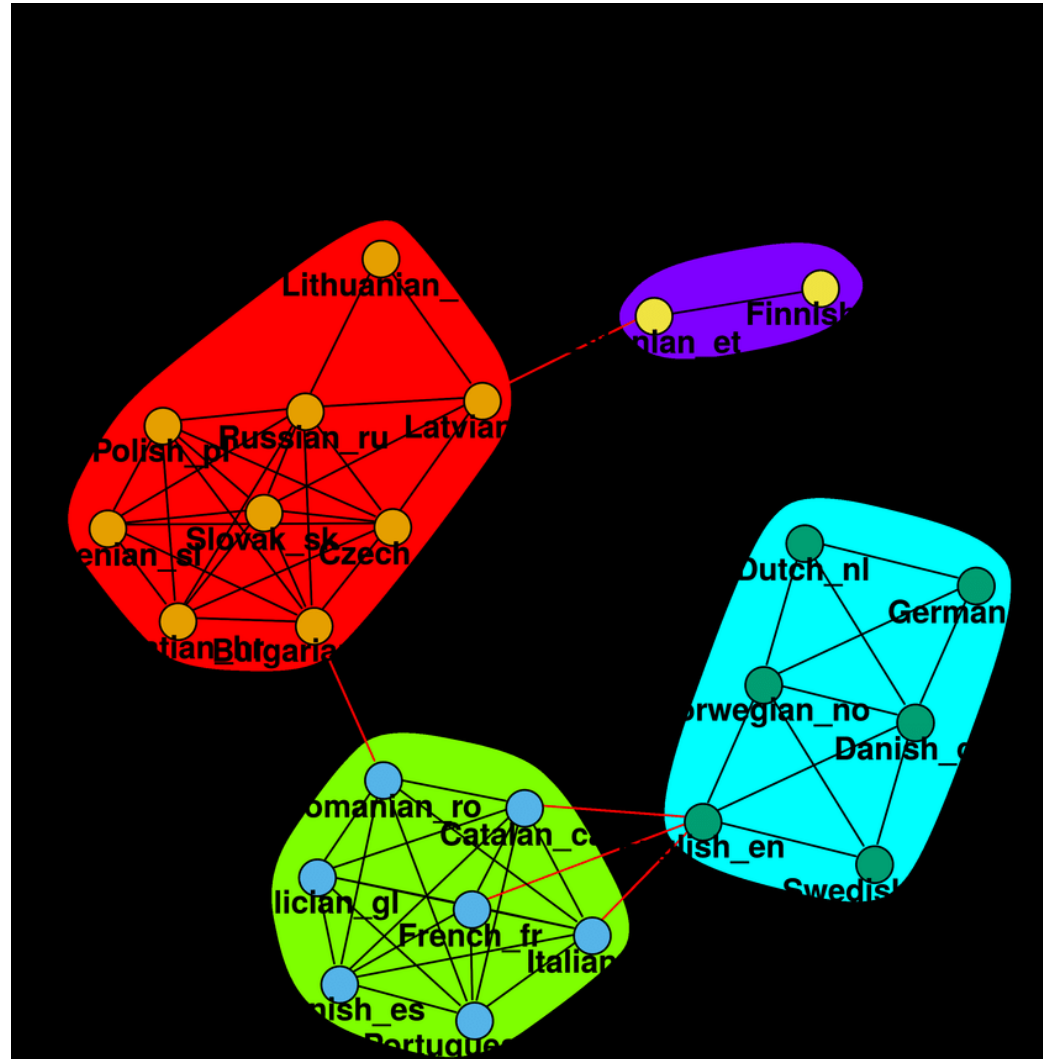## https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iNOtmn2UTzI

Pedagogical translanguaging

- Planned teaching strategies for involving all linguistic resources of the students in the learning process
- An approach to teaching that recognizes and values the multiple languages and language practices that learners bring to the classroom
- Examples of pedagogical translanguaging in the classroom:
  - Bilingual or multilingual labels, word walls, and word lists or personal dictionaries
  - Pair students with similar language backgrounds so that they can support each other
  - Reading in one language and writing in another language
  - Drafting a text in one language and then translating it into another language or languages (e.g., multilingual stories or identity texts)
  - Parallel text in two or more languages
  - Flexible oral and written language use

Exploring connections among different languages

Jag går upp kl 06:30. Först duschar jag och sedan tar jag på kläder. Därefter äter jag frukost och sedan läser jag min tidning. Klockan 07:10 borstar jag mina tänder och sedan lämnar jag mitt hem och går till jobbet.

I get up at 6:30. First I have a shower and then I put my clothes on. After that I have breakfast and then I read my newspaper. At 07:10 I brush my teeth and then I leave my house to go to work.

Ich stehe um 06:30 auf. Erst dusche ich und dann ziehe ich meine Kleider an. Danach esse ich Frühstück und dann lese ich meine Zeitung. Um 07:10 putze ich meine Zähne und dann gehe ich von meinem Zuhause zur Arbeit.

Guessing word meaning: Cognates

English	real-ly	admir-**e**	deci-**sion**
Spanish	real-**mente**	admir-**ar**	deci-**sión**
Portuguese	real-**mente**	admir-**ar**	deci-**são**
Italian	real-**mente**	ammir-**are**	deci-**sione**
French	réel-le-**ment**	admir-**er**	déci-**sion**

Guessing word meanings

NORWEGIAN:

partall – odetall

par*tall* – ode*tall*

ENGLISH:

even number – odd number

*ode*tall – *odd* number

FRENCH:

numero pair – numero impair

*part*all – numero *pair*

PARTALL
EVEN NUMBER   2, 4, 6
NUMERO PAIR

ODETALL
ODDNUMBER   1, 3, 5
NUMERO IMPAIR

Teacher identity

- "Who teachers are and what sort of experiences they bring to the classroom setting" (Higgins & Ponte, 2017, p. 16)
- Teacher identity is formed by the following processes:
  - Own learning experiences
  - Teacher education program
  - Teacher professional development
  - Classroom experience
  - Interactions with colleagues
- The concept of teacher identity allows us to examine and understand "the complex ways in which teachers learn to be and become teachers, grow as teachers, and exercise their practices situated in sociohistorical, cultural, and political contexts' (Yazan & Lindahl, 2020, p. 1)
- Teacher identity development is an ongoing and multifaceted process in which personal and professional factors interplay

My teacher identity

- What subjects do you teach?

- What languages do you speak?

- Your teaching manifesto: three statements that summarize your most important beliefs about teaching:
    - 1.
    - 2.
    - 3.

- Parallel text in at least two different languages

Recommended readings

- Krulatz, A., Neokleous, G., & Dahl, A. (2022). Multilingual approaches to additional language teaching: Bridging theory and practice. In Krulatz, A., Neokleous, G., Dahl, A. (Eds.), *Theoretical and applied perspectives on teaching foreign languages in multilingual settings* (pp. 15-29). Multilingual Matters.

- Identity Texts: A short brochure

- Translanguaging: A short brochure

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