**Plurilingualism: A Review of Theory and Current Practice**

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**Introduction**

In the last fifty years, Canadian governments have invested significant resources in second language (L2) education. This development has been for the express purpose of enhancing the acquisition of the two official languages among the growing numbers of allophones, those new Canadians who report a home language other than those that are Indigenous, French or English (Stats-Canada, 2022). Given this increased social, cultural, and linguistic heterogeneity, scholars such as Ballinger, Lyster, Sterzuk and Genesee (2017) have questioned the usefulness of simple cross linguistic pedagogy within minority and majority language learning situations. In answer to these concerns, several recent curriculum development projects funded by the Ontario Ministry of Education (Rehner, 2017) have pointed to *plurilingualism* as a way forward.

Plurilingualism has been defined as the recognition of “the existence of a complex or even composite competence [in language usage] on which the social actor may draw” (Coste, Moore & Zarate, 2009, 11). As such, plurilingualism “challenges the assumption of complete and balanced competence in [discrete] languages” and “highlights interculturality and the social nature of communicative competence” (Lau & Van Viegen, 2020, 12). This orientation looks on communicative competence as a synthesis of what have often been viewed previously in the academic record as discrete skills, such as metalinguistic, multicultural, discoursal, pragmatic, or pertaining to might be called the “traditional” four language skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing.

The implications to this shift in orientation towards language use are significant. As Piccardo, Germain-Rutherford and Lawrence (2021) note, a plurilingual perspective validates the real language use of those not deemed to be “native speakers”. Instead of regarding those employing non-standard varieties of language as suffering from deficits, this new orientation takes the position that those who do not conform to imposed and abstract language norms do not suffer from deformity. To express this orientation more positively, those with a command over concrete varied and integrated usage demonstrate that they have a highly developed set of language skills that go well beyond a narrow competence with imposed (and often artificial) standards. As such, plurilingualism implies that varied language use is a form of resistance to these norms, which are often used to reinforce (and even contribute to the production of) unequal power relations (Piccardo, 2018).

In classrooms in which a plurilingual orientation has been adopted, “teachers and students pursue an educational strategy of embracing and exploiting the linguistic diversity present in order to maximize communication and hence both subject learning and plurilingual/pluricultural awareness. (Piccardo, 2018, p. 214). This is based on “understanding the complex socio-historical context in which students´ language practices are formed and practiced” (Ollerhead, Choi & French, 2018 p. 8; as cited in Dominguez, 2021).

The mixed-method SSHRC-funded study that this review supports will be employed to explore how digital technological practices are linked to the Allophone home languages within across both Francophone and Anglophone contexts.In addition to enhancing curriculum, teaching practices and professional development, this study document the ways in which teachers of English and French as official languages in publicly funded Anglophone and Francophone schools engage in professional development to mobilize Allophone learners' linguistic repertoires. As a result, our findings will significantly contribute to the existing knowledge base associated with language teachers’ continuous education.

This present document in simply the first step for this Canadian-based study. We will follow this up with a similar review of the Francophone literature in this regard. We will keep the community updated on our progress on the EDUCLANG website at https://www.educlang.ca/en/home/

**Purpose and Organisation**

As other scholars have agued, many teachers are reluctant or even resistant to the adoption of plurilingual approaches (Cruickshank, 2015; Dooly & Vallejo, 2020; Galante, Okubo, Cole, Elkader, Carozza, Wilkinson & Vasic, 2020; Mady & Arnett, 2019; Portolés & Martí, 2020). As we elaborate on below, it is important to recognize the reasons for this reluctance when delivering teacher education and professional development.

Teachers have a right to be suspicious of the latest fashions within second language education since, as Carroll (1971) once noted, “our field has been afflicted with many false dichotomies, weak conceptualizations, and neglect of critical issues and variables” (p. 102). Thus, we contend that it is not enough to dismiss teachers who show this reluctance as being ignorant of the implications associated with what has been advocated as an advance in theory. As has been consistently argued previously by notable curriculum specialists during the widespread adoption of the communicative approach (Breen, 1984; Johnson, 1989; Markee, 1995; Stern, 1992), real curriculum innovation depends on understanding how the nature of teaching practice and decision-making is influenced by belief systems. Changing belief systems, in turn, depends on teachers being shown what works concretely in the classroom (Kagan,1992; Park & Ertmer, 2007) and respecting their responsibilities and expertise (Clark,1988). To adopt the attitude that teachers should automatically adhere to the recommendations proposed by self-appointed experts dooms curricular change and perpetuates what Pennycook (1989) once argued is the maintenance of the traditional inequalities and hierarchies between ESL theorists and practitioners. Carroll’s cautions are still meaningful today and, in short, we contend that we should learn from history.

This systematic review therefore explores how plurilingualism and the concepts associated with it have been defined in academic literature focused on the teaching of English as a Second or Other Language and how these concepts can be adopted into practice. In short, our aims are to 1) provide some of the theoretical background pertaining to plurilingualism, 2) clarify how the notion is related to similar concepts, 3) identify how the notion fits into Anglo-American trends within applied linguistics, 4) review how the concept of plurilingualism has been used from the viewpoint of teachers in concrete assessment and classroom practices as discussed in the Anglophone academic literature from 2010 and 2020 and 5) come up with specific recommendations regarding engaging teacher belief systems in teacher education and professional development.

As shall be shown, although there is a common thread within the literature pertaining to criticism levelled at grammar-based structural approaches to linguistics and second language pedagogy, there is some debate as what actually constitutes plurilingualism. Furthermore, as also we show below, an examination of the literature indicates that there are on-going debates as to how plurilingualism can be actualised in practice or even whether or not it is possible (or even desirable) to do so.

Nonetheless, on the basis of our review of the empirical work below, we argue that the concept of plurilingualism is highly useful. It is important to understand the theoretical background and contexts associated with plurlingualism, even if there are limitations in how the concept has been applied. It is only in that way that one can understand the potential contributions to concrete practice that adopting this concept can make.

**Methodology**

Our first step was a search for sources using the keyword “plurilingu” in three Anglophone and Francophone databases: Cairn; Google Scholar and Omni. This resulted in well over 1000 results. In addition, the ERIC database was consulted using the key word "plurilingu \*". This second search resulted in 230 sources.

From these results, only peer-reviewed articles and book chapters published from 2010 to 2021 in English were selected for further consideration. Although a plethora of material pertaining to plurilingualism exists in such sources as on-line academic repositories, it was decided that limiting the search to peer-reviewed sources would strengthen the authority of the claims we hoped to eventually make. It was further decided that only those sources published in English would be included since we wished to examine the notion of plurilingualism in relation to Anglophone academic second language education discourse within the contexts of elementary and secondary public schools. In total, 97 Anglophone articles and book chapters were considered. These sources were then divided into those that focused on policy, student repertoire, classroom practice and teacher perspectives and within higher education.

In this review, we examine the twenty-four sources that focused on classroom practice and teachers’ perspectives. This section below has been organised in terms of how this literature has been coded: The resistance to the adaptation of plurilingual pedagogy; key factors in changing attitudes towards the approach; and concrete classroom options that demonstrate the usefulness of plurlingualism.

**Theoretical Background**

The term “plurilingual” was coined in a series of publications that led to the creation of the Common European Framework of Reference for Language Learning and Teaching (2001). A summary of the process involved has been provided by several of the scholars who were instrumental in its creation: Coste, D., Moore, D., & Zarate, Z. (2009). These scholars made the point that plurilingual practices have always been concretely evident in daily usage, which they define as utilising the “capacity of the individual social agent to call upon and to make use of the whole set of language resources which he has at his disposal in his repertoire, including his own vernacular and the national / official language” (abstract). They further argue that pluricultural competence goes well beyond declarative (structural/grammar) knowledge of a particular language in that it,

refers to the ability to use languages for the purposes of communication and to take part in intercultural interaction, where a person, viewed as a social actor, has proficiency, of varying degrees, in several languages and experience of several cultures. This is not seen as the superposition or juxtaposition of distinct competencies, but rather as the existence of a complex or even composite competence on which the social actor may draw (p. v)

As we argue here, In the Anglophone context, there has been a similar trend in the development of orientations towards second language acquisition that pushes past those that focus narrowly on declarative knowledge. In some cases, there have been connections between trends within related Anglophone discourse. However, much of the theoretical and practical work on plurilingualism was initially focused on the European context and it has only been in recent years that plurilingualism has been seriously considered in the Anglophone context (Piccardo, Germain-Rutherford & Lawrence, 2021). The earlier trends that push past grammar-based and structural orientations within Anglophone pedagogy generally predate the use of plurilingualism. Thus, in our opinion, it is well worth describing them briefly here since this clarifies what it is that plurilingualism brings to the table.

The most influential of these new Anglophone orientations towards second language acquisition has been that of *communicative competence*, developed by Dell Hymes (1972). Hymes owed much to Chomsky’s (1965) emphasis on the creative nature of language use and the extensive empirical research on linguistic varieties by others such Gumprez (1964) and Fishman (1967). As Bachman (1996), who further utilised the concept in the field of testing and assessment, communicative competence was further defined as pertaining to three components: “linguistic competence, pragmatic competence and sociolinguistic competence” (p. 87).

In this regard, it's important to understand Chomsky’s (1965) influential distinction between ‘competency’ and ‘performance’. In his *transformational grammar*, competency is the innate system of knowledge possessed by native speakers and performance is one’s spoken and comprehension abilities. This distinction is at the core of his explanations for the relationships between ‘universal grammar’ and distinct languages, the ease at which first languages are commonly acquired, the creativity inherent within language use, and for the very possibility of second language learning. They are key concepts in the Chomskian paradigm shift that moved past the antiquated behaviorist orientations towards second language pedagogy so prevalent previously.

However, Chomsky’s notions assume that there is a concrete, syntax-based and biological basis for standardised and distinct languages. In other words, transformational grammar is an idealistic conception of language that assumes that there are such things as full fluency and native speakers. It is a structural view of language well within the tradition of Saussure’s (1906, 2001) distinction between langue and parole. It is notable that Chomsky has repeatedly refused to make judgments in terms of linguistic pedagogy. Nonetheless, Chomsky’s notions presuppose *interlanguage*, which Cummins (2000) adapted into his ‘iceberg model’, which has found a prominent place in many curriculum documents, including those produced by the Ontario Ministry of Education (Rehner, 2017). Cummins' (1996) model illustrates that the transfer of competency skills from one language to another is mainly done at a subliminal and submerged level (hence the iceberg metaphor). This model is highly useful, especially in terms of how it challenges deficit models of second language acquisition. However, it still implies, we respectfully submit, a somewhat linear transfer of language proficiency from one language to another. This makes the non-linear acquisition and simultaneous abilities with multiple languages highly problematic.

Hymes (1972) coined the term *communicative competence* as a way of concretizing Chomsky’s terms for the concrete purpose of language teaching. Hymes focused on understanding actual language use and was not overly concerned with inherent linguistic competency (to use Chomsky’s terminology). In essence, Hymes reversed the nomenclature that Chomsky employed, undoubtedly because he was concerned with the discrete skills needed for language mastery. The term competency in Hymes’ model is deployed in much the same way as it is in workplace education: as a way to describe the breaking down of tasks into discrete skills for mastery.

Communicative competence became a way to move past the exclusive focus on declarative knowledge in second language education. In this formulation, teachers must also show students how to use the target language in social situations. As some of the earliest adherents to this model argued, the communicative approach in SLE involves teaching “the rules of use as well as rules of grammar” (Allen & Widdowson, 1979, p.141).

Communicative competence is useful in that it can be used to define what the standard is for using language in professional and occupation contexts and is thus easily adaptable to testing and assessment. It is in that sense skill-based. This model moves well past declarative knowledge of a language, since competency models are based on criterion or skill-based

Hymes’ work was adapted by Canale and Swain (1980) into a highly influential four-part language competency model:

* linguistic: the more purely language elements of structures and grammar
* socio-cultural: the social and cultural content and assumptions underlying language use
* strategic: what strategies a user of the language utilizes to overcome difficulties or enhance communication
* discoursal: what forms of discourse and conventional use frames the communication.

Linguists who emphasize the functional aspects of language, such as Halliday (1973), have criticized the way in which these competency models have arbitrarily divided language into contradictory, artificial and redundant subsets and been used to privilege product-oriented concepts of standardized and idealized discreet languages that tend to downplay the cultural content of language. These theorists have also noted that discourse is often described in terms of it being little more than complex forms of syntax-based grammatical competence.

Halliday’s Systemic Functional Linguistics (1973) is not based on syntax, but on discourse. In common usage, discourse is an extended and highly organized method of communication using language (e.g., one “discourses” on a topic at length in a lecture) and/or an implied expertise on the part of the speaker. This sense of discourse as an organized and planned aspect of language is the one inherent within the Canale and Swain competency framework.

Systemic Functional Linguistics, however, uses the term discourse to emphasize the concrete and meaningful use of language within complex social contexts. This is undoubtedly a product of the influence on the field of Foucault’s (1978/1994) views on the relationship between power and discourse. Using discourse rather than syntax implies that the correct language usage is a fluid social construct that is subject to conventions and power relations transgressive (no firm boundaries) and that standardized languages (and the converse: dialects and pidgins) are concepts based on power relations and dominant discourses. In short, according to Halliday, language is:

* subject to conventions and power relations
* transgressive (no firm boundaries)
* and that standardized languages (and the converse: dialects and pidgins) are concepts based on power relations and dominant discourses.

It is clear from our discussion above that Hymes initiated a trend within Anglophone second language pedagogy that has developed past the grammar-based structural orientation pioneered by Chomsky. So, in that regard: what does plurilingualism bring to this discussion?

**Terms and Concepts Associated with Plurilingualism**

There is a “maze or terminology” (Lewis, Jones & Baker, 2012) associated with multiple language use and in terms of plurilingualism in particular, there is “a plethora of comparable terminologies and concepts” (Lau & van Viegen, 2020, p. 5).

Bilingualism.

Perhaps the oldest of these terms is that of *bilingualism,* which is simply the ability to use two languages. It is often juxtaposed to *monolingualism*, the belief that one can be fluent in only one dominant language. Edwards (2004) argues that bilingualism is common in daily practice and that “the monolingual mindset can be traced to 19th century Europe and the rise of the nation state, when one dominant group at the core achieved political and economic control of the periphery” (p. 4-5).

Dominant political discourses often view bilingualism as a problem in that it threatens national unity. However, critics of this position argue that an insistence on monolingualism represents a jingoistic attitude towards immigrants that serves unequal power relations (Gunderson, 2006).

In bilingual education, two languages are used to transmit the curriculum. According to Baker (2006), this transmission can be in either one of two forms:

* ‘Weak’ bilingual education-students are only allowed to use their home language in the curriculum for a short period with a transition to education solely in the majority language;
* ‘Strong’ bilingualism-when both languages are used in school to promote bilingualism and biliteracy.

Baker formulates this into three types of curriculum design:

* Mainstreaming/submersion or segregationist (monolingual);
* Transitional/separatist (weak bilingual); and
* Immersion, maintenance, dual or mainstream bilingual (strong bilingual).

Additive vs. Subtractive Bilingualism.

Cummins (1984) argues that there are two differing kinds of language proficiency with different purposes and rates of acquisition in bilingual education: Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS): the surface and oral skills needed for everyday daily communication and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP): the acquisition of academic language skills. Put simply, the implication here is that it cannot be assumed that non-native speaking students who have mastered BICS will have a corresponding mastery of CALP.

As Lytle and Botel (1988) have argued on the basis of empirical research, bilingualism strengthens cognitive ability and increased brain activity which results in greater flexibility, creativity and increased problem-solving skills. This leads bilinguals to academically outperform others on college entrance exams. Again, on the basis of empirical research, Thomas and Collier (2003) have argued that that bilingualism validates minority language communities, decreases interethnic conflict, promotes intergenerational family ties, overall social cohesion, education advancement and equity. At the political level, Genesee (2008) notes that many countries fund bilingual education in order to promote:

* national policies of bilingualism (French immersion in Canada);
* national languages in countries with one official language but students who speak a variety of other languages (Estonian immersion for Russian-speaking students in Estonia);
* proficiency in important regional and/or world languages (English immersion in Japan);
* proficiency in heritage languages (Hungarian immersion in Slovakia);
* indigenous languages that are at-risk (Mohawk immersion in Canada);
* foreign language learning for educational enrichment (French immersion in the U.S.).

Multilingualism.

Bialystock (2004) argues that research has traditionally defined bilingualism as being the competency to use two languages at the level of full fluency (the “native speaker”). In other words, this tradition views bilingual people as being two monolinguals in one. Instead, it is better to use the term multilingual, to conceptualize the human capacity to utilize multiple forms of language in particular contexts in which two standardized forms of language are recognized. In that sense, everyone has the ability to be multilingual to greater or lesser degrees in various modes.

In view of the variety of human experiences and abilities, one might be more competent at communicating in terms of accent, pronunciation, oral skills, aural understanding, writing or reading comprehension. One might have some abilities in one language in certain situations and lesser abilities in another including the strategic use of the language or in various socio-cultural contexts. As May (2011) argues, multiple language abilities also make one more adept at understanding different cultures and at intercultural communication.

Critical Multilingualism.

Language is, of course, linked to culture. Critical multiculturalism, a term first coined by the Chicago Cultural Studies Group in 1992, critiques the way in which multiculturalism has had critical content removed by corporate interests in dominant Anglo-American discourse. Critical multicultural education is marked as having social transformation as its explicit goal and is related to the notion of *voice*, which is the “repressed histories, memories and experiences of diasporic and marginalized people.” (Luke, 2008, 292). However, this orientation, as Kubota (2004) emphasized, is not just for people who have been historically marginalized, but for all students.

Since 1971, Canadian state policy has been marked by multiculturalism. Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau (1971) argued that official bilingualism, as a constitutional guarantee, is essential for Canadian unity. In a detailed analysis of Canadian state policy, Esses and Gardner (1996) noted that immigration is essential for the nation’s economic growth and official policies regarding multiculturalism are in response to the protests from Allophone immigrant communities to the designation of French and English as official languages.

Young (1987) argued that official multicultural policy assumes that inequality is based on individualistic prejudices. However, he noted that understanding exploitation or oppression within this context must be done in terms of the nation as a whole. In fact, “national social identity in Canada has been fabricated into a certain nationality through maintaining the dominance of a certain patriarchal Englishness against and under which all others are subordinated” (p.10).

Haque (2012) goes further in her detailed analysis of how racialized notions associated with language are embedded within the British North American Act of 1867, the founding document of the nation. This is reinforced by current language policy, in which “both the idea of language as a skill and a commodity produce the perceived lack of these competencies as a ‘deficit’ in the immigrant, and the newcomer becomes overdetermined as someone who needs official language(s). In this way, all other aspects of a newcomer’s identity and skills become secondary or are erased, so, e.g., language competencies other than those in English or in French are discounted, and multilingualism has no value. This deficit model reproduces human capital theory which understands knowledge development to be an acquisitive and individualised activity instead of a social and constructive process” (p. 105).

Pedagogically, Corson (1990) noted that multicultural education is laudable when augmented with anti-racist pedagogy. Without this connection, multiculturalism "may provide only a veneer of change that perpetuates discriminatory educational structures. It does little to examine the causes of minority students’ academic difficulties nor to mitigate variations in achievement that different groups have" (p. 150).

Translanguaging.

As Lau and Van Viegan (2020) note, translanguaging originated from an orientation towards concrete practice that encourages the use of minoritalised languages in content-based classrooms (Williams, 1996; Garcia et al., 2009). Since that time, translanguaging has developed a general emphasis on the active and consciously strategic use of language varieties in ways that question the existence of discrete languages (Garcia & Kleyn, 2016).

García and Otheguy (2014) argue that plurilingualism and translanguaging utilise different epistemologies and practices. They claim that translanguaging challenges “the familiar conception of the dual lexico-grammatical system of bilinguals” (p.1) that plurilingualism retains. However, in more recent years, the notion of translanguaging has often been used interchangeably with that of plurilingualism (e.g., Li, 2020). In our opinion, the differences between plurlingualism and translanguaging have been exaggerated, quite possibly as part and parcel of academic turf wars and the pressures associated with career promotion.

It could be argued that translanguaging derives from traditions within Anglo-American linguistic discourse, whereas plurilingualism owes more to how language has been problematized in the Continental tradition, as exemplified by such philosophers as Bahktin (1981), Derrida (1998) and Deleuze (1997). In any case, it is not our intention here to enumerate the minute differences that might exist between the two concepts. Rather, we have adopted Lau and Van Viegan’s (2020) decision to treat the terms as essentially identical. Thus, we use the term plurilingualism here as one that merges the essential elements of both notions.

Multiple Variations.

Lau and Van Viegan (2020) have noted, when describing how multiple language use has been continually (re)conceptualised within applied linguistics, that *code-switching*, the common way in which individuals move back and forth between different distinct languages, has been a standard theoretical concept since at least the 1950’s. Furthermore, the notion of *code-mixing*, in which multiple language use occurs within sentences or phrases, has been around almost as long.

Lau and Van Viegan (2020) further argue that these two forms of usage were long viewed negatively, in which one language use interfered with another. However, more recent conceptualisations of multiple language use have viewed such phenomena as positive, whether these variations be *linguistic landscapes* (Shohamy & Gorter, 2009), *metrolingualism* (Otsuji & Pennycook, 2010), *superdiversity* (Blommaert & Rampton, 2011), *heteroglossia* (Garcia, 2009), *polylanguaging* (Jorgensen, 2008), or *code-meshing* (Canagarajah, 2011).

We do not propose to go into the differences between all these variations, since these are, in our opinion, often minute theoretically and essentially inconsequential to teaching practice. However, it is worth noting that all these variations have abandoned negative deficit-based conceptualisations of multiple language use. Moreover, they acknowledge the social basis and context dependent nature of multiple language use and criticize (explicitly or implicitly) the privileging of standard languages.

Critiques.

As Cenoz and Gorter (2017) have pointed out, minority communities often have heavy investments in having their home language codified, protected and preserved. There have been a number of scholars who have questioned some of the basic tenets of plurilingualism and even its basic efficacy as a classroom resource. Kubota (2016), for example, has argued that plurilinguistic orientations often represent language skills as individualistic commodities that are commensurate with neoliberal globalisation. Multiple language use, as noted above, has been a historical reality for most. However, for many within the global elite today, access to multiple languages has become a way to access capitalist opportunities on a global scale.

At the policy level, McNamara (2011) has pointed out that even though the Council of Europe has endorsed plurilingualism, dominant standardized languages such as English and French are still given privileged status. Non-dominant or regional languages (or dialects, if you prefer), such as Basque or Roma, do not enjoy official status.

Plurilingualism has also been described as problematic from the perspective of concrete classroom practice. Cummins (2021), using what he calls “consequential validity” questions the usefulness for classroom teachers of some of the underlying theories because they often fail to account for local teacher agency and experience as co-creators of actionable knowledge/theory in the face of institutional pressures to teach standardized forms of language. Some of the thought-processes regarding the complexity of applying plurlingualism to classroom practice have recently been captured by Ahmed and Morgan (2021).

**The Empirical Research on Classroom Practice and Teacher Perspectives**

This section of our manuscript outlines the twenty-four articles that we have determined, through the methodology described above, to be central to our review of the empirical literature regarding plurilingualism. These articles have been organised into four themes pertaining to: the resistance to the adoption of plurilingual pedagogy (N=5); key factors in changing attitudes towards the approach (N=6); identified classroom options (N=10); and implications for Teacher Education (N=3).

We summarise the implications arising from our examination of these articles with an italicised paragraph the end of each thematic sub-section. Of course, these themes to a very large extent overlap, a point that shall be covered in the final conclusion in this manuscript.

The resistance to the adoption of plurilingual pedagogy.

On the basis of an extensive set of interviews with teachers in day and community schools Cruickshank (2015) argues that those who use plurilingual pedagogy, experience challenges associated with gaining and retaining rewarding employment. Even though it has been adopted as a preferable approach in many policy contexts, plurlingualism is commonly viewed skeptically at the school level. The author notes that the adoption of plurlingualism at this level depends on how well cultural and linguistic diversity is found within school curriculum, community involvement, explicit administrative support and on-going professional development.

Through an examination of the discussions held during a series of professional development workshops, this article focuses on what on Dooly and Vallejo (2020) focus on what they call the ‘transformative’ aspects of plurilingualism and the conceptual tools that should be provided to teachers who are making the transition to plurilingual practice. It is important for teacher trainers in this context to acknowledge the positive and negative perceptions about plurlingualism within the profession and be clear and forthright about the challenges these teachers face.

Galante, Okubo, Cole, Elkader, Carozza, Wilkinson and Vasic (2020) report a self-study that examined the implementation of plurilingual practices at the university level. The authors contend that even though the literature is full of calls for a shrift towards plurlingualism, most teachers are unsure about how to apply this approach. The seven co-researchers of the study, who had not had the benefit of previous education in plurilingual approaches, interviewed each other and observed each other’s classroom practices. As they describe it, the classrooms were divided into those that adhered to plurilingual approaches and those in which English-only instruction was enforced. The authors found that the students in the classes that emphasized plurilingual instruction exhibited greater engagement with material and showed stronger self-confidence. The study also found that it is important to develop safe spaces for students and to acknowledge how difficult it can be for teachers to break old habits related to English-only instruction.

Mady and Arnett (2019) reported the surveys of three years’ worth of teacher education participants and graduates that focused on how the use of languages was perceived in French as a Second language classes that included English language learners (ELLs). The study found that novice teachers emphasised the need to maximize French use and minimize English use. At the same time, these novice teachers regarded additional languages to be useful resources as a way of supporting the acquisition of French as long as they were limited to teacher use. In addition, the surveys revealed that these participants preferred that ELL students be placed in Core French rather than French Immersion. The authors recommend further teacher reflection and further education in plurilingual principles.

Using an extensive set of surveys designed as pre and post-tests, Portolés and Martí’s (2020) study looked at the effect of teacher education on the beliefs about multilingualism and plurilingualism held by preschool and primary teacher candidates in Valencia. The study found that, despite education, these teacher candidates still held erroneous beliefs about second language pedagogy, including the need for English-only instruction and the effect of age on second language acquisition.

*The five articles outlined above in this theme highlight how difficult it can be for teachers to adopt plurilingualism, especially in terms of challenging English-only instruction. These difficulties are not simply related to the retention of old habits and continued erroneous beliefs about second language pedagogy research and practices. Many teachers have well-founded fears of how the adoption of a new approach can threaten their chances of gaining and retaining rewarding employment. Collectively, these articles recommend honestly acknowledging the positive and negative perceptions about plurlingualism that teachers hold and argue that it is important to develop safe spaces for teachers and students to reflect on and engage with the principles associated with plurlingualism that they themselves deem important to explore.*

Key factors in changing attitudes towards the approach.

Rocafort (2019) conducted a study of teacher candidates that examined their beliefs regarding language education through a process of multimodal narrative reflection. The findings showed that many beliefs were based on purist and monolingual attitudes and were deep-seated and resistant to change. On the basis of this study, the author argues that reflective practice is key to changing teacher candidate attitudes from those that see language as a thing to be mastered to an appreciation for plurlingualism repertoires.

Sabatier and Michael Bullock (2018) collaborated on a self-study in terms of their personal histories as teacher educators. They examine how their identities and conceptions evolved in the contexts of colleagues, teacher candidates and the process of self reflection. They emphasise how living in plurilingual spaces has helped them reframe their identities as teacher educators.

Slaughter and Cross (2021) contended that the lack of concrete guidance in how to conduct plurilingual pedagogies has resulted in the disengagement of many teachers in English as an Additional Language (EAL) programming in Australia, even though many of these teachers are sympathetic to its principles. On the basis of the study’s findings, the authors argue that teacher motivation can be restored when the linguistic repertoire of students are “mapped”. This involves asking teachers to reflect more deeply on how they perceive language and making them more aware of their students’ communicative “lifeworlds”.

In a mixed method case study examining a virtual exchange project involving German and Columbia upper intermediate English students, Bailey and Gruber (2020) found that it was important to explicitly provide significant space for online conversations and written collaboration if students were to develop communicative, plurilingual and pluricultural competencies. This action research focused on student self-assessment of their own performance in multi-varied tasks. The researchers also found that it was important to encourage self-reflection, to explicitly make students aware of concepts related to plurilingualism and to pair students with speakers of other languages rather than with those who shared the same L1.

Gagné, Chassels and McIntosh’s (2015) article consists of a dialogue between three researchers who conducted a study of as set of plurilingual teacher candidates and graduate students who utilised a support and tutoring service centre within their university. The study revealed the need to conduct significant changes within the centre that would better address the need for a greater focus on equity and inclusion.

Prasad (2012) reported a case study in a French-language school that focused on how teacher practices with allophone learners opened up third-space supports for linguistically diverse children. The study shows the importance of policies enacted by policy makers, educators and researchers that create concrete measures for their integration into Canada.

Schmidt and McDaid (2015) collected interview and focus group data collected from two studies of Internationally Educated Teachers (IETs) in Ireland and Canada. Even though the sites vary greatly, the participants faced similar challenges in terms of how their linguistic repertories were regarded as barriers to employment and increased status. They argue that institutions should provide IET’s with better linguistic supports and should abandon monolinguistic frameworks. Rather support should be given to these teachers who offer rich linguistic resources to these institutions.

*The six articles outlined above in this theme collectively argue that changing teacher attitudes towards plurilingualism is not simple or easy. Concrete guidance that makes use of reflective practice is key. Institutional support is also important, especially when it comes to valuing and rewarding teachers who bring their own plurilingual resources to the institution in question. This support should not simply take the form of symbolic acknowledgments at the level of policy. This support should also be substantially material. These articles also note the importance viewing language as an appreciated living entity rather than as a thing to be mastered. In this way, plurilingual repertoires and identities can be valued, resulting in classroom treatment that leads to the development of “third-space” supports for linguistically diverse students and communities.*

Classroom options.

In an experimental study with English-foreign-language primary school students from diverse linguistic backgrounds in Germany, Busse, Cenoz, Dalmann and Rogge (2020) found that significant vocabulary learning gains can occur when one’s first languages is view as a resource. This research used an interventionalist strategy in which an experimental group was led through activities in which one’s first language was explicitly utilised. On the basis of pre and post testing, in contrast to the control group, the experimental group showed significant gains in less time and displayed higher levels of self-confidence and motivation.

Corcoll López (2021) described a sequential approach that encourages the enhancement of learner identity, flexibility on the part of the teacher and making pedagogy explicit and visible. The author recommends organising classroom treatment options in three stages that refer to the diverse languages found in the classroom, emphasize the everyday utility of these languages and explicitly make connections between them.

In this article, Corcoll López and González-Davies (2016) recommend two pedagogical strategies that counter the common unfounded contention that plurilingual practices result in language interference, a drop off in student motivation and a reduction in target language exposure. These strategies are based on the usefulness of code-switching and translation. Classroom tasks should be designed that encourage the purposeful use of multiple languages while noticing and understanding the similarities and difference between them. At the same time, students should be encouraged to carefully monitor their own production. The authors argue that these strategies can be highly effective.

Llompart, Masats, Moore and Nussbaum (2020) focused their study on data collected at multilingual schools in Catalonia. Using conversation analysis based on classroom observations, they argue that plurilingual practices influence how student participation changes over time in ways that progressively utilize linguistic diversity as resources for their cognitive and language learning. The students that they studied exhibited reluctance to engage in practice in the target language initially. However, through an explicit ‘didactic’ explanation of plurilingual principles that encouraged the utilization of their first language resources, these students learned to engage in meaningful target language practice.

Based on a study that investigated how Japanese learners understand the construction of passive structures in English and Japanese, Nagai (2020) proposes a number of classroom tasks that would help students develop better awareness of plurilingualism and crosslinguistic similarities and differences. These tasks would focus on metalinguistic awareness and how passives are actually manifested and encourage their everyday use.

Ortega (2019) outlined the concept of "trans[cultura]linguación”, in which classroom tasks are designed to explicitly compare linguistic and cultural variation. The study specifically looks at how one teacher uses plurilingual and translanguaging principles to address issues related to social-justice, to support the value of varied student backgrounds and to address issues within specific communities.

Using data collected through in-depth interviews, Pavant (2015) looked at how four plurilingual students at the university level regarded linguistic repertoires while completing a set of collaborative pedagogic tasks. The study found that both native and non-native languages were used as significant resources, both cognitively and socially. However, variances between the participants were related to factors such as: previous educational experiences, language proficiency, and the context of their language learning.

Prasad’s (2015) article draws on the experiences of plurilingual students in four English and French schools in Toronto, Canada and one school in Montpellier, France. The article reports an exploratory comparative and collaborative ethnographic action research study that engaged children as co-researchers. Specifically, each of the five children in the study were interviewed the study about the process of creating plurilingual multimodal ‘identity texts’ in the contexts of discussions with their teachers and parents.

Based on 24 in-depth interviews with both migrant and non-migrant adults living in Western Europe, Rivière’s (2017) study examined how plurilingual readers accessed books produced in various media and their different languages repertoires. Rivière found that media in dominant languages are much more accessible that those in dominated languages, by enlarge because of this media was cheaper and more varied. However, access to media in dominated languages can be greatly facilitated through the interaction and active participation of plurilingual readers themselves. The author recommends encouraging autonomous practices in the circulation of dominated media though carefully thought-out pedagogical practices.

Stunell (2021) examined how the linguistic diversity in a plurilingual school community can be used to build positive attitudes in the surrounding community. Focusing on primary teacher candidates in France, the findings suggest that major changes in how language is represented in pre-service education is necessary if the attitudes of student teachers can be changed to emphasize the values of inclusion and interculturality.

*The ten articles outlined above describe lessons learnt from the adoption of specific classroom practices that made use of plurilingual principles. Initial student reluctance to engage in these practices was overcome through explicit explanations of the pedagogical goals involved and a focus on a metalinguistic awareness of everyday language use. Successful adoption of plurilingual methods can result in significant linguistic gains in shorter amounts of time, address issues related to social justice, and help strengthen student self-confidence and motivation.*

*Classroom treatment options should be organised in ways that refer to the diverse languages found in the classroom, the practical utility of these languages and the connections between them. Students should be shown how to monitor their own language use and to notice the similarities and differences between the languages used in the classroom. Teachers should encourage code-switching and translation while paying close attention to their students’ current and previous educational contexts and linguistic experiences. Specific activities such as the use of “identity texts” or the production of media in dominated languages can be greatly facilitated by actively engaging students as “co-researchers”.*

Implications for Teacher Education

Maddamsetti (2020) reported a study that focused on a candidate in a US teacher preparation program who had Korean heritage and previous lived experiences in China. Coupled with her previous high socio-economic background and her practicum work in poor urban schools that featured English-only pedagogy, these factors resulted in complex negotiations of social-economic, cultural, linguistic and professional identities. The findings indicate the need to support novice teachers as they negotiate the complexities associated with the implementation of plurilingual strategies in English-only contexts and how teacher identity is affected as a result.

Moloney and Giles (2015) examined the linguistic profiles of a cohort of teacher candidates in Australia and found that one third had dynamic plurilingual identities. However, there were few connections between these identities and their experiences in teacher education. This was especially true for those candidates in monolingual school practicums. The authors argue that pre-service education should better validate plurilingual identities and use them to enhance programming and professional integration.

Otwinowska’s (2014) paper reported a study on plurilinguistic awareness carried out with Polish teachers of English that consisted of a survey of over 230 teacher candidates and a set of interviews and focus groups with five in-service teachers. Plurilinguistic awareness was positively corroborated with the length of participant teaching experience and the linguistic repertoires. The author recommends that plurilinguistic principles be enhanced and strengthened in teacher education.

*The three articles outlined above emphasize how plurilinguistic awareness is connected to how long one has been teaching and one’s own linguistic repertoire. These articles emphasise the importance of helping novice teachers negotiate the complexities associated with the adoption of plurilingual strategies, especially within English-only institutions. To do this, the often-overlooked connections between the linguistic and social identities of these novice teachers must be taken into account. Overall, plurilingualism must be a major focus within teacher education.*

**Conclusion**

This literature review has summarised what we consider to be the dominant trends in conceptual and empirical work in the Anglophone academic literature that are closely related to plurilingualism as they pertain to teacher beliefs and classroom treatment options. In that regard, we have provided some of the pertinent theoretical background, noting that much of the older trends within this literature problematized decontextualized and standardized orientations towards language, especially in terms of what we consider to be the erroneous notion of the “native speaker”, a concept first problematized in the Anglophone second language education literature by Leung, Harris and Rampton (1997). This is what we consider to be the common legacy that this literature shares with plurilingualism. However, through our literature review, we have further argued that plurilingualism deepens this trend and adds valuable conceptual insights and (more importantly) concrete pedagogical recommendations.

What are the commonalities between the twenty-four articles across the four themes we identified through this literature review?

Clearly, plurlingualism has the potential of making a significant difference in terms of classroom practice. The adoption of plurilingual methods can result in significant and efficient gains in linguistic abilities, strengthen student self-confidence and help address issues related to social justice. As these articles make plain, institutional policy AND material supports are key. The key notion is to view language as linked to multiple repertoires and identities. These are living entities rather than things to be mastered.

To be successful, plurilingual classroom treatment options should be organized in specific ways. Students should explicitly be made aware of plurilingual principles and helped to appreciate the linguistic diversity of themselves and others while engaged in the practical utility of language use. This can be done through an encouragement of self-monitoring, code-switching and translation. Teachers should encourage code-switching and translation while paying close attention to their students’ current and previous educational contexts and linguistic experiences.

Adopting plurilingual methods on the part of teachers is not a simple process. Resistance to change has a rational basis related to employment and English-only constructs common within institutions. Those seeking a paradigm shift must acknowledge that these contexts do indeed exist. It is not a matter of lazy teachers who cannot break old habits.

Within our lifetimes, we have had constant shifts in paradigms. These have included (to name just the more dominant trends): grammar translation, the audio-lingual technique, a plethora of pop-psychologically-based “designer methods, the communicative approach, focus on form, task-based instruction, etc. Those seeking a paradigm shift must also acknowledge that many teachers are frustrated with pressures from “experts” extolling the miraculous nature of yet another set of new precepts in the field. It is important to develop safe spaces for teachers and students to reflect on and engage with the principles associated with plurlingualism that they themselves deem important to explore.

Teacher education has a major role to play. It is important to help teachers negotiate the adoption of plurilingual strategies in all their complexity through an engagement with linguistic and social identities. We argue that it is not enough to be dismissive of the beliefs that these teachers hold, since curricular innovation depends on showing teachers that notions such as plurilingualism is concretely useful in the classroom. To do otherwise is to fall prey to the elitism that is common within the academic/practitioner divide and to what (at least theoretically) plurilingualism is designed to address.

To a certain extent, it is true that the notion of plurlingualism does amount to being “old wine in new bottles”. However, we argue that there is some new wine in the notion, as well. As Flores (2013) has noted, that “there is a need for a more critical treatment of the concept of plurilingualism to avoid complicity with the promotion of a covert neoliberal agenda” (p.1). It is clear to us that plurilingualism is concretely useful. The notion breaks with the common focus on long-antiquated grammar-based and structural orientations within Anglophone second language pedagogy. We should have more of it.

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