

Haben Studierende ein Bewusstsein für ihr plurilinguales Verhalten?  
Untersuchungen zur Praxis von zwei Fremdsprachen in einem Kurs

Les étudiants sont-ils conscients de leur comportement langagier plurilingue ?  
Étude de l'emploi de deux langues étrangères dans un seul cours

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## Are students aware of their plurilingual behavior?

Study on two foreign languages in one course



**Eeva Boström & Joachim Schlabach**

Turku School of Economics / University of Turku

**11th International CercleS Conference**

2-4 September 2010, Helsinki, Finland

University Language Centres – Language Policy and Innovation

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1. Introduction:  
Plurilingualism and  
Plurilingual Competence
2. Course:
  - 2.1 Concept: Plurilingual Study Trip
  - 2.2 Realization: Plurilingual Study Trip
3. Research design:  
Interviews
4. Results of the interviews:
  - 4.1 Choice and Change of Languages
  - 4.2 Negative
  - 4.3 Positive
  - 4.4 Strategy
  - 4.5 Transfer and
  - 4.6 Code-Switching

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## 1. Introduction

### Plurilingualism as an integral objective

#### Increasing significance of plurilingualism

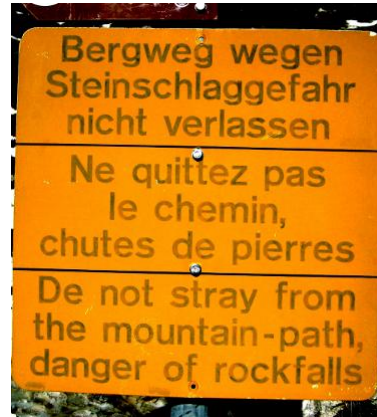
- EU: 1+2 languages,  
for Finland: 2+2 (Takala)  
personal adoptive language
- ELAN-study: language competence as an  
economic factor
- Confederation of Finnish Industries EK:  
English is not enough
- Foreign language pedagogy:  
CEFR, EuroCom / Intercomprehension,  
Third language acquisition,  
Common curricula

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## 1. Introduction

### Plurilingual competence

- Plurilingual working life  
38% of TSE's graduates switch regularly between two or more languages  
*Pour la gestion des situations plurilingues, il faut qu'on apprenne à traduire et à changer de langue selon les besoins différents. (Raisa)*
- Communicate in two or more languages in one and the same situation
- Reception and production
  - Coping with uncertainty and stress
  - Linguistic empathy
- Code-Switching
- Mediating activities



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## 2.1 Course

### Concept: plurilingual study trip

#### Plurilingual competence as main objective

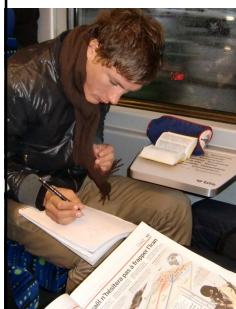
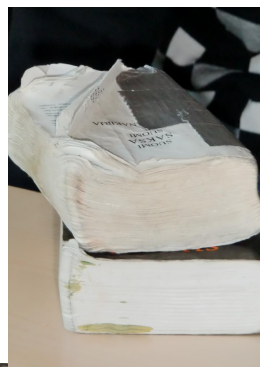
- 2 languages: German and (or) French additionally Finnish
- Work groups: heterogeneous **DE+fr / de+FR**  
mutual assistance: mediating
- Prep seminar 4 x 3h
  - presentations in DE and FR
  - glossary (DE-FR-FI)
- Learning portfolio  
tasks referring to language / learning awareness
- Other goals: language and communication competence, motivation (confirmation, continuing learning, study abroad), economic Landeskunde, positive view of the country and the people

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## 2.2 Course

### Realization: plurilingual study trip

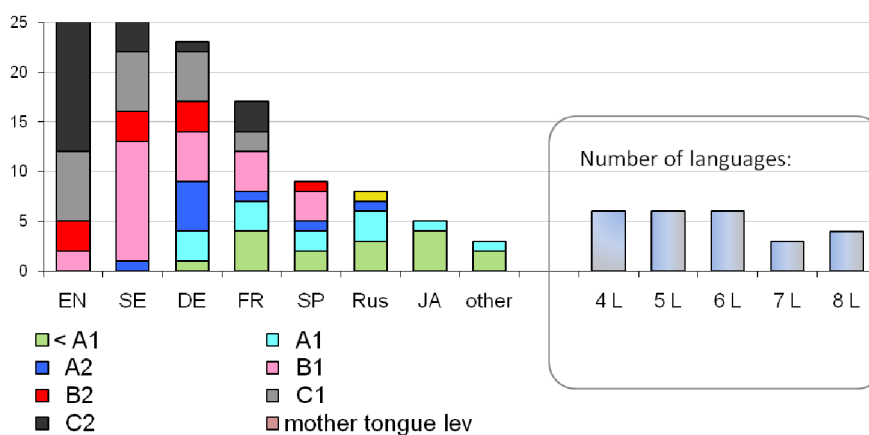
- In 2009 (2<sup>nd</sup> time)
- course SA14 / RA15, 3 credits
- 25 students
- 2 teachers German and French



## 2.2 Course

### Realization: plurilingual study trip

Foreign language competence n: 25

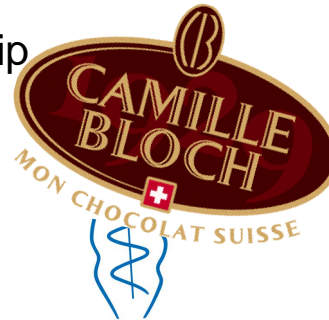


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## 2.2 Course

### Realization: plurilingual study trip

- Study trip 6 days Switzerland
  - Biel/Bienne
  - Company visits:  
Migros Zürich, Camille-Bloch Courtelary,  
Weleda Arlesheim, FHS Biel/Bienne,  
Girard Perregaux La Chaux-de-Fonds
  - City guides
  - University Bern
  - Excursion to Niesen mountain
- Linguistic configurations:
  1. only German
  2. only French
  3. German and French simultaneous listening + reading
  4. German and French consecutive
  5. German and French alternating
  6. German and French in two divided groups
  7. Additionally Finnish, Swedish, English ...



**WELEDA**

*En accord avec l'Être humain  
et la Nature*

**Ein  
M  
besser.**

## 3. Research design

1. Questionnaires before + after  
→ language background, attitudes ...
2. Recording (audio) of seminar, program:  
→ language use (choice, code-switching ...)
3. Student portfolios  
→ attitudes, language use / learning / strategies
4. Interviews during study trip  
→ plurilingual language use / choice / transfer / observations ...

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### Example from the recordings in the train

J Startade du de

E Ja

J Här ser du den. Nå nå  
låt den ligga där

E Och den tar härifrån

J Jo jo

E Joo. Hyvä puolivälin arviointi  
Mitä huomioita te ootte

Train: Die BLS begrüsst Sie in der  
S3 nach Bern-Belp und  
wünscht Ihnen eine  
angenehme Reise

Train : Le BLS vous souhaite la  
bienvenue et un agréable  
voyage dans le S3 à  
destination de Berne-Belp

E Joo Mitä huomioita te ootte  
tehnyt?



Swedish  
Finnish  
German  
French

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## 4. Results of the interviews

- Students were interviewed in 8 small groups
- 3 hours 25 minutes of recordings
- Categories of interest:
  - 1) choice and change of languages (125)
  - 2) negative experiences and stress (53)
  - 3) positive experiences (84)
  - 4) strategy (51)
  - 5) transfer and code-switching (181)

**A TOTAL OF 494 OCCURRENCES**

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## 4. Results

### First impressions



- all the students in the group are plurilingual
- consciousness on various levels:
- aware of what languages they hear, read and speak
- willingness to use foreign languages
- awareness of the help provided by other languages they already know
  
- the Swiss seen as polite because they do not automatically change to English, they let the students speak DE or FR
- many students mention the situation in Finland (Finnish + Swedish), but they see it as a not used potential, "we could be more bilingual" <sup>13</sup>

## 4. Results

### 4.1 Choice and change of languages

125 occurrences:

- the interlocutor changes the language (12)
- the student tries or wants to use a foreign language (17)
- the student speaks his/her language even if the interlocutor speaks another (13)
- the student doesn't want to use English (10)
- the students give an explanation if they have used English (11)
- the student tries to use the weaker language, if he/she has one (9)
- the student chooses the language according to the situation (9)

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## Example of a multilingual situation

INTERVIEW 4, 00:07:21

"The transparencies are in English, the spoken text is in French and then you try to think about questions to ask in German and then you hear, beside you, the translation in Finnish, so it was quite a diverse situation"



## 4. Results

### 4.2 Negative

53 occurrences:

- frustration of not understanding (7)
- lack of self-confidence with the language (6)
- the interlocutor changes to EN even if the student speaks DE or FR (3)
- doesn't have the strength to listen to the L3 (3) / L4 (1)
- tiredness (in general) (5)
  - of making efforts (4)
  - the schedule (4)
  - listening to the non-mastered language (3) / the weaker language (1)
  - being in a group (1)
  - when tired the performance falls (1)
  - at the end of the trip, other language come to mind (1)

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## 4. Results

### 4.3 Positive

- 84 occurrences
- understanding the language (18)
  - even surprised, goes beyond the expectations (5)
  - understanding the weaker language (8)
  - understanding the non-mastered language (5)
  - understanding on the basis of the English material (6)
- being able to speak, being understood (9)
- to try and to succeed and to progress (9)
- the group helps (4)
- being able to translate to the others (4)
- the multilingualism is nice (2)



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## 4. Results

### 4.4 Strategy

- 51 occurrences
- to compare with other languages
  - Swedish (5)
  - English (2)
  - Spanish (1)
- to speak even if making mistakes (6)
- to guess (5)
- to ask (4)
- to deduce (3)
- to see in practice (1)
- to listen to the translation / listen to the 2 teachers saying the same thing in two languages (2)



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## 4. Results

### 4.4 Strategy

- forcing oneself to speak (4)
- going around the difficult word (3)
- not speaking if not sure (3)
- inventing words (2)
- not inventing words (1)
- imitation (1)
- trying in different languages (1)



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## 4. Results

### 4.5 Transfer

89 occurrences:

- yes, the student does it in general (5)
- positive transfer (7) / negative (7)
  
- aware of it (9) / not aware (5)
  
- languages used for transfer
  - SE → DE (13)
  - EN → DE (2)
  - EN → SP (1)
  - EN → FR (2)
  - FR → SP (1)
  - FR → (1)
  - SP → FR (3)

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## 4. Results

### 4.5 Transfer

Explanations given by the students (transfer):

- to find the words quickly
- it's good to try, it helps
- it's risky to do it
- probably not aware ("if it works, I don't notice it")
- aware ("it's not that, but I try")
- did not check in the dictionary afterwards
- transform the word into Finnish
- the teachers speak Swedish → effects on German
- not good in written text

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## 4. Results

### 4.6 Code-switching

92 occurrences:

- yes, the student does it in general (17)
- knows that the interlocutor masters the language (5)
- using English (6), French (2), German (1)

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## 4. Results

### 4.6 Code-switching

Explanations given by the students (code-switching):

- doesn't find the word (10)
- to have fun (10)
- to communicate (7)
- awareness: yes (3) / no (1)
- better than the Finnish word (5)
- quick in English
- more easy
- the word that comes into mind
- not doing it, looking for the Finnish word
- not in official contexts (3)

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## Example of a multilingual strategy

Interview 4, 00:19:14 (translation from Finnish, talking about transfer)

"In general, when there is a silent moment, I think a few seconds about what could I say now. So first I search from English, then Swedish and if I find a word from there, which could... in general, I then remember that it's probably something like that in German and then I use it."

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## Continued success?

A new group in the autumn 2011

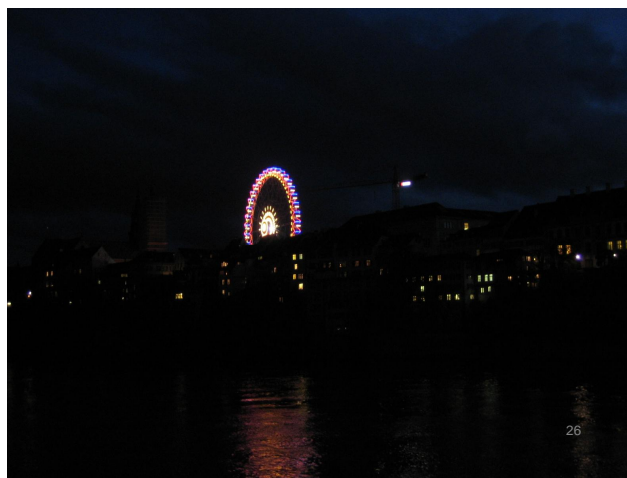
“This doesn't have anything to do with this question, but it's really nice that you speak like that both of you, so then it is possible to understand something even with only a basic course in French. It's a really great moment.”



### FUTURE

new language combination German – Swedish created in a new course at TSE

**challenge:** the more and more heterogeneous level of the students



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