

On the pathway to plurilingual proficiency



Eeva Boström & Joachim Schlabach

Turku School of Economics at the University of Turku



Seventh International Conference
on Third Language Acquisition and Multilingualism
Warsaw 15-17 September 2011

On the pathway to plurilingual proficiency

1. Introduction:

Plurilingual proficiency

2. Plurilingual study trip

Pedagogical approach

Linguistic configuration

Research design

3. Results: Data from interviews and portfolios

Awareness

Strategies

4. Further research:

Plurilingualism in international business communication

1. Introduction: Plurilingual proficiency

- The learning objective
Educational purpose – as language teachers –
with reference to CEFR
- A tool to describe plurilingual situations in
international business communication
Research purpose – as researchers –
with reference to research in multilingualism
- Using the term plurilingual not multilingual



1. Introduction: Plurilingual proficiency

Ability to use two and more languages for the purpose of communication (preliminary)

- Specific plurilingual skills:
Code-switching, mediating, transfer
- Uneven levels:
internal and between languages

EDUCATIONAL ASPECTS:

- Awareness and strategies
- Dynamic: lifelong learning
- Aspired level not native

2. Plurilingual study trip

2.1 Pedagogical approach

The Framework used at Turku School of Economics:

- 4 mandatory languages:
 - Finnish
 - Swedish
 - two foreign languages:
 1. mostly English
 2. German, Spanish, French, Russian, or Japanese
- Thus far languages have been taught as individual / independent subjects not as a part of a plurilingual curricula
- Courses used to implement plurilingual approaches:
 - Plurilingual study trip (German and French)
 - Business communication in German AND Swedish
 - MonikieliSilta (introduction to plurilingual language learning)

2. Plurilingual study trip

2.1 Pedagogical approach

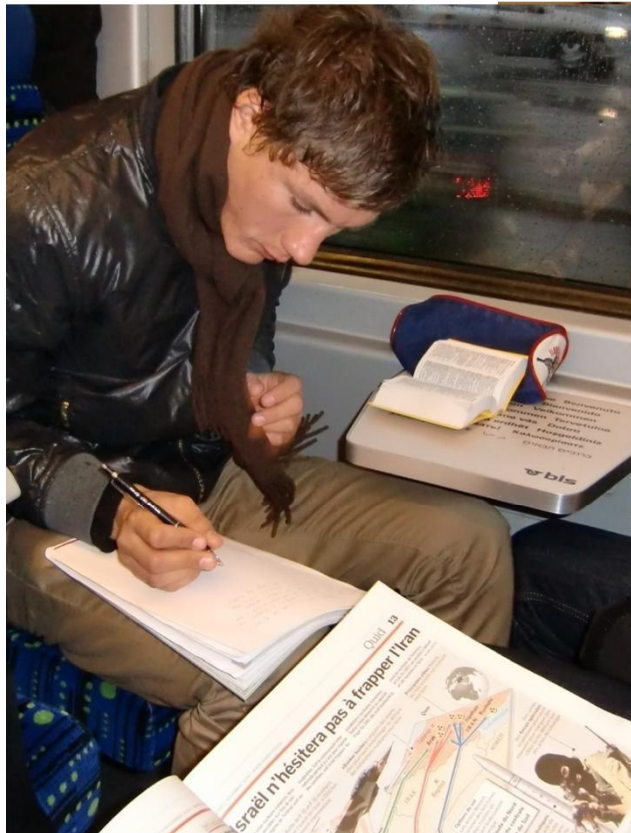
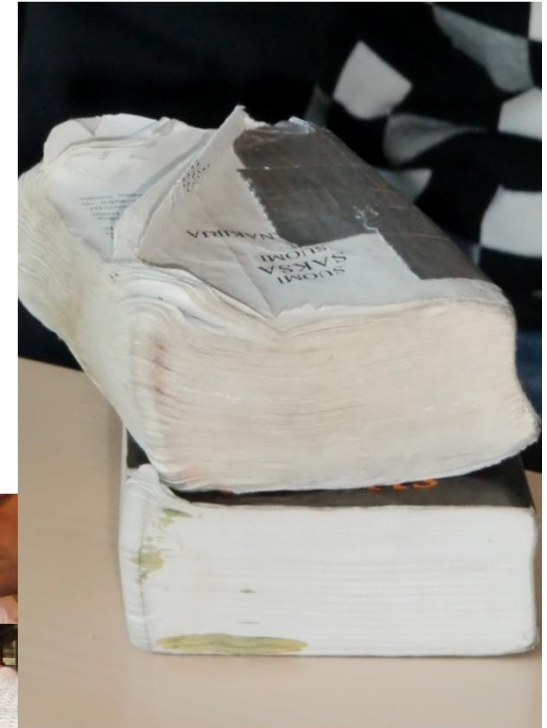
Plurilingual proficiency as the main objective

- 2 languages: German and (or) French
additionally Finnish
- Work groups: heterogeneous **DE+fr** / **de+FR**
mutual assistance: mediating
- Prep seminar 5 x 3h
 - presentations in DE and FR
 - glossary (DE-FR-Fin)
- 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

2. Plurilingual study trip

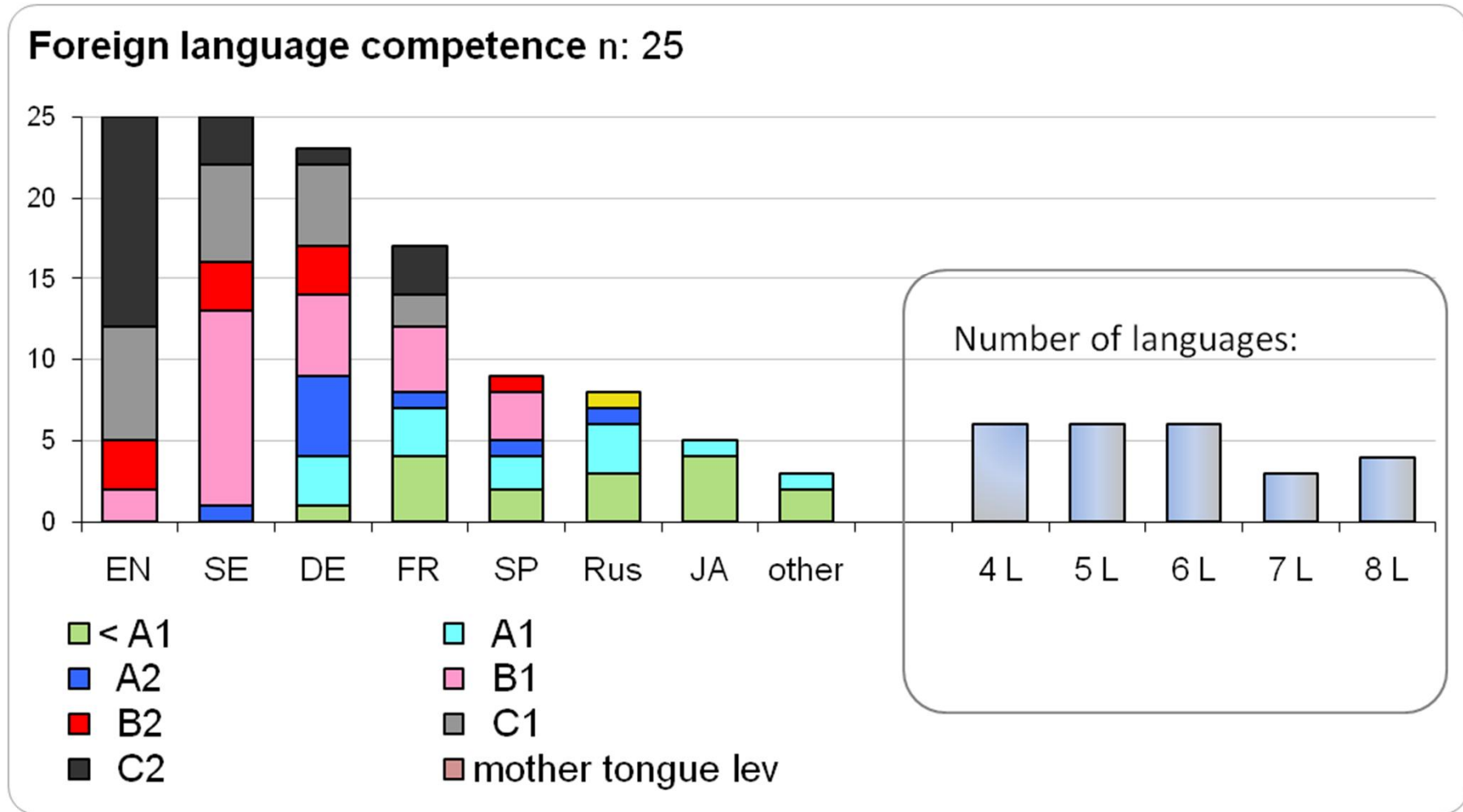
2.1 Pedagogical approach

- In 2007, 2009, and 2011
- Course SA14 / RA15, 3 credits
- 25 students
- 2 teachers German and French



2. Plurilingual study trip

2.1 Pedagogical approach



2. Plurilingual study trip

2.1 Pedagogical approach

- 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



WELEDA

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

**Ein
M
besser.**

2. Plurilingual study trip

2.2 Linguistic configuration

Linguistic configurations:

1. Only German
2. Only French
3. German and French consecutive
4. German and French alternating
5. German and French in two separate groups
6. Two languages simultaneously: listening + reading
7. Additionally: Finnish, Swedish, English ...



2. Plurilingual study trip

2.3 Research design



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

Example from the recordings in the train

J Startade du de

E Ja

J Här ser du den. Nä nä
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

3. Results

Awareness

- Choice and change of language
- Experiences, negative and positive
- Code-switching

Strategies

- Transfer
- Translation
- Supporting material
- Others: gestures, glossary, attitudes

INTERVIEW

- half way through the trip
- students were interviewed in 8 small groups
- 3 hours 25 minutes of recordings

PORTFOLIO

- the portfolio was given to the teachers after the trip, but prepared during the whole course
- every student wrote his / her own portfolio (25)

	Interview	Portfolio
choice / change of language	125	
negative experiences and stress	53	60
positive experiences	84	88
strategies	51	193
transfer and code-switching	181	
TOTAL (all the occurrences in the material)	494	731

3. Results

3.1 Choice and change of languages

Examples:

- the language is chosen according to the situation
- speaks his/her language (DE/FR) even if the interlocutor speaks another
- doesn't want to use English
- tries to use the weaker language, if he/she has one

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, next to you, the translation in Finnish, so it was quite a diverse



3. Results

3.2 Negative

- frustration of not understanding
- lack of self-confidence with the language
- the interlocutor changes to EN even if the student speaks DE or FR
- doesn't have the strength to listen to the L3

3. Results

3.3 Positive



- understanding the language
 - surprised, goes beyond expectations
 - understanding the weaker language
 - understanding the non-mastered language
 - understanding on the basis of the English material
- to try and to succeed and to progress
- the group helps / being able to translate to the others
- multilingualism is nice

3. Results

3.4 Strategies

- to compare with other languages
 - Swedish
 - English
 - Spanish
- to speak even if making mistakes
- to guess
- to ask
- to deduce
- to see in practice
- to listen to the translation
- listen to the 2 teachers saying the same thing in two languages, possibility to check the understanding



3. Results

3.4 Strategies

- forcing oneself to speak
- going around a difficult word
- not speaking if not sure
- inventing / not inventing words
- imitation
- trying in different languages



3. Results

3.5 Transfer

- students recognise the transfer phenomenon in general
- report positive and negative transfer
- reflect on the question of being aware or not of transfer
- languages used for transfer:
 - Swedish → German
 - English → German
 - English → Spanish
 - English → French
 - French → Spanish
 - French → Italian
 - Spanish → French

3. Results

3.5 Transfer

Explanations given by the students to 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 (*"I know it's not that, but I try"*)
- transform the word into Finnish
- the teachers speak Swedish together → effects on German
- it is ok when spoken, but not written

3. Results

3.6 Code-switching

- the students report that, in general, they do it
- it is done when the students know that the interlocutor masters the language
- using English, French, German

3. Results

3.6 Code-switching

Explanations given by the students for code-switching:

- doesn't find the word
- to have fun
- awareness: yes / no
- better than the Finnish word
- easier / quick in another language
- not doing it at all, looking for the Finnish word when speaking the L1
- not doing it in official contexts

Example of a multilingual strategy

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

”In general, when there is a silent moment, I think a few seconds about what I could 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.”

→ “the simultaneous influence of more than one language upon a target language, i.e. a many-to-one type of association” (De Angelis 2007)

SUNRISE AVE

ON THE WAY TO WONDERLAND TOUR 2007
TRIFUN MUSIC
WWW.TRIFUNMUSIC.CH



DO, 15. NOVEMBER · SOLOTHURN, KOFMEHL
FR, 16. NOVEMBER · PRATTELN, Z-7
SO, 18. NOVEMBER · ZÜRICH, VOLKSHAUS

die finnen kommen!

20 Minuten verlost 2x 2 Tickets pro Konzert von Sunrise Avenue in Solothurn, Pratteln oder in Zürich! Möchten Sie das finnische Quintett live erleben? Senden Sie ein SMS mit SUNRISE an die Nummer 2020 (Fr. 1.-/SMS) oder nehmen Sie hier kostenlos an der Verlosung teil: www.wettbewerbe.20min.ch INTENSIVER LEBEN



4. Further research

A new project on plurilingualism in international **business** communication

- questionnaires, interviews in companies
- objective: to define plurilingual proficiency in business communication with empirical data
- develop a plurilingual curricula and new language courses which correspond to the needs of working life

Auf Wiedersehen • Au revoir • Arrivederci • A revair • See
you again • Hasta la vista • Até à próxima • Tot ziens
• På gensyn • På gjensyn • Välkommen åter • Näkemiin •
Vízontlátásra! • Na shledanou • Do vidjenja • Mirupafshim
• Terar görüşmek üzere • До свидания • Για σας •
மீண்டும் சந்திப்போம் • さようなら • إلى اللقاء • להתראות •



tinyurl.com/pluriling