

**A New Vision of Language Education, from Monolingualism to Plurilingualism:
An In-depth Analysis of Plurilingualism and Its Theories
Relevant to Language Education**

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Abstract

This dissertation investigates the theoretical premises and pedagogical implications of plurilingualism through an extended analysis of the academic and (where appropriate) policy literature. Firstly the tension between superdiversity, caused by globalisation, at the social and individual levels, is juxtaposed with traditional approaches to language teaching. Two main forces in traditional language teaching, a monolingual ideology and cognitive second language acquisition (SLA) are examined. By exploring the profound influence of monolingual ideology over language classrooms, the research brings to the fore the need for a new theoretical framework in the field of language education. The investigation raises influential recent shifts in the language field, particularly the “social turn” and the “multilingual turn”.

Subsequently, the theoretical premises and core concepts of plurilingualism are carefully investigated, aiming to identify the difference between this new lens and traditional language education. When the research explains possible practices of plurilingual education, two different pictures are presented. On the one hand, in many pluralistic language classrooms where this new perspective is embraced, teachers have achieved gratifying results in developing students' plurilingual and intercultural repertoires and cultivating their composite competence. On the other hand, the research also shows that many language teachers lack awareness of the use and further development of students' whole linguistic and cultural repertoires. In the meantime, some disconnection between theoretical knowledge and practice is caused by inadequate pre service and in service professional development and training.

After an in-depth analysis of its characteristics and advantages, this research identifies that although plurilingualism has not yet become an accepted theory of language in mainstream language education, this action-oriented, student-centred pedagogical approach and its broad and strategic framework can provide high-quality language education in an era of superdiversity. In addition to cultivating students' plurilingual and intercultural ability, it can also foster lifelong learning awareness of the need to continue to cultivate these skills and understanding. Finally, this dissertation also analyses the key points, difficulties, and possible solutions of promoting plurilingualism in schools.

This research suggests that many educators and language teachers still lack awareness of the implication embodied in this new concept or lack adequate support for implementing it in the classroom setting. It is necessary to address these issues through professional training. In addition, studies on experiences of schools that have successfully shifted from traditional pedagogy to pluralistic approaches would be helpful.

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List of Acronyms

AtL	Awakening to languages
AUT	Auckland University of Technology
CEFR	The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages
CEM	Cumulative Enhancement Model
CLIL	Content and language integrated learning
CLT	Communicative Language Teaching
CREDIF	Centre de Recherché et d'Études pour la Diffusion du Français
ESProg	European Studies Programme
EuRom5	Read and understand five Romance languages (Portuguese, Spanish, Catalan, Italian and French)
FL	Foreign language
FREPA	The Framework of Reference for Pluralistic Approaches to Languages and Cultures
IC	Intercomprehension between related languages
interactive IC	Interactive intercomprehension competence
JSTOR	Journal Storage
L1	First language, mother tongue
L2	Additional language(s) acquired after the mother tongue
L3A	Third language acquisition
receptive IC	Receptive intercomprehension competence
SCT	Sociocultural Theory
SLA	Second language acquisition
TESOL	Teaching English To Speakers of Other Languages
TPM	Typological Primacy Model

Attestation of Authorship

“I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning” (AUT, 2019).

Signature:

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction

In recent decades, super diverse sociolinguistic landscapes and individual linguistic profiles caused by factors such as globalisation and information technology have brought great challenges to the field of language education, and have also led to many reflections and transformations. Having examined the limitations of traditional language teaching ideas, researchers and educators have extensively rethought language itself and, language learning. At the turn of the century, this momentum eventually resulted in two epistemological turns in the field. These were termed the “social turn” (Block, 2003) and the “multilingual turn” (Conteh & Meier, 2014; May, 2014). In these transformations, some important concepts about language teaching emerged, reflecting a more dynamic and holistic perspective on language and the individual's linguistic competence. Plurilingualism is a representative notion of transformations embodied in these two turns. Through the broad notion of plurilingualism, the Council of Europe proposed a new vision for language education (Piccardo, 2017a). However, given the twenty or so years that have passed since this concept was developed plurilingualism does not seem to have been widely accepted and applied in mainstream language teaching. The aim of this dissertation is to deal with the question of plurilingualism and whether it is an appropriate concept that can be applied to language education in this era. The study does this through an in-depth analysis of the characteristics of contemporary language teaching and the reasons for its formation, as well as an examination of the theoretical core of plurilingualism and its application in the school context.

1.2. Researcher's rationale

In this era of superdiversity of languages and cultures, there is a sharp contrast between the way of language teaching in traditional foreign language (FL) classrooms (e.g., teaching languages separately with the aim of reaching native-speaker levels of linguistic competence) and the way students use language outside the classroom. As a former Japanese language teacher, textbook editor, and an international student who is currently doing a master's degree in English, I have always had a strong interest in multilingual language learning and teaching. As one country example that I am familiar with, the FL teaching methods in mainland China have not changed obviously in recent years. For instance, native-speaker English teachers are still very popular in FL courses due to the belief that a pure, single language environment is conducive to FL learning (Li, 2016) and that native language teachers represent the standard accent and culture of the target language (Zhang, 2017). Also, I have believed for many years that the influence between my three languages is negative. However, conceptual changes have taken place in language education across many parts of the world. New perspectives advocate breaking the theoretically constructed boundaries between languages, learning languages in use, and cultivating individual's plurilingual and intercultural competence. These new ideas oppose viewing languages as bounded operating systems, as well as the blind pursuit of native-like monolingual ability.

In this research I intend to clarify important factors affecting the current language teaching field, and provide an in-depth examination of plurilingualism, and its implications for language education. The main purpose of this dissertation is to analyse whether the theoretical premises of plurilingualism and practical pedagogy informed by it meet the needs of contemporary language teaching.

1.3. Aim and research questions

The overall goal of this research is to examine the value of plurilingualism and how it is practiced in schools and language classrooms through analysing the reason for its emergence and its theoretical premises as well as pedagogical practice. Consequently, this dissertation will investigate the following questions:

- Why is a new approach to language education required?
- How different is plurilingualism from the concepts of traditional FL education?
- How can plurilingual theory be practiced in the language classroom?
- Why are pluralistic approaches to language pedagogy worth promoting and how can they be encouraged in the education system?

1.4. Methodology

This research adopted the method of in-depth analysis based on a traditional literature review, which is also known as a narrative literature review. According to Sylvester, Tate, & Johnstone (2013), a traditional review of the literature is intended to summarise content that has been written on a specific topic but does not seek generalisation or cumulative knowledge from the material under review. Cronin, Ryan and Coughlan (2008) suggest that a traditional literature review is an unsystematic approach to information. One characteristic of this method is that the author applies a certain subjectivity to the choice of literature. This approach is helpful for researchers to identify research questions or formulate hypotheses. A traditional literature review also enables the development of an argument, which is what this dissertation endeavours to do. It develops the argument that traditional language teaching approaches need to embrace plurilingualism and change to better suit contemporary societal and educational conditions.

Literature searches for this dissertation were conducted in the following databases: AUT Library, Cambridge Journals Online, CNKI China Academic Journals, John Benjamins Journals, JSTOR, Project MUSE, SAGE Full-Text Collections. The following key words among others have been adopted: plurilingualism, plurilingual competence, multilingualism, monolingualism, cognitive SLA, L3A, sociocultural theory, multi-competence, translanguaging, pluralistic approach, intercultural competence, integrated didactic approaches to different languages studied,

intercomprehension between related languages, awakening to languages, among others, with literature published between 1980 and 2019.

Since the goal of this dissertation was to produce an in-depth analysis of topics related to language education and an argument for plurilingualism, the inclusion or exclusion of retrieved literature depended on its relevance to the subject (with positive or negative representation or typicality). It should be noted that in terms of the pedagogical practice of plurilingualism in chapter four, based on a wealth of literature reading, I chose the method of in-depth study of an appropriate case under each category of the four pluralistic approaches, rather than discussing all the literature in each field.

1.5. Dissertation overview

This dissertation consists of five chapters. Following the introductory chapter, chapter two analyses the background of the challenge to language education, by investigating linguistic and cultural superdiversity at both the societal and individual levels, the origin of monolingual ideology, the features of cognitive SLA, and the continuing influence of traditional language teaching theories and concepts. The social turn and the multilingual turn are discussed as influential shifts in the language field. At the end of this chapter, two significant concepts emerged in the multilingual turn are introduced, which to some extent in line with the concept of plurilingualism.

The third chapter details the theoretical premises of plurilingualism, by examining its key concepts such as, plurilingual competence, partial competence, intercultural competence, the social agent, and four modes of communication. Then it analyses the transformation and educational significance of this new teaching concept.

The fourth chapter looks at how plurilingualism is being implemented at school. Firstly, through the literature review, language teachers' different attitudes towards plurilingualism are investigated, with a special focus on negative attitudes and reasons for them. Then the implementation and outcomes of plurilingualism in the language classroom are examined with four representative cases.

The last chapter summarises why a plurilingual lens for language teaching and learning is worth promoting through an evaluation of its significant educational outcomes, such as partial competence, intercultural competence, and autonomous language learning awareness, among others. This chapter also discusses how to encourage plurilingual pedagogy at school through considering issues at both the policy-making and practical level. Based on the analysis of the

reason and possible solutions of deficiencies in implementation, this section also provides suggestions and recommendations for further study.

CHAPTER 2: THE BACKGROUND OF CONTEMPORARY LANGUAGE EDUCATION

2.1. Introduction

In this chapter I will firstly explore the challenges posed by superdiversity (Vertovec, 2007) to traditional language education. The latter can be characterised by a “monolingual ideology” and is heavily influenced by cognitive SLA theory. Then I will introduce the social turn (Block, 2003) and the multilingual turn (Conteh & Meier, 2014; May, 2014) which have emerged in the field of language education in response to the challenges of the hyper mobility of people across the world and the ensuing unforeseen levels of linguistic and social diversity in societies previously considered to be predominantly monolingual (especially Anglo societies). I will also analyse the persistent influence of traditional language teaching and its underlying precepts. At the end of this chapter, I will introduce two notions that deconstruct the monolingual mindset and recognise the linguistic competence of people who know more than one language from a holistic perspective. This then paves the way for the introduction of the concept of plurilingualism in the following chapter.

2.2. Globalisation and superdiversity

The concepts and images of "globe" and "the global" became very popular in the early twentieth century, well before the term "globalisation" appeared in academic and public discourse (O'Rourke & Williamson, 2002). Following Blommaert (2010), Kramsch (2014) defines globalisation as "shorthand for the intensified flows of capital, goods, people, images and discourses around the globe, driven by technological innovations mainly in the field of media and information and communication technology, and resulting in new patterns of global activity, community organisation and culture" (p. 296). With the increasing interaction and connection of people, companies and governments around the world, global economic and cultural activities have become increasingly interdependent.

2.2.1. Highly mobile population

In this era of globalisation, transportation technology has been considerably developed, which greatly improves the mobility of people around the world. Cross-border tourism, business, employment, education and other activities are now hyper-frequent, affecting the lives of more and more people. On the one hand, taking the typical tourism short-term flow as an example, “World Tourism and Tourism Council” (2019) reports that the growth rate of global tourism in 2018 is only second to that of the manufacturing industry. In addition, one in five new jobs in the world are currently created in this industry. This short-term, sustained, global movement is one of the defining features of our contemporary society. On the other hand, mass migration, the long-term movement of people, is another prominent phenomenon in this era of globalisation. In

addition, because of the convenient transportation system, today's immigrant groups are no longer as fixed in their adopted communities as previous generations. It is easier for them to visit their country often. The flow of individuals involves the mobility of language resources. Therefore, in the context of globalisation and high mobility, the level of cultural and language diversity is quite different from before (Pauwels, 2014).

The increase in mobility, most significantly international migration, has dramatically changed the linguistic environment of many countries and communities, including those areas traditionally considered to be monolingual (Block, 2003). Multilingualism is particularly prominent in urban areas. Bonnet and Siemund (2018) show that the levels of ethnic and linguistic diversity in Europe's major cities far exceed the typical multi-ethnic and multilingual regions of Asia (e.g. Singapore) or Africa (e.g. South Africa). Similarly, classroom language and cultural composition are changing in many parts of the world (Scarino, 2018). This means that a significant number of students who come to learn an additional language may already know more than one. This complex linguistic diversity at the community and individual levels has sparked extensive discussion, particularly in the area of language education (Hammarberg, 2018), which will be addressed later in this dissertation.

2.2.2. The impact of network communications

In recent decades, advanced innovations in the field of information and communication technology have provided new opportunities for people to interact and communicate. On the one hand, physical distance has been overcome. Individuals can connect with people scattered around the world by becoming part of networks, for example by learning about or even participating in events in other regions; purchasing cross-nationally online; making friends with people who share common interests or working in groups. On the other hand, as Pauwels (2014) notes, internet communication exposes people to a high variety of language types and registers, just as real world interactions do. More importantly, on the internet, people are more free to use mixed forms of integrated language and symbols, partly due to the fact that intelligibility exceeds the accuracy and appropriateness requirements of virtual space communication. Meanwhile, native speakers of various languages are easy to find on the internet, but these people often speak or write in a completely different way from FL textbooks. Kramersch (2014) points out that networked communication brings about "fundamental changes in socially distributed genre and register conventions" (p. 300), which also brings problems to language educators in their efforts to teach learners appropriate language and usage norms.

2.2.3. Superdiversity and lingua franca multilingualism

As mentioned above, globalisation and various advanced technologies have jointly shaped a mixed and dynamic world. This has promoted interaction and interconnection among people and

resulted in a multiplication of cultural and linguistic resources and diversity. This has aroused great interest from sociologists, sociolinguists and language educators. As May (2014) suggests, language educators, especially critical applied linguists, have turned more and more attention to multilingual speakers' fluid, dynamic, and hybrid linguistic repertoires. Makoni and Pennycook (2012) call this phenomenon "lingua franca multilingualism" which they describe as "languages (which) are so deeply intertwined and fused into each other that the level of fluidity renders it difficult to determine any boundaries that may indicate that there are different languages involved" (p. 447).

2.3. Challenging monolingual ideology

2.3.1. Historically multilingual societies

Some researchers (e.g. May, 2014; Melo-Pfeifer, 2018; Piller, 2016) challenge the assumption that linguistic and ethnic superdiversity are new phenomena. They argue that urban multilingualism has always existed and preceded the emergence of the nation-state. Piller (2016) points out that multilingual practices were normal in ancient empires, even dating back to the 12th century BC. Piccardo (2017b) describes the harmony and prosperity of multilingual societies in the Austro-Hungarian Empire before the outbreak of World War I as "Emperors consciously used specific languages to communicate with the different local authorities... The (language) policy saw identity as a compositum and acknowledged all ethnic groups without confining any of them to a minor role ..." (p. 3). Nevertheless, as the author indicates, the long-term relative peaceful coexistence of distinct languages and cultures has finally disappeared in the explosion of nationalism (Piccardo, 2017b).

2.3.2. Monolingual ideology in language education

The consolidation of the nation-state during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was characterised by the elimination of linguistic and ethnic diversity through concerted political efforts to promote national security and internal cohesion (Piller, 2016). Countries strove to promote "pure", standard languages in their education systems and in other policy arenas as well. The concept of the nation-state and that each country has its own standard language has become an important feature of modern society (Kramsch, 2014). Consequently, historic linguistic diversity has, in the twentieth century, officially at least, been replaced by language separation and state-sponsored monolingualism (Piccardo, 2017b). The field of FL education has been heavily influenced by these ideas.

Language teaching within this monolingual framework is pervaded with the ideology of the "standard" language (Heller & Duchene, 2012). The premise of this ideology is that one form of language, usually its written norm, applies to all communication situations. The inherent diversity of social, historical, geographical, or situational usage of language is simply deleted or considered

defective (Kramersch, 2014). Only "standard language" is "correct language", which conveys to students the implicit message that native speakers solely speak according to this standard. Therefore, a unified language image is transmitted to students, especially in the teaching of writing.

Following Foucault (2003), Blommaert and his colleagues point out that the widely accepted modernist beliefs of order, purity and normativeness are fully reflected in the language educator industry (Blommaert, Leppanen, Pahta, & Raisanen, 2012). They argue that order is the first belief of modern language teachers. Language teaching has relied heavily on a stable grammar and dictionaries for translation. Students learn to distinguish "right" language choices from "wrong" language choices, and this knowledge can be examined in tests with true/false and multiple choice questions. In addition, the standard form of language and its pronunciation are considered superior to dialects. Language structure and parts of speech are "systematically" and explicitly structured and people are required to know the boundaries between languages. Therefore, codeswitching or hybrid forms should be avoided because they reflect the speaker's inability to express himself or herself properly in one or another "pure" language. Normativity is another important basis for the establishment of modernist linguistic approach, which is based on the "ethnolinguistic hypothesis... linking language use and ethnic or cultural group identity with linear and one-to-one relationships", and this group identity is "correct regionalization, bounded space, historical unconsciousness, cultural homogeneity" (Blommaert et al., 2012, p. 3). The image of native speakers in textbooks is shaped by this background-less theory of modern linguistics (Kramersch, 2014).

For at least a century and a half, along with the dominating concept of boundaries, the belief in order, purity and normativity has formed a strong ideology, providing a sense of security and belonging. At the same time, it also creates fear of crossing borders and mixing up (Piccardo, 2017b). As a result of this fear, monolinguals have been considered superior to bilinguals, and bilingualism has even been considered intellectually harmful. This view remained dominant until Peal and Lambert (1962) published a study of bilingual children that "acknowledged the beneficial effects of bilingualism and opened the way to the concept of multiple cognitive abilities" (p. 35). In the late 1970s, Wandruska (1979) also called attention to the composite nature of languages, by highlighting the fact that there are several varieties in some people's mother tongue. He also emphasised the constant dynamic development and the interdependence of an individual's languages.

Nevertheless, from that time until now, monolingual ideology has been rooted in language teaching to varying degrees. This is reflected in the teaching forms that many language teachers take for granted (Cenoz & Gorter, 2013), such as assigning different time periods, classrooms and

teachers to each language class; avoiding using students' first language (L1) in second language (L2) classes; encouraging merely the integration of language and content but not the integration of languages in content and language integrated learning (CLIL) programmes, and others. From the monolingual point of view, Cenoz (2013) pinpoints that learning a further language is to add a different named language to the students' existing language(s), which means that bilingualism is regarded as a dual monolingualism. In this sense, some bilingual teaching, such as traditional two-way immersion programmes, also deal with language in isolation. The deep concern embodied in such view is the perceived negative interference produced by integrated linguistic practices, resulting in smaller gains of linguistic ability in the language being learned.

As can be seen from the discussion in this section above, monolingualism was not the norm in human history, but the ideology of monolingualism has had a deep impact on the field of contemporary FL teaching. In addition, cognitive second language acquisition theory has also had a profound effect on language education and I discuss this in the following section.

2.4. Challenging Cognitive SLA

2.4.1. Cognitive SLA

Since the 1990s, the field of FL education has witnessed a debate between a positivist paradigm and a relativist paradigm (Zuengler & Miller, 2006). In the decades when the former's representative "cognitive SLA" dominated the traditional field of FL teaching, the process of SLA was almost unanimously regarded as an internalised cognitive process (Kramsch, 2014). As Firth and Wagner (1997) explain, cognitive–interactionist theory is based on the idea that external (environmental) and internal (cognitive) factors work together to make language learning happen. The environment provides learners with the data they need to acquire language, but the acquisition itself takes place in the learner's mind (brain) as a result of internal processing. McLaughlin and Harrington (1989) define cognitive SLA as attempting "to elucidate the psychological mechanism that constitutes understanding and production and the means by which abilities develop in the minds of learners" (p.1).

From the perspective of cognitive SLA, language is an independent phenomenon, stable and pure, and existing outside its learners (Ortega, 2012). Language learners are regarded as passive recipients of vocabulary, phonology, and grammar knowledge which should follow a "natural" development path (Zuengler & Miller, 2006). It is surmised that general acquisition rules can be generalised through quantitative research and applied to all learners of the same language. It seems that by the early 1990s, the field of SLA was still keen to discuss how to link cognitive science with SLA (Beretta, 1991; Crookes, 1992; Long & Doughty, 2003), so that language acquisition could be quantified by scientific experiments. This kind of FL teaching theory, still has influence in FL teaching in mainland China.

Research under the cognitive SLA framework focuses on the phenomena of input, transfer and output (Larsen-Freeman, 1991). In the following section, I will introduce three existing third language acquisition (L3A) (L3 presents L3/L4...Ln) models for multilingual learning in cognitive SLA. Through these models and the interpretation of the cross-linguistic influence mechanism placed by their authors, the belief of researchers work from a cognitive perspective in language and language learning will be explained.

2.4.2. Cross-linguistic influence viewed from a perspective of cognitive SLA

It is believed that the general increase in interest in researching about learning more than one language stems from sociolinguistics (Blackledge & Creese, 2014; Jaensch, 2013; Rothman, 2012). Later, when cognitive SLA linguistics also paid attention to multilingual learning, their research focused on the mechanism of language transfer in the human brain, and mainly on the transfer from a previous language to the new language (Cenoz, Hufeisen, & Jessner, 2003; Jaensch, 2013). Based on the perspective that language acquisition is following a linear, undifferentiated path, researchers undertook large numbers of quantitative studies to look for stable patterns and generalisations of transfer phenomena (see Bardel & Falk, 2007; Flynn, Foley, & Vinnitskaya, 2004; Rothman, 2011).

2.4.2.1. Examining the epistemology and methodology of cognitive SLA with three cross-linguistic transfer models

The contradictory cross-linguistic transfer models

So far, there are three generative models proposed in the L3A domain of cognitive SLA, all of which seem to focus on the initial stage of L3A. The *Cumulative Enhancement Model* (CEM) (Flynn et al., 2004) emphasises that the L1 (mother tongue) is not the only source for transferring to the L3; the *L2 Status Factor model* (Bardel & Falk, 2007) explains that the impact of the L2 (additional language(s) acquired after the mother tongue) is always stronger than the L1 on L3 language learning; and the *Typological Primacy Model* (TPM) (Rothman, 2011), indicates that psychological typological similarity plays a key role in cross-linguistic transfer. Psychological typology is a concept different from typology. While typology refers to the existence (or absence) of certain linguistic properties (such as head-direction, grammatical gender), psychological typology means “the learners’ perception of how (dis)similar their languages are” (Jaensch, 2013, p. 76).

It is evident, and Jaensch (2013) also notes that although the latest model (TPM) is basically in tune with the first model (CEM) and can be considered as a further explanation of it to some extent, it contradicts the second one, the *L2 Status Factor model*, in nature. The latter claims that regardless of the similarities between languages, only the L2 can affect L3A and it negate or even

block a positive L1 effect. Additionally, Cook (2014), who proposed the concept of “multi-competence”, argues that these three models only reflect the influence of existing language knowledge on the new one, while not mentioning backward impact. In fact, reverse transfer phenomena have been documented several times in some empirical studies (see Jaensch, 2013; Rah, 2010) , but were seemingly neglected when the authors came up with the transfer models. This is possibly due to the focus on seeking transfer rules in the initial stage of L3A. Nevertheless, another question may be raised here: what criteria should be used to define the “initial stage” of an L3 learner? No explanation was provided.

Interpretation and questions of the mechanisms of cross-linguistic transfer

Rothman (2015), the author of the TPM, explains that the typological proximity, the cause of cross-linguistic transfer, is not determined by either actual linguistic relevance or learners’ “assessments of comparative similarities” (p. 185). Instead, it determined by the unconscious job of “the parser” in human’s brain “based on linguistic cues from the L3 input stream” (p. 185). Nevertheless, Jaensch (2013) questions whether the parser works in this way since it cannot explain the experimental results of the L2 Status Factor Model. On the other hand, Bardel and Falk (2012), the authors of this model, argue that the L2 is more easily transferred to the L3 because the L1 and the L2 differs in neurolinguistics. They further explain that the L1 (mother tongue) is an implicit language structure, while L2 learning is based on explicit knowledge, which makes it easier to transfer to other FLs. Yet again, if the L2 exhibits such a strong influence as they believe, why did the participant involved in Rothman’s (2011) study choose the L1 over the L2 for transferring? So far, it appears that these explanations based on language processing mechanisms in the brain deepen rather than clarify the contradictions between these models.

Antiquated concepts of language learning

Above-mentioned cross-linguistic transfer models and the researchers’ interpretation of those transfer mechanisms show the perspective of cognitive SLA on language learning, that is, language acquisition takes place in the human mind and learners are passive in this cognitive process. Such idea of separating language from learners, as well as the boundary between languages in the monolingual mode of thinking in language, have been increasingly considered unsuitable for addressing hybrid and dynamic social language landscapes and individual linguistic profiles.

2.5. Two major turns emerged in SLA

In the late 20th century, the tension in the field of traditional FL teaching, which is characterised as one between the modern world and the world of late modernity by sociologists (Castells, 2009) and sociolinguists (Blommaert, 2010; May, 2012), has been ever increasing. Finally, under the

catalyst of complex social changes brought about by globalisation, profound epistemological changes have occurred in the SLA sphere as well (Ortega, 2012).

2.5.1. The “social turn”

Based on extensive academic research, analysis and evaluation, theories oriented towards social interpretation of SLA phenomena from post-structuralist and interpretive qualitative view have challenged those cognitive-oriented, quantitative and positivist approaches to SLA (Block, 2003). Researchers have seriously criticised the cognitive theories of language learning, arguing that approaches that only consider cognitive factors are inadequate to explain complex language learning and use. These new theories, such as the sociocultural theory (Frawley & Lantolf, 1985), conversation analysis for SLA (Firth, 1990), and usage-based theories (N. Ellis, 1996), offer social explanations of SLA phenomena (Ortega, 2012). By the end of the 20th century, new intellectual forces and knowledge pluralisation eventually reached what Block (2003) called the social turn in language education. Among the language socialisation research (Zuengler & Cole, 2005; Zuengler & Miller, 2006), sociocultural theory, namely Vygotskian sociocultural theory will be highlighted in the next section as a representative theory of the social turn (Ortega, 2012).

2.5.1.1. Sociocultural theory

Sociocultural theory (hereafter SCT) was introduced to the western SLA community by James Lantolf and colleagues in the mid-1980s (Zuengler & Miller, 2006). SCT originates from the works of Vygotsky (1978, 1986) and his team, who argue that human mental functions are a mediated process organised by cultural products, activities and concepts. The vision of mediation as a process that connects two spaces has developed in applied linguistics in North America with reference to Vygotsky’s work (Lantolf, 2000). Indeed, many notions of language learning and use in SCT have largely informed the concept of plurilingualism (North & Piccardo, 2016). Nevertheless, since it involves some definitions which will be addressed in chapter three, the contrast between SCT and cognitive SLA will be the focus here to shed light on the significance of the social turn in SLA sphere.

2.5.1.2. Contrasting SCT with cognitive SLA

As noted earlier, the vision of cognitive SLA relies on the idea that the language itself is independent from its user and acquisition is separate from use. In such a view, language can be acquired through the memory of linguistic elements and then assembled to perform an activity. Consequently, knowledge of grammar and vocabulary is the primary concern of cognitive SLA. As a passive recipient, the learner becomes the input device of the linguistic knowledge when he/she is exposed to the target language. Therefore, language acquisition is regarded as an independent cognitive process. Razfar, Licón Khisty, and Chval (2011) note that generally

speaking, cognitive SLA research does not focus on how language affects broader development issues. Target vocabulary has become the focus of teaching activities. It results in laying stress on the fixed definition of vocabulary rather than on the process of meaning making. Although meaningful information is also the core of cognitive SLA, it is more about the inner activities of learners than what happens in interpersonal communication.

Contrary to the perspective of cognitive SLA, SCT holds that language learning is a result of individuals' conscious social interaction and the co-construction of reflective knowledge, rather than something that take place to people (Lantolf & Poehner, 2014). The sociocultural view of language learning suggests that the use of language in real life is fundamental, not a complement to language learning. Instead of addressing it as input, the researchers of SCT view language as a resource for people participating in social interaction in their daily lives. Participation in such interaction is not only a product of language learning, but also a learning process. In this sense, one cannot split language learning and use for the reason that use is actually how learning takes place (Zuengler & Miller, 2006). From the point of view that language learners are always embedded in various environments and "learn to become competent participants in culturally, socially, and politically shaped communicative contexts", Zuengler and Miller (2006) explain, "the linguistic forms used in these contexts and their social significance affect how learners come to understand and use language" (p. 40).

To conclude, in the framework of cognitive SLA, language is an object, while in SCT, language is a means, a resource and, in the meantime, a product of the meaning-making process among people. In other words, language is both a mediational tool for problem solving and is co-constructed in people's interaction. Therefore, the social turn of language education is a turn concerning both goals and methods, from the goal of language itself to the goal of using language to accomplish tasks; from the method of linear input and output to the method of engaging in situated meaning-making.

2.5.2. The "multilingual turn"

While on the one hand the social turn that accentuates the social attributes of language learning and use is in progress, on the other hand, with the ever-growing awareness of linguistic diversity and of the borderless multilingual practices of individuals, the language education sphere has also seen a multilingual turn around the turn of the century (Conteh & Meier, 2014; May, 2014; Melo-Pfeifer, 2018). From this perspective, researchers and practitioners call for a departure "from the monolingual conception of language to develop understandings of the nature of multilingualism and the multilingual mind" (Conteh & Meier, 2014, p. 292). This especially challenges the monolingual bias which is still prevalent across school curricula and language instruction.

Many new terms and theories have emerged in this process. In the English world, Cook (1992) pioneered the introduction of “multi-competence”, challenging the idea of language disconnection in the brain and the concept of “native speaker”. Shortly thereafter, the concept of “translanguaging” was coined by Williams (1994) in Wales, referring originally the cross-linguistic practices of students in the Wales-English bilingual. This term has been considered to open up real bilingual practice in the classroom. In 1996, as Council of Europe (2018) notes, the terminology “plurilingualism” was first introduced in a proposal by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (hereafter CEFR), and was motivated largely with its publication in 2001, newly conceptualising the meaning of linguistic plurality (Moore & Gajo, 2009). Since then, there has been a proliferation of new terms from “heteroglossia” (Pavlenko, 2005), “code-meshing” (Canagarajah, 2006), “polylingual languaging” (Jørgensen, 2008) to the broader perspective of “translanguaging” (Garcia, 2009), as well as the aforementioned “lingua franca multilingualism” (Makoni & Pennycook, 2012), among others. It is worth mentioning that, some of these terms were translated from other languages into English, and their later universally accepted meanings have been changed somewhat from the original definition. For example, “heteroglossia” (see Bailey, 2012 for a detailed explanation) came across from the Russian term “разноречие” and “translanguaging” from the Welsh term “trawsieithu” (see Hafner, Li, & Miller, 2015).

2.5.2.1. Reviewing the concept of multilingualism

Nevertheless, there seems to be some convergence in this multilingual turn, mainly focusing on understanding and applying the core concept of multilingualism to language in use as well as in language education (May, 2014; Melo-Pfeifer, 2018; Piccardo, 2017b). Scholars argue that although the starting point of multilingual turn in language education was to break away from the prejudice of monolingualism and propose a more suitable analytical lens to view increasingly liquid and integrated language practices, the meaning of multilingualism seems far from being clearly understood (Melo-Pfeifer, 2018; Piccardo, 2017b). Additionally, it is believed that some epistemological differences or ambiguity have led to differentiated implementation of multilingual education due to dissimilar views of individual multilingual competence. Most importantly, these conceptual ambiguities often reflect a profound monolingual ideology which will be discussed in the following section.

The monolingual ideology behind multilingualism

Following Bailey (2012), Jessner and Kramersch (2015) argue that multilingualism is often used “as an umbrella term for linguistic diversity” (p. 3), while at other times multilingualism and bilingualism are seen as synonyms. Marshall and Moore (2018) share this opinion, suggesting that multilingualism is used mostly as a synonym of “linguistic diversity” in general, lacking reference to any particular context. Therefore, there seems to be a consensus that multilingualism

is basically simplified into the coexistence of discrete and relatively independent language systems. Importantly, when such multilingual definitions are applied to an educational goal, students are still expected to be qualifiers of different languages by acquiring separate sets of pure and complete linguistic language knowledge (Cenoz & Gorter, 2015). As Canagarajah (2009) commented, such a “multilingualism” which is still based on monolingual awareness cannot address the hybrid linguistic performance without clear boundary between bilingual languages.

Some studies may provide enlightening answers to the causes of the unclear understanding of the definition of multilingualism. Following Liddicoat (2015), Piller (2016) offers an incisive answer for this, which is that an English monolingualism has become a contemporary way of viewing multilingualism, especially laying a foundation for academic research on it. First of all, as Piller (2016) points out, most academic research publications on multilingual education are written in English, while Liddicoat’s (2015) study on English publications regarding multilingualism shows that only 7% of literature sources cite works in other languages. The author also argues that because other languages play little role as sources of ideas, multilingual research can be seen as a place where a single language habit dominates, thus representing the epistemological dilemma of the field. Pavlenko (2014) identifies as well that a common assumption of Anglo-Saxon linguistics is that they can study “language” without knowing specific languages. That is to say, academic linguists in the English tradition agree with the assumption that one does not need any level of language proficiency to analyse it. For example, Crowley (2007) who focuses on the problem of language ability, explaining that he has never carried out basic conversations in most of the 18 different languages he has published in.

Sharing the view with Heller (2007) and Liddicoat (2015), Piller (2016) concludes that seeing multilingualism in such an English-monolingual way must entail a universalism that equates language with English and consequently research into multilingualism is continually obscured. That is because the context-free research tendency in language has erased some of the main variables that shape the diversity of multilingualism such as “language status, speaker status, national histories, individual proficiencies and institutional contexts”, thus resulted in a “multilingualism” of “a combination of serial or parallel monolingualisms” (pp. 26–27).

A theoretical innovation neglected by mainstream language teaching

Some researchers suggest another issue which exists in this multilingual turn, that is, despite the growing interest in multilingualism, “mainstream” applied linguistics remains largely unaffected by this development (May 2014). Especially in teaching practice, this tendency of multilingualism seems to be easily ignored. This undisturbed state is most evident in the mainstream SLA (Ortega, 2014) and TESOL (Canagarajah, 2014), both of which continue to strive to maintain the ideal hermetic process of additional language acquisition (usually English) by shielding any linguistic

contaminants from other languages. Therefore, under the influence of the heritage of Western applied linguistics, May (2014) argues, and I also agree with him from my personal experience and observation, we should not underestimate the ubiquity of monolingual ideology.

2.5.2.2. Two significant concepts within the multilingual turn

Despite the ambiguity and epistemological deflection exemplified above, some real holistic and integrated views of language and linguistic systems have appeared during this period. In addition to the subject plurilingualism that will be covered from the next chapter, I will explain two other important concepts first: “multi-competence” and “translanguaging”. The former discusses the unique linguistic competence of bilinguals by viewing languages as a unified linguistic system. The latter, translanguaging, has become a popular term widely used in pedagogical practices of bi/multilingual speech based on the idea of integrated languages. Both concepts overlap partially with plurilingualism.

Multi-competence

The term multi-competence was coined by Cook (1992) and initially defined as "the compound state of a mind with two grammars" (p. 1). It was modified to "have knowledge of more than one language in the same mind" (Cook, 1994), to eliminate the ambiguity that multi-competence is limited to grammar. In his contributions, Cook challenges some ideas that SLA theory assumes as common sense.

Firstly, Cook (1992) questions the common assumption that learning and knowing just one language is the norm, as more people in the world communicate by more than one language, or even four or five, every day. There are only about 150 countries in the world, but there are 3,000-5,000 languages (Cook, 2008). Cook argues that monolingual people are actually unusual. He therefore challenges the premise of the contemporary linguistic view that the single linguistic ability is typical.

The second question raised by Cook (2016) is why people who have acquired their L1 are no longer considered as L1 learners, but those who learn more than one language are regarded differently. From this perspective, Cook holds that the term “L2 user” is more appropriate than "L2 learner", and "multi-competence is not restricted to high-level balanced bilinguals but the mind of any user of a second language at any level of achievement" (Cook, 2016). In this context, Cook criticises the idea of judging one who knows more than one languages by a standard of monolingual competence. For instance, a person who knows two languages should not be treated from the angle of a well-developed language plus a deficient language. Based on this view, Cook advocates a new approach to look at additional language learning.

Thirdly, Cook (2016) studied labels such as “transfer” and “cross-linguistic influence” proposed by SLA researchers, referring to impacts from the L1 to the L2. Cook suggested that these favourite dominant terms resulted from a monolingual idea in which native speakers are idealised, while one’s L2 is seen always in a state of deficiency. Furthermore, rather than focusing on the impact from one’s L1 to L2, multi-competence has provided a new lens through which one can observe the two-way interaction between languages by looking at the whole linguistic repertoire of a person (Moore & Gajo, 2009). In this way, Cook (2016) argued that the aim of second language teaching is to cultivate successful L2 users based on a unique linguistic system (their own growing repertoire of languages), instead of on the basis of them needing to become imitators of native speakers.

This new perspective on bilingual’s unique linguistic competence is similar to that of plurilingualism in some respects. Danièle Moore and Laurent Gajo, two significant authors of plurilingualism particularly refer to Cook’s multi-competence in one of their important works, when illustrating the evolution from a monolingual view to a wholistic view of bilingualism/multilingualism (Moore & Gajo, 2009). They also contend that the concept of multi-competence has made a great contribution e challenging traditional beliefs that cross-linguistic influences only cause language attrition.

Translanguaging

The term translanguaging initially came from Welsh, “trawsieithu”, coined by Williams (1994) to describe the linguistic practice in which students are asked to alternate between two languages, such as reading in Welsh and writing in English, and vice versa (Baker, 2011). The word “trawsieithu” was translated into English by Baker (2011) as “translanguaging” with the English definition from its original meaning in Welsh as “the process of making meaning, shaping experiences, gaining understanding and knowledge through the use of two languages” (p. 288). Thereafter, this term has been widely utilised by some researchers and educators to refer to dynamic linguistic practices in multilingual individuals and communities, as well as pedagogical activities (Hafner et al., 2015).

As traditional bilingual terms, such as code-switching and code-mixing, are questioned to be monolingually oriented and thus insufficient to explain creative bi-/multilingual interactions (Canagarajah, 2013; Li, 2011; Li & Zhu 2013), the term translanguaging has become increasingly popular, although different scholars have slightly different emphases in practice. García (2009) employs translanguaging to describe “multiple discursive practices in which bilinguals engage in order to make sense of their bilingual worlds” (p. 45), while Lewis, Jones and Baker (2012) suggest that in the process of translanguaging, “both languages are used in a dynamic and functional way to organise and mediate understanding, speaking, literacy, especially the

psychological process of learning” (p. 1). By making full use of the potential semantic prefix “trans”, Li and Zhu (2013) propose the “three dimensions of flexible and dynamic multilingual practices” (p. 519) of translanguaging, including “trans-system/structure/space” “transformative” and “transdisciplinary” (pp. 519-520).

Although translanguaging is included in the descriptor of the CEFR (2018) as a constructive form of pedagogical practice within the plurilingualism framework, some scholars holds that despite some overlaps, translanguaging and plurilingualism differ epistemologically, and the difference in epistemology must result in different educational goals (García & Otheguy, 2019). García and Otheguy (2019) argue that although both plurilingualism and translanguaging break through the concepts of traditional multilingualism and, although they both make full use of the learner's repertoire and sometimes seem to be the same in teaching practice, there are essential differences between them. According to the authors, the most critical point is that plurilingualism keeps the notion of named language intact, while translanguaging holds that the concept of named language must be completely eliminated in order to remove the political, identity and other inequalities it bears. In their contribution, García and Otheguy (2019) propose inspiring perspectives on the concept of “language” and the relationship between language and identity. Nevertheless, since this proposition goes beyond the subject of this dissertation, it will not be further discussed this time.

2.6. Summary of chapter two

In this chapter, I have examined the notion of linguistic and ethnic superdiversity caused by globalisation and its accompanying factors, and the challenges it brought about to the field of language education. After tracing back historical multilingualism, I investigated the root and the strong influence of modern monolingual ideology in language teaching. Then I examined another concept, cognitive SLA theory, which has supported conventional language teaching. Following that, I introduced the social turn (Block, 2003) and multilingual turn (Conteh & Meier, 2014; May, 2014) emerged in language education sphere. Through the comparison between SCT and cognitive SLA, the characteristics of social turn were analysed. I also discussed the academic debate on the multilingual turn which pointed out the limitations of the term multilingualism. These have provided the answer to my first research question: Why is a new approach to language education required? Finally, two concepts that overlap with plurilingualism in some sense were introduced, preliminarily revealing what kind of conceptual innovation is needed in the field of contemporary language education.

CHAPTER 3: PLURILINGUALISM

3.1. Introduction

In this chapter, I will focus on analysing core notions and the theoretical premises of plurilingualism for offering the answer to my second research question: How different is plurilingualism from the concepts of traditional FL education? Before introducing key concepts of plurilingualism, the use of terms regarding plurilingualism in this dissertation will be explained. Afterwards, I will focus on examining a series of shifts in ideas about language and language teaching from traditional SLA to plurilingualism. Finally, I will summarise the implications of plurilingualism for language education.

Introduction to terms involving plurilingualism

To begin, I would like to explain the terms with regard to plurilingualism adopted in the following sections. When the competence of the plurilingual individual is referred to, the CEFR have used five words: *plurilingualism*, *plurilingual and pluricultural competence*, *plurilingual and intercultural competence*, *plurilingual competence*, and *intercultural competence*. The first four terms have been offered the same definition, while among them *plurilingualism* has another meaning of plurilingual/pluralistic approaches to language teaching and learning (Council of Europe, 2001). It is worth noting that whilst in the CEFR (2001) and its companion volume, the CEFR (2018), *plurilingual and pluricultural competence* are used, in many other related documents, the term is replaced by *plurilingual and intercultural competence* to represent the same implication (Candelier, Daryai-Hansen, & Schröder-Sura, 2012b; Lenz & Berthele, 2010). In this contribution, among these synonyms, I will adopt primarily (but not exclusively) the shorter term of *plurilingual competence* to refer to the holistic competence of the plurilingual; and use *intercultural competence* specifically to refer to one's ability interculturally interact and communicate. As for the terms *plurilingual approaches* and *pluralistic approaches*, they have the same meaning in CEFR (2001, 2018) descriptors, denoting pedagogical approaches to develop plurilingual competence. I will adopt the term of *pluralistic approaches* in the whole contribution. In addition, *the language user/learner* is frequently used in CEFR (2001, 2018) to refer to *the language learner* in the usual sense, which will be followed in this dissertation.

3.2. The emergence of plurilingualism

In the previous chapter, two major turns, the social turn (Block, 2003) and the multilingual turn (Conteh & Meier, 2014; May, 2014), were introduced. The latter has aroused extensive discussion, mainly because when it comes to dealing with fluid and dynamic language use and the complex nature of individuals' linguistic repertoires, the limitations of the term "multilingualism" have become increasingly apparent (Piccardo, 2017a; Piccardo, 2017b). It is therefore believed that

multilingual phenomena at societal and individual levels need to be viewed from a broader perspective and through a more complex lens.

In the 1990s, a new concept, plurilingualism, was introduced to the language education system by the Council of Europe. According to Council of Europe (2018), based on a series of studies on bilingualism/multilingualism at the CREDIF research centre (Centre de Recherche et d'Études pour la Diffusion du Français), the notions of plurilingualism and partial competences were first proposed "in Draft 2 of the CEFR proposal in 1996" (p. 28), and the concept of plurilingual and pluricultural competence was elaborated in more detail in its French version of 1997. It is believed that these notions were not only new but also subversive at the time (Coste, Moore, & Zarate, 2009).

3.3. Distinguishing plurilingualism from multilingualism

Plurilingualism, in the CEFR (2001), is clearly defined in respect of and against multilingualism. Multilingualism is defined as "the knowledge of a number of languages, or the co-existence of different languages in a given society" (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 4). In this sense, it can be achieved by diversifying the languages provided by educational systems, or by encouraging people to learn more FLs. In contrast, plurilingualism highlights a person's complex linguistic and cultural repertoire with experience and knowledge linked and influenced by each other, and his/her ability to flexibly mobilise languages to meet specific contextual requirements. Through the work of the CEFR a clear line has been drawn between plurilingualism and multilingualism, helping to clarify confusing issues in multilingual research (Coste et al., 2009).

3.4. Key concepts of plurilingualism

Plurilingual competence

Plurilingual competence implies the ability to use one's pluralistic repertoire made up of various linguistic and cultural resources to interact with individuals from other backgrounds or satisfy communication needs, and to enrich the repertoire in the meantime. The definition described in the CEFR (2001) as:

...the ability to use languages for the purposes of communication and to take part in intercultural interaction, where a person, viewed as a social agent has proficiency, of varying degrees, in several languages and experience of several cultures. This is not seen as the superposition or juxtaposition of distinct competences, but rather as the existence of a complex or even composite competence on which the user may draw. (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 168)

This definition emphasises the relationship between different parts in a person's linguistic/cultural repertoire. In this way, the CEFR (2001) highlights a holistic and ecological view of individual's

plurilingual and intercultural competence (Piccardo, 2017a). That is to say, a person's knowledge in two (multiple) languages/cultures is dynamically blended and together constitutes his/her overall competence. Also, the language user/learner's resources in one language/culture may differ largely in nature to those in others, and they may use resources in one language/culture in a fundamentally different way from using those in another one (Council of Europe, 2001). Therefore, from a plurilingual perspective, the development of linguistic/cultural competence is considered to be unbalanced and changing. In this way, the CEFR (2001) introduces the notion of *partial competence*.

Partial competence

From the perspective of plurilingualism, *partial competence* refers to the fact that the mastery of a particular language at a given moment is imperfect, or even very limited (Council of Europe, 2009). This kind of partial competence may be a functional ability related to a specific goal. For example, it may involve certain language activities (e.g., written/oral comprehension competence); or it may concern a specific field or task (e.g., the vocabulary in a language used in a certain profession). Although these abilities are limited to some degree, they have complementary functions in different dimensions of a person's repertoire (Council of Europe, 2001). That is to say, different partial competences are part of a person's plurilingual competence and have a role to play in certain contexts.

Intercultural competence

Intercultural competence in the CEFR (2001) refers to the ability to be personally reflective about one's own identity and beliefs, withhold judgements, engage productively and peacefully with those of other cultures, be willing to experience otherness and diversity, and analyse and benefit from such experiences, especially through learning several languages. Intercultural competence means having a reflective, open, and critical attitude towards other cultures. It also highlights the ability to critically examine egocentric or ethnocentric attitudes.

The CEFR (2001) holds that language learning and use are closely related to intercultural competence, as language is a significant carrier of culture. Although *plurilingual competence* is used in CEFR as a synonym for *plurilingual and intercultural competence*, implying that the meaning of intercultural competence is included in it, nevertheless, the term *intercultural competence* is often used independently, reflecting the importance CEFR attaches to this capability.

Plurilingual individual and social agent

Coste et al. (2009) explain that a *plurilingual individual* is a person who knows/uses two or more languages for diverse purposes in various spheres of life. Because plurilinguals' needs and use of

several languages can be very different, their languages are rarely equal or completely fluent. The key point is that plurilinguals develop a single, interrelated linguistic/cultural repertoire consists of a variety of languages, experiences, as well as different forms of knowledge. These heteroclitic resources compose plurilinguals' linguistic/cultural capital which can be selected, exploited, and adapted flexibly by them in order to accomplish different tasks.

A plurilingual individual is seen as a *social agent* (*social actor* in the French version) in the CEFR (2001, 2018). From this point of view, a plurilingual speaker is placed in the contact centre, who draws upon their plurilingual and intercultural competence with varying degrees of proficiency and various cultural experience to engage in intercultural interaction. The CEFR (2001) accentuates the subjective initiative of plurilingual speakers in language learning and use, and breaks away from the idea of passive knowledge recipients of cognitive SLA. In the meantime, it brings to the fore the connection between social and individual dimensions, highlighting the social vision of plurilingualism (Piccardo, 2017a).

3.5. Plurilingualism - a multifaceted shift

By putting forward the concepts of plurilingualism, plurilingual competence, partial competence, and social agent, and drawing an explicit distinction between plurilingualism and multilingualism, the CEFR (2001) represents a series of shifts from the traditional ideas of language education.

From “multi-” to “pluri-”

First, we can see from the choice of words that CEFR has tried to remove the boundaries created between languages and people's linguistic capacity. Although the terms multilingualism and plurilingualism are etymologically the same (both prefixes are Latin for “several, many”), it is worth noting that the prefix “pluri-” implies the nature of the whole, having the implication of plurality and embedded difference, while the prefix “multi-” means adding individual components together. The dissimilarity between the two positions on linguistic and cultural diversity have been analysed as living together or living side-by-side (Piccardo, 2017b). Therefore, plurilingualism attaches great importance to language users/learners' partial competence in their repertoires, rather than focusing on high proficiency in every single language, which is what traditional FL education is all about. From a plurilingual perspective these capabilities are not viewed as dependent existences superimposed over one another or juxtaposed side by side, but rather as an integrated competence involving the full range of the linguistic and cultural resources interwoven together (Council of Europe, 2001). This ability develops through one's learning and interactions with others, and in turn shapes one's learning and experience, so that must be seen from a dynamic perspective (Coste et al., 2009).

From completed monolingual ability to unbalanced integrated ability

From the view of plurilingualism, it is not useful to use monolingual norms or the ideal level of monolingual proficiency (native speaker proficiency) to evaluate linguistic competence. Analysis of a plurilingual's linguistic capacity based on monolingual norms tend to judge that he/she suffers a deficit in competence, which actually ignores some important parts of communication in contact situations. According to Piccardo (2017a), a wide range of discourse analysis studies have found that plurilingual speakers are not hampered by unbalanced linguistic competence in communicating effectively. Instead, they usually adopt a wide assortment of strategies to deal with the gap between them and their interlocutors in order to negotiate meaning. The linguistic effort caused by this imbalance, such as systematically dealing with the gap by mobilising ones plurilingual repertoire, is also the time when learning occurs. In other words, a plurilingual's ability to speak one language cannot be studied separately from the other languages they speak; and some knowledge of a language should not be confused with an absence of ability.

Plurilingual competence are very dynamic, rather than static. In the process of completing new tasks, a person often needs to develop new partial competence to meet various needs. In turn, these partial competences constantly enrich his/her whole repertoire and improve their learning strategies. From a plurilingual perspective, therefore, language ability will never be fully achieved, but will develop over a lifetime (Lüdi & Py, 2009). It is noteworthy that all of the statements of "native" in the descriptors from B2 to C2 in the CEFR (2001) descriptors have been removed from CEFR (2018). This indicates the ideal of native speaker-like monolingual competence is no longer a reference point to measure the success of user/language learners (Council of Europe, 2018).

From purity to pluralism

Piccardo (2013) states that in a plurilingual view, meshing and blending languages is no longer a flaw, but rather a natural strategy in plurilingual communication. Since in daily life, mixed discourse forms have proved to be inevitable and effective, similarly, in the language classroom, different languages should not be regarded as things that need to be kept in separate mental compartments. Instead, students in a plurilingual classroom are encouraged to draw upon their whole repertoire strategically. In addition to dispelling the myth that monolingual communication is the only worthy form of communication, plurilingualism accentuates the positive influence of plurilingual communication on linguistic creativity and mutual understanding. Besides, as Piccardo (2017a) explains, when expectations and attention are shifted from the illusion of a pure communicative model, the presence of other language is no longer regarded as a kind of pollution, hindering the improvement of so-called target language proficiency. Instead, this linguistic diversity and its normality and effectiveness will be accepted. Once such shift to pluralism

happens in a classroom, the students will take pride in their plurilingual competence and make full use of it.

From language learners to social agents

As already mentioned earlier, the plurilingual individual has been termed as “social agent” in descriptions of the CEFR (2001, 2018). The concept of the social agent highlights that language learning takes place in the interaction between people and the external environment. Learners gain learning opportunities by playing an active role in dynamic or collective communicative tasks, and they always need to strategically utilise all available resources (both linguistic and non-linguistic) to achieve their goals (Moore & Gajo, 2009). In this way, language learners are regarded as language users who act as social agents activating various strategies to interact with others or fulfil different tasks (Council of Europe, 2001). Each user/learner integrates his/her experience into these interactive actions and becomes more and more aware of his/her own knowledge and ability in the process of applying them to social activities. In turn, they get feedback through these social actions and language sharing which help them to build knowledge and competence continuously.

From four skills to four modes of communication

In the descriptor of the CEFR (2018), the traditional four language skills (Lado, 1961): listening, speaking, reading and writing, are replaced by four modes of communication: reception, interaction, production and mediation (Council of Europe, 2018; North & Piccardo, 2016). By doing this, the CEFR adds the social dimension in language use and learning (North & Piccardo, 2016). Among the four activities, receptive activities include reading and listening, while productive activities refer to writing and speaking. Both of them involve important forms of language learning and use, such as consulting text materials, making oral presentations and written reports. Interactive activities usually mean (at least) two persons engage in a written and/or oral exchange in which reception and production alternate. North and Piccardo (2016) explain that more than receiving and producing utterances, interaction involves a process of dynamic meaning of co-construction. Activities of mediation partly refer to oral and/or written actions that make communication possible between individuals who are incapable communicating with each other directly, by interpreting or translating, or reprocessing an existing text. In addition, mediation is also interwoven with all the other three communicative forms and integrates these language activities together. The relationship of the four modes can be better understood with the diagram below, which shown in the CEFR (1998, p. 14), and reproduced by North and Piccardo (2016, p. 9) in a supplementary volume to CEFR:

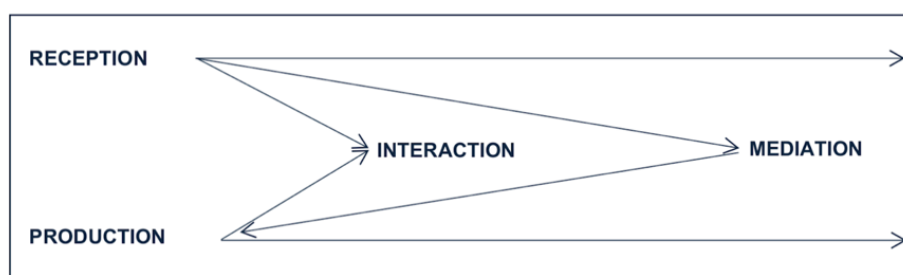


Figure 1. *Mediation in the CEFR, 1998 edition (Council of Europe 1998: English version, p. 14).*

North and Piccardo (2016) note that going beyond the important factor of meaning co-construction that interactions encompass, mediation also highlights the continuing link between social and personal dimensions in language learning and use. By underlining interaction and mediation, the CEFR (2001) highlights the social dimension of language learning and the social agent role of language users/learners. Furthermore, for CEFR, social agents, as the centre of contact with language and culture, are always mediating between themselves and the external environment by managing their dynamic plurilingual repertoire, and in the meantime their plurilingual competence may have opportunities to develop (North & Piccardo, 2016). Therefore, as the focus of language education shifts from the “learner” to the “agent”, plurilingualism brings to the fore individual choices and actions based on the interpretation and adaptation of the situation in the process of language use/learning, and emphasises that mediation runs through the whole process.

3.6. The significance of plurilingualism to language education

The CEFR’s plurilingualism provides a broad and strategic theoretical framework to language teachers and learners/users (Marshall & Moore, 2018). Piccardo (2013) suggests that by drawing attention to the interconnected and interwoven relationship within the plurilingual’s linguistic and cultural repertoire, the concept of plurilingualism helps us address monolingual bias and constraints in language educational contexts. Besides, instead of the focus on the language itself, plurilingualism leads a new focus on the individuals’ practice that changes flexibly according to context. From this point of view, the language user/learner is seen as a social agent, learning in interactions, drawing upon a plural repertoire as mediational tools for accomplishing various tasks. From these characteristics, although plurilingualism is often attributed to the multilingual turn (Conteh & Meier, 2014; May, 2014), it actually contains many important elements in the social turn (Block, 2003) as well.

This concept of plurilingualism develops a holistic rather than segmented view of language, culture, and linguistic skills. Instead of balanced and completed abilities, plurilingualism supports and even valorises uneven and partial competence. It insists on potential connections rather than the separation of its components; it builds a dynamic vision of capacity, contextualised, situated

and developing over time; it holds that competence is highly individualised, and contingent on personal biography and life paths (Coste et al., 2009). With the vision of dynamic development of plurilingual competence, language learning is considered a lifelong learning task. In this sense, the CEFR (2001, 2018) encourages people to develop different partial competences, improve learning strategies and enrich their plurilingual and intercultural repertoire over their whole life.

From the perspective of plurilingualism, the goal of language education is profoundly transformed. It is no longer regarded as simply mastering one or more languages, nor with the perfect native speaker as the final model. Rather, the new objective is to build up a plurilingual repertoire in which every partial competence has value. Therefore, this means that educational institutions should provide pluralistic language and culture teaching, so that students have the chance to build up plurilingual competence (Council of Europe, 2018).

In terms of developing pluralistic approaches to language and culture in institutions, the Framework of Reference for Pluralistic Approaches to Languages and Cultures (hereafter FREPA), as one of the main supplements to CEFR descriptors, provides a detailed guidance and classification of pedagogical approaches to plurilingualism (Candelier et al., 2012a, Council of Europe, 2018). Characteristics and practical cases of these approaches to language and culture will be analysed in the next chapter.

3.7. Summary of chapter three

In chapter three, the theoretical premises of plurilingualism have been analysed and unpacked. Starting with the distinction between the definitions of plurilingualism and multilingualism, the idea of this theory was examined through a close look at its core concepts. After that, by contrasting plurilingual approaches to traditional ideas of language education, a series of changes embodied in plurilingualism were explored. Analysis showed the concept of plurilingual competence can help remove the boundaries between languages which were created by the monolingual bias. Moreover, by underlining the concept of the social agent and the idea of action-oriented language learning, plurilingualism has been shown to encompass a completely different language learning philosophy from the notion of distinguishing language learning from language use. It can be said that plurilingualism represents a transformation with regard to language education embracing both the social turn (Block, 2003) and the multilingual turn (Conteh & Meier, 2014; May, 2014).

CHAPTER 4: PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICES INFORMED BY PLURILINGUALISM

4.1. Introduction

In the previous two chapters, I analysed the needs of language teaching in the new era and the theory of plurilingualism proposed by the CEFR to meet the challenges. This chapter addresses my third research question: How can plurilingual theory be practiced in the language classroom?

First of all, I will examine the extent to which language teachers understand this new language educational idea and their attitudes towards it. Negative attitudes and the reasons for them will be analysed first, since it helps provide clues to further research. After that, I will turn to positive classroom practices of plurilingualism. The studies will focus on the four pluralistic approaches proposed by FREPA: *awakening to languages, intercomprehension between related languages, integrated pedagogic approaches to different languages studied, the intercultural approach* (Candelier et al., 2012a; Melo-Pfeifer, 2018). In addition to carefully analysing the rationale and teaching objectives of each approach, as a representative example of these pluralistic approaches, a quality case of each category will be presented and analysed in detail.

An analysis of the literature shows that language teachers have different attitudes towards the diversity of students' linguistic and cultural backgrounds, as well as to the benefits of changing traditional pedagogy. There are both negative and positive teacher reactions to plurilingualism. Among those who have a negative position there appear to be two different standpoints. Some teachers take a position of denial about the students' previous language knowledge by thinking it has no value at all, which reflects their deep-rooted traditional FL education concepts. Some other teachers theoretically accept that plurilingual theories are relevant but they do not do anything about it, mainly because their lack of expertise and tools to apply this discourse of plurilingualism to classroom practice. On the other hand, however, some teachers and educators have begun to embrace the plurilingualism both theoretically and practically. Their well-designed pedagogic practices contribute to the construction of students' plurilingual and intercultural competence, as well as to the development of their language awareness and language learning strategies.

4.2. Negative attitudes

Although teachers' attitudes towards students' plurilingual repertoires is an area lacking in research (Bruen & Kelly, 2016), the few existing studies have shown that many teachers remain unaware of the diverse linguistic background of the students in the classroom. Some research reveals that language teachers lack awareness and preparation of how to use students' plurilingual repertoires to promote their language learning.

De Angelis's (2011) survey of middle school teachers working in Italy, Austria and the UK find that most of them show little awareness about languages' in children's repertoires, and believe such interaction can cause confusion and delay language learning of an additional language. Pauwel's (2014) research on language teachers in Australian and British universities indicates that teachers' awareness level is relatively low and their participation in the existing linguistic diversity in the classroom is quite limited. Less than a quarter of the 62 language teachers interviewed by Pauwel expressed that they had some knowledge of learners' linguistic repertoires. A considerable number of respondents not only showed their low-level knowledge of students' language profiles but also believed that such knowledge was not "terribly relevant" (p. 314) to the teaching process. Some teachers even suggested that students with some prior language learning experience thought that they knew how to learn a FL, resulting in casualness in learning attitudes.

According to the study carried out by Gkaintartzi, Kiliari and Tsokalidou (2015) in Greece, the authors report that teachers usually neglect the existence of linguistic diversity in the classroom, although they consider it as positive in theory. A case study recorded by Hu (2018) which was carried out by Linderoos at several Finnish Comprehensive Schools in 2016 replicates largely the results of the former study. The report indicates that while some teachers recognise that students can benefit from their plurilingual knowledge, they still teach in a traditional way because they feel uncertain about how to support these plurilingual students. In a similar vein, Cutrim Schmid and Schmidt's (2017) research in the German context sees evidence that is in tune with the former studies in the Greece and Finnish contexts. The researchers investigated to what extent teachers use migration-based plurilingualism as a resource in the English classroom. Research findings indicate that although many teachers see students' plurilingual skills as a further language learning advantage at a general level, they rarely use the learners' whole repertoires as a resource for English classes. Most of them expressed that their limited expertise on this topic was the main reason. In addition, Auger's (2014) study suggests that some French teachers who identify with plurilingualism also feel that they lack sufficient techniques and tools to put it into the classroom setting.

4.3. Proactive attitudes

Nevertheless, there are also many teachers and researchers keen to explore how plurilingualism can be embraced as a pedagogical tool to draw upon and further develop learners' diverse linguistic and cultural repertoires. They recognise and value students' diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds, and try to harness classroom diversity as a resource to carry out a variety of teaching practices, and to foster a plurilingual environment for both students and themselves.

Some practical cases

In addition to the four categories of pluralistic approaches suggested by FREPA (Candelier et al., 2012a), which will be focused on later, literature shows that many researchers and teachers have also practiced plurilingualism in various ways in the language classroom. For instance, comparing and contrasting linguistic elements between pre-known languages and new language to facilitate language awareness is a common plurilingual classroom practice. Auger's (2014) study in France describes how the teacher help learners of French by utilise their L1 (Catalan) when memorising difficult spellings. For instance, comparing "silent" letters in oral French that are present in written French with those being pronounced in Catalan. In an Irish university, Bruen and Kelly (2016) conducted a special plurilingual module, in which language students of Japanese or German were asked to compare or contrast key grammatical concepts in the target language with those in the languages spoken by each member of their groups. The majority of participants stated that this activity changed their attitude towards language learning and improved the efficiency of learning new grammar. Their research both demonstrate that pedagogies of focusing on a comparative approach to languages by making using of learners' repertoire to scaffold their linguistic reflection are helpful in enhancing a sense of self-efficacy and autonomy, in particular at the level of lexical and grammatical features (Auger, 2014; Bruen & Kelly, 2016).

Besides improving language awareness by comparing linguistic elements, some other researchers focused on the positive impact on learning attitudes and outcomes when students' linguistic repertoires were activated. A survey conducted by Fielding (2016) in six Australian schools where a plurilingual programme was newly offered showed that when plurilingual students were encouraged to use their home language(s) as a resource, they showed high enjoyment of learning and established plurilingual learning strategies. Moreover, in these contexts, teachers also tried to expand their linguistic repertoires for engaging more deeply in students' learning. Wandera and Farr's (2018) peer-tutoring writing project carried out in a primary school in Kenya focused on observing collaborative dialogue around peer tutoring. Their research illustrates that students' thinking has been significantly stimulated in the plurilingual classroom when their marginalised languages are allowed to be used.

4.4. Four pluralistic approaches of FREPA and case analysis

Since 2004, the FREPA project, an important complement to CEFR, has been supported by the European Centre for Modern Languages (ECML) with a view to achieving the vision of "integrating the teaching and learning of all languages in order to make use of potential synergies" (as cited in Candelier et al., 2012b, p. 243). FREPA has developed a wide range of educational tools for policy makers, teachers, curriculum designers and other stakeholders in the realm of plurilingualism. The four pluralistic approaches that will be focused on in the next section were

proposed by FREPA in 2007 to foster plurilingual education (Candelier et al., 2012a). This dissertation mainly refers to its revised version published in 2012.

In FREPA, pluralistic approaches to languages and cultures are defined as pedagogical approaches which “use teaching/learning activities involving **several** (i.e. more than one) varieties of languages or cultures” to develop learners’ plurilingual and intercultural competence (Candelier et al., 2012b, p. 245). Contrasting with traditional approaches to FL teaching which could be called “singular”, where only one language or a particular culture is taken into account, these approaches regard all new and existing knowledge from an integrated perspective, emphasising “their similarities and differences, their points of contact and their continua” (Melo-Pfeifer, 2018, p. 199).

In broad terms, the promotion of pluralistic approaches to languages and cultures is to facilitate students' plurilingual competence in two directions. The first orientation could be called retrospective. It aims at making full use of students’ previous knowledge and experience so as to make ongoing language learning more flexible and sustainable, in the meantime benefiting their existing repertoire. The second orientation could be called prospective. It seeks to stimulate students’ interest and curiosity towards the new language(s) through exposure to new (and unpredictable) linguistic and cultural material with appropriate guidance. It also aims to help in opening learners’ minds and developing more effective learning strategies (Melo-Pfeifer, 2018).

In the following section, I will focus on these four pedagogical approaches in turn by looking into their educational foci and analysing a case in detail under each category, with emphasis on designs and outcomes.

4.4.1. Awakening to languages

Awakening to languages (hereafter AtL) aims to offer opportunities to develop a linguistic awareness about students’ own and other languages, by eliciting their whole linguistic repertoires and linguistic and cultural experiences. Such an approach is often considered particularly suited to pre-primary and primary school levels, with a focus on developing the plurilingual awareness rather than developing competence in a certain language. Melo-Pfeifer (2018) explains that AtL attaches great importance to lively activities and ludic games in the classroom and “focus on the development of metacognitive, metalinguistic and metacommunicative competences” (p. 200).

AtL activities usually involve languages that are not planned to be officially taught at the school. For example, pupils’ mother tongues or other languages they know. AtL integrates the language used in teaching, the language in the process of being learnt, children's family language(s) and other linguistic variants. It is inspired by the Language Awareness campaign launched by

Hawkins (1984). The main purpose of the Hawkins's movement was to introduce children into the world of linguistic diversity at the beginning of school education to enable both children and teachers to fully understand the rich linguistic repertoire of children. It can also serve as a preparatory course for primary schools. Moreover, it can be extended beyond the initial stage of primary school, and utilised as a supportive approach to students' language learning throughout their school career (Candelier et al., 2012).

When participating in AtL courses, children are invited to engage in a wide assortment of activities where they can explore innumerable new languages, observe various writing systems, think about the similarities and differences among languages, and value their own language(s) as a precious asset in learning other languages. Although AtL activities mostly focus on languages that will not be taught at school, no languages are unwelcome (Fielding, 2016). By doing such, children are exposed to different languages and cultures and may be more likely to develop an enthusiasm for linguistic and cultural variety. AtL is in this sense considered "one of the most extreme pluralistic approaches as it integrates a wide range of languages in one single learning moment" (Coelho, Andrade, & Portugal, 2018, p. 200).

4.4.1.1. One case: an AtL intervention programme at a preschool in Portugal

This case study was designed by Coelho et al. (2018) and carried out at a private preschool in Portugal. Researchers stated that in Portugal, pre-school educational institutions generally had only English lessons alongside Portuguese, and most schools did not seem to have an environment of linguistic diversity. Besides, the authors mentioned that among many schools contacted by them, this school was the only one that welcomed the implementation of the programme. The intervention programme aimed at promoting engagement in linguistic and cultural diversity and openness to different languages, along with an incidental purpose of improving the communicative skill of the children with a focus on syntax.

Participants involved in this research were 16 children (5-6 years old) and two teachers. All the children spoke Portuguese as their family and school language and had English classes at school. There were four children with French as a part of their family languages. The children were divided into the experimental group (EG) and the control group (CG). During the three-months' project, the EG had the AtL courses as an extra activity weekly or bi-weekly, each lasting 20 to 45 minutes, while the CG doing their normal preschool routine only.

In the intervention programme conducted in the EG, the plurilingual language activities were incorporated into their daily teaching activities, including listening to and retelling stories, singing songs, talking circle time, and playing language games involving information exchanging and requesting (e.g., memory games, action games, board games). Children were

invited to use five languages in these activities: Portuguese, English, French, Spanish and Italian, which were the languages they had expressed interest in.

Those AtL activities built an environment where children felt free to express themselves and talk to everyone in Portuguese, as well in any other languages if they want. In addition to playing fun multilingual games and attending multilingual lessons, the children were offered opportunities to engage in discussions regarding linguistic and cultural diversity. The teacher asked the children questions such as: “Do you think all these boys and girls speak the same language?” “Why do they speak different languages?” “And what can we do to be able to speak to them” (pp. 210-211)? Perhaps it is worth recording here that for the last question, the answer given by the child was: “We have to speak their language. We have to think how they speak” (p. 211).

Besides observing the classroom practice, before and after the project, a language test and a report were employed separately to examine how these children improve their communicative competence. According to the evaluation done by researchers using transcriptions and excerpts of the sessions, the EG made higher progress than the other group in almost all language skills, particularly in the oral syntactic communicative capability in Portuguese. Additionally, excerpts of the sessions showed that some children had evolved from giving simple answers or even nonverbal responses to teacher’s questions to being very communicative.

Several significant elements of this case:

Bottom-up orientation

The five languages used in the intervention programme were not determined by the researchers or teachers but through children's own choices. This deserves mention. In the beginning, in a questionnaire called “My Language Biography”, when queried whether they wanted to know about other languages and cultures, the children offered seven or eight languages. Later, however, during learning activities including stories and games involving all the languages mentioned in the answers, researchers identified that some languages were completely ignored by the children. Therefore, in the end, it was decided that five languages, Portuguese, English, French, Spanish and Italian, in which children were really interested would be included in the intervention programme.

Results

Coelho et al. (2018) concluded that “the activities in the intervention program met the children’s learning and developmental needs, as well as their interests and tastes” (p. 203), which could be seen from the satisfaction and curiosity shown by the children during the whole

programme, and from their improved linguistic skills. Researchers further argued that via pluralistic approaches such as AtL, children were able to build up their language learning strategies so that they might impact the way they engage in future language education since they were led to discover the connections and differences between languages. Also, being exposed at an early age, to an environment where different languages and cultures harmoniously co-exist and interrelate, “children would most likely not see languages as separate entities, but possibly develop a truly plurilingual competence” (p. 213).

4.4.2. Intercomprehension between related languages

Intercomprehension between related languages (hereafter IC) is generally defined as “a pedagogical approach that actively and systematically makes use of transfer strategies at all levels with the aim of understanding written and oral texts in a foreign neighbour language” (Melo-Pfeifer, 2018, p. 200). It aims to deal with two or more languages of the same linguistic family simultaneously (e.g., Romance, Germanic, Slavic languages). In general, one of these languages is the learner’s L1, or another language learnt previously. The IC approach to language learning tends to develop receptive skills, “as the development of comprehension is the most tangible way of using the knowledge of a related language to learn a new one” (Candelier et al., 2012a, p. 7). More broadly, Melo-Pfeifer (2018) suggests that intercomprehension-related projects are not strictly limited to one linguistic family, IC thus can be understood from “an inter-, intra- and trans-familiar perspective” (p. 200).

There are two research and teaching branches in IC: *receptive IC* and *interactive IC*. Bonvino, Fiorenza and Cortés Velasquez (2018) explain that *Receptive IC* refers to the understanding of written/oral texts in a foreign neighbour language through mobilising one’s linguistic repertoire. It has been focused on inter-linguistic written comprehension, but recently also involves the interactive dimension in the form of distance communication (e.g. chats, mails, and forums), still centring on reading competence. *Interactive IC* implies that interlocutors negotiate and co-construct meaning through their knowledge of different languages and collaborative strategies, namely that people understand what each other say although they do not speak in the same language. For instance, a French speaker and a Portuguese speaker, or an English speaker and a Mandarin speaker, communicate by speaking their L1. Candelier et al. (2012a) note that both forms of IC are based on the interaction between one's linguistic repertoire and other languages, emphasising the improvement of the awareness of the linguistic links between and among the neighbour languages.

Over the last two decades, according to Donato (2017), the interest in practices in IC have been growing. An IC approach to languages education is viewed to be an excellent portal to plurilingualism, and also a mechanism that allows it to be taught and learnt. The approaches to

teaching IC are varied, but with similar principles shared among them. Bonvino et al. (2018) summarised the principles of typifying IC-based practices as:

pluralistic approach, partial competences, attention to cognitive and metacognitive strategies, learning transversality, reflection on languages and the role of L1. (p. 4)

According to the CEFR (2001), a range of partial competences constitutes a person's integrated repertoire. IC methodology is built upon the notion of partial competence/s (Bonvino et al., 2018). It is generally believed that comprehensive (receptive) skills are easier to acquire for most people. Oxford (2011) suggests that if people learn several related languages and focussed on receptive skills, they could be acquired in a short time with IC training. IC approaches can help learners make use of transfer strategies at all levels to establish a connection transversely between the linguistic features. Comprehensive skills will be of great help to some people, for example journalists, due to their need for gathering information from various authentic sources.

Developing IC competence means embracing linguistic diversity rather than a single lingua franca (Räsänen, Teija, & Forster, 2013). Teaching IC aims at developing the capability of linking pre-known languages to other languages, identifying the similarities between languages, resorting to processes of inference, autonomously discovering the functions of the language system by observing the nexus between the lexical transparency (Bonvino et al., 2018). While cultivating crucial awareness in good reading performance, IC also focuses on developing reading strategies. Students are expected to be aware of and self-evaluate the strategies they have used, and then to develop new strategies to practice in new tasks.

4.4.2.1. One case: developing receptive IC in five Romance languages simultaneously

EuRom5 method

In the following case provided by Bonvino et al. (2018) as an example of teaching receptive IC (written comprehension), the EuRom5 methodology was adopted. EuRom5 is one of the widely accepted approaches to IC, with its definition as “an IC-based methodology aiming at developing reading ability in five Romance languages, namely Portuguese, Spanish, Catalan, Italian, and French to users of one of these languages” (Bonvino et al., 2018, p. 5). According to the authors, EuRom5 is explicitly linked to the pluralistic approaches by following principles of “plurilingual approach, use of partial competences, attention to comprehension, reflection on language(s), development of strategic and metacognitive knowledge and competences” (p. 1).

EuRom5 approach to IC is to develop written comprehension strategies in five Romance languages simultaneously by utilising students' personal language knowledge and exploiting similarities among Romance languages. Bonvino et al. (2018) pointed out that this kind of activity

could be seen as a problem solving task which involves reception and mediation strategies. Reception strategies in the CEFR (2018) is explained as exploiting linguistic clues (e.g., prefixes and suffixes, numbers, logical connectors) and other paralinguistic cues (e.g., illustrations, subtitles, position in the text), and drawing inferences from the linguistic context. Mediation involves activities in which the language user/learner construct or transmit meaning within the same language or cross-linguistically (Council of Europe, 2018). In this sense, IC approaches imply a process in which the user/learner convey and construct meaning from an unknown language into his/her pre-known language(s) by identifying a range of cues and inferring information within the context.

The EuRom5 course

During the EuRom5 course, students were exposed to a wealth of authentic reading materials chosen from 100 newspaper articles (20 articles in each language). The purpose of the course was to train the students to understand texts on general topics in a short time (usually 35-40 hours), and by the end of the course, enable them to read newspaper or other written matter concerning their interested fields on their own. Although it is impossible to develop perfect reading ability in several languages in such limited time, this partial competence can meet the needs of many communicative tasks such as extracting information for use in new texts. It can also enhance beginners' confidence by establishing reading strategies in their own right (Bonvino et al., 2018).

Learners began to deal with articles written in languages they did not know from the first session of the EuRom5 course. The title translation and full text reading were provided. After listening to the text, learners tried to understand the text independently. There was an important section called "transposition of text in L1" (p. 6) in the course. That was to verify what students had understood, and most importantly, to share with the class the path(s) to correct or wrong meaning. This transformation was not exactly a translation, but rather a self-report (thinking aloud). It was interestingly to observe that how the learners used their L1 to do such transpositions by gradually adjusting step by step. At this stage, students were allowed to forth questions with regarding to the main dissimilarities between the target language and their L1 or another language they use as a bridge. They also had other choices such as depending on strategies proposed by their trainer or other contextual aids provided in the handbook.

Key factors of inter-linguistic written comprehension

In this course, the starting point of the IC process observed by the researchers was the linguistic proximity, which was apparent in the lexical transparency among Romance languages. The authors further explained that vocabulary is the key element on which the comprehension of a text was built. This transparency between words enable comprehension even "in the case of complex syntactic structures" (Bonvino et al., 2018, p. 6). The comprehension tended to start

from a few keywords and then extended to cover or construct the entire text, owing to the reasoning process. In addition, not understanding a word usually did not prevent one from grasping the main meaning of the whole text. The researchers suggested that this is one crucial point of the EuRom5 reading strategy, which had been defined by Blanche-Benveniste (2008) as “the right to approximation” (as cited in Bonvino et al., 2018, p. 5). This term means that those good readers in their L1 proceed by sets of words rather than word by word, and their reading is based on inferences at different levels accompanied by guessing some unknown words. Thus, good readers accept areas in which they have approximate understanding.

Trainers’ role

In the EuRom5 course, trainers intervened only when it was necessary to facilitate the process. The main task of them was to identify the real difficulties in understanding and to encourage, motivate and stimulate the team’s participation. During the course, trainers harnessed (but not limited to) the following guiding strategies: asking the students who were in trouble to utilise inferencing strategies; encouraging the students to plan, monitoring and evaluating their comprehension by adopting metacognitive strategies continuously; advising the learners to use tools such as dictionary for incomprehensible elements when necessary. In sum, the main goal of the trainers was to observe and guide the process of comprehension rather than teaching languages.

Great training results

Researchers concluded that, by the end of this course, the competences of the students tended to achieve a level of upper B1, even B2 (See descriptors of CEFR, 2018), including those who first came into contact with other Roman languages (other than their own). Bonvino et al. (2018) thus believed that benefit from the transparency among Romance languages which “allows one to recognise familiarity in words even if those words have never been introduced before” (p. 9), EuRom users could make inference of unknown words by using a top-down approach. The top-down approach explained by Bonvino and Cortés Velásquez (2013) as reading strategies including “global reading, inference, exploiting transparent zones, linguistic and extra-linguistic context, encyclopedic knowledge, etc.”

4.4.3. Integrated pedagogic approaches to different languages studied

Integrated pedagogic approaches aim at constructing bridges between languages taught at school as well as in tertiary education, promoting the exploitation and creation of linguistic, curricular and procedural synergies (Melo-Pfeifer, 2018). According to the specific needs, it includes many ways, such as utilising the language of schooling to further access to the first FL and subsequent FLs/languages as mutual support, as well as go in both directions, or integrating languages in bilingual education, and also existing in some methods of CILI (Candelier et al., 2012; Neuner, 2004). The goal of such approaches is to highlight that

languages teaching at school is a whole, rather than just the juxtaposition of different curricular languages.

Using other languages during a FL learning process was believed to be a source of interference (error) in traditional SLA. This has resulted in the strict separation of school language courses from each other. Nevertheless, close attention to learners' viewpoints has brought new insights. Instead of learning words and other linguistic knowledge in a new language in isolation, learners tend to relate them to those in the prior language(s) they already know. Indeed, as Neuner (2004) suggests, language memory is not divided into "waterproof compartments" (p. 16), but is more like a network, where all knowledge components are interconnected with each other in different ways.

From the perspective of plurilingual teaching, when learning multiple languages, learners do not start from scratch in each case, but constantly expand their existing linguistic repertoire through each new language. "They do not keep their languages and cultures in strictly separated mental compartments, but rather build up a communicative competence to which all knowledge and experience of language contribute and in which languages interrelate and interact" (Council of Europe 2001, 4).

4.4.3.1. One case: the two-way language bridge of integrated bilingual pedagogy

This case was carried out by Martin-Beltrán's (2010) at a traditional dual immersion bilingual school located in central California, involving participators of 30 fifth-grade students and three teachers. In this school, Spanish and English had been taught according to their respective schedules. With the support of the school and teachers, the author integrated the two courses in the form of bilingual cooperative writing task, aiming to develop students genuine plurilingual competence.

The joint writing task

In this case, students were required to collectively write a letter to one of their friends or relatives in pairs. The letter was to describe an unforgettable experience of one student. Firstly they told each other a memorable story of themselves, then they decided together whose story is more worthy of being written to the recipient.

Two languages bridge gaps and create learning opportunities

Martin-Beltrán's (2010) study focused on the interaction processes of students' language learning. The bilingual joint dialogue and writing of one dyad, Heather and Iliana, will be discussed. Heather was a strong English speaker and a weak Spanish speaker, while Iliana was the opposite to Heather. Iliana was a new student of this school who has moved to California

several months ago from Michoacan, with a more unbalance bilingual proficiency in Spanish and English, if compared with Heather. Nevertheless, Martin-Beltrán's (2010) case showed that how two girls bridge linguistic gaps with their uneven bilingual capacity, in the meantime create learning opportunities for each other.

Translanguaging in storytelling and joint writing

In the process of narrating unforgettable experiences, the most noticeable thing was the translanguaging strategy that two girls naturally adopted. For example, when Heather encountered a lexical difficulty in Spanish, she replaced it with an English word and used a rising intonation to signal the question. Adopting English enabled her to continue telling the story. But sometimes Iliana did not give the Spanish word immediately, so Heather was forced to use other strategies (e.g. physical demonstrations) to describe the unfamiliar English word to Iliana until the latter expressed her understanding by providing the corresponding Spanish word. The author stated that this kind of uptake of new vocabulary was a significant step for language development (Martin-Beltrán, 2010).

Later, when Iliana read her written work in English aloud to clarify meaning or seek more formal English vocabulary from her co-authors, she also employed Heather's early translanguaging strategies. It is noteworthy that the two girls did not immediately adopt all the substitution provided by their companion. Instead, they considered those words and discussed them further with their partners when they were uncertain. This co-construction is described by Foster and Ohta (2005) as "allowing learners to participate in forming utterances that they cannot complete individually, building language skills in the process" (as cited in Martin-Beltrán, 2010, p. 420).

The author argued that although a monolingual view may stress the insufficiency in two students' lexicons, a plurilingual analysis could reveal the way the additional opportunities created by the linguistic gap for learning both Spanish and English. In this case, by their unbalanced bilingual skills, two students made an interaction space. Instead of intervening, the teacher allowed the students to deal with these problems of word choices themselves, thus stressing the importance of peer collaboration and mutual teaching and learning. Nevertheless, the author put forward a further suggestion that the teacher could extend such "cross-linguistic comparison by calling attention to the different ways that Spanish and English words express the manner where events occur" (Martin-Beltrán, 2010, p. 262).

Private speech becomes social mediation

When Heather repeated her story for Iliana for writing the letter, she struggled with her choice of words when reflecting different contexts in the two languages. She then turned to English

and expressed her confusion by a private speech. The teacher played a crucial role when she noticed Heather's private speech. She lead Heather's self-directed question to an interaction between them by asking: "what's so confusing" (Martin-Beltrán, 2010, p. 263)? When Heather started to talk with her teacher to resolve her cognitive difficulties, the private speech turned to a social mediation, which opened a window into Heather's cognitive process. This metacognitive moment offered an important chance for her to make interlinguistic comparisons and utilise languages as a tool for both mediation as well as an object for analysis. Yet again, the author suggested that the teacher could have invited Iliana, who was busy in writing at that time, into this interlinguistic comparison, "thus multiplying opportunities for increased metalinguistic awareness for both students in both languages" (Martin-Beltrán, 2010, p. 263).

Research findings

To conclude, in this traditional bilingual school where the two language courses actually had their own timetable, the bilingual joint writing project provided a new plurilingual approach to the integration of the two languages taught at school. The author contended that this kind of bilingual practice of students was a real manifestation of the multilingual community outside the classroom. The findings from this research indicate that learners unbalanced bilingual competence, a student's weakness for example, may bring more opportunities both to build communicative skills and to the language learning. This study also proves that when both languages are always available, the ongoing learning processes of two languages could occur at the same time. Therefore, the establishment of horizontal/vertical links between language courses in schools will be of great benefit to the creation of a plurilingual environment in schools.

4.4.4. Intercultural approach

The *intercultural approach* to language education highlights the intrinsic nexus between language and culture (Melo-Pfeifer, 2018). Liddicoat (2004) argue that "Every message a human being communicates through language is communicated in a cultural context" (p. 17). In this sense, language learners who have only learnt vocabulary and grammar indeed do not have the competence to communicate interculturally in that language. Furthermore, the intercultural approach regards language as a tool for constructing and maintaining social identity. From this new perspective, as Elboubekri (2017) argues that, FL teaching and learning should no longer merely be steeped in information exchanging activities, instead, it highlights the intercultural competence of using "the topics of culture as the basic framework of the information exchanged" (p. 523).

Byram (1997) suggests that culture is dynamic and interacts with language dynamically. Therefore, the language-culture connection can be viewed in an intricate way, in which culture and language constantly co-construct each other. The intercultural approach aims to foster a complex set of attitudes, knowledge, and skills related to linguistic and cultural diversity to successfully carry out intercultural exchanges, in which students engage in mediating between languages and culture, with their plurilingual and intercultural repertoires constantly expanded in the process.

Intercultural awareness is an important foundation for building intercultural competence. The CEFR (2001) explains that “knowledge, awareness and understanding of the relation (similarities and distinctive differences) between the ‘world of origin’ and the ‘world of the target community’ produce an intercultural awareness”, including “an understanding of the regional and social diversity in both worlds” (p.103). Furthermore, sensitivity to cultural differences is considered important. As Kramsch (1993) points out, more emphasis should be laid on the otherness rather than the common features and issues between different cultures. Thus, it is necessary to integrate intercultural materials in language classrooms to guide students to explore, compare and reflect, and to make sense of real intercultural interactions.

According to Newton, Yates, Shearn, & Nowitzki (2010), it is intercultural communicative competence which is valued in the intercultural approach to language, rather than the native speaker competence. They argue that targeting the native speaker’s competence is to seek an “assimilationist goal, encouraging the learner to separate from his/her own culture and to adopt a new sociocultural identity” (p. 74). Byram (2003) also contends that, just as no native speaker is a perfect linguistic model, the same no native speaker could be an authority of their culture. The point is that the intercultural approach should encourage language learners to critically analyse what they observe in their interaction with native speakers, and then distinguish between appropriate and inappropriate behaviour.

Therefore, intercultural competence involves the perception and the value judgment of different cultures. At the same time, in the communicative-pragmatic dimension, it fosters appropriate linguistic behaviour in the context of other cultures (Candelier et al., 2012a). Rost-Roth (2004) suggests that cultivating intercultural competence should focus on two aspects: on the one hand, developing an awareness of other cultural groups and appreciation of one’s own culture, so as to enhance multicultural understanding. On the other hand, improving the ability to adopt appropriate communicative behaviour in other cultural groups, such as correctly interpreting the behaviour of individuals of different culture and performing appropriate linguistic action oneself.

4.4.4.1. One case: the intercultural approach in an academic setting in Hong Kong

The European studies programme

This case provided by Cabau (2015) was a four year cross-disciplinary programme called the European Studies Programme (hereafter ESProg) conducted at Hong Kong Baptist University, focusing on enhancing the intercultural competence of students. ESProg combined two majors in social sciences and language leaning (French or German), through “systemic study of European political, social and economic affairs with intensive FL acquisition” (p.172). In this case study (French stream), Cabau (2015) noted that “students’ intercultural competence was developed along the dual educational axis of the CEFR for languages: a vision of the learner as a social agent and an action-oriented approach” (p.165). This meant that all language curricula were designed according to the idea of task completion. In addition, the CLIL approach was adopted in about a quarter of French classes as another tool for developing intercultural competence of the learners, since this approach was considered to have an evident advantage in combining language and culture (Rodríguez, & Puyal, 2012; Sudhoff, 2010).

Special intercultural encounter context

There were eighteen students in the class, fifteen from Hong Kong and three from mainland China. The authors suggested that both groups need to first make some adjustments to each other’s presence. For example, languages might result in some communication issues, and different social and cultural background might lead to different world views and values, or other divergence of views. Additionally, students attended their third year of academic studies at one of the two French colleges which belong to a student exchange program of the ESProg.

The CLIL approach

In order to include rich cultural information in the language curriculum, CLIL was employed in about a quarter of French classes. The author believed that the CLIL approach highlighted the inseparable relationship between language and culture in the language learning process and was an effective teaching method for building intercultural understanding and developing intercultural communication skills. Teaching materials included TV shows, movies, and news articles, among others. Themes involve French history and social content. Besides, students could reflect on and discuss their existing knowledge and perspectives on French society. On this basis, French culture was compared with cultures of their own.

Social identity

The Social science-oriented ESProg programme ascribed great importance to the concept of “social identity”, which defined by Tajfel (1982) as “that part of the individual’s self-concept which derives from their knowledge of their membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership” (cited in Cabau, 2015,

p.167). According to Cabau (2015), in this case study, the design of curricula for developing intercultural competence was based on the concept that correctly identifying the social identity of others is crucial for successful interaction, as it affects the interaction between FL learners and people of other language and cultural. In the meantime, it also meant that learners must not only understand the value system of target language users but also reflect on their own values.

In French sessions, students were invited to reflect on their own personal and cultural background. Such reflection was also considered critical for any international student as they may be frequently asked: “Where are you from” (Cabau, 2015, p. 173)? Moreover, this issue may have involved more complex connotations for Hong Kong students. Therefore, as early as the first year, French teachers began to stimulate students’ curiosity regarding their own environment by guiding them to think questions such as: “What is important in my lives?” “How could I introduce Hong Kong to foreigners” (p. 173)?

Other special intercultural settings

For the main purpose of helping prepare students for the third year’s academic stay in France, contacts with the French language and culture was strengthened and diversified from the second year. Some future French teachers in a cooperative French University provided these students with online tutoring. Through interaction online with young French people, students were expected to familiarise themselves with the current aspects of French society and become more aware of cultural differences. The activities designed by these tutors combined authentic online resources concerning French culture, economy, and society content with linguistic skills in listening and reading comprehension. A different topic was discussed every week.

In year three, as mentioned earlier, students had options of study at one of the two partner French colleges. Undoubtedly, the study in France this year, including possible internships, was a process in which these students were completely exposed to foreign cultural environments. After that, students returned to Hong Kong to continue their programme. In the last year, the author noted that students had the chance to get an insight into another culture, a work and corporate culture. A three-hour French seminar was included in per semester in year four. In this project-based seminar, students were asked to mobilise all of their academic, linguistic and cultural knowledge to devise projects or scenarios, such as setting up a French company in Hong Kong.

Conclusion of the case

It can be seen that the overall setting of the ESProg programme was well structured towards developing intercultural competence. A significant aspect of the programme was the multifaceted intercultural environment. The cultural distinction between mainland students and Hong Kong students, the different styles of academic culture presented by Hong Kong teachers, French

teachers, and young French tutors, as well as the transition from academic culture to business culture in the fourth year, together provided an extremely rich intercultural context for these students. In this context, through a series of courses and activities aiming at the development of intercultural competence, students were trained to be culturally sensitive and be capable of playing roles as communicators and mediators between different individuals and cultures through flexible use of interculturally communicative strategies. Another important point was that for teachers, the focus of the intercultural approach was not to evade issues in intercultural communication, but to guide students to identify and deal with differences, to reflect on them, and then adapt and negotiate (Cabau, 2015).

4.5. Conclusion of four pluralistic approaches

By focusing on the analysis of the rationale of the four pluralistic approaches recommended by FEARE and four practical cases in which those principles were applied, we have seen how this new language teaching ideas differ from traditional SLA theory and practices. Teachers working plurilingually view students' linguistic abilities from a holistic perspective. Pluralistic approaches to language and culture enable students to realise the linguistic and cultural capital they possess, thereby enhancing their agency and self-efficacy. Rather than merely learning one language, students develop learning strategies for multiple languages and become more autonomous. FEARE also points out that although each of the four teaching methods has its own emphasis, they are not independent of each other. Applying them in a co-ordinated way is expected (Candelier et al., 2012a).

4.5. Summary of chapter four

Chapter four has focused on language teachers' attitudes towards capitalising on students' plurilingual repertoires and the implementation of pluralistic approaches in the classroom. On the one hand, the literature review has shown that gratifying learning results have been achieved in the application of various pluralistic pedagogies. On the other hand, however, there were still many teachers who appeared to lack awareness of plurilingual competence, or lack methodological strategies or sufficient materials to support their implementation of pluralistic pedagogy. The reasons for these deficiencies and how to resolve them will be further discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION, LIMITATIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND CONCLUSION.

5.1. Discussion

The previous chapters have provided an in-depth analysis of the challenges facing language education and the new lens of plurilingualism proposed by the CEFR (2001) to meet the needs of contemporary language teaching. In the following section, I will address my final research questions: Why are pluralistic approaches to language pedagogy worth promoting and how can they be encouraged in the education system? To answer the first half of this question, I intend to look at it from three perspectives: educational objectives, core concerns, and feasibility. After that, I will discuss how plurilingualism can be promoted in the education system by considering the basic principles when planning and teaching, as well as possible difficulties and solutions.

5.1.1. Why are pluralistic approaches to language pedagogy worth promoting?

5.1.1.1. The central factors of pluralistic approaches to language pedagogy

Developing composite partial competence

To evaluate whether an educational idea is worth promoting, the first thing to do is to see what it aims to cultivate. As has been introduced earlier, plurilingual competence is a main target of pluralistic approaches to language and culture. According to the CEFR (2001), plurilingual competence refers to the capability to draw upon a rich linguistic and cultural repertoire to communicate and participate in intercultural interaction, which is a composite competence consisting of different and unbalanced partial competences.

From the perspective of pluralistic approaches, people do not need a fully realised monolingual ability. That is to say, the goal of learning a FL to be “like a native speaker” is no longer the object. From the perspective of plurilingualism, language learning is for action. For example, mastering reading ability is very helpful to those who need to collect multilingual information for work reasons, or who just like to read more literary works. Promoting effective receptive skills are encouraged by the CEFR since they are relatively easy to develop and, for instance, wide-ranging receptive proficiencies of readers allow scholars to write in languages they are best at without worrying that the work can only be understood by a small number of people.

Consequently, the idea of partial competence releases language learners/users from the pressure of the impossible task – to be like a native. In fact, such a goal has made many people abandon learning language halfway, or even fear to start. Moreover, partial competence such as receptive skills can be a good starting point for further development of a certain language in the future by laying a good foundation of language learning awareness for learners.

Developing intercultural communicative competence

Additionally, it is important to note that, pluralistic approaches attach great importance to the cultivation of intercultural competence, which makes them surpass Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) as an approach to language education. As the SLA field turned away from focusing on grammar acquisition and rote memorisation of patterns, CLT has played a crucial role in SLA practice and policy since the 1980s (Grenfell, 2002). CLT pays attention to practice, emphasises the development of oral fluency and advocates using the target language only, in teaching as far as possible (Van Essen, 2002). Despite its focus on interactive and learner-centred practice, there has recently been a growing consensus that CLT has not led to the significant improvements in linguistic outcomes. Some argue that this approach may negatively affect learners' motivation, and challenge them with the lack of cognition (Grenfell, 2002; Nuffield, 2000).

To enable students to deal with everyday situations in this new era of superdiversity, the demands for language educators to develop learners' intercultural communicative ability in addition to purely linguistic skills has grown. It is believed that the notion of communicative capacity alone lacks consideration for the intercultural dimension of interaction, which has been increasingly recognised as a significant and intrinsic dimension of communicative competence and needs to be achieved via more integrative curriculum models (Beneke, 2000). In this sense, pluralistic approaches are fit for this purpose well. In the light of plurilingualism, language is considered a carrier for culture. Intercultural approaches aim at placing intercultural awareness in the centre of communication and cultivating the user/learner to be a cultural mediator who is capable of creating a positive interactive environment between different cultures.

Developing linguistic awareness and language learning awareness

The objective of pluralistic approaches is different from that of previous FL teaching. It no longer attempts to teach as much linguistic knowledge and skills as possible into students, as it has abandoned the goal of making students fully master each language. Instead, in addition to partial skills, pluralistic approaches focus on developing linguistic awareness and language learning awareness (Neuner, 2004).

Firstly, pluralistic approaches target at constructing the basic elements of language learning for students to develop a plurilingual profile which answers the communicative needs of students of using the language(s) (e.g. pragmatic and intercultural competence). In this way, a foundation is built up for learners to further develop one or more languages in the future. Additionally, as can be seen from the analysis of four cases in the previous chapter, pluralistic approaches hold that interactional learning approaches are more useful than transmitting knowledge. Therefore, pluralistic approaches ascribe great importance to the development of learners' language learning awareness, that is, how to learn languages effectively. These approaches can be used when

learners wish to further improve their language skills, or to learn a new language at some time in the future. By doing this, pluralistic approaches highlight the development of autonomous learning of learners, which is the basis for the lifelong learning of languages (Council of Europe, 2001, 2018).

5.1.1.2. The core concern of the plurilingual classroom

Student-centred classroom

The centre of the plurilingual classroom is each and every student. To begin, the students' linguistic repertoires need to be valued and exploited as a starting point for work in a plurilingual classroom, since these are the basis for their new language learning. From this angle, the preconditions and foundations that each student brings to the new language learning process are different. Teachers need to seek to help students to establish more connections between their previous language(s) and new ones, and to develop linguistic awareness by observing similarities and differences of linguistic elements. How to help learners benefit from past effective learning experience and improve learning efficacy is one of the key points of teachers' work.

One of the main goals to be achieved in the plurilingual classroom is to develop individual-oriented plurilingual competence. In other words, homogenised learning outcomes is not the teaching purpose. The development of differing potentials based on each individual's specific foundation should be of concern to the teacher. Therefore, pluralistic approaches are a bottom-up, learner-centred approach, which are different from conventional language teaching applied in a top-down framework. They manifest themselves in the internal differentiation of teaching and focus on developing each students' specific learning strategies and language profile. Practical cases of pluralistic approaches introduced in the prior chapter all show that such approaches to language teaching can stimulate students' enthusiasm for learning, since they are good at dealing with individual differences and the personal needs/profiles of individual students. In addition to being able to motivate students who themselves have great interests in language learning, it can also encourage those students who have difficulty in learning or who lack interest.

5.1.1.3. Pragmatic and context-independent approaches

Besides all other explanations for the theoretical advancement and practical feasibility of plurilingualism, there is, in my opinion, a simple and straightforward reason for its promotion in the language field. It is that pluralistic approaches based on plurilingualism break illusions of achievable perfection in traditional language education and deny the false boundaries placed between languages. They also have no faith in the goal or possibility of monolingual perfection, and multilingual communities and plurilingual individuals are valued.

Although originating in Europe, the study of plurilingualism has been discussed in many other continents and countries (Marshall & Moore, 2018). As mentioned in the previous chapter, there are many successful applications of plurilingual teaching strategies in Canada (Marshall & Moore, 2013), Australia (Fielding, 2016), America (Martin-Beltrán, 2010), Africa (Wandera & Farr, 2018), and Asia (Cabau, 2015). Although most of the practices were piloted in short-term and small-scale forms, they were undoubtedly great attempts and successful starting points for the future.

5.1.2. How can pluralistic approaches be encouraged in the education system?

5.1.2.1. Different situations in practice

The question then, is how to implement pluralistic pedagogy in language classrooms. From my research, there are two possible pictures in the process of advancing plurilingualism. One is the vigorous promotion of the Council of Europe and fruitful results and good reputation gained in places where they have been actively accepted. The other is indifference or the disconnection between the theory and implementation. In addition to the various negative attitudes of the language teachers already mentioned in the previous chapter, it is remarkable that even in the birthplace of plurilingualism, France, languages are still often taught separately (Jeoffrion, Marcouyeux, Starkey-Perret, Narcy-Combes, & Birkan, 2014). Auger (2017) also points out that there is very little practical implementation of pluralistic pedagogy in the teaching French as a foreign language sphere. In some other cases, the situation is that the new teaching policies proposed by the school are actually not based on plurilingual principles as declared. On the contrary, curricula design still follows standardised and compartmentalised multilingualism rather than individual-oriented plurilingualism (Willans, 2013).

5.1.2.2. Changes required at multiple levels

Taking into account experiences of success and failure shown in the literature, I believe that the promotion of pluralistic approaches requires efforts at two levels, namely policy making and the practice of teachers in the classroom. First of all, if we want to implement the innovative pedagogical ideas of plurilingualism, especially those four pluralistic approaches that aim at the whole language curriculum setting of school, top-down support from school leaders is necessary. Imagine that if teachers are employed to teach “standard” FLs to a satisfactory level of proficiency, the implementation of pluralistic approaches in the classroom will be difficult to achieve. In addition, the curriculum setting is closely related to assessment criteria. If assessments continue to be aimed at native speaker like language proficiency, the development of partial competences will not become a reality and students’ linguistic repertoires may suffer. Therefore, formulating teaching policies driven by concern for the cultivation of individual plurilingual competence is the key.

Secondly, there must be ongoing pre and in service language teacher development. If teachers do not know how to implement pluralistic approaches in their teaching, or lack appropriate materials or course books, the implementation possibilities will be greatly reduced. Moreover, between fostering teachers' plurilingual awareness, including pedagogical strategies, and providing support for instructional materials, the former is more critical than the latter. As can be seen from the cases of pedagogical practice of plurilingualism in the previous chapter, if teachers are not afraid to implement innovative methods and regard diversity as a rich source and a catalyst for successful learning, both students and teachers themselves can be beneficiaries (Fielding, 2016). Therefore, teacher education is an important task in the future, calling for further research.

5.1.2.3. Overcoming constraints

Educational changes must and first require consensus among school leaders, language department leaders, and teachers to reach a consensus to break down negative views on mixed language and expectations of students' perfect monolingual competence in each language. Only then can the integrated language curriculum be actively incorporated into the classroom (Krumm, 2004). This requires fundamental changes in assessment, material development, and professional teacher training to facilitate realistic alternatives. In order to improve the school's willingness to implement new pluralistic approaches and overcome the gap between theory and practice, both school leaders and language teachers need to receive professional training. In this regard, professional language organisations may play a key role as facilitators of disseminating good practices (Cruickshank, 2015). Besides, both FREPA and ECML provide online teacher training and instructional materials. In addition, because the core idea of pluralistic approaches is the individual needs of students, it would be very effective for each school to organise teachers to develop their own corpus of plurilingual materials.

Accepting plurilingualism is not an all-or-nothing option, but can be a process that allows for various forms. Pluralistic approaches can be cross-linguistic comparison of grammar/vocabulary or other modules involving linguistic diversity, integrating languages taught at school, using CLIL or a two-way immersive course format or any new classroom forms. As Piccardo (2017b) suggests, as long as it is based on a plurilingual spirit, such as focusing on meaning-making, purposefully using and developing students' linguistic resources, and maintaining openness and reflection on linguistic and cultural diversity, these processes are plurilingual innovation and pluralistic approaches.

5.1.3. Summary of discussion

In the contemporary globalised society characterised by mobility and change, learner-centred and action-oriented pluralistic approaches that emphasise composite competence is in line with the need for language learning. By cultivating language awareness and language learning awareness,

pluralistic approaches develop language users/learners' learning strategies and prepare them for lifelong language learning. Moreover, this new approach to language and culture has proved its feasibility in many countries and regions. Nevertheless, despite many advantages of this new concept, there seems to be resistance in many places from policy making levels to classroom implementation. This means that more professional support is needed from changing perceptions to better practice.

5.2. Limitations and implications of this research

Limitations

The main limitation of this research is that the body of literature that establishes the basis of the analysis was relatively small. This is mainly because a great majority of the literature on plurilingualism, especially on pluralistic approaches, is written in languages other than English. This may affect my research to provide comprehensive background with up-to-date knowledge in this field. Another limitation of my dissertation is that in the pedagogical practice part of Chapter four, I did not systematically synthesise all relevant literature's finds, but focused on in-depth analysis on several representative cases. Consequently this dissertation cannot be used as a comprehensive data presentation of literature review.

Implications and recommendations

This research helps us understand the challenges facing contemporary language teaching and how pluralistic approaches informed by plurilingualism can respond to these challenges. This dissertation analysed the difficulties faced in implementing pluralistic approaches and provided some possible solutions to these issues. For language users/learners of this era, it is essential to recognise their plurilingual and intercultural capital, to establish autonomous learning strategies, and to have a lifelong learning mentality. The literature analysis found that the theoretical premises and pedagogical guidance of plurilingualism is broad and strategic enough to meet the actual needs of contemporary language use and learning. Nevertheless, the biggest gap identified by this research lies in obvious deficiencies in the promotion of plurilingualism. Language educators, represented by language teachers, lack awareness of implication embodied in this new concept or lack adequate support for implementing it in the classroom setting. This deficiency may be addressed through professional pre-service and in-service education. More research needs to be done on how to offer effective training to both school leaders and teachers. Further research may also involve schools that have successfully shifted from traditional pedagogy to pluralistic approaches. The challenges they faced and the solutions they proposed may help inform future thinking on various issues.

5.3. Overall conclusion

The main goal of this research was to analyse whether pluralistic approaches from the new lens of plurilingualism are appropriate for contemporary language education. In chapter two, I introduced the superdiversity of social and individual languages caused by globalisation and its accompanying factors and the challenges it posed to the field of language education. After critically examining traditional ideas of language teaching represented by monolingual ideology and cognitive SLA, two major epistemological turns emerged in SLA field were discussed, including academic debates and some significant concepts. In the third chapter, I investigated the essential differences between the perspective of plurilingualism and traditional approaches to language teaching by examining its key concepts and significant educational shifts embedded in plurilingualism. Subsequently, after examining different attitudes of language teachers towards pluralistic pedagogy, the study fell in four pluralistic approaches to look at how plurilingual theory can be implemented in the education system, as well as its practical effects on developing plurilingual and intercultural competence. In the last chapter, I tried to discuss why this new idea of language teaching is worth promoting and how to further expand the impact of this teaching method. At the end of this dissertation, recommendations on how to solve main issues of promoting pluralistic approaches to language pedagogy and on further research have been given.

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