

On the importance of self-concept and emotion in multilingual education

Immersion seminar, Åbo Akademi University - Vaasa,

October 1st 2020

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Outline

- 12:00 – 12:20 **Talk** (J. Festman)
- *12:20 – 12:30 Breakout room division (tec staff)*
- 12:30 – 12:40 **Group discussion with questions** – Swedish or English (10 participants per group, 1 discussion chairperson → 8 groups)
- *12:40 – 12:45 Getting back from breakout rooms to main meeting room*
- 12:45 – 12:00 **Summary** of group discussion highlights (Swedish or English) and **wrap-up** in plenary



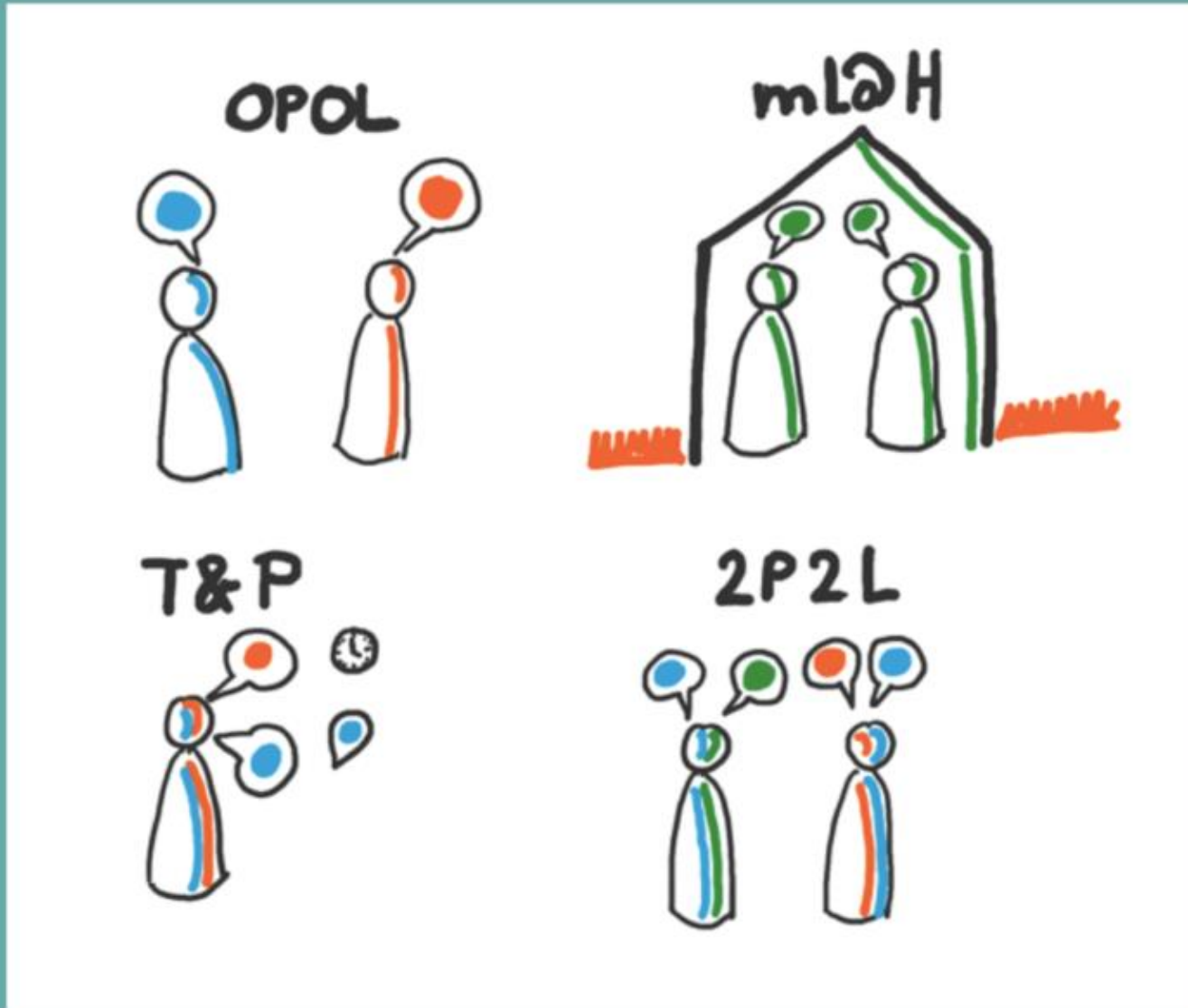
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Language use – language choice

- Every bi- and multilingual has the ability to choose a) a certain language or b) codeswitching between two or more languages as a means for communication at any given point in time.
- Bi- and multilinguals **select the currently appropriate language(s)** in accordance with the situation, the interlocutor and the interlocutors' language knowledge.
- → **personal decision/choice**

Grosjean, F. (1982). Life with two languages: An Introduction to Bilingualism. Harvard University Press.

Family language strategies → implemented as teaching strategies



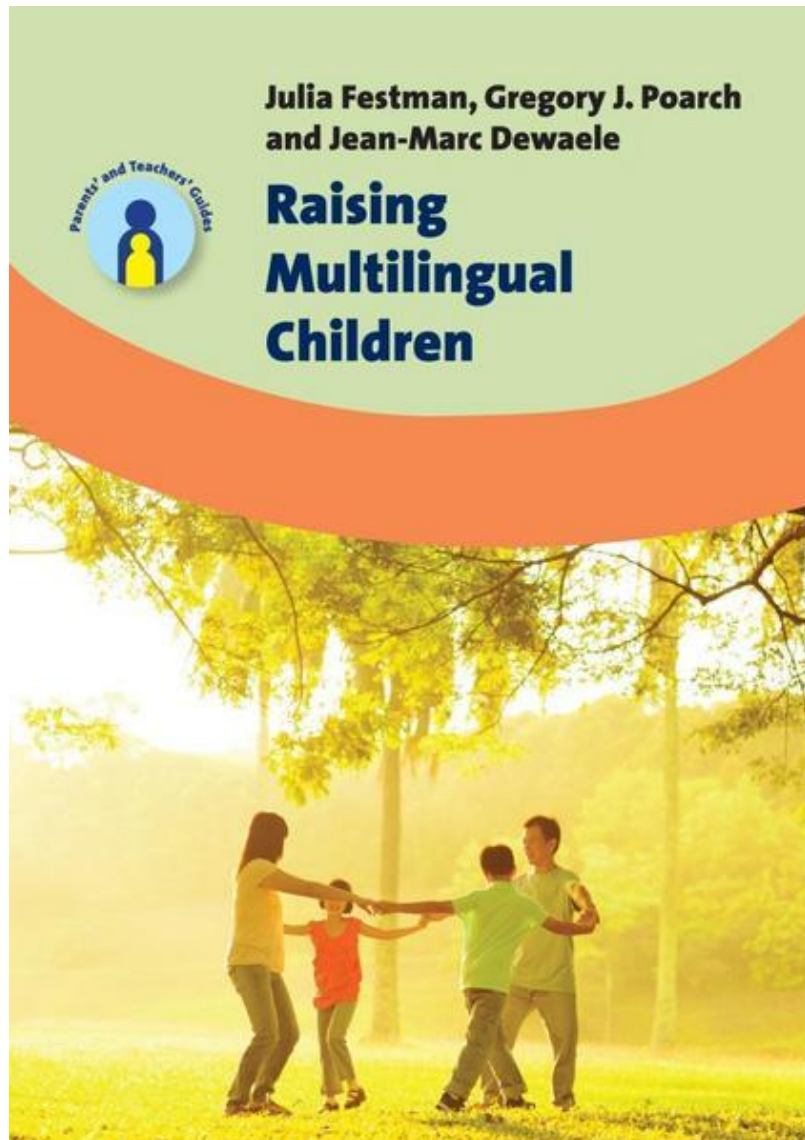
OPOL – one person one language: each person speaks a different language with the child (can be minority language, can be community language, can be foreign language) → language each person feels most comfortable with

mL@H – minority language(s) at home: family speaks only the minority language at home → important for family communication and emotional aspects; but some think they should better use the community language with the child (language of instruction)

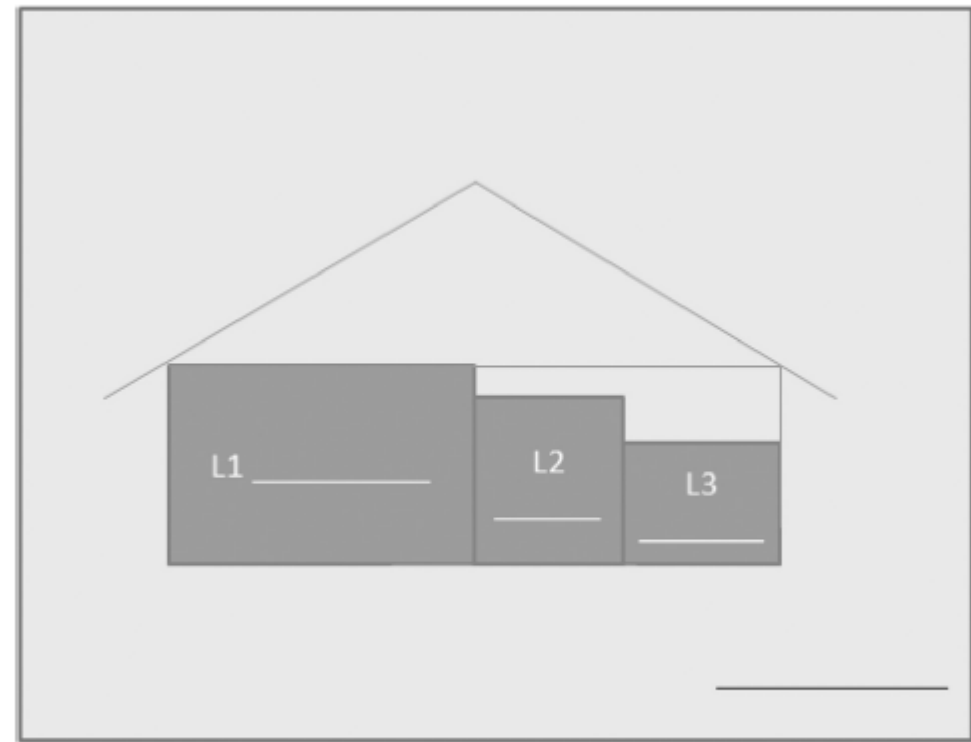
T & P – Time and Place strategy: language choice depends on time (time of day, e.g., breakfast vs. dinner; week vs. weekend) and place (home vs. school; different rooms, ..)

2P2L – Two Persons Two Languages: two persons (e.g., parents) speak both languages with child

→ Is that all??



Family language policies



Fill-in version: Unbalanced exposure to three languages in the home

Different fill-in sheets in the appendix of the book

Emotions and language learning

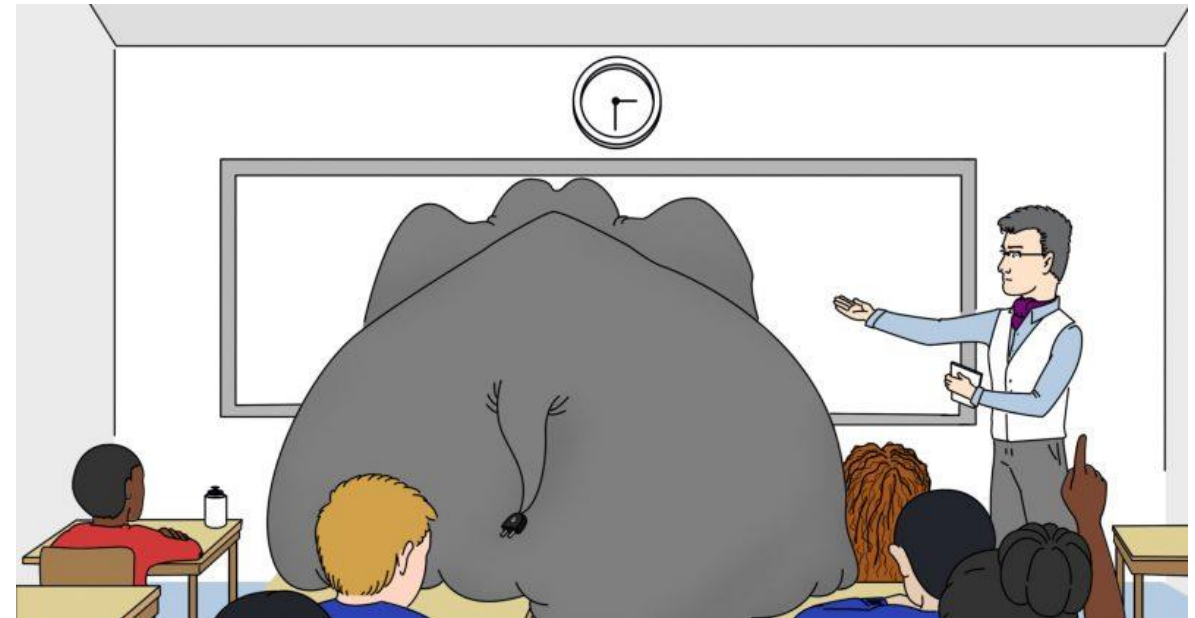


- **1. Emotions are at the heart of language learning**
→ MOTIVATION (MacIntyre, MacKinnon & Clément, 2009); happy children learn more easily than sad, stressed ones (focus, concentration, perception, willingness to make an effort. ..)
- **2. Predefined language use in classroom** → no free choice...
language of instruction;
or foreign language lesson;
or translanguaging approach (making use of full linguistic repertoire; García, 2009;
<https://oxfordre.com/education/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780190264093.001.0001/acrefore-9780190264093-e-181>)
- **3. Classroom context** – atmosphere (supportive, causing anxiety/fear, silencing, ...)
- **4. Teacher feedback** → shaping children's self-concept

Emotions are the elephant in the (class)room ...

- Swain (2013): Emotions are the *elephant in the room* – poorly studied, poorly understood, seen as inferior to rational thought → **more focus on cognitive impact** on language learning
- before: most research on **anxiety** in classroom; but this is the negative side of it... → “When elephants fly: the lift-off of emotion research in applied linguistics” (Dewaele, 2019)
- **Positive psychology** – factors sustaining a learner’s investment in learning experience: flow, hope, courage, well-being, optimism, creativity, happiness, resilience, positive emotions, strengths, wisdom (Lopez & Snyder, 2003)
- The flowering of positive psychology in foreign language teaching and acquisition research – by Dewaele, Chen, Padilly, & Lake (2019)

<https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.02128>



Meaning of metaphor:
Something is difficult and obviously there,
but nobody wants to talk about it, discuss it or address it...

The notion of self-concept (in general)

- Self-concept = the view/mental image you have of yourself
- Influenced by parents, friends, caretakers, teachers, ...
- Can be reinforced (strengthened, encouraged)
- Self-esteem/ self-worth – how much you like and respect yourself
- Self-confidence / self-efficacy – how much you trust your own powers
- The notion of self-concept comprises the individual's ideas of him/herself (Shavelson, Hubner, & Stanton, 1976) including competences in diverse skills.

Thoughts of a person with a **POSITIVE** self-concept:

I can do anything I really want to do.

I am an okay person.

I see myself as being as good as my friends.

There are many ways to solve a problem.

I feel good about myself.

Thoughts of a person with a **NEGATIVE** self-concept:

I cannot do what I really want to do.

I am not an okay person.

My friends are better than I am.

There is only one way to solve a problem, and I will probably fail.

I feel bad about myself.

The notion of self-concept (domain-specific, e.g. math, reading, ...)

The importance of knowledge about the development of self-concept is a much-underestimated aspect in teacher or pedagogy training despite its high importance for the speakers.

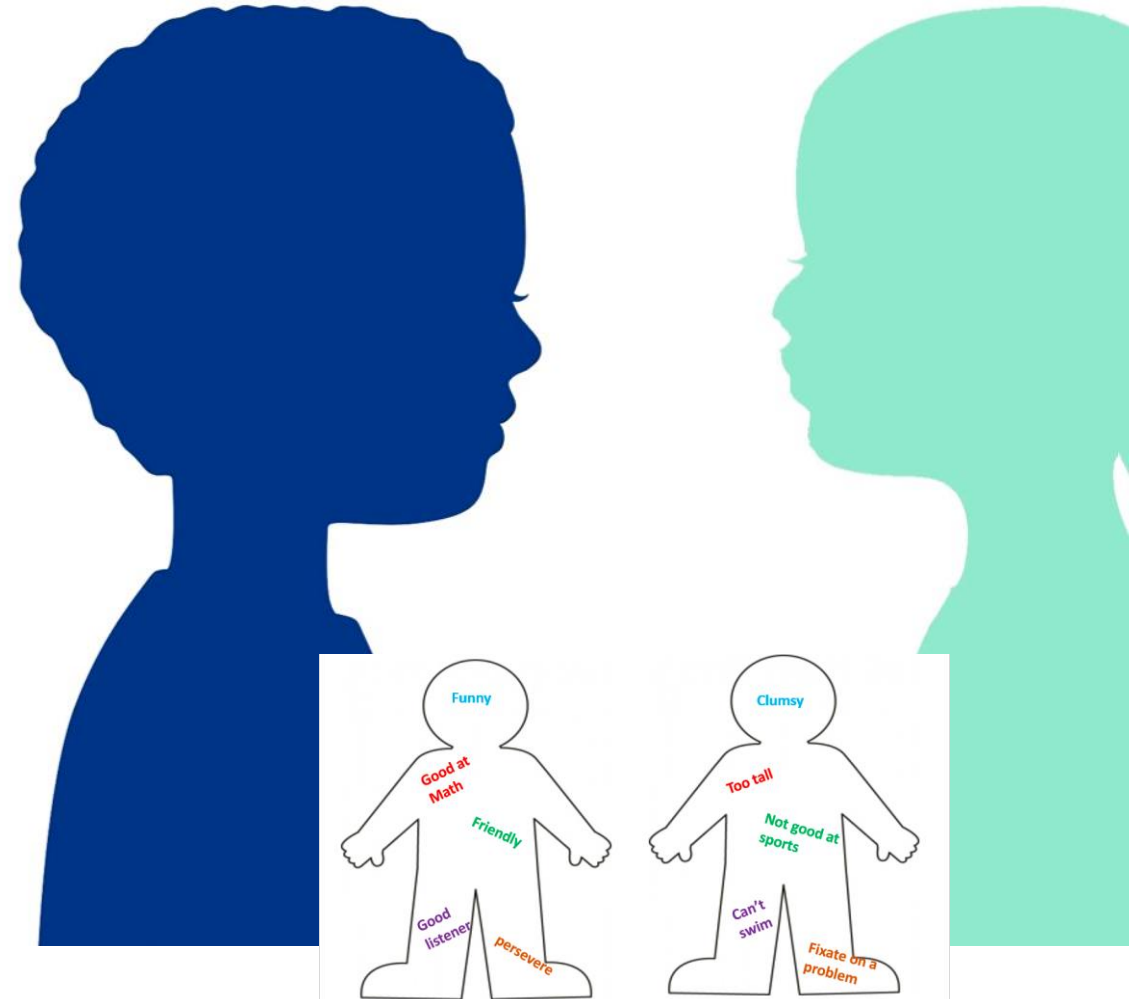
A positive self-concept, **essential for a healthy personality and identity development** (Hellmich, 2011), is related to and **influences academic achievement** (Martschinke, 2011).

Learning environment and appropriate, supportive feedback are crucial factors for shaping one's self-concept, starting with exaggerated positive self-concept during the kindergarten age **progressively differentiated with increasing age** (Möller et al., 2015).

At school, **external evaluations, judgments, feedback from significant others** (e.g. teachers, peers, parents) are the core means by which children shape their self-concepts.

I am a math person





I am *not* a math





Emotions and multilingualism/multilingual education

Additional important questions:

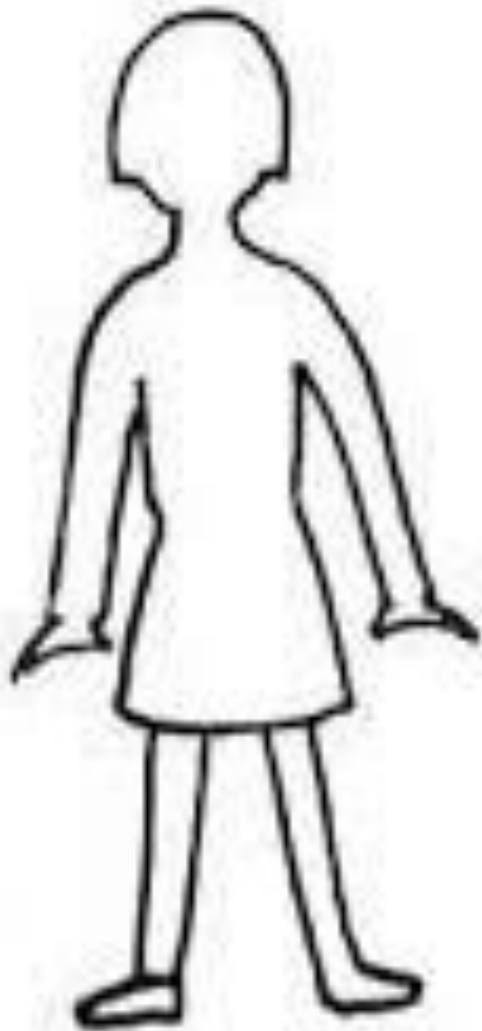
- Attitude towards use of languages (What do I think and feel about my languages? → linked to prestige of languages...)
 - Do I feel at ease to use my home language in public?
 - Is home language use encouraged or forbidden?
 - Attitude towards cultural origins (→ wish to stand out, wish to assimilate, wish to stay among own ethnic group, ...); in particular important in cases of migration, trauma, etc.
 - How do I feel about being made “expert” of my home language and culture?
 - How is the teacher’s attitude towards multilingualism and diversity – and how is the atmosphere and approach to these among the classmates?
- 
- 
- 
- 

Language portrait (Neumann, 1991)

- To reveal multilingual speakers' language repertoire and emotional connection to each of their languages
- Based on this information, the pedagogue could better understand what **importance, value and experience** a speaker attributes to a certain language. This might offer the possibility to take this information into consideration and into account when planning lessons, activities and adapting teaching strategies.



<http://sarah-maria-e.blogspot.com/2014/03/english-is-in-my-feet.html>



Different options:

- wholistic view of languages
- language use patterns (which language with whom, ..)
- biographic work (places of living and of learning, etc.)
- color = emotions
- language proficiencies
- motivation to learn specific languages

→ What is the task for the pupils?

These are my languages
 Das sind meine Sprachen
 Voilà mes langues
 Bunlar benim dillerim

Hier kannst du die Überschrift in einer anderen Sprache schreiben, die du kennst.

Male deine Sprachen in die Figur und nimm für jede Sprache eine andere Farbe.
 Erläutere deine Zuordnung. Male den Umriss so aus, dass man sieht, welche Bedeutung deine verschiedenen Sprachen für dich haben und welche Gefühle du mit ihnen verbindest.
 Dies kannst du mit der Wahl der Farbe, mit der Größe der Fläche und mit der Zuordnung zu bestimmten Körperregionen ausdrücken.

Lara Ich bin 12 Jahre.

Sprachen:

liebe ich

Languages...
 I love them



Instruction is VERY important:

Color in the figure with your languages and use one color per language.

Explain your classification.

Color it in a way so it gets clear which meaning the different languages have for you,
 And which emotions you relate to them.

You can express this information by the choice of your color, the size of coloring in and the classification of certain body parts.

Lara, 12 years old:
 Report about language use,
 Language biography,
 Emotions linked to languages

English,
 Since 2nd grade,
 It's important to me

Turkish,
 My parents' language,
 Thus, I respect it

Spanish,
 It's dear to me
 and is close to
 my heart and
 my legs and
 hands,
 because I was in
 Spain and I
 think in that
 language and
 speak it

German,
 I carry it in my legs and
 on my body,
 It gives stability

Datum: _____

Short summary

- Language choice
- Language policies and language use in families and in teaching situations
- Emotions – elephant in the room; emotions do play a crucial role
- Self-concept – learning achievements; role of teacher
- Emotional link to languages → language portrait

ORIGINAL RESEARCH ARTICLE

Front. Commun., 03 July 2018 | <https://doi.org/10.3389/fcomm.2018.00026>



Vocabulary Gains of Mono- and Multilingual Learners in a Linguistically Diverse Setting: Results From a German-English Intervention With Inclusion of Home Languages

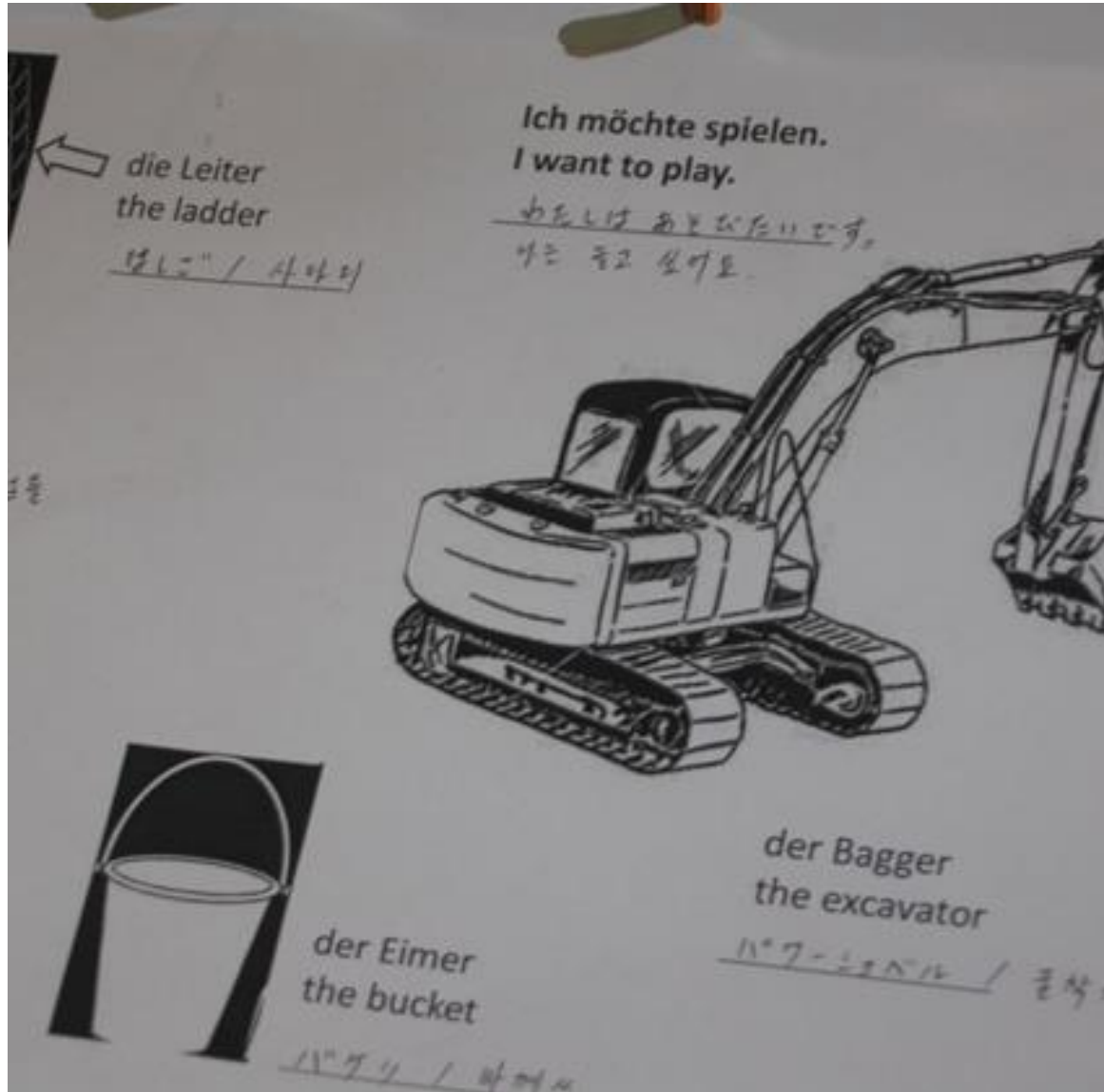


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Today, group settings (e.g., in kindergarten) are more linguistically diverse than ever. However, concepts in language acquisition only rarely include this fact. This paper reports on the effects of a language intervention which is based on a concept specifically designed for linguistically diverse settings (“PROgramme for BI- and MUltilingual Children”; Festmar and Rinker, 2014). The implementation of the programme and its outcomes are described with the example of a German-

Emotional aspects in ProBiMuc-concept



- small groups, two “teachers”: 1 OPOL, 1 2L
 - seeking moments of 1:1-interaction
 - inclusion of home language
 - inclusion of parents
 - meaningful context: Story / act for acquisition
 - fast-mapping extended: link phonological structure to accompanying **movement** and gesture (→ faster and more sustained memory of words, Macedonia & von Kriegstein, 2012)
 - **fun**: playful contexts for repetition, role play, work sheets, songs
- provides security and success → stronger self-concept
- feeling of inclusion, belonging, being part of group
 - an eye on individual progress

Individual progress

Possible due to:

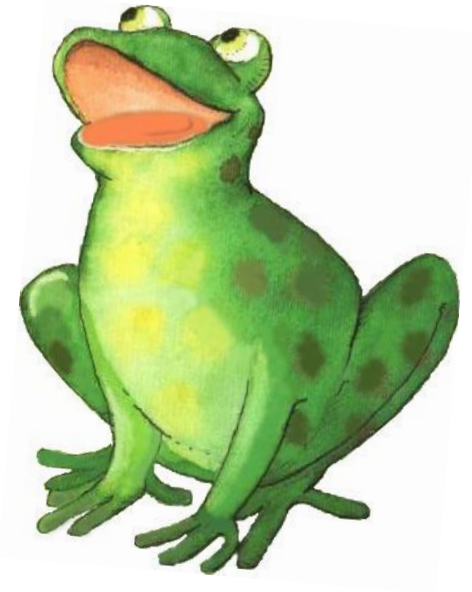
- **Attention to every single child**
- **Active participation, speaking and acting out, repetition, elicitation of verbal output**
- Focussed acquisition of particularly useful keywords and sentence structures
- Catch everyone at the stage of development and promote their individual progress



Questionnaire Parents - multilingual



„...As our daughter speaks neither English nor German, it was very important for us that she gains a vocabulary, especially in German. Probimuc **helped her learn new words**, but more than that, helped her gain the **confidence to speak** and use new words in her day-to-day life. This has also **infiltrated our home**, as more German and English words are incorporated into conversations“



Questionnaire Parents - monolingual



- Great project, child-friendly – „is there a Probimuc-session today?“ (daily question..)
- Child looked with parents at the folder instead of a good-night-story, repeated words at home regularly, colored the pages → **spoke some English at home**
- Always happy to go to the session, looked forward to it
- Photos showed that the kids had fun
- Folder helped children remember the words
- Noticable increase in **interest in the English language** (G.monoling. Child), before Probimuc, the child did not want to say a single word in English – that changed dramatically
- Another German **child asks parents for English translations** and uses **English words as well at home**
- As soon as the child was home on a Probimuc-day, she would immediately **tell the parents about it including all the new words**
- Child **asks parents for looking at the folder**, to **repeat words**, **proud** of using the new words

Questionnaire Parents - multilingual



- Great project, child-friendly, well organized („The best one can achieve with children“)
- folder - very helpful to learn names of things,
- A father reported: his Chinese child seems to recognize > 70% of the words in the folder
- repeated words at home regularly, colored the pages → spoke some English at home
- Always **happy to go to** the session, **looked forward** to it
- A Japanese child **started to use** German and English words at home
- Parents' surprise about their child's progress: „Because J. took long time to adapt new languages and recently I have heard her **speaking out with both German and English words!**“
- A Russian boy **asked the parents at home to study the folder, but he is still too shy to make use of the words**

Conclusions



- Parents were involved, **home languages were really valued and included**
- Children were supported Children turned to be **more active language users and communicators**
- **Intercultural and multilingual experience**
- **Increased language awareness**
- **Increased self-concept**
- Independent of background and prior knowledge, **all children were able to gain vocabulary knowledge in both languages through the intervention → boost of word learning for all children**

Behav Sci (Basel). 2019 Apr; 9(4): 39.

Published online 2019 Apr 13. doi: [10.3390/bs9040039](https://doi.org/10.3390/bs9040039)

PMCID: PMC6523240

PMID: [31013920](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/31013920/)

Self-Concepts in Reading and Spelling among Mono- and Multilingual Children: Extending the Bilingual Advantage

[Julia Festman](#)^{1,2,3,4,*} and [John W. Schwieter](#)^{3,4}

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Abstract

Cognitive representations and beliefs are what comprise an individual's self-concept. A positive self-concept is related to and influences academic achievement, and the relationship between a domain-specific self-concept and achievement in the same domain is positive and strong. However, insufficient attention has been paid to these issues among multilingual children. More importantly, since instruction strongly

Results in RaSch-Project: Self-concept

Project with children in
3rd grade (9 years of age)

2 groups (69 monol. / 56 bi-multiling.)

Asked them:

Table 1. Mean ranks per group (P: mono- and multilingual parents; C: mono- and multilingual third-graders) for parental aspirations towards educational achievements (e.g., spelling) and children's willingness to learn (e.g., German language) (P, upper part) and for children's evaluations of their teachers' behavior towards them (C, lower part) based on questionnaire responses by parents or children.

Parents' Aspirations (P) and Child Evaluations (C) of Their Teachers' Behavior	Monolinguals Mean Rank	Multilinguals Mean Rank	Mann-Whitney Test
P: child should write text without errors	56.66	60.76	$U = 1547$ $p = 0.441$
P: child should make an effort in the German lessons	56.30	62.25	$U = 1526$ $p = 0.281$
C: my teachers like me	60.02	59.97	$U = 1747$ $p = 0.993$
C: my teachers treat me with fairness	58.58	60.67	$U = 1655$ $p = 0.718$
C: my teachers tell me off too often	59.05	58.94	$U = 1693$ $p = 0.986$
C: my teachers talk to me in a friendly way	59.02	57.87	$U = 1631$ $p = 0.840$
C: my teachers take care of me	57.38	62.09	$U = 1585$ $p = 0.429$

Results

- Comparable domain-specific self-concept for reading and spelling
- = no difference between the groups
- Same reading competency (standardized tests)
- But difference in spelling: monolinguals were better at spelling than multilinguals

Table 2. Mean ranks for mono- and multilingual third-graders for domain-specific self-concepts.

Domain-Specific Self-Concepts	Monolinguals Mean Rank	Multilinguals Mean Rank	Mann-Whitney Test
Reading	63.31	55.88	$U = 1530$ $p = 0.239$
Spelling	65.25	53.46	$U = 1402$ $p = 0.063$

Table 3. Mean ranks for monolinguals and multilinguals for standardized tests of reading (reading comprehension–ELFE 1–6, reading fluency SLRT-II) and spelling (BUEGA) competences.

Standardized Test for Reading and Spelling	Monolinguals Mean Rank	Multilinguals Mean Rank	Mann-Whitney Test
Reading comprehension (n correct responses)	64.14	54.85	$U = 1476$ $p = 0.144$
Reading fluency (n correct responses)	58.86	60.32	$U = 1673$ $p = 0.818$
Spelling (n errors)	54.24	67.17	$U = 1369$ $p = 0.042$

- How well were they able to judge their reading and spelling abilities?
- → correlation of children's self-ratings and standardized test results

All children in our sample had a realistic domain-specific self-concept!!
 → helpful feedback from teachers!! Diversity-inclusion, supportive

5.2. Correlations

For reading, correlations between the rating for domain-specific self-concept and the performance scores on the two different standardized tests are presented separately for the monolingual and the multilingual group in Table 4. The correlation between reading comprehension abilities and the self-concept for reading, although weak, was significant for both groups. In both groups, reading fluency was significantly correlated with the assessed reading fluency and had a moderate effect size.

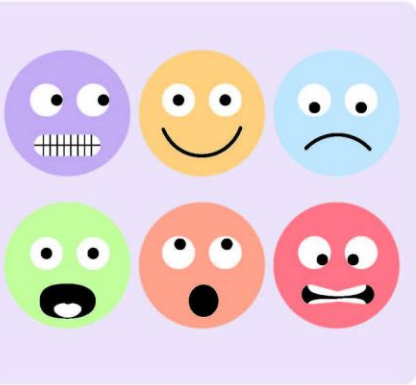
Table 4. Correlations between self-concept for reading and standardized reading tests for monolinguals and multilinguals. Bivariate correlations between variables utilized Spearman's rho.

		Reading Comprehension Test		Reading Fluency Test	
		Monolinguals	Multilinguals	Monolinguals	Multilinguals
Self-concept reading	r_s	0.307	0.296	0.456	0.394
	p	0.012	0.031	<0.001	0.004

For spelling, correlations between the rating for domain-specific self-concept and the performance score on the standardized test (BUEGA) are presented separately for the monolingual and the multilingual group in Table 5. For both groups, there was a significant correlation between self-concept for spelling and their performance on the spelling test. The effect size for this correlation was moderate.

Table 5. Correlations between self-concept for spelling and the standardized spelling test for monolinguals and multilinguals. Bivariate correlations between variables utilized Spearman's rho.

		Spelling Test	
		Monolinguals	Multilinguals
Self-concept spelling	r_s	-0.392	-0.438
	n	0.001	0.001



Pedagogical implications

- Emotions play a vital role in language learning! And in teaching. Teachers: think of how to boost own and students' language learning enjoyment (solidarity, trust, hope, optimism, humor, supportive emotional environment)
- Train your antennas for your students; **good teacher** = has antennas to pick up the vibes in the class... → when do students need a change, no more grammar but a funny song..
- Boring lessons are the worst – too easy → boring; too difficult → doesn't catch it.. also boring... -→ at the level where the kids understand and can follow, but with some challenge 😊 (PRoBiMuc, Festman 2019)
- Be a **friendly teacher** providing supportive **feedback** that is useful to the student (**a friendly teacher – strong predictor of enjoyment** (Dewaele, Magdalena Franco & Saito 2019); impact on self-concept! → realistic domain-specific self-concept (Festman & Schwieter, 2019)
- Create **friendly learning environment** and supportive classroom atmosphere and peer support (PRoBiMuc, Festman 2019)
- Strive for high **proficiency** in the topic/field, etc. you are teaching → more fun, more self-perceived competence, more creativity in approaches, etc
- **Is teacher-happiness contagious?** Moskowitz & Dewaele 2019 – perception of language teacher happiness and student attitudes
- Reflect on your **attitude** towards your students, diversity, inclusion, multilingualism → great if positive
- Inclusion of home languages, freedom of choice of language use, children's emotional relation to certain languages (PRoBiMuc, Festman 2019)

...questions for discussion

Which role does emotion play in your classroom / in your teaching approach / in your caretaking duties? Is it the elephant in the room?

Which experiences do you have with emotion in language learning – when you learn and use languages yourself and with the children you take care of?

Talk about ideas how to include more positive emotions in language learning. What could you do? What have you tried already? How did it work?

Have you tried to include children's home languages? And how did that work on the emotional level?