



## Exploring Multiliteracies in Early FL Classrooms

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Recent research-based reconceptualizations of language as a resource for making meaning and literacy as multimodal and multilingual multiliteracies call for a holistic understanding of what it means to teach and learn first and additional languages in schools (e.g. Makoni & Pennycook 2007; Cope & Kalantzis 2009). Despite profound and similar conceptual changes, the concept of literacy is typically connected to developing the first language(s) (L1s) and language to developing foreign languages (e.g. Kern 2003). In practice, this has led to very different ways of teaching and learning first and additional languages in school (Luukka et al. 2008).

Multiliteracies has been introduced as a transversal cross-curricular competence in the Finnish core curriculum from 2016 on (EDUFI 2016) but there is very little research on how the concept is operationalized in the language classroom. Finland also introduced an earlier start for foreign language learning in schools (from 2020 on), including a new early language learning (ELL) curriculum (EDUFI 2020). Starting the first foreign language in the first grade means that children are not necessarily literate in their first language, and they thus learn first language and foreign language literacy at the same time.

This setting is an optimal context for examining how multiliteracies are reflected in ELL teaching practices. The study is a case study with one focal teacher teaching English to grade 2 students. Classroom observations were conducted by three researchers using an observation grid that is based on Cope and Kalantzis' (2009) conceptualization of multiliteracies. In our analysis, we focus on two lessons. The results show that some aspects of multiliteracies (e.g. addressing different modalities) are present in the focal ELL classrooms, whereas issues of multilingualism (e.g. addressing learner diversity or comparing and contrasting languages) and learner agency are given less attention.

**Keywords:** Multiliteracies, Early language learning

### References

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