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English as a Lingua Franca practices for inclusive multilingual classrooms

Multilingualism

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ACTIVITY 1

Before we begin, think about **your experience** as a **user** and a **teacher** of English

- What does **multilingualism** mean to you? What kind of characteristics would you say that multilingual communication may have?

- How do you think acknowledging your students' multilingualism affects their **academic performance**?

Click the **link** under the video to share your views if you haven't done so yet

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What is Multilingualism?

Multilingualism versus **plurilingualism**:

According to **European Commission**, **multilingualism** refers to "the ability of societies, institutions, groups and individuals to engage, on a regular basis, with **more than one language** in their day-to-day lives"

(European Communities, 2007, *Commission of the European Communities Final report - High Level Group on Multilingualism*)

What is Multilingualism?

Multilingualism versus **plurilingualism**:

More conventional definitions have made the distinction between multilingualism and pluralism, attaching **the former to societies** and **the latter to individuals**. However, as in this definition, the difference is not addressed in most instances. Still, it is important to keep in mind that the term **plurilingualism** usually refers to the state of the sum of languages spoken in societies as a whole

What is Multilingualism?

Individual and **societal**

Multilingualism is then understood both as a **human capacity** and a **societal fact**. In the case of the former, we talk about individuals speaking/using multiple languages since birth or since one point in childhood or adulthood

What is Multilingualism?

Individual and **societal**

In some societies, there are **multiple home languages**, as in both parents being multilingual and teaching these languages to their children

In fact, as many researchers now reveal, **multilingualism is the norm across the world** populations rather than monolingualism

What is Multilingualism?

Languages in multilingualism: **dominant**, **non-dominant/home languages**

In many societies, there is one **dominant language**—in most cases this is also the **official language**

Languages other than the dominant language, the **non-dominant languages** are less powerful either by the number of their speakers, or the value they bring to its speakers for political, economic, or social reasons

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What is Multilingualism?

Languages in multilingualism: **dominant**, **non-dominant/home languages**

In the case of **immigrant households** for instance, children acquire home languages first, and the societal/dominant language as soon as they start schooling—they follow different trajectories in their final multilingual make-up

ACTIVITY 2

Do some Internet search to answer the following questions:

o How many **non-dominant languages** can you list that are spoken across Europe?

o How many **different home languages** can you list that you know are spoken in your country/city?

Click the **link** under the video to share your views

The Multilingual Interaction

The **ordinariness of multilingual talk**

As stated before, the world population is predominantly multilingual, and much of what we call **daily interaction** takes place in multiple languages rather than single languages

Take the example of a **multi-ethnic marketplace** in a city, or a **break time following a lesson**, or an **international business place**—public places like these and many more are marked by multilingual interactions

The Multilingual Interaction

The **ordinariness of multilingual talk**

In most cases, people in these places need multiple languages to carry their meaning across

Although some of us might be exposed to monolingual interactions more often than multilingual, we should know that **multilingual interactions are as natural as monolingual for the majority of the world population**

The Multilingual Interaction

Code-mixing: definition and examples:

For any multilingual individual, one of the most natural forms of talk is mixing the languages, "codes" as they speak

Code-mixing/switching/alternation are slightly different than each other as research topics

However, the idea behind them is the same—individuals switch between languages to ease their communication or achieve a certain effect

The Multilingual Interaction

Code-mixing: motivations

Multilingual people do not randomly switch back and forth between languages—they follow certain principles in these switches

- Sometimes, they just insert one word from language B into their sentence in language A

- Sometimes they start one sentence in language A, and finish in language B

The Multilingual Interaction

Code-mixing: motivations

- Other times, they say the first sentence in language A and the second sentence in language B, so on and so forth
- But we all know that they switch codes at very meaningful parts in their speech
- The **motivations** for code-switching might vary: lack of knowledge of a word, syntactic reasons (because it is easier, more "accessible" to switch than to continue in the same language), or for stylistic effects

The Multilingual Interaction

Code-mixing: motivations

- In some of these instances, individuals are aware that they are code-switching, and in others they do it automatically without much thinking
- All of these are **natural linguistic behaviours** that multilinguals employ

The Multilingual Identity

Defining **multilingual identity**

Recent years' research has come to show that **identity is constructed through interaction among individuals**
Multilingual identities, likewise, are constructed through multilingual talk
Rather than the sum of languages in one's linguistic repertoire, multilingual identities draw on a range of resources that are **linguistic, semiotic, multi-modal**

The Multilingual Identity

Thus, if one has a native language identity and an English identity, his identity is not the sum of these two--rather, it is a **skillful combination of resources in the two languages in one's repertoire**

People **construct, enact, re-construct, and re-enact their identities all the time**, depending on who they interact with and what kind of situations they find themselves in

Thus, **when teaching English, a teacher is also helping the learner start constructing a multilingual identity**

Construction of Multilingual Identity

Identity construction starts at a **very early age**, as soon as the individual starts socializing with the adults around her/him

As soon as she/he realizes the **importance of social behavior**, the individual starts constructing roles and act accordingly

Language is a key in constructing this identity, because it determines how individuals connect with others in their community

But these connections also shape the language people speak—thus, **language and identity** in are in a mutual relationship with each other

Construction of Multilingual Identity

When individuals speak multiple languages, they do not necessarily construct a separate identity for each one of them

Rather, **different aspects of their identity are constructed through constant interaction with the languages they speak**

Construction of Multilingual Identity

For instance, a person might identify with nationalism, and she/he might construct this identity through her/his resources in multiple languages in her/his repertoire

Many immigrants (say, Turks in Germany) construct their joy when their homeland football team wins a match against the host country's team, but they do so in the German language or a mix of Turkish-German language

ACTIVITY 3

Can you think of **other ways multilingual immigrants construct and enact their identities?**

Do you think this construction is **stable**? Why or why not?

Click the **link** under the video to share your views

Multilingualism and Transnational Identity

As **globalization** and **migration** have become widespread social phenomena around the world, individuals have identified more as **transnationals**

We all know people who move to other countries for work, education, or simply to live a better life—as they move, they also learn new languages

These languages help them construct transnational identities

Multilingualism and Transnational Identity

For instance, by learning the language of the host society, transnationals access more resources and construct new sets of identities to negotiate them

Take **immigrants** who come from underprivileged backgrounds—it is very common among them to start speaking the language of the host society as soon as their children start schooling

They start bonding with other parents, regularly meeting the teachers, and socializing with their children

Multilingualism and Transnational Identity

These are all new sets of resources that they access through starting to live in a new country

These relationships affect their language learning and use as well as constructing new transnational identities

Multilingualism and Ethnic/Racial Identities

Transnational identities are not the only identities available for multilingual individuals

People construct and re-construct their **ethnic, racial, and gender identities** when they start living in new countries

Multilingualism and Ethnic/Racial Identities

For instance, in their homeland people might belong to an ethnic minority, but when they migrate, this aspect of their identity might be more pronounced

If this ethnicity requires speaking a different language than the national language of their homeland, they continue speaking this language in their new country of residence, and even become more protective about it and transmit it to the next generation

Multilingualism and Ethnic/Racial Identities

The opposite might happen, too

Individuals might be ready to give up on their minority language and raise their children both in the national language of their homeland and the language spoken in their new country of residence—they do so for the purpose of **helping their children better integrate into the society**

Multilingualism and Ethnic/Racial Identities

People's **racial identities** also play a role in the **construction of their multilingual identities**

For instance, in some Western societies, like in the UK, race plays an important role in people's access to resources—people's access to resources might be blocked based on their racial background, and this in turn might result in various different forms of constructing and enacting multilingual identities

To exemplify, an African-based immigrant community might turn more inwards as they are not allowed educational or economic resources, which would bring them closer to native speakers

Multilingual Education

Multilingual students at school: **regional minorities/immigrant minorities**

Particularly in the case of Europe, migration is not the only reason for multilingualism to be a societal fact

Composed of many different nations with a diversity of histories, **Europe has been multilingual continent for centuries**

Multilingual Education

This history has led into the persistence of regional minority languages across countries

Regional minority speakers have different multilingual compositions as they have become natural elements of the countries that they live in

Yet, as a new reality of the last few decades, there are also immigrant minorities across European countries, who come from a wide range of homelands speaking a wide range of languages

Multilingual Education

These students have a more diverse composition than the regional minorities in terms of economic background, home languages, religion, and the like

This diversity makes the classrooms in Europe much more diverse than in the past

Heritage Language Education

In the context of migration, heritage languages are those spoken at home by one's family

Thus, Arabic, Turkish, or Chinese would be considered as heritage languages spoken, for instance, in London

Many different immigrant communities today try to retain their heritage languages through teaching them in schools sponsored by their own communities

Heritage Language Education

Known as **Saturday schools or community schools**, these schools contribute to the learning and use of heritage languages through regular instruction

These schools show differences in characteristics across the countries in Europe, and they are also different than the schools of their kind in the US

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Multilingual Pedagogies

It is important to acknowledge that multilingual classrooms of today's schools require different pedagogies than in the past—it holds true both for foreign language and subject classes

There are **two sides to approaching multilingual pedagogies:**

1. What to do with classrooms in which students come from twenty-something different linguistic backgrounds?
2. What to do with classrooms in which most of the students are multilinguals?

Multilingual Pedagogies

Classroom pedagogies should address both of these dimensions: while they should attend to the multilingual composition of the classroom, they should also attend to each multilingual student's needs

That is to say, be it language or subject classes, each class should be encompassing enough to include multilingual students of various backgrounds while at the same time acknowledging the uniqueness of their multilingual repertoire

Multilingualism with English

Multilingual English speakers

The spread of English around the world also means the spread of English as learned and used by multilingual people—this fact has led into the notion of multilingualism with English to develop

Most multilinguals around the world are also English speakers, as English has become a regular school subject in many countries across the world

Yet, depending on the context, **multilinguals' exposure to English shows variations**

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Multilingualism with English

What is important for us to acknowledge is the role of English in the multilinguals' linguistic repertoires

Particularly in the case of immigrant situations, students with immigrant background might perform better in English than in their heritage languages or the host society's languages

This might stem from the **positive attitudes** they develop for English

English in the Multilingual Digital World

English as a lingua franca is the language of the digital, multilingual contexts, as these are spaces without borders and practically anyone can have an "online presence"

With the access to multimodal resources offered by the digital world, English today is spoken in ways and contexts that have never existed before

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English in the Multilingual Digital World

For instance, **online forums** where people from around the world type and post their messages including the symbols and other multi-modal, semiotic tools—altogether, these verbal and non-verbal elements in online communication enhance meaning

They also align with the **digital habits of our day**, where we spend a considerable portion of our day online and we stay connected to the rest of the world

English in Multilingual Classrooms

English lessons themselves, and other lessons, by providing spaces for English enhance students' understanding of **English as an important element of their multilingual repertoires**

This tells us that **English can be exploited for the appreciation of multilingual repertoires and identities in the classroom**

In this way, it is **not seen as a language only but a way of connecting with the rest of the world** and accessing resources in the other languages in a multilingual's repertoire.

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ACTIVITY 4

Find some **real-life examples from your own classes** that are **evidence of students' awareness of their own** **multilingualism**
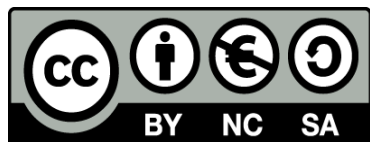
Discuss **how they these examples can be understood with reference to the way that you teach**

Click the **link** under the video to share your views at the Forum of this section

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