## Using pluralistic approaches to enhance language proficiency

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## Outline

- Research question and hypothesis
- Theoretical framework
- Research design
- Analysis
- Results
- Discussion


# Research question and hypothesis 

## Common European Framework of Reference

## Development of multilingual competence:

- links between languages
- taking into account the multilingual repertoire


## Research question

Present students with unknown languages = pluralistic approach (Candelier, 2003)

Focusing away from learning goal will help:

- raise cross-linguistic awareness
- develop metalinguistic competence
- implement transferable strategies


## Hypothesis

- Pluralistic approaches help students develop their metalinguistic competence:
$>$ transferable
> independent from languages used
- Development of metalinguistic competence should have impact on L2 proficiency

Today: results about metasemantic competence

# Theoretical framework 

## State of Research

- Language Awareness (Hawkins, 1974)
- Development of metalinguistic skills (Dabène, 1992)
- Classification of strategies (O'Malley and Chamot, 1990)
- Minimum threshold of competence (Bialystok, 1978)
- Interdependence hypothesis (Cummins, 1991)


## Definitions

- Metasemantic competence (Gombert, 1990) = ability to recognize a linguistic system + to manipulate words
- Developing metasemantic competence = ability to activate:
- knowledge from the multilingual repertoire
- transferable skills (strategies)
- positive attitudes
- Language proficiency (R. Ellis, 2008) = ability to use this internalized competence in different tasks


## Research Design

## Mixed methodology

## Both quantitative and qualitative data

- Quasi-experimental design
- Pre- and post-tests (semantic and syntactic)
- Experimental groups and control groups
- For each session:
$>$ individual sheets
$>$ group sheets
$>$ transcripts of interactions


## Participants

- Lower secondary school pupils, two target groups:
- students from year 7 (12-13 year-old)
- students from year 9 (14-15 year-old)
- Observed participants: $\mathrm{N}=88$ students from year 7 (22 groups)


## Procedure

- Three unknown languages: Dutch, Italian, Finnish
- Three media:
> metasemantic activities
$>$ metasyntactic activities
> metaphonological activities
- Same model: give systematicity to a regular exercise


## Session 1 : metasemantic activities

- mobilize metasemantic knowledge/skills
- validate and enhance understanding
- reflect upon strategies used


## Analysis

## Variables and indicators

| Variables | Elaboration | Inferencing | Deduction |  |
| :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  |  |  | D- | D+ |
| Indicators | relating to prior <br> knowledge of L1 <br> and/or L2 | Using available <br> information to <br> guess meanings of <br> new items | Relying on <br> input <br> (morphological <br> observations, <br> numbers, etc) | Relying on <br> general |

Adapted from the cognitive strategies defined by O' Malley and Chamot (1990: 120)

## Quantitative analysis

- Group sheets: type and frequency of implemented strategies
- Comparison with ideal projection
= Understanding strategies used by students?


## Results

## Results of metasemantic sessions

## Assessment S1



## Discussion

## Differential expected-realized S1


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## Positive differential

- Elaboration strategies:
- Typological proximity for Dutch or Italian
- Relying on French for Finnish
- Non-conscious use of other strategies
- Translation strategies:
= Non verbalized elaboration (65\%)


## Negative differential (1/2)

- Inferencing strategy:
- Minimal threshold of L2 competence (Bialystok, 1980)
- Relying on skills developed in L2
= Higher competence threshold in L2 ?


## Negative differential (2/2)

- Deduction strategy:
- Bottom-up processes
- Top-down processes: « threshold theory » (Cummins, 1980)
- interactive-compensatory mechanism (Stanovich, 1980)


## Conclusion

## Implemented strategies (1/2)

- Elaboration: strategy of choice
- Typological proximity with L1 has an inhibitory effect on other strategies
- Subjective evaluation of typological proximity modifies behaviorof learners (Deyrich, 2007)


## Implemented strategies (2/2)

- Inferencing: Requires training
- Language typologically close to L2
- Possible transfer between different language systems
= Beneficial effect of pluralistic approaches


## Effects of pluralistic approaches

- Limitations : results only reflect conscious strategies
- Pluralistic approaches enable the development of metasemantic competence by:
- relying on multilingual repertoire
- implementing complex strategies
- More effective with distant languages from L1 and/or close to L2


## From Language Awareness to Language Proficiency?

Pluralistic approaches:

- raise awareness
- develop metalinguistic competence
- improve L2 proficiency by $36 \%$ if teacher has a 'facilitator' attitude and by $6 \%$ if 'autocratic' attitude
$>$ Analysis of pre- and post-test differential
> Comparison between experimental- and control-groups


## References

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# Thank you for your attention! 

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## Video of first session on Dutch

## Dutch session 1:

## iserving a foreign languag

## nd deducing the meaning

Text in Dutch

Hallo mijn vriend!
Miin naam is Anneke en ik ben 12. Ik woon met mijn ouders, Marijke en Geert, in Amsterdam. Ik heb een grote broer; ziin naam is Hans en hii is 20. Hil woont in Duitsland want hii heeft een Duitse vriendin. Ik heb ook een kleine zuster; haar naam is Sara en zij is 8 jaar oud.
Schrijf vlug terug en vertel mij over je familie.
Beste groeten,
Anneke

## Text in Italian

«Sono un topo molto famoso. Io sono piccolo, con grandi orecchie nere. Indosso pantaloni rossi con grandi bottoni bianchi. I miei migliori amici sono Paperino e Pippo e la mia bella ragazza di nome Minnie.

Mio padre è molto famoso: il suo nome è Walt Disney!
Chi sono io? »

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## Text in Finnish

Päivi: " Rakastatko musiikkia?"
Timo: "Kyllä, minä rakastan. Lataan paljon musiikkia Internetistä."
Päivi: "Soitatko musiikkia?"
Timo: "Kyllä, minä soitan. Soitan pianoa. Sisareni Eija
ei soita pianoa, mutta hän soittaa kitaraa.
Entä sisaresi Nina?"
Päivi: "Sisareni Nina rakastaa rap-musiikkia.
Rakastaako sisaresi Eija myös rap-musiikkia?"
Timo: "Ei, hän ei rakasta."

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Example of a group sheet in Dutch


Example of a group sheet in Italian


Example of a group sheet in Finnish


## Documents supports

- Réponses-groupes NLS2
- Réponses groupes ITS2
- Synthèse des réponses


## Documentation

- Lien vers la page Moodle de l'ERR
- Lien vers la page à destination des parents

Example of non-conscious strategy use


