

## **Towards plurilingual competence in Norwegian lower secondary schools: cross-linguistic awareness in bilingual subject instruction.**

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Full paper presentation

This study investigates the use of home language in bilingual subject instruction in Norwegian lower secondary schools and its role in raising cross-linguistic awareness and strengthening students' plurilingual competence. Being a transitional tutoring offer, bilingual subject instruction has the potential to equip students with competences needed in mainstream schooling, as well as prepare them to use their holistic linguistic repertoires according to changing circumstances and needs. In this paper, I argue that the active use of home language strengthens not only subject knowledge, but also the learners' awareness of the connections between their language systems (cf. Cenoz & Jessner, 2009). The following research question was formulated: How can the incorporation of the home language in bilingual subject instruction contribute to the development and enhancement of students' cross-linguistic awareness and, consequently, strengthen their plurilingual competence?

The theoretical framework comprises the concepts of metalinguistic and cross-linguistic awareness (Cenoz & Jessner, 2009; Jessner, 2008) and the notion of multi-competence (Cook, 2016), an approach that highlights the inter-relatedness of the language systems the individual possesses and the importance of prior linguistic resources in second language learning.

The study follows a qualitative research design and introduces spoken data from three classroom contexts. The analysis features dyadic interactions between one bilingual Polish teacher and three lower secondary students with Polish heritage, that were recorded during bilingual subject instruction classes. The findings show that the teacher uses an array of practices to uncover tacit linguistic knowledge and create new links between the language systems, supporting the notion of linguistic multi-competence (Cook, 2016). At the same time, the home language plays a crucial role in metalinguistic activity and provides the students with a base for subject knowledge and understanding. I argue that through equipping the students with a capacity to look at their languages through a functional lens, the bilingual teacher supports the development of plurilingual competence and the ability to adapt to the everchanging and culturally diverse society. The study contributes to the field of multilingual education by highlighting the bilingual teacher's practices that lead to metalinguistic reflection and strengthening subject knowledge amongst students with different prerequisite skills and needs.

## References:

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