Students’ and parents’ views towards Language Awareness activities in the Nordic and Baltic countries

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Developing the Language Awareness Approach in the Nordic and Baltic countries (DELA-NOBA)

• 08/2013 – 07/2016
• 21 partners from seven Nordic/Baltic countries (Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Sweden)
• Partnerships between seven pilot schools (primary and secondary) and institutions in higher education
DELA-NOBA’s general objectives

• to examine how plurilingual language awareness education can be integrated and further developed in the Nordic/Baltic context

• to examine the impact of plurilingual language awareness education on learners’ and parents’ attitudes towards language diversity and language learning

• to contribute to the societal discussions on language diversity and language learning in the Nordic/Baltic countries.
Seven pilot schools

- List of plurilingual LA teaching activities (Primary 1, Primary 2, Secondary 1)
- Three teaching activities
- Language autobiography
Surveys (based on EVLANG and JaLing)

Teachers
- Preexperience survey
- Postexperience survey

Parents
- Preexperience survey
- Postexperience survey

Teaching activities’ evaluations
- Students
- Teachers
The Parents

**Denmark** (Children in two Grade 2 and one Grade 6 classes, ages 8 yrs. and 12 yrs. – The International Profile School in Copenhagen)
Preexperience: n=44
Postexperience: n=41

**Iceland** (Children in three Grade 5 classes, ages 10-11 yrs.)
Preexperience: n=33
Postexperience: n=30

**Lithuania** (Children in 2 Grade 2 classes, students in 11th class, gymnasium)
Preexperience: n=62
**Sweden**: n=30
The Parents

**Finland** (Children in one Grade 6 class, age 12 yrs.)
Preexperience: n=18
Postexperience: n=7

**Sweden** (Children in two groups, 13-14 yrs. and 14-15 yrs.)
Preexperience: n=35
Background information - Iceland

Most commonly known languages – parents: Icelandic, English, Danish

Languages most commonly spoken in the home: Icelandic

Most common languages spoken by children: Icelandic, but some children also speak Polish, English, Lithuanian, Norwegian, Danish, Spanish or Serbian
Background information - Denmark

Most commonly known languages – parents: English, Norwegian, German, Swedish

Languages most commonly spoken in the home: Danish

Most common languages spoken by children: Danish, English (37%), German (8.7%) – some children also speak Estonian, Faroese, French, Latvian, Sami, Turkish
Background information - Lithuania

Most commonly known languages – parents: Lithuanian, Russian, English, German, French, Polish

Languages most commonly spoken in the home: Lithuanian (100%)

Most common languages spoken by children: Lithuanian, English (45%), Russian, German – some children also speak French, Polish or Italian
Background information - Finland

Most commonly known languages – parents:
   Finnish, English, German, Swedish,
   Italian, Spanish

Languages spoken at home:
   Finnish, Swedish, French, Lingala and English

Most common languages spoken by children:
   Finnish, Swedish, English, French and Spanish
Background information - Sweden

Most commonly known languages – parents: Swedish, English, German, Spanish, French

Languages spoken at home:
Swedish,

Most common languages spoken by children:
Swedish, English, French
Languages children learn at school

Iceland:
- Icelandic (Grade 1)
- English (Grade 4)
- Danish (Grade 7)

Denmark:
- Danish and English (Grade 1)
- French (Grade 5) – 48%
- German (Grade 5) – 57%
Languages children learn at school

Lithuania:
- Lithuanian
- English
- Russian, French and German in 11th class
- Chinese

Finland:
- Finnish (Grade 1) – 73%
- French (Grade 1) – 100%
- English (Grade 3/4) – 100%
- Spanish (Grade 3/4) – 6%
- Swedish (Grade 3/4) – 11%

Sweden: English, Swedish, French, German
Language learning preferences

**Denmark**: Danish and English (vast majority)
  - German, Spanish, French, Swedish

**Iceland**: Icelandic and English (vast majority)
  - Danish, Spanish

**Lithuania**: Lithuanian and English (vast majority)
  - Russian, German, French

**Finland**: English, French and Swedish (3 most common), Finnish, sign language, Spanish, German, Italian, Chinese, Estonian

**Sweden**: Swedish, English, French (most common), Spanish and German
Parents’ views – pre experience

Parents in Denmark, Iceland, Lithuania, Sweden and Finland overwhelmingly agree that:

• it is important for children to be introduced to different languages at school (I: 100%, DK: 95%, L: 97%, F: 94%, S: 100%)

• it is important to know a variety of languages (I: 100%, DK: 95%, L: 98%, F: 94%, S: 100%)

• knowing other languages helps you to learn new ones (I: 97%, DK: 98%, L: 95%. F: 100%)
Children’s interests (according to parents)

Children are interested in learning about new languages and cultures.

**Children have asked questions about:**

- Languages and cultures in other countries – I: 73%, D: 89%, L: 72%, F 78%, S: 86%
- Language and languages in general – I: 70%, D: 68%, L: 55%, F: 90%, S: 74%
- The language(s) used at home – I: 53%, D: **82%**, L: 60%, F: 73%, S: **31%**
- The language(s) used at school – I: 57%, D: 73%, L: **56%**, F: **95%**, S: 77%
- The origins of the family (country, city) – I: 60%, DK: 84%, L: **90%**, F 73%, S: 43%
- The language(s) used with relatives – I: 34%, DK: 71%, L: 65%, F 45%, S: 37%
Parents’ views – post experience

Children have asked questions about:

languages and cultures in other countries – **I: 83%**, **DK: 51%**, **F:29%**
language and languages in general – **I: 80%**, **DK: 42%**, **F:29%**
the language(s) used at home – **I: 63%**, **DK: 65%**, **F:14%**
the origins of the family (country, region, city) – **I: 13%**, **DK: 67%**, **F:14%**
the language(s) used in the family (with relatives) – **I: 70%**, **DK: 65%**, **F:14%**
Parents’ views – post experience

Parents overwhelmingly agree that doing language awareness activities at school are important because they contribute to children’s:

- knowledge about languages and cultures (I: 100%, DK: 88%, F: 71%)
- positive attitudes towards languages and cultures (I: 100%, DK: 88%, F: 71%)
- abilities to talk about languages, to analyse languages, to compare languages (I: 100%, DK: 86%, F: 71%)
Students’ voices – Finland
What did you learn?

I learnt greetings on different languages

Greeting in different languages, pronunciations and about languages spoken in different countries

I learnt to greet in Arabic and official greetings in different languages
What did you like about the exercise?

I liked about the material and video.

Counting how many language are spoken in our classroom.

Greetings, video, greetings in different languages, pronunciations.
I would like to learn more about the languages that I speak:

• Totally agree and agree 53%
• I don’t know 47%
I would like to learn more the languages I study with Finnish/French

- Totally agree or agree 61%
- I don’t know 31%
- Totally disagree 1
Conclusions

- Parents and teachers have very positive attitudes towards plurilingual language awareness activities in schools.
- Plurilingual teaching activities may contribute to students’ reflection on languages and cultures.
- The recognition of minority languages and the integration of plurilingual teaching activities in across the curriculum are areas that need emphasis.
Questions? Comments?
https://www.ruc.dk/index.php?id=22283

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