

Aspects of a didactic of plurilingualism

Terminological proposals

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The relevance of this document

The two documents entitled “Aspects of a didactic of plurilingualism / Terminological proposals” and “In the quarry of plurilingualism” complement and clarify the core document of the Passepartout project. The following briefly explains:

- why more precision is necessary (a)
- the status and functions of the documents (b)
- how the “Clarification” can make a contribution to harmonisation in language teaching beyond the area of the Passepartout project (c).

(a) Why more precision is necessary

The field of plurilingual didactics is growing rapidly. The large number of concepts and sometimes ambiguous terms, in both practice and research, make it difficult to use the conceptual instruments in a uniform and clear manner. However, comprehensible and clear terminology is necessary for the creation of a suitable curriculum and of appropriate teaching materials for teacher training. This document sets out to give a more precise explanation of certain concepts and to define them in relation to one another, as well as to lay down a range of consistent and authoritative terms. A pragmatic process, involving future adaptations and development and leading to a definitive terminology, is envisaged.

(b) Status and functions of the documents

There are currently two works of reference available to the Passepartout project in the field of plurilingual didactics: firstly, the core document with its short glossary, and secondly, the document entitled “Aspects of a didactic of plurilingualism”, with the supplement entitled “In the quarry of plurilingualism”:

- “Didactic principles for foreign language teaching in primary schools” (core document with short glossary)
This describes in a few pages the fundamental philosophy of the Passepartout project. The glossary explains all of the principal terms of plurilingualism, without going into detail. It gives basic information on the didactic principles of Passepartout. The document has already been approved by the steering committee.
- “Aspects of a didactic of plurilingualism” and “In the quarry of plurilingualism”
In “Aspects”, the principal terms of the plurilingual didactic, which are briefly outlined in the core document, are defined in more detail. In particular, a distinction is made between the terms used here and other terms which are also currently used. The “Clarification of the key concepts of a didactic of plurilingualism” defines the authoritative terms for the Passepartout project.
“In the quarry of plurilingualism” represents an internal tool, taking the form of an open anthology, in which the various terms and their possible synonyms are complemented, discussed and commented upon.

(c) A contribution to harmonisation

The work on “Clarification” took place in dialogue with various groups and specialists, for example with the language coordination group (KOGS) of the Swiss Cantonal

Ministers of Education (EDK), with the working group on languages, EDK of North-west Switzerland (AG Sprachen der NW EDK), with the authors of the Handbook on Foreign Language Teaching at the Pedagogical University Zurich (PHZH), and with language educationalists both in Switzerland and abroad. The first version of “Clarification” met with great interest and was very well received by the various bodies involved in the field.

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Clarification of the key concepts of a didactic of plurilingualism

The following glossary contains our proposals for terms to be used in the context of the Passepartout project, with the aim of uniform language use.

1. Functional plurilingualism and didactic of plurilingualism

Our approach is based on the idea that the prime objective of learning a language is individual, functional plurilingualism. This educational goal applies not only to foreign language teaching, but to language teaching in schools overall. The requirement to include out-of-school language experience is also connected here.

Functional plurilingualism	<p>In the “Passepartout“ project, in accordance with the aims of the Council of Europe and of the EDK, the primary aim is considered to be the teaching of functional plurilingualism, i.e. the capacity to use languages for the purposes of communication and participation in intercultural interaction. The individual is considered to be a social agent who has gradually varying competences in several languages and experience with several cultures.</p> <p>“... the plurilingual approach emphasises the fact that as an individual person’s experience of language in its cultural contexts expands, ... he or she does not keep these languages and cultures in strictly separated mental compartments, but rather builds up a communicative competence to which all knowledge and experience of language contributes and in which languages interrelate and interact.” (Common European Framework of Reference, 2001, p.4).</p>
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Language teaching which aims to encourage plurilingualism requires a new didactic – a didactic of plurilingualism. This is based on an understanding of the combined and coordinated teaching and learning of languages.

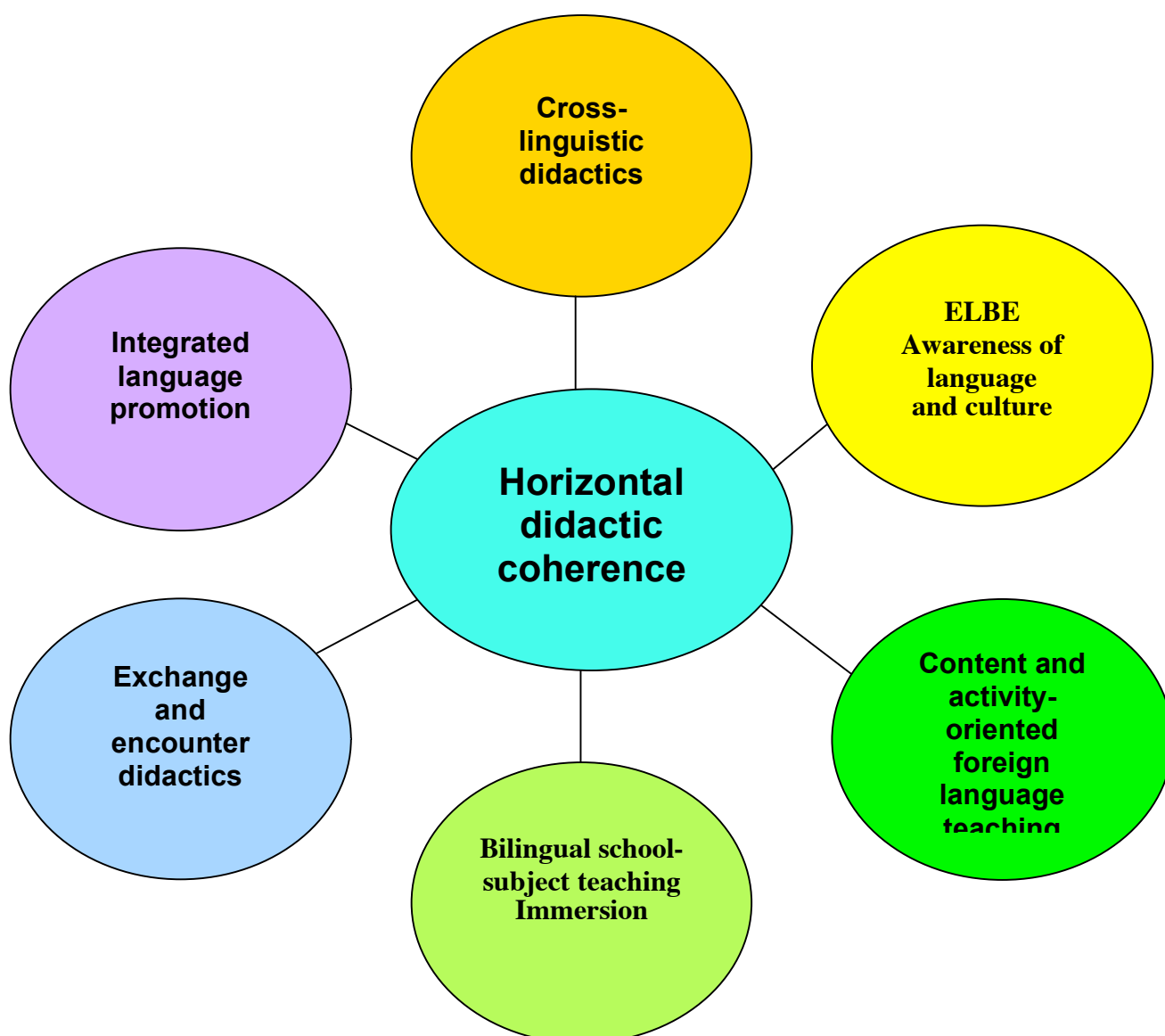
Didactic of plurilingualism	<p>With a view to a plurilingual didactic, the teaching of L1, L2 und L3, which has until now usually taken place separately, should be combined. Thus, not only will synergies be used in language learning, but competences will be combined and these will form a new plurilingual competence.</p>
	<p>According to Zappatore (2007, p. 21f), a new didactic is required, whose aim is the promotion of plurilingualism through a combined and coordinated teaching and learning of languages, both in and out of school. Such a didactic should offer cross-linguistic concepts to optimise the learning of the foreign language. These concepts should promote the motivation to learn several languages and allow the richness of languages and cultures to be experienced.</p>

2. Horizontal didactic coherence

The promotion of plurilingual competence requires an internal link to be created between the various teaching areas in which language promotion and language learning take place at a particular school level.

Horizontal didactic coherence	<p>Horizontal didactic coherence denotes a more systematic use of teaching domains or sequences at the same school level which were previously frequently separated.</p> <p>As well as meaning coherence between languages (cross-linguistic didactics), this is also understood to be the coherence between language and non-language subjects, between in-school and out-of-school learning, between curriculum, teaching materials and evaluation practice and between content-centred and language-reflecting sequences.</p>
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The following means are consequently available to achieve horizontal didactic coherence:



In current discussion, a range of terms are used to describe these means.

This leads to various problems. On the one hand, one and the same term is sometimes used to mean varying concepts, and on the other, there is a great overlap between terms, and it is often difficult to distinguish between them. Furthermore, the whole field is still developing. Both practical experience and scientific results influence this process.

According to our proposal, the seven concepts should be used with the following meanings:

Cross-linguistic didactics for all approaches linking L1, L2, L3 and other languages.

ELBE for the promotion of language awareness and openness to languages and culture.

Content and activity-oriented foreign language teaching for teaching in which new content, which encourages linguistic activity, is developed with the help of the foreign language, and through which the foreign language is learned using new content. In this way, the work on the language resources also plays an important part.

Exchange and encounter didactics for intercultural and communicative learning in direct encounters.

Bilingual school-subject teaching for teaching in which the content of the school subject is conveyed as far as possible in the foreign language.

Immersion for school-subject teaching which takes place exclusively in the foreign language.

Integrated language promotion for the explicit promotion of the teaching language in each subject.

In the table below, the seven concepts and their sub-concepts are developed more fully and are illustrated by examples. A description of the individual concepts and their sub-concepts is given in the Appendix.

Cross-linguistic didactics	In cross-linguistic didactics, the target language (L2) is linked with other languages, such as L1, L3 and further languages. This takes place on the one hand in the knowledge that L1 continually interacts with L2 in the acquisition process; on the other hand, it is economical from the cognitive as well as the didactic viewpoint. The following aspects are central to the didactic considerations: transfer bridges between the languages, awareness of similarities and differences between languages through language comparison, use of language experience and of language learning experience. The aim is more effective foreign language learning.
	Sub-concepts Integrative language didactics Language-linking didactics Tertiary language didactics

	Pluralistic access to language and culture
	Examples EuroComDidact, transversal didactics, intercomprehension
ELBE Awareness of language and culture	<p>“ELBE is a methodological approach that prepares for language learning and accompanies and interlinks language teaching. ELBE activities (language sensitisation, language comparisons, language reflection) can be carried out in all school subjects. ELBE demonstrates an approach to implementing cross-linguistic didactics.” (Didactic principles for foreign language teaching (2008), page 12)</p> <p>The aim is the promotion of language awareness and openness to language and culture.</p>
	Sub-concepts Language Awareness Encounters with languages EOLE: Education et ouverture aux langues
	Examples EOLE (Education et ouverture aux langues / Suisse romande) Kiesel (Europäisches Fremdsprachenzentrum Graz) Sprachenvielfalt als Chance (B. Schader) Sprachenfächer (I. Oomen-Welke)
Content and activity-oriented foreign language teaching	<p>Content and activity-oriented foreign language teaching is given incidentally by the foreign language teacher. New content (world knowledge) is made accessible during teaching with the help of the foreign language and the foreign language is learned by means of the new content. The learning of the content and the language learning are equal in importance. The foreign language learning follows a progression of activity competences. Work on the language resources (vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation,) plays an important part. Particularly the language learning success is assessed and evaluated. In addition, content learning goals can also be examined and evaluated.</p>
	Sub-concepts CLIL-EMILE Activity-oriented foreign language teaching Task-based learning
	Examples Feinkonzept Mille feuilles und Prototyp Rêves, Schulverlag (2007) Explorers

Exchange and encounter didactics	<p>Exchange and encounter didactics are necessary complements to incidental foreign language teaching. They help in the achievement of specific competences (especially strategic, discursive and intercultural competences) in the foreign language. A variety of possible forms (letter/e-mail contact, class or group exchanges, mother-tongue users' visits to class, activities in the target-language areas, intensive-learning weeks, etc.) provide excellent opportunities for both activation and expansion of activity competence in L2. The encounters provide important motivation for further language acquisition and promote practical use of the language portfolio. Encounters are thus catalysts for learning. They are an essential part of the learning process and are not just "fillers". To exploit the maximum learning potential of language encounters, these must be integrated into the annual programme. For example, the effect of an exchange project with a French class is considerably enhanced when there is good preparation in class beforehand and when it is then used as a long-term resource.</p> <p>Example Educomm school-twinning project.</p>
Bilingual school-subject teaching	<p>In bilingual school-subject teaching, the subject-teacher conveys the content of the respective subject partly in the foreign language, thus providing linguistic support for the learner. The teacher plans the switches from teaching language to foreign language and back according to the principle: "As much as possible in the foreign language, as much as necessary in the teaching language".</p> <p>Sub-concepts CLIL-EMILE Integrated foreign language learning</p> <p>Examples Reports on the Valais, Grisons, Alsace, Biel-Bözingen/Boujean, Bättwil, Gelterkinden, Fribourg. (Available in German and French.): Immersion und bilingualer Unterricht auf der Sekundarstufe I in den Kantonen der NW EDK (mit „Seitenblicken nach GR, AR, ins Elsass sowie auf die Primarstufe“). Kaufmann B. www.nwedk.ch/sprachen_</p> <p>Französisch-Deutsch. Zweisprachiges Lernen auf der Sekundarstufe. Stern, O. et al. (1999). Zürich: Verlag Rüegger</p> <p>Die Lehre zur Sprache bringen. Handbuch für die Einführung von zweisprachigem Unterricht an Berufsschulen. Jansen O'Dwyer, E., Nabholz, W. (2004) Bern: h.e.p.verlag</p> <p>Das bilinguale Sachfach Geographie. Eine empirische Studie bezüglich des progressiven Lernzuwachses im bilingual deutsch-französisch unterrichteten Sachfach Geographie auf der Sek I. Golay, D. (2005). Dissertation Universität Eichstätt De. In: Geographiedidaktische Forschung Bd. 39</p> <p>Expériences et projets plurilingues dans les écoles en Suisse. Brohy C. (1998). Published by the Arbeitsgemeinschaft zur Förderung des mehrsprachigen Unterrichts in der Schweiz, Solothurn</p>

Immersion	<p>Immersion denotes school-subject teaching that takes place exclusively in the foreign language. The main focus of the immersive teaching is the development of content, with the language serving as a means of conveying this content. Knowledge of the subject is evaluated. Foreign language competences are not evaluated.</p>
	<p>Examples</p> <p>Reports on the Valais, Grisons, Alsace, Biel-Bözingen/Boujean, Bättwil, Gelterkinden, Fribourg. (Available in German and French.): Immersion und bilingualer Unterricht auf der Sekundarstufe I in den Kantonen der NW EDK (mit „Seitenblicken nach GR, AR, ins Elsass sowie auf die Primarstufe“). Kaufmann B. www.nwedk.ch/sprachen_</p> <p>Immersion - Starthilfe für mehrsprachige Projekte. Einführung in eine Didaktik des Zweitsprachenunterrichts. Le Pape Racine, Ch. (2000) Zürich: Pestalozzianum</p> <p>Voyage en immersion à l'école des langues. Merkelbach, Ch. (2002).</p> <p>Rapport intermédiaire sur l'expérience d'enseignement bilingue à l'école de quartier Bienne-Boujean</p> <p>L'évaluation dans l'enseignement immersif - la quadrature du cercle? Brohy, C., Pannatier, M. (2000). In: Babylonia No. 1 / 2000</p> <p>Bilingualer Unterricht im Elsass: Bilanz nach 10 Jahren aus vergleichender deutsch-französischer Perspektive, Geiger-Jaillet, A. (2003) in Heinz-Helmut Lüger (Hg.): Im Blickpunkt: Das Elsass. Landau: Knecht-Verlag. (Landauer Schriften zur Kommunikations- und Kulturwissenschaft Bd.3)</p>
Integrated language promotion	<p>All teaching is also language teaching. Thus there is a demand for explicit promotion of the teaching language, integrated into every teaching subject.</p>
	<p>Examples</p> <p>Language profiles</p> <p>Nodari, C. (2004) Sprachförderungskonzept für die Volksschule im Kt. Basel-Stadt</p>

3. Vertical coherence

As well as the links between the various teaching areas at a particular school level, the continuity of the language learning, i.e. the vertical coherence, also plays an important part in the promotion of plurilingual competence.

Vertical coherence	A) In a school context, vertical coherence is achieved if the continuity of the language learning is ensured across the interfaces and if the foreign language teaching creates a foundation for life-long learning.
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To achieve vertical coherence, curricular considerations and measures are of central importance. In this context, the instrument of the curricular scenario is particularly interesting.

Curricular scenarios	<p>The instrument of the curricular scenario makes it possible to define various different routes to the same goal. Firstly, a distinction is made between the two scenarios:</p> <p>B) French from the third school-year, English from the fifth school-year</p> <p>C) English from the third school-year, French from the fifth school-year</p> <p>In scenario A), two further options are possible:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum with the accent on bilingual school-subject teaching and immersion • Curriculum with the accent on exchange and encounter projects <p>The minimum standards prescribed by HarmoS must be fulfilled in all scenarios.</p>
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