

THE DIFFERENT FACES OF MULTILINGUALITY

Danuta Gabryś-Barker

danuta.gabrys@gmail.com

University of Silesia (Polónia)

Abstract: One of the important factors in foreign language teachers' development is their ability to reflect on educational processes they are involved in and also on themselves as not only teachers but also language learners and users (Gabryś-Barker 2012). The present paper discusses the importance of understanding the different dimensions of the concepts of multilingualism and multilinguality in the educational context and more precisely, in foreign language teacher training. The overview of studies that were carried out as a way of raising awareness of future teachers of English and other foreign languages is presented here as a part of teacher training programmes run at the University of Silesia within the module of research project. The conclusions and implications drawn from the research exemplify how future teachers' multilingual awareness can contribute not only to their individual multilinguality but foremost to their professional development as teachers of multilingual learners.

Keywords: multilingualism, individual multilinguality, awareness, reflection, perceptions, teacher training

Introduction

One of the major assumptions made by modern approaches to foreign language teacher training is to focus on developing trainees' ability to construct their knowledge not only from study courses but also from their own individual experiences and reflection. Although the ability to reflect is to some extent an inborn trait of an individual, it can also be developed by training. The processes of reflection need to be cultivated through appropriate training activities which will offer trainees in-depth and inspirational ways of looking at different aspects of teaching and learning languages. The idea of research project classes derives from this understanding, that the fundamental need of creating pre-service teachers' awareness of their own multilinguality will have a significant impact on their professional development and in classroom practice will result in the successful multilingual development of their students. The studies reported here only indicate certain areas of interest that may constitute various aspects of multilingualism and especially individual multilinguality. They embrace the concepts of multilingualism and multilinguality and awareness of their complexity. They also comment on pre-service teachers' reflection on their multilingual functioning in the

different dimensions of language processing such as thinking or dreaming, and in language use determining their personal and teacher identities. They also focus on the dominant language constellations of the trainees, the most recent concept introduced in multilingualism studies - DLC (Aronin 2016, 2021b, Lo Bianco & Aronin 2020, Aronin & Vetter 2021), which is described as different functionalities for different languages in possession of an individual. The studies briefly outlined here demonstrate also different, fairly innovative and multi-modal qualitative methods of data collection and analysis, which target individual perceptions and thus they demonstrate very unique understandings of one's multilinguality. The most important objective of the outlined studies is the didactic outcome of reflection on multilinguality being a part of professional training for future teachers of foreign languages.

1. Multilingualism *versus* multilinguality

Before discussing the scope of research projects overviewed here, it is necessary to operationalise, contextualise and characterise briefly the basic concepts that are multilingualism and multilinguality.

1.1 - Defining and contextualising

Very often confused, these two concepts are often wrongly used interchangeably as to their scope. Multilingualism is a general term which refers to the phenomenon of being functional in three and more languages. It is also seen as the focus of studies on this phenomenon. On the other hand, multilinguality is a term which is person-specific and thus describes a person's individual and unique ability to use more than two languages (Aronin 2016).

The past decade or so has marked a surge in studying multilingualism and multilinguality, as due to mobility and generally processes of globalisation, multilingualism is less an exception than a norm. In fact, it all started with the need to develop multilingual instruction, which was first observed in the centers of international cooperation such as Brussels. Together with the revival of interest in heritage and minority languages in some European countries (Spain, Holland, Ireland etc.) and beyond, educational issues of multilingual societies came to the fore with establishing not only bilingual schools but also those implementing various background languages of students (and teachers). The best example would here be new multilingual instruction in the Basque Country, which derives from a strong revival movement represented also by such educationalist as Jasone Cenoz, Durk Gorter or David Lasagabaster, just to mention the three leading scholars. Schooling has provided a strong basis for developing multilingualism in communities but also communities cherishing their language heritage create a positive climate for multilingual education. Also, in the countries that have been so far seen as fairly monolingual and educationally focused on bilingualism (teaching

one foreign language), additional foreign languages have been introduced in their schooling systems as obligatory (e.g. in Poland).

The above-mentioned process of globalisation and human mobility both professional, educational and personal, due to flexibility in travelling across the borders (or no borders at all between Schengen countries), promote and accelerate the development of multilingualism. So in other words, multilingual contexts are created by mixed marriages, immigration (voluntary or forced in case of refugees from wars) or temporary living in another country (work, study, family reunions).

The growing multilingualism and individual multilinguality in until now monolingual contexts is also on the rise. As is the case in Poland, formal instruction in a school context introduces two foreign languages as an obligatory form of instruction. Generally, English as *lingua franca* (ELF) is the state-sponsored language at schools and additionally a language of the learner's own choosing, depending on the options a given school can offer (Gabryś-Barker 2012, 2023).

1.2 - Characterising multilinguality: complexity issues

In relation to the concept of multilinguality, its uniqueness is expressed in its complex characteristics due to:

- * variable sets of languages in possession of an individual
- * linguistic resourcefulness (the multiple linguistic reference systems as reference systems)
- * the level of proficiency in each language
- * functionality in each of the languages and personal preferences
- * cognitive abilities and linguistic effort involved
- * motivations and attitudes to each language determined by different work/life factors of an individual
- * affective functioning in each language and visible differences
- * culture and values as expressed by the different language communities. (De Angelis 2007; Gabryś-Barker 2013, 2019)

Apart from the above-mentioned proficiency level in each language, a diversity of the age of acquisition/learning of each language and the sequence in which these processes occurred for each language were acquired/learnt will contribute significantly to the pattern of individual multilinguality and its complexity. No less significant is the learning history of an individual: the length and intensity of acquiring/learning each language and the context (natural immersion *versus* formal instruction) expressed by the type of instruction (natural *versus* formal in the classroom). Extensive educational experiences lead to some form of transfer of training (preferred/well-known teaching methods) and transfer of learning (learning and communication strategies).

2. Methodology of the studies

Before the actual research data is presented, I would like to offer some additional comments on the background to the studies and contextualise them in more detail in the present language instruction format at the University of Silesia, which exemplifies a university model of language education across Poland and suggests a growing interest in promotion of multilingualism among those whose future will entail these responsibilities as teachers of foreign languages.

2.1 - Multilingual instruction at the University of Silesia (contextualized rationale and subjects)

The rationale of the training project presented here is to demonstrate how to prepare neophilology students at the School of English for their future job as foreign language teachers. Their L2 proficiency is near-native like (C), whereas their L3 ability is at the pre-intermediate level (B). They are pre-service teachers, whose professional responsibility will lie in teaching two foreign languages on the one hand and dealing with the students who know/learn two foreign languages on the other. As a consequence of educational reform, the school reality of language instruction calls for a new approach of teachers to accommodate a different type of language learner with more linguistic resourcefulness.

The initial assumption was made that pre-service teachers, themselves being multilingual, first of all need to become aware of their own multilinguality. In all the projects described here, this state was arrived at through stages of awareness-raising and reflectivity tasks relating to multilingualism as a phenomenon to start with and subsequently, leading to (individual) reflecting upon multilinguality in its different dimensions. This process of multilingual reflections was developed via a variety of language lectures and classes, methodology seminars and research project classes. In the case of each project overviewed here, the subjects were MA students of English as a major, participating obligatorily in the above-mentioned study activities/courses.

To get a full picture of the subjects, however, it is necessary to give some background information on (multilingual) language education these subjects receive in the university system, in particular at the University of Silesia.

For these subjects, the whole multilingual language instruction consists of:

1. Regular English language classes (theoretical and practical) - formal instruction
2. Lectures on multilingualism at the MA stage
3. Courses related to multilingualism research (e.g. research project course)

The overall purpose of this instruction is to promote the multilingual development of students as well as the continuous development of their knowledge and reflectivity on multilingualism and their own multilinguality, which is realised in students' active involvement in the research projects of their lecturers and their own.

The structure of language instruction in the non-philology departments consists of one foreign language (English, German, French, Russian, Italian, etc.) at BA level (final B1), and continued at MA level (final B2). It needs to be added here that a small amount of hours and length of instruction (3 semesters) requires a great deal of individual students' work to reach the target level (otherwise, it is unrealistic). The situation of language instruction at the neo-philology departments is naturally different and it embraces:

- * one major language as the language of instruction,
- * one additional foreign language; in the teaching programme: qualifications to teach two foreign languages at school (University of Silesia: English and German),
- * additional courses in multilingualism and research project course (School of English).

The first stage of pre-service teachers' awareness raising is targeted during the monographic lecture on multilingualism, which gives fair attention to understanding the phenomena of multilingualism and multilinguality and overviews literature in the field, but at the same time, it is supplemented by reflective and mini-project tasks. To sum up, its main purpose is to:

- * develop students' awareness of the phenomenon of multilingualism and multilinguality
- * develop students' awareness of their own multilinguality
- * encourage reflection and provide students with the tools for individual reflection
- * add to these pre-service teachers' professional expertise in teaching two foreign languages simultaneously.

The syllabus of the multilingualism lecture covers the following topics:

- * Multilinguality and multilingualism.
- * Aspects of cultural awareness in multilinguals.
- * Multilingual language processing (conscious versus subconscious contexts)
- * The affective dimension in multilingual learning and instruction.
- * Methods and instruments in researching multilinguality.

The lecture itself is not a pure presentation by the lecturer but a so-called "gapped" one, in which a heuristic approach to teaching is employed. On the basis of data, students learn by discovering things themselves and also refer back to their own experiences. Personal reflection and biography are tools used in the assessment of personal experiences (reflection).

At the post-lecture stage, the students attend research project classes, the purpose of which is to involve them in conducting research projects with the research

cher and in this way, to make use of the knowledge (both in terms of content and research tools) as well as developing their multilingualism awareness. This in turn is believed to have implications for their future teaching practice. Also here, personal reflection and biographical narratives are employed in the individual projects carried out.

2.2 - Research tools

The earlier outlined complexity of multilinguality and thus, the uniqueness of each individual in terms of their multilingual language functioning calls for expanding research methods used in studying multilingualism as a phenomenon so far and make use of tools offered by psychology when studying a human being or used in sociology to observe an individual in his/her natural social environment.

Research methods used in multilingualism studies use both quantitative and qualitative tools of data collection, among them questionnaires, association tasks and different types of narratives (e.g reflective narratives, biographical narratives). As questionnaire and association tests are fairly well-known to scholars in applied linguistics, they do not require additional information. It is the justification for narratives and metaphors that calls for a comment.

Narrative as a research method has its sources in psychology and sociology but has become quite a frequently-used tool in multilingualism studies, as it allows us to comment on individual beliefs and perceptions, and also their uniqueness. As Trahar (2011:48) put it:

Narrative inquiry focuses on the meanings that people ascribe to their experiences (...) narrative inquiry concerns more than can be observed in daily practice. It also investigates the different ways in which people interpret the social world and their place within it.

Autobiographical narratives in particular offer a breadth of understanding of an individual:

One studies stories not because they are true ... but for the same reason that people tell them, in order to learn about the terms on which others make sense of their lives: what they take into account and what they do not; what they consider worth contemplating and what they do not; what they are and are not willing to raise and discuss as problematic and unresolved in life. (Brodkey 1987: 47)

Narratives can also use a specific approach that allows for a deeper interpretation of certain perceptions and beliefs. Metaphors are a way of seeing as they give us a framework for thinking and reflect the way we experience, understand and interact with the world around us:

Metaphor is pervasive in everyday life, not just in language but in thought and action. Our ordinary conceptual system, in terms of which we both think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature. (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980: 3)

The studies overviewed here are based on biographical and reflective narratives as well as explicit metaphors (similes) as vehicles of this narration.

2.3 - Research focus

During the past ten-year period of running MA seminars in TEFL and research projects with the students, various topics related to teacher training were covered. The ones selected for this review focus on different dimensions of multilinguality (Table 1):

Project 1: Factors defining learners' /users' profiles (a pilot study)

Project 2: Multilingual language processing

Project 3: Understanding multilingual (language) identity

Project 4: Dominant language constellations

(For detailed descriptions of the studies, their analysis, conclusions and implications for FL teacher training, see my publications from this period in References)

Project sequence	Topic focus	Methods/tools	Timing: 2013-2023
Project 1	Factors defining learners' /users' profiles (a pilot study)	biographic narratives	2013a
Project 2	Multilingual language processing 1. Thinking 2. Dreaming	narratives	2013b 2015
Project 3	Understanding multilingual (language) identity	narratives metaphors	2018 2019
Project 4	Dominant language constellations	metaphors visualisations	2023
Closing remarks	Project classes feedback	group discussion	2023

Table 1. An overview of studies (Gabryś-Barker, 2013-2023)

3 - Projects in a nutshell

The comments on each of the projects carried out with my students offer only general observations and findings as to their expectations, beliefs and perceptions

of their multilingual profiles. They also carry some significant implications for multilingual teaching practice.

3.1 - Project 1: Factors defining learners'/users' profiles (a pilot study)

The first project was an introduction to more topic-focused reflections on multilinguality in later projects (Gabryś-Barker 2013a). The subjects were asked to write an open-ended narrative on the topic "My profile as a multilingual language learner and user" (400 words). No instruction as to its content was provided to make it possible for the subjects themselves to come up with issues, factors and features of their multilinguality that they would select as significant for them.

On the basis of the data collected, three major observations can be made. Firstly, compared with cognition, there is a dominant role of affectivity in multilingual development which not only relates to motivations to learn each of the languages and how it affects subjects' profile, but it also relates to their attitude to each language and their learning process.

Secondly, the latter is seen as either creating an open approach and willingness to learn as contrasted with inhibition and stress in other cases. Which of the two approaches is present seems to be very much dependent on the human factor - the teachers who are seen as agents of change. Thus, the role of learning history of these multilinguals is the most significant factor in their language development. As one of the students said "My profile as a multilingual user is strongly connected with the profile of mine as a multilingual learner." Thirdly, being able to communicate cross-culturally as well as their professional future constitute an important factor in developing a positive attitude to learning a language. In other words, one's multilinguality is seen as personal development and life prospect.

These first comments on the linguistic profiles of multilinguals provided by the pre-service teachers demonstrate directly how important in their own learning histories were their own teachers as either models to follow or the exact opposite, rejecting approaches that resulted in students' fear, insecurity and failure. The narratives written by the subjects can be seen as their language biographies more than an expected reflections on characteristic features of their individual multilinguality.

3.2 - Project 2: Multilingual language processing

When processing any language, we both monitor our processing in the case of thinking but we also process language subconsciously. The latter case is best exemplified in dreaming. The language processing of multilingual language users is conditioned by their individual traits and the personal factors involved. Also, but to a lesser extent, this processing is determined by linguistic characteristics innate to a given language. The latter are even described as psychologically deter-

mined by an individual in multilingual language processing, in for example their personal perceptions of language distance defined as psychotypology (Gabryś-Barker 2013b).

3.2.1 - Multilingual language processing: Thinking

According to McNeill and Duncan (1998:11) "(...) speakers of different languages create language-specific modes of thinking-for-speaking". It is interesting to see how multilinguals' thinking is influenced by the multiple languages they possess on thinking patterns and language choices they make in their activation.

The subjects participating in this project were instructed to write a narrative text "Language(s) of my thoughts". The data collected was analysed using qualitative content analysis (QCA, Mayring 2000), which presupposes the existence of deductive categories (determined by the focus of the text) and inductive ones (heuristic data originating from the narratives themselves). The deductive categories of analysis that were identified at the start were: a choice of languages activated in thinking processes (L1, L2 or L3), a frequency of activation of different languages, contexts of activation. The inductive categories based on the narratives, and unique to some extent to individuals, were identified as those related to:

- * Linguistic categories: level of language proficiency, perceived language economy, code-switching, communication with NS and speakers of other languages.
- * Non-linguistic categories: exposure and immersion (media, music, film, studies and work), the affective dimension (attitude to a language, confidence in one's ability, emotional states)

Analyses of the narratives allow us to describe some of the aspects of multilingual processing in thinking and factors that determine it:

- * Exposure to a given language is the main determinant of its not only conscious but also subconscious use in one's thinking processes, irrespective of the context (TLC & FLC) – it may lead to multilingual thinking. In the target language context - in contrast to a classroom environment - this exposure makes multilingual thinking an important factor in the integrative process in relation to target culture and its people (in functioning on daily basis). In other words, the process of thinking in a given language becomes not only a language achievement but perhaps also part of identity formation. In a non-target context, multilingual thinking occurs as a facilitative dimension of expressing culture-grounded or related thoughts. Thus, thinking in languages beyond one's mother tongue may express different values; those which are characteristic of a given language.

- * The choice of the topic also facilitates multilingual thinking. One of the examples could be that students of a given language may think in this language when learning for an exam or test, etc. In other words, this thinking process becomes a rehearsal for spoken performance (following a well-known “thinking-for-speaking theory” - Slobin 1987).
- * A (very) positive attitude to a language, a strong liking is perceived by the subjects as facilitating their thinking processes. At the same time, a negative attitude to a language, or dislike for a language as perceived by the subjects, seems to inhibit language choice and its activation in thinking; the language becomes dormant.
- * On a more personal level, positive affectivity resulting in language activation brings about more self-confidence, and thus a positive perception of oneself as language learner and user. At the same time, negative affectivity may lead to withdrawal and minimal multilingual activation during the process of thinking and as a result diminished confidence in speaking in a given language.

The subjects made direct connections between multilingual thinking and speaking following Slobin’s theory as they see multilingual thinking as a form of rehearsal for speaking. What is more, multilingual thinking is considered to be an effective learning strategy due to exposure to a given language through inner speech, a dialogue carried out with oneself when thinking, which goes beyond the learning experience as it is transferred to daily life. At the same time, multilingual thinking is assessed as evidence of high language competence and ability. With references to the possible implications of the above, it is clear that promotion of multilingual thinking in formal instructional settings will be conducive to language development.

3.2.2 - Multilingual language processing: dreaming

Another context in which language processing can be observed is during dreaming. Dream speech has been analysed by various scholars of different disciplines and in different contexts to determine which languages are activated, focusing on incorrect or novel language forms that can be identified in dream speech. Earlier studies have focused on, among others, dream speech and the speech of schizophrenic patients, language proficiency in multilingual dreams, comparing aphasic and normal polyglots in language choices, a relation between language choice in dreams and learning experiences of that language before sleep, pre-sleep thought samples and the REM dream report, the situation and the person one dreams about and proficiency and environment duration (home versus abroad) (for an overview see Gabryś-Barker 2015).

In this study, the subjects were asked to recall their language use in dreams in a narrative text “What language(s) do you dream in?”. No instruction was given to the students so that they had a free hand in their comments and reflections.

The data demonstrated that if language(s) appear(s) in their dreams, their L1 is naturally always the dominant language. It is believed that dreaming in other than L1 languages results from a high language proficiency, however the subjects stated unanimously that their dream language is perceived as higher than it is in reality. As in previous studies carried out in different contexts (Table 3), the factors determining language activation during night dreams demonstrate first of all, the significance of the environment prior to sleeping and pre-sleep experience of a language, for example learning for a class or test next day. It also shows feelings towards a given language and sometimes anticipated events (so-called *precognition dreams*, for example before an examination).

As mentioned earlier in the case of thinking, it is the exposure to a given language that constitutes the main determinant of its subconscious activation in a dream. It is also any topic persons are engaged with in a dream when interacting with others. Similarly to thinking, also affective factors come to the fore in dreaming and thus positive attitudes facilitate and result in language activation, whereas negative ones inhibit it. It is as if affect also operates in subconscious processing of language. The subjects also here see dreaming in other languages as a form of rehearsal commonly identified in anticipation of a stressful event such as an exam in a given language or an interview for a job. This study area in researching multilingualism can only be treated as a preliminary to a discussion of multilingual dream speech patterns.

3.3 - Project 3: Understanding multilingual (language) identity

The concept of identity was defined by Norton as:

(...) how a person understands his or her relationship to the world, how that relationship is structured across time and space, and how the person understands possibilities for the future. (2013: 45).

Identity is a very complex and diversified phenomenon for individuals due to numerous factors constructing it. Factors contributing to identity formation include individual's present/past/future, language(s) in social practice (contexts, relationships), relations of power (marginalized versus highly valued), diverse learning contexts (natural versus formal, starting age), motivation and investment (desire and commitment) and imagined communities (imagined identity, ideal-selves/ought to be selves) (Block 2005).

How is this understanding reflected in multilingual language learners/users? According to Block (2014), foreign language (FL) instruction can have little bearing on the identity shifts of a foreign language learner, contrary to second language acquisition, whereas Pavlenko believes that irrespective of a context

Speaking a different language means being a different person, belonging to a different community, character type, emotional type (...). I feel

like I have a different personality in French (...). When I speak Dutch I feel like a more precise person (...). (2006: 5)

The target of project 4 was to describe identities of multilingual students first in terms of their general perceptions and the influences different languages have on the subjects' behaviour (part 1) (Gabryś-Barker 2018) and expand on it by presenting perceptions of their complex identities by means of metaphors (part 2) (Gabryś-Barker 2019).

3.3.1 - Multilingual profile - part 1

The subjects in the study commented in their reflective narratives "My multilingual language identity" on to what an extent languages they know impact their (language) identity. The data demonstrates that an overwhelming majority of 78% of all the subjects admits that languages form their identity profiles and change them accordingly (profile 1 subjects). They express their views by saying:

Languages change our personalities (s.1) and expose us to confusing behavioural situations (s. 7) and therefore being multilingual means "a complex way of being, different temperaments and behaviour" (s. 4) (...) Language is our personality and its use determines and describes us" (s. 7). Thus, we are "a different person in each language, discovering oneself in each" (s. 12) to form a coherent whole (s. 13).

The observed changes in personality were described as: becoming more open-minded, tolerant and expressing more positive feelings ("like a journey, open doors to new paths, and new thinking, views, developmental, motivator, developing confidence, also confidence given by others, e.g. in authentic communication versus insecurity in formal instructional settings becoming more aware of oneself, becoming more complete (...) different learning/functioning contexts in different language, make us take different positions (positioning oneself). The patterns of verbal behaviour observed were described as:

L1 – automatic, spontaneous, adjusted to a situation but also fast, chaotic, incoherent, resulting from the safety of expression/being understood (as expected).

L2- abundant and upbeat versus inhibited, fully controlled, like a stage performance, but also identifying with and belonging to a larger community - imagined community, community of practice, more security outside class and in communication with NSs than in a controlled classroom situation.

L3 – focus on form not content, fully controlled, stressful due to lack of ability/competence, more natural outside class.

In using non-verbal behaviour in different languages, the subjects believed that their gestures differed for different languages and they were:

L1 – abundant and uncontrollable (a gesture person) versus lack of gestures (non-gesture person) – an idiosyncratic personality trait.

L2- frequent and expressive gestures, mostly controlled, used to gain confidence and as a compensatory strategy, a didactic tool in the context of teaching a FL.

L3- mostly unaware of gestures, avoidance of gestures because of a lack of awareness of nonverbal signs in L3/Ln, gestures used in stressful situations and to express negative emotions. (Gabryś-Barker 2018)

What is more, there is a transfer of gestures characteristic of the target language (e.g. Italian or French), which was seen as facilitating effective communication. The remaining 22% of students (profile 2) believed the opposite:

(language is) enriching us, but not changing our personality (s. 3), thus functioning in L2 is like “being an actress” playing a role on the stage (s. 16), whereas in not very well-developed L3 we may feel like a child not an adult (s. 16).

Additionally, they stated that languages “influence thinking: but not behaviour (s. 24) and emphasised the importance of their mother tongue: “L1 shows who I am, creates me as a person. L2 (L3) is just a tool” (s. 26).

3.3.2 - Metaphoric understanding of multilingual (language) identity - part 2

In the subsequent part of this multilingual identity study, the subjects were to conjure up metaphors (similes) to express their language identity by completing the statement and commenting on it in a narrative “My L1/L2/L3 identity is like ... (narrative/metaphor)”. Such an exercise in awareness raising by means of metaphors expands the understanding of the underlying cognitive and affective aspects of multilingualism, demonstrating integration of various factors and areas of life to understand being a multilingual as becoming both a unique person and a social being (Gabryś-Barker 2019).

On the basis of the metaphors constructed by the students, the following key descriptors for each of the language identities were drawn (Table 3).

Language identity in:	Key descriptor	Metaphor
L1	Something cosy and familiar Something safe: a life-buoy Something indispensable: Something valuable: Something free (freedom):	<i>Home, apartment</i> <i>A life-buoy</i> <i>Breathing, air, heart-beating</i> <i>A precious ring</i> <i>A bird flying freely</i>
L2	Something developmental/ challenging: Something changeable: Something complementary: Something useful/indis- pensable/nice: Something to hide behind:	growing tree branches, a hobby, a physical training, an adven- ture, a garden, being a traveller a chameleon a soul-mate, a piano (white and black keys) a toolbox, an all-directions tick- et, a mobile phone, a cupcake a dress/a make up
L3	Something difficult (happen- ing occasionally): Something challenging: Something to work on: Something to cope with: Something offering security: Something illusory/unsta- ble: Something of a play/ non-authenticity:	a long journey, an adventure, climbing a tree a hedgehog, unusually high tree a diamond in the rough, an obstacle on the way cleaning a shed, daily challen- ges a parachute a ghost, a never ending story, a (melting) snowdrop being an actor, a stage presence

Table 3. L1/L2/L3 metaphoric identity - key descriptors (Gabryś-Barker 2019)

When comparing subjects' perceptions of their identities in the three languages, it can be observed that L1 identity is seen as an inherent quality of each person/persona, affective in nature, whereas L2 identity is perceived as developmental, indispensable and allowing to grow as a person, allowing one to satisfy their needs and it is mostly cognitive in nature. L3 identity is perceived as challenging, scary and illusory, not fully surfaced and still "under construction" What is more, the latter is expressed by descriptors with more unique patterns, more diversity and less predictability, expressing less stability and is more fluctuating.

3.4 - Project 4: Dominant language constellations (DLCs)

The last study introduced to students as a form of development of their awareness raising and reflectivity focused on their dominant language constellations. Aronin (2016, 2021a) distinguishes between the language repertoires (LR) versus the dominant language constellations (DLC) of multilingual language users by stating that LRs refer to all the languages a person knows, whereas DLC only languages chosen by a person to function in a multilingual context. It may mean that in fairly monolingual countries (such as Poland), the development of learners' multicompetence does not necessarily become functional beyond the instructional settings, as much as it would be in a naturally multilingual context.

The purpose of the study was to answer the question whether the concept of DLC applies to these language learners, who do not necessarily become language users immediately beyond their educational activities (like the students in this study). These learners/language users make choices about their preferred/dominant languages in various language-related processes, such as for example multilingual thinking, code-switching/translanguaging or multilingual dreaming (as reported earlier in Gabryś-Barker 2015, 2021).

It seems that DLCs development in the context of formal instruction is a different developmental process than in a natural immersion environment (e.g. in immigration groups, or study /work abroad periods). It is a development in which language competence is the result of a learning achievement, and learning attainment and ultimate success is of prime value, whereas in a multilingual context survival/communicative abilities alone build the DLCs of multilinguals. In other words, success is defined from different perspectives in these two contexts: natural (TL) vs formal/instructed (FL).

3.4.1 - DLC project: visualisations

The study followed the metaphoric interpretation of data presented by means of visualisations (Gabryś-Barker 2023). Visualisations, being symbolic descriptions of subjects' DLCs, show even more forcefully how competence in various languages constitutes these multilinguals' language identities/functionality, thus their DLCs.

The vehicles of the visual metaphors picture subjects' DLCs as related to:

- * Nature (trees, flowers) drawn for example as forest strata, an oak tree, flowers: from a bud to a full blossom.
- * A person (parts of a body) expressing different dimensions of language functioning from affective to cognitive and behavioural: heart, head / mind, hand.
- * A hierarchy (order, bottom-up) as expressed by Maslow's hierarchy of needs: indispensability of each level – language.

- * Numerical figures (charts, graphs) demonstrating different roles and proportions of use of DLCs in different domains: home, work, university, leisure/culture, travelling/holidays.
- * Completeness /interaction within DLCs: a house, car, climbing a ladder (complementarity of each language within a DLC).

The pictorial representations of DLCs presented by the subjects were classified according to the categories visualised in relation to physical qualities graphically demonstrated by size of constituents, strengths; distance between them and also roles and domains of use as well as interaction. They express mostly positive language experiences (as is also shown in the verbal metaphors) in the case of more advanced competence in a language versus more negative ones in the case of a lower competence and, resulting from it, insecurity (ibid.).

On the basis of the above, it can be concluded that the language identity of the subjects clearly expresses DLCs rather than LRs through the active functionality of the languages learnt formally, although to different degrees and in different domains. What is significant in the present context is that the subjects point to varying degrees of confidence in functioning in their DLCs, where classroom use is very much inhibited by the power relations felt in response to the teacher's presence, control and assessment. The unique identities are vividly expressed by these metaphors and reflective comments on multiple language use. Moreover, certain patterns across the study groups emerge to give evidence of the specific roles of each of the languages known and used, and their interaction (irrespective of level of competence in each case).

The study illustrates how DLC can be used as a tool for multilingual self and professional development by activating other modes of expression (visual), encouraging comparison between languages by implementing (self-)observation/reflection activities on a regular basis.

4 - The final comment: Student feedback to the projects

As a form of course assessment, the subjects were asked in a group discussion session to comment on the relevance and usefulness of the projects they participated in for themselves as multilinguals as well as future language teachers. Unanimously, all the students agreed that being involved in a reflection process allowed them to understand that becoming a multilingual was recharging them with extra resources, new concepts offering new and fresh perspectives, and also promoting greater understanding, flexibility and creativity flow from the multiplicity and variety of languages. Additionally, it was not the number of languages that a person gained that determines the feeling of being multilingual, but it is rather knowing the languages, to be able to use them freely and anytime.

In relation to the nature of the tasks performed (narratives, metaphors, visualisations), the subjects believed that they offered:

(...)The possibility of sharing various types of experiences and listening to other people enriched my views connected with multilingualism.

(...) The results were exciting and allowed me to get to know better the people I already knew and also to know myself.

The students assessed their participation in the projects as interesting as it allowed them to find out about themselves and their multilingual identity, and reflect on the factors shaping them.

The projects carried out with the students were not without limitations and challenges for both the researcher and the students themselves. In the case of the latter, the challenges were felt in a limited exposure to multiple languages (input/ environment) in language instruction perceived as just regular courses in the programme of studies with a poor range of languages to learn. Thus, in the majority of cases, the students who were multilinguals initially (before the reflection process was implemented by the projects) did not consider themselves to be multilingual (unassumed multilinguality). The process of reflection and thus awareness raising changed this perception. Although successful language learners, they were not fully aware of how their learning experience and language awareness in their first foreign language (L2) can contribute to the acquisition of another foreign language (L3/Ln) and how these languages actually affect their personalities and behaviour. Self-reflection expressed by narratives, metaphors and visualisations opened up new channels for understanding themselves as language learners, users and importantly, as people.

In other words, the target of this whole series of projects carried out with the students, as mentioned above, on the one hand developed their students' awareness of the phenomenon of multilingualism and multilinguality in general and their awareness of their own multilinguality in particular. On the other hand, it encouraged reflection and provided students with the tools for individual reflection that may also be implemented in their own teaching and in developing awareness of their own students. Thus, participation in these projects added to their professional competence in teaching two foreign languages to learners, who aim to become multilingual themselves. The heuristic approach to developing reflectivity and awareness allowed the students to use their own language learning experiences in discovering their own multiple language learners/users profiles through personal reflection and biography.

REFERENCES

- Aronin, L. 2016. "Multi-competence and Dominant Language Constellation." In V. Cook; L. Wei (Eds.), *The Cambridge Handbook of Linguistic Multicompetence* (pp. 142–63). Cambridge University Press.
- Aronin, L. 2021a. Dominant Language Constellations in Education: Patterns and Visualisations. In Larissa Aronin and Eva Vetter (eds.) *Dominant Language*

- ge Constellations Approach in Education and Language Acquisition* (pp. 19-41). Cham: Springer.
- Aronin, L. 2021b. Dominant Language Constellations: Teaching and learning languages in a multilingual world. In Raza, K., Coombe, C.; Reynolds, D.(eds.) *Policy development in TESOL and multilingualism: Past, present and the way forward* (pp. 287-300). Cham: Springer.
- Aronin, L., Vetter, E. 2021 (eds.) *Dominant Language Constellations Approach in Education and Language Acquisition*. Cham: Springer.
- Block, D. 2005. *Multilingual identities in a global city: London stories*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Block, D. 2014. *Second Language Identities*. London: Bloomsbury.
- Brodkey, L. 1987. Writing critical ethnographic narratives. *Anthropology and Education Quarterly*, vol.18, Issue 2, 67-76.
- De Angelis, G. 2007. *Third or Additional Language Acquisition*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Gabryś-Barker, D. 2012. *Reflectivity of Pre-Service Teachers: A Survey of Theory and Practice*. University of Silesia Press.
- Gabryś-Barker, D. 2013a. The Profile of a multilingual. In *Proceedings of the Tenth Annual Conference of the Polish Association for the Study of English: PASE papers in linguistics, translation and TEFL methodology*. Kraków : Jagiellonian University Press. 185-198.
- Gabryś-Barker, D. 2013b. Face to face with one's thoughts: on thinking multilingually. In M. Pawlak; L. Aronin (eds.) *Essential topics in applied linguistics and multilingualism: studies in honor of David Singleton*, pp. 185-204. Heidelberg : Springer.
- Gabrys-Barker, D. 2015. What the languages of our dreams tell us about our multilinguality. In E. Piechurska-Kuciel; M. Szyszka (ed.) *The eco system of the foreign language learner: Selected issues*, pp. 3-17. Cham: Springer.
- Gabryś-Barker, D. 2018. Defining language identity: On metaphoric perceptions. A paper delivered at the 30th ICFSLA Conference, Szczyrk, May 2018.
- Gabryś-Barker, D. 2019. Studying bilingual and multilingual language identities: natural settings versus formal instruction, *Linguistica Silesiana*, 40. 341-359.
- Gabryś-Barker, D. 2021. Challenges of Multilingual Education in a (largely) monolingual context. A lecture delivered at the AELA. Winter roundtable on multilingual education (2/12/21) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YlpJjXXLytg> Minutes: 1:31:00 – 2:17:39.
- Gabryś-Barker, D. 2023. Language repertoires or individual dominant language constellations: the reality of instructed educational settings in a (mostly) monolingual context. In L. Aronin and S. Melo-Pfeifer (eds.) *Dominant Language Constellations: Language awareness and identity*, pp. 107-129. Springer,
- Lakoff, G., Johnson, M. 1980. *Metaphors we live by*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.

- Lo Bianco, Joseph; Aronin, Larissa. (eds.). 2020. *Dominant language constellations: A new perspective on multilingualism*. Cham: Springer.
- Mayring, P. 2000. Qualitative Content Analysis. *Forum Qualitative Social Research* . 1(2) Art. 20, retrieved in October 10, 2019.
- McNeill, D., Duncan, S. D. 1998. growth points in thinking-for-speaking. <http://cogprints.org/664/1/mcneill&duncan.html> (retrieved 5th January 2013).
- Norton, B. 2013. *Identity and Language learning: Extending the Conversation*. Cleve-
don: Multilingual Matters.
- Pavlenko, A. 2006. *Bilingual Minds; Emotional Experience, Expression and Representa-
tion*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.
- Slobin, D. 1987. Thinking for speaking. In *Proceedings of the Thirteenth Annual Mee-
ting of the Berkeley Linguistics Society*, pp. 435-445.
- Trahar, S. 2011. *Developing cultural capability in international higher education: a nar-
rative inquiry*. London: Taylor & Francis.
- Tripp, D., 1993. *Critical Incidents in Teaching. Developing professional judgement*. Lon-
don: Routledge.
- Woods, P., 1993. *Critical Events in Teaching and Learning*. London & Washington,
D.C.: The Falmer Press.