PROMOTING CROSS-LINGUISTIC AWARENESS
English motion events in a multilingual teaching model

MARTINA IRSARA
LIBERA UNIVERSITÀ DI BOLZANO

Abstract – The younger generations often learn English along with a number of other languages. Research into language learning seems to agree that multiple language acquisition and use is dynamic and concerns the whole mind system, where languages are interwoven (Cook 2016; Jessner 2008). This appears to encourage multilingual didactics, where the learners' diverse languages are considered and transfer is viewed as an essential aspect of language development (Peukert 2015; Treffers-Daller, Sakel 2012). However, despite the existence of multilingual school programmes in the world, there seems to be a dearth of information on how teachers are prepared for multilingual teaching, a challenge that warrants attention in teacher education. Multilingual practices need to be informed by theoretical and practical knowledge and delivered by confident practitioners, who should have sound cross-linguistic awareness. The present article emphasises the importance of promoting cross-linguistic knowledge among primary teachers in education who will operate in multilingual educational contexts. It describes how Ladin student primary teachers in South Tyrol (Italy) are educated on how to develop and implement multilingual teaching strategies in the quadrilingual schools where they will work. At South Tyrolean Ladin schools, English is taught as a fourth language after Ladin, Italian, and German. More specifically, this article presents a qualitative case study on the teaching of English motion verbs within the multilingual didactic framework *Integrated Linguistic Education* at primary schools and in teacher education programmes (Cathomas 2015; Le Pape Racine 2007). The topic of motion events provided a good example of how students in education can be exposed to cross-linguistic research and of how theory and practice can be integrated.

Keywords: English as a fourth language; Ladin schools; multilingual teaching; teacher education; theory-practice integration.

1. Purpose of the study and theoretical foundation

The aim of the present article is to support multilingual didactics, promote cross-linguistic awareness in teacher education, and encourage some cross-linguistic reflection among young learners at primary school, which is endorsed by a body of literature and illustrated with a qualitative case study.

Multilingualism seems to be normal in our contemporary world, where the younger generations often learn English with a number of other languages (Hoffmann 2000).[1] Nowadays, language teachers are supposed to develop learners' multilingual skills as well as their communicative competence in the target language (Carcoll López, González-Davies 2016; Haukås 2016). Teachers are encouraged not to compartmentalise languages but to integrate them, since research appears to concur that there is a certain degree of connectivity and conscious or subconscious interplay between the learner's different

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[1] The present article uses the terms *learning* and *acquisition* interchangeably, unlike Krashen (1982), who contrasts these expressions, arguing that acquisition is a subconscious process, while learning is an intended process that takes place consciously: language acquirers 'pick up' the language without being aware of it, whereas learners 'know about' language, their grammar, and rules (Krashen 1982).

languages in the learning of a third or fourth one (Jessner 2008). A number of researchers view multiple language acquisition and use from a multi-competence perspective, arguing that the overall system of a mind is involved (Cenoz 2011; Cook 1991, 1995, 2016). Transfer has been considered a central and natural element in multiple language development and use, and a better awareness of positive transfer in particular might be beneficial for learners (Peukert 2015; Treffers-Daller, Sakel 2012).

Today it is generally accepted that third (L3) and further (Ln) language acquisition might be enhanced by cross-linguistic awareness, defined by Jessner (2006, p. 116) as the "learners' awareness of the links between their language systems expressed tacitly and explicitly during language production and use". Jessner (2008, p. 270) argues that "from a dynamic DST-perspective, metalinguistic knowledge and awareness of this knowledge play a crucial role in the development of individual multilingualism". In Scott's (2016, p. 452) view, "language education, with its focus on fostering language awareness, is an essential part of a multi-competence perspective in the foreign language classroom". Awareness might be argued to be essential for teachers, who should be skilled language users and analysts (Wright, Bolitho 1993). The present article argues in line with Wright and Bolitho (1993, p. 292) that "the more aware a teacher is of language and how it works, the better. A linguistically-aware teacher will be in a strong and secure position to accomplish various tasks".[2]

Research therefore seems to encourage schools to promote cross-linguistic awareness and adopt multilingual strategies, which "can be used together with monolingual strategies in a balanced and complementary way" (Cummins 2007, p. 221). Multilingualism has been promoted in Europe and forms of bilingualism have been successful in different schools around the world (Baker 2007). However, multilingual didactics still seems to be challenging and monolingual practices appear to prevail even in schools teaching several languages, which are often kept separate (Cummins 2009; Paquet-Gauthier, Beaulieu 2016). Teachers often avoid combining languages because they are afraid of negative transfer effects and of not being able to maximise target-language production among pupils (Corcoll López, González-Davies 2016). Moreover, they are often unaware and unfamiliar with multilingual teaching practices and simply mistake them for translation. Worthy of note is a multilingual teaching practice that has been implemented for a number of years in South-Tyrolean Ladin primary schools and at the Faculty of Education of the Free University of Bozen-Bolzano (Italy), described in the next section.

The geographic area where the present article originates is specified in Section 2 below, where characteristic features of the school system under consideration are also highlighted. Section 3 describes a case study that was designed and executed in a primary school and in a teacher education programme. Section 4 presents an evaluation of the teaching units, highlighting a number of implications. Finally, Section 5 summarises the

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[2] The term *linguistic awareness* has been analysed extensively by researchers operating in a diverse range of contexts and various interpretations have been put forward in recent decades. However, the different conceptual approaches to the term are not the focus of the present article, where the cross-linguistic approach to language awareness in multilingual speakers is central. This article includes various dimensions of *awareness* and *consciousness*, unlike James (1996), who separates the two terms: language users become aware when tacit knowledge is rendered explicit, while learners become conscious when they notice a knowledge or competence gap. A broad definition of linguistic awareness is provided by Carter (2003), who defines it as "the development in learners of an enhanced consciousness of and sensitivity to the forms and functions of language" (p. 64). For core definitions of language awareness in teaching and learning, see Bolitho *et al.* (2003).

major points that emerged and were emphasised in the article and acknowledges limitations, while justifying the value of the study.

2. Geographic area and school system

The northern Italian province of Bozen-Bolzano (South Tyrol) recognises three official languages: German (69.41%), Italian (26.06%), and Ladin (4.53%) (ASTAT 2012). Val Badia and Gherdëina are the two South-Tyrolean Ladin valleys, which are home to approximately 20,300 residents, of which an average of 90% declared themselves speakers of Ladin in the latest population census (ASTAT, 2012).

As illustrated in Table 1, in the South-Tyrolean Ladin primary schools, Ladin is taught as a curricular subject two hours a week throughout primary school. Moreover, it is used as a teaching tool in situations where it is considered pedagogically meaningful, for example in lessons on local flora, fauna, culture, and events (Autonomous Province of Bozen-Bolzano 2009). Italian and German are taught as subjects for five hours a week in the first three school years and for four hours a week in the fourth and fifth years, where two weekly hours of English are also delivered. Moreover, both Italian and German are used as mediums of instruction, in compliance with a law that calls for a balanced tuition in the two languages, which should be spoken by the pupils at an equal proficiency at the end of primary school.[3]

Subject	1st year	2nd year	3rd year	4th year	5th year
Ladin	2	2	2	2	2
Italian	5	5	5	4	4
German	5	5	5	4	4
English	/	/	/	2	2
Plus: Italian and German as mediums of instruction					

Table 1
Weekly hours of Ladin, Italian, German, and English as subjects in South-Tyrolean Ladin primary schools.

Among the expected learning outcomes at the end of primary school is the pupils' ability to make cross-linguistic comparisons. A provincial resolution encourages the regular implementation and documentation of multilingual classroom activities, which is normally done in the curricular subject known in the Ladin valleys as *Educaziun Linguistica Integrada* (ELI) 'Integrated Linguistic Education' (Autonomous Province of Bozen-Bolzano 2009).[4] In the primary schools of Val Badia, this subject is taught one hour per week and adopts a comparative, cross-linguistic approach.

The subject ELI is inspired by the concept of the so-called *Integrierte/ Integrierende Mehrsprachendidaktik,* 'Integrated/Integrating Multilingual Didactics'

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[3] The South-Tyrolean Ladin schools are characterised by the so-called *modello paritetico* 'parity model', which provides that an equal number of classes are taught in Italian and German. Primary teachers can decide to alternate the two teaching languages on a weekly or midweek basis, provided the same number of hours are allocated to Italian and German. The 'parity model' is implemented in a different way at lower secondary school (grades 6-8), where half of the subjects are taught in Italian and half in German (for further details, see Verra 2005).

[4] "Attività di didattica plurilinguistica integrata vengono svolte e documentate regolarmente in tutte le classi" (Autonomous Province of Bozen-Bolzano 2009, p. 59). Multilingual primary school activities often include a range of lexical topics, such as animals, plants, and food.

(IMD).[5] This didactic framework encompasses various linguistic and methodological approaches that focus on finding and exploiting commonalities between languages, their learning, and teaching. The IMD framework aims at a systematic, carefully-ordered, interdisciplinary, and comparative teaching of multiple languages, and at the further development of language learning strategies (Cathomas 2015). Based on the assumption that good language teaching displays all the characteristics of good teaching in general (in addition to subject expertise), IMD also embraces concepts and principles of general didactics (Cathomas, Carigiet 2002). Motivation is a powerful factor in learning in general, as it appears to play a fundamental role in letting in input. According to the *affective filter hypothesis* in Krashen's (1982) Monitor Model, "learners with high motivation and self-confidence and with low anxiety have low filters and so obtain and let in plenty of input" (Ellis 1985, p. 263). All subject teachers should challenge learners to an appropriate extent. Krashen (1982) argues that acquisition only occurs if input is slightly beyond the learner's current level of competence ($i + 1$). Finally, all teachers should be convinced of the value of their programmes and 'practice what they preach'.

Most Ladin primary teachers are educated at the Free University of Bozen-Bolzano, whose Faculty of Education comprises a German, an Italian, and a Ladin section. Students enrolled in the Ladin section compulsorily attend lectures and seminars in German, Italian, Ladin, and English. The degree course in Primary Education consists of five years of study combined with practical experience, totalling 300 credit points to be achieved as follows in the Ladin section: 30% in German modules, 30% in Italian modules, 30% in Ladin modules, and 10% in English modules (Course regulation becoming effective 2017/2018). In the course entitled *Integrierte Sprachdidaktik* 'integrated language didactics', students are provided specifically with theoretical foundations and practical guidelines for multilingual language teaching. Ladin graduates are expected to reach a B2 level in English and a C1 in the three local languages. Ladin primary teachers are therefore fully multilingual and provide a good role model of successful multilingualism. As emphasised by Le Pape Racine (2007), the development of new language teaching approaches necessarily brings about changes in teacher education and training. [6]

3. Case study

3.1. Introduction

As was elucidated in the previous sections, Ladin pupils in Val Badia are regularly given multilingual language lessons within the subject *Integrated Linguistic Education* (ELI), where their L1 (Ladin), L2 (Italian), L3 (German) and, occasionally, L4 (English) are considered. We believed that fifth graders might benefit from a stronger emphasis on English, which is only taught two hours per week, as illustrated before. We therefore designed a sample ELI lesson with a focus on English and implemented it at a primary school. Subsequently, we planned a university workshop with the aim of presenting

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[5] For the history of the terminology, see Cathomas (2003) and Le Pape Racine (2007).

[6] However, questions remain as to how and to what extent languages spoken by immigrants can be considered in schools with great linguistic complexity and individual linguistic repertoires due to migration (Garton, Kubota 2015).

strengths and weaknesses of the didactic unit, which was to be reflected upon and further elaborated by the teachers in education themselves.

The topic chosen was motion verbs, which were considered an ideal object of multilingual teaching, with a good potential to enhance cross-linguistic awareness among pupils and teachers in education. Motion verbs seem to clearly show how lexicalisation patterns can agree or contrast in different languages. Germanic languages (e.g. German and English) seem to be manner-salient languages. Motion verbs normally express the manner of movement in their roots, whereas "path is expressed in a separate Path satellite or prepositional complex" (Talmy 2000, p. 64), e.g. English *He ran into the house*. Most Romance languages (e.g. Italian) seem to be low-manner languages. Their motion verb roots typically express the path or route followed by the moving figure. The manner the figure is moving is described outside of the main verb and is optional, e.g. Italian *Entrò (correndo/di corsa)* 'He entered (running)'. Ladin also seems to be a low-manner-salient language. It is conceptually oral and it therefore exhibits lower type-token ratios in the lexicon and a higher frequency of semantically light or general verbs, e.g. *go* (Irsara, in press).[7] It has been shown that languages rarely belong unambiguously to one specific typological type or the other, but they can be placed somewhere along a continuum between different poles (e.g. lower vs. higher manner saliency) (Slobin 2004).

Partly due to their first and other languages, learners of English often ignore or underuse more English-specific manner verbs, despite their centrality in the English target language (Treffers-Daller, Tidball 2016). In a test carried out for the present case study, none of the thirty assessed students at a B2 level of English were familiar with the elementary verb *hop* or actively used the verb *tiptoe*. Nonetheless, motion verbs rarely seem to receive explicit attention at school (Treffers-Daller, Tidball 2016).

3.2. Primary school: lesson description

The primary school ELI lesson was delivered to eighteen fifth graders (10-11 years of age). It took place in a physical education room and was conducted mainly in English. The aims were to teach children a number of English motion verbs and to enhance their cross-linguistic awareness.

Two introductory bilingual action songs served as icebreakers and were followed by a number of total-physical response (TPR) activities involving *walking, running, jumping, hopping, skipping, crawling, tiptoeing, galloping*, and *climbing*.

After the physically engaging activities, a number of video clips were shown to the pupils, who watched the movements performed by the recorded girl and orally described them in Ladin, Italian, and German. The English expressions were practised by combining home-produced and laminated, targeted picture and expression cards, which were hung around the room by the pupils and later served as memory aids.[8]

A cross-linguistic reflection and L1 discussion about similarities and differences between the motion expressions in the different languages followed.[9] Comparisons between Ladin, Italian, German, and English were drawn on the basis of the quadrilingual

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[7] Also see Berthele (2004a, 2004b, 2006) for Rhaeto-Romance in Switzerland.
[8] The video clips were created by the teacher-researcher-author, with technical assistance, in compliance with the legal requirements.
[9] Comparative and metalinguistic reflections are initially carried out in the children's first and strongest languages. With their growing communicative competence and confidence, learners are gradually invited to participate in discussions in all the school languages.

Table 2 below. In class, the table was formed by differently coloured cards that were assembled and attached to the wall by the pupils. The colours chosen were the ones regularly used for the four languages in the Ladin nursery and primary schools: green for Ladin, yellow for Italian, red for German, and blue for English.[10]

Ladin (green)	Italian (yellow)	German (red)	English (blue)
jí a pe	*camminare*	*wandern*	*walk*
jí sön duicater	*camminare a quattro zampe / gattonare*	*krabbeln /* *auf allen vieren kriechen*	*crawl /* *crawl on all fours*
jí sön la piza di pîsc	*camminare in punta di piedi*	*auf Zehenspitzen gehen*	*tiptoe*
trá salc sön na iama sora	*saltellare su un piede / una gamba*	*auf einem Bein hüpfen / ~ hoppeln*	*hop*
salté	*correre (NO saltare)* [11]	*rennen / laufen*	*run*
se arampiché / *se arpizé*	*arrampicarsi*	*klettern*	*climb*
galopé / jí a galop	*galoppare*	*galoppieren*	*gallop*

Table 2
Flash-card table assembled and reflected upon by the pupils.

Origami paper fortune-tellers or chatterboxes were subsequently used by the learners to practise eight English motion verbs in pairs.[12] The lesson was concluded with the replication of a song performed at the beginning and a brief drilling session of rapid teacher-pupils repetition of motion verbs, which provided a lively roundup.

3.3. Teacher education: lesson description

The primary school programme was followed by a teacher education workshop entitled *English verbs of motion in a multilingual context: theoretical foundations and a practical teaching example*, which was attended by 10 speakers of Ladin.[13]

The workshop started with an introduction to a number of theoretical concepts at the basis of the didactic unit that was to be carried out. The teaching session was initially conducted in a lecture format, with the aim of enriching students with further scientific knowledge, which enabled them to understand the theoretical foundation and rationale of the following activities. After the theoretical part, participatory activities were given priority, following the IMD principle that teacher preparation programmes should be in

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[10] The four colours are used to visualise and order the different languages, along with puppets (each 'speaking' a different language), costumes (each representing a different language), language corners (set up in such a way to encourage children to engage in one specific language), and four-coloured dice (inviting learners to respond in the language whose colour was diced) (Cathomas 2015; Cathomas, Carigiet 2002).

[11] For Ladin *salté* 'run' and Italian *saltare* 'jump', see Section 4.1.

[12] Due to a lack of time, the fortune-tellers were prepared by the teacher-researcher-author. However, it would be pedagogically better to let the students create them. Items of handicraft to be used in language classes could sometimes be created by children during the craft and handwork lessons.

[13] The workshop was also delivered to 18 teachers in education who spoke a South-Tyrolean variety of German as their first language. However, the present article focuses on the Ladin speakers who are planning to work in the Ladin quadrilingual school system.

step with actual practice. The multilingual lesson for primary school was presented to the teachers in education and actually performed with them step by step, partly adopting a loop-input approach, where "the process is also part of the content" (Woodward 1991, p. 13). The activities were carried out with a partly modified language input and discussed in different languages.[14]

An English storytelling session based on the topic of motion was added in the workshop. A short story inspired by *Yes, we can* by McBratney and Fuge (2006) was told and presented with visual aids by the teacher educator, author of the present article. The attendants subsequently suggested multilingual follow-up tasks that could potentially accompany the story in a primary classroom. It was pointed out that various post-reading activities can be carried out in different languages, but that a word-for-word translation of the story should be avoided. In his coaching and monitoring of IMD teaching units, Cathomas (2015) found that a repetition of topics in different languages was problematic, probably because this is normally felt to be dull by learners, whose curiosity, interest, and attention consequently decline.[15]

4. Evaluation and implications

4.1. Primary school

The topic of motion verbs turned out to be an ideal one for young learners, most of whom prefer the kinaesthetic learning style, carrying out physical activities while engaging with language. The pupils were pleased to be allowed to spend some additional time in the sports room and to be able to enjoy some more English.

The children acquired new verbs and were additionally provided with an opportunity for cross-linguistic comparisons. Drawing on principles of discovery learning, pupils were involved in exploration and discovery, partly supported by the teacher-researcher's scaffolded questions. The pupils saw lexical similarities between the different languages and realised once more the facilitative effect their previously learnt languages can have on their L4 learning. While they were initially not able to produce the English verb *gallop*, they were positively surprised at how easily they could understand this verb, due to the high similarity between their languages.[16] When they encountered the English

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[14] While the teacher educator and author spoke in English, students were left free to respond in other languages as well. Students' contributions in English occasionally received indirect feedback in terms of recasts and reformulations, but linguistic accuracy was not the main aim of the workshop. An educational objective of IMD is functional multilingualism, which is understood as the ability to use various languages in various contexts in an appropriate way, as opposed to an idealised expectation of perfect multilingualism in all situations, which can lead to frustration in learners and teachers alike (Cathomas 2015). Successful speakers of multiple languages display distinctive features that are characteristic of multilingualism. As emphasised by Birdsong (2005, p. 320), "non-nativelike performance is not necessarily indicative of compromised language learning abilities".

[15] Students came up with a series of possible follow-up activities and related contents that could potentially be covered in a following teaching unit. However, participants had to be reminded of the importance of engaging fully with a story before moving on to other topics. Post-reading activities should require learners to refer back to the story and help them check for understanding, deepen comprehension, consolidate vocabulary and structures, reflect, and think deeper.

[16] Unlike Ladin *galopé*, Italian *galoppare*, and German *galoppieren*, English *gallop* is stressed on the first syllable. The raising of phonological awareness is also aimed at in multilingual teaching, so that pronunciation was also practised in class.

verb *crawl*, they noticed the same initial sound in the German equivalents *krabbeln* and *kriechen* (see Table 2 above). A pupil was reminded of the very similar German verb *kraulen* to describe a swimmer doing fast swimming strokes or 'doing the crawl'.

Differences between the languages were also noted, such as the more frequent use of the general verb *go* in Ladin than in German and in English, with the consequence that an overuse of the verb *gehen* 'go' in German, for instance, can result in linguistic inaccuracies. The Ladin verb *jì* 'go' is used generically for walking and using means of transport, e.g. *jì cun l'auto* 'lit. to go with the car', whereas German uses *fahren* 'drive' in the latter context. Furthermore, the pupils recognised the shortness and semantic precision of the English verbs observed and the benefit that might be gained by learning them in terms of cognitive economy or minimum effort. One girl pointed out that once she has learnt the verb *hop* she only needs this one word instead of the four ones *jump on one foot* to express the same meaning.

By observing and comparing the four languages, not only the pupils' language knowledge but also their learning skills were promoted. The learners recognised that their other languages, e.g. German, can sometimes support them in the learning of their fourth one, English, while initially they seemed to be better aware of possible negative transfer effects and were of the idea that previously learnt languages should possibly be shut off in further language learning and production. The learners were familiar with a number of words that look similar to a word in another language but means something different, such as the Ladin and Italian false friends *salté* 'run' and *saltare* 'jump' (see Table 2 above). It might be argued that guessing the meaning of a word by making a connection to previously learnt languages is a skill that learners need to be able to use when appropriate (Williams, Burden 1997). As emphasised by Rothman (2015) in relation to L3 learning:

> Facilitation occurs when whatever mental representation is transferred concords with the target L3 mental representation. Non-facilitation occurs, alternatively, when a transferred mental representation results in an initial hypothesis for the L3 that is in disaccord with the actual target presentation. (Rothman 2015, p. 180)

4.2. Teacher education

Cross-linguistic knowledge was also enhanced among teachers in education, who noticed cross-linguistic differences in the salience of manner. They realised the importance of learning motion verbs of manner in order to become more target like in their movement descriptions in English. In a previous investigation into the use of motion verbs in Ladin L1, Italian L2, German L3, and English L4, Irsara (in press) found that the German L3 texts were lexically the richest. Teachers in education also noticed that manner salience is not only a peculiarity of English but also of German, where they already had an extensive vocabulary for motion.

A number of English verbs caused surprise among the students, for instance *skip* and *climb*, among others. Although, these two verbal forms were well-known to students, incomplete form-meaning connections had been created so far. Most participants understood the verb *skip* as not doing something, such as leaving something out, e.g. skipping class or breakfast. The collocation *skip rope* was also not new to the teachers in education. However, among the multiple uses and meanings of *skip*, the learners ignored the use of the verb to describe a light and quick forward movement often made by children, stepping from one foot to the other, jumping a little with each step. It came as a surprise to the participants to realise how well they knew this specific movement, how imprecisely they described it in their first and other languages, and how specifically the

meaning could be expressed with one word in English. The verb *climb* is a highly frequent and basic word that is normally acquired by young learners at Movers level. However, most teachers in education were surprised at finding that *climb* can be used not only to indicate the ascending of mountains, hills, trees, and walls, but also in other contexts in order to describe a difficult or effortful movement through something, (e.g. a window), into something, (e.g. a bed), or a descending movement (e.g. to climb down a ladder). Teachers in education realised that *climb* corresponds not only to German *klettern*, but also to *steigen*, whereas Ladin *se arampiché* and Italian *arrampicarsi* only represent part of the referential meanings conveyed by English *climb*.

The workshop attendants were familiar with the didactic framework IMD, but they welcomed the further practical teaching example. They appreciated the presentation of primary multilingual classroom activities and the opportunity to discuss them. For teachers in education, the connection between theory, research, and practice is essential. Surveys reveal that teachers and parents are satisfied and appreciate the multilingual teaching programmes regularly implemented at Ladin schools (Evaluation Committee of the Ladin Schools, unpublished report). However, it is also shown that multilingual teaching is demanding and requires extensive preparation time. Teachers' joys and difficulties with multilingual teaching should therefore be tackled in teacher education.

The modus operandi that was used in the case study briefly presented in the present article proved its worth again. In the teacher education workshop, theory was followed by awareness-raising activities and practical young learner classroom examples, which were reflected upon and further elaborated by the teachers in education, who might decide to test them in their practical training.[17]

5. Conclusions and outlook

The present article has emphasised the importance of developing cross-linguistic awareness among teachers in education and of providing them with practical examples of how they could implement multilingual teaching strategies with young learners, who could also benefit from some cross-linguistic awareness.

The encouragement of linguistic reflection in this paper did not stem from dissatisfaction with the communicative teaching approach, which was partly at the base of the Language Awareness movement.[18] Teachers in education were in fact involved in "talking analytically about language, often to each other" (Svalberg 2007, p. 291). It was not argued against monolingual practices, which might be claimed to be important for learners in order to 'tune into' the target language and increase active target language production. Each language should be given its space in use, learning, and education, which at times should move from language separation phases to language unification, where differences and, in particular, commonalities should be found and exploited by learners and teachers.

[17] As well as practical examples in teacher education, multilingual materials would provide support and scaffolding to teachers taking the multilingual turn. Multilingual materials that include English are still sparse in the Ladin valleys, but a contribution has been made by *Junde*, a comparative grammar package for Ladin primary schools (Videsott *et al.* 2017). A stronger emphasis on English is planned in the comparative grammar for the lower and higher secondary schools (R. Videsott, personal communication, February 9, 2017).

[18] For background information about the origins of the Language Awareness movement, see Simard and Wong (2004).

This article focused on a restricted minority-language area, but it might open up a number of avenues for future research, which might experiment a variety of multilingual primary teaching strategies, on different topics, in diverse schools where multiple languages are used. A number of scholars rightly emphasise that "caution should be used in relation to the uncritical acceptance of plurilingualism in TESOL" (Garton, Kubota 2015, p. 420). Teaching practices might be context sensitive and make more sense in some rather than in other contexts, so that careful choices need to be made and multilingual ELI lessons thoughtfully planned by competent teachers, who should not engage in arbitrary language switches or offer hasty translations. However, the didactic framework IMD has shown success stories in Ladin schools of South-Tyrol and might offer a number of valuable suggestions and inspiring ideas (Cathomas 2015).

The qualitative study presented in this article was limited in size, and mainly self-evaluated. Nonetheless, it provided a concrete example of how the IMD framework can be tried out in a school and teacher education context. Among the factors that contributed to the success of his large-scale project *Schritte in die Mehrsprachigkeit* 'steps towards multilingualism', Cathomas (2015) mentioned that (i) small steps were taken, and (ii) concrete examples were offered along with theoretical analysis. The study discussed in this article has therefore made a contribution to the multilingual teaching debate and to the IMD framework, which is constantly being developed and refined.

With the contemporary changing society and the spread of English as an international language, the topic of multilingualism at school is up-to-date. Sensitising pre-service teachers to cross-linguistic comparisons and multiple language acquisition seems to be paramount in our contemporary world, where the younger generations often learn English with several other languages and where people's entire linguistic repertoire should be valued.

Bionote: Martina Irsara is an Assistant Professor (Professore Aggregato) in English language at the Faculty of Education of the Free University of Bozen-Bolzano (Italy). She holds an MA in Teaching English to Young Learners awarded by the University of York and a PhD in Linguistics from the University of Bristol (UK). Her research interests lie in the areas of English language teaching and acquisition in multilingual contexts as well as in the fields of English and Romance linguistics. Publications authored by Martina Irsara include studies on deixis and motion event descriptions by learners of English as a third and further language.

Author's address: martina.irsara@unibz.it

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