

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

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

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

DELA-NOBA's general objectives

- to examine how plurilingual language awareness education can be integrated and further developed in the Nordic/Baltic context
- to examine the impact of plurilingual language awareness education on learners' and parents' attitudes towards language diversity and language learning
- to contribute to the societal discussions on language diversity and language learning in the Nordic/Baltic countries.

Seven pilot schools

- List of plurilingual LA teaching activities (Primary 1, Primary 2, Secondary 1)
- Three teaching activities
- Language autobiography

Surveys (based on EVLANG and JaLing)

Teachers

- Preexperience survey
- Postexperience survey

Parents

- **Preexperience survey**
- **Postexperience survey**

Teaching activities' evaluations

- **Students**
- Teachers

The Parents

Denmark (Children in two Grade 2 and one Grade 6 classes, ages 8 yrs. and 12 yrs. – The International Profile School in Copenhagen)

Preexperience: n=44

Postexperience: n=41

Iceland (Children in three Grade 5 classes, ages 10-11 yrs.)

Preexperience: n=33

Postexperience: n=30

Lithuania (Children in 2 Grade 2 classes, students in 11th class, gymnasium)

Preexperience: n=62

Sweden: n=30

The Parents

Finland (Children in one Grade 6 class, age 12 yrs.)

Preexperience: n=18

Postexperience: n=7

Sweden (Children in two groups, 13-14 yrs. and 14-15 yrs.)

Preexperience: n=35

Background information - Iceland

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

Languages most commonly spoken in the home:
Icelandic

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



Background information - Denmark

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

Languages most commonly spoken in the home:
Danish

Most common languages spoken by children:
Danish, **English (37%)**, German (8,7%) – some
children also speak Estonian, Faroese, French,
Latvian, Sami, Turkish

Background information - Lithuania

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

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

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

Background information - Finland

Most commonly known languages – parents:

Finnish, English, German, Swedish,
Italian, Spanish

Languages spoken at home:

Finnish, Swedish, French, Lingala and English

Most common languages spoken by children:

Finnish, Swedish, English, French and Spanish

Background information - Sweden

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

Languages spoken at home:
Swedish,

Most common languages spoken by children:
Swedish, English, French

Languages children learn at school

Iceland:

Icelandic (Grade 1)

English (Grade 4)

Danish (Grade 7)

Denmark:

Danish and English (Grade 1)

French (Grade 5) – 48%

German (Grade 5) – 57%



Languages children learn at school

Lithuania:

Lithuanian

English

Russian, French and German in 11th class

Chinese

Finland:

Finnish (Grade 1) – 73%

French (Grade 1) – 100%

English (Grade 3/4) – 100%

Spanish (Grade 3/4) – 6%

Swedish (Grade 3/4) – 11%

Sweden: English, Swedish, French, German

Language learning preferences

Denmark: Danish and English (vast majority)

German, Spanish, French, Swedish

Iceland: Icelandic and English (vast majority)

Danish, Spanish

Lithuania: Lithuanian and English (vast majority)

Russian, German, French

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

Sweden: Swedish, English, French (most common), Spanish and German

Parents' views – pre experience

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

- it is important for children to be introduced to different languages at school (I: 100%, DK: 95%, L: 97%, F: 94%, S:100%)
- it is important to know a variety of languages (I: 100%, DK: 95%, L: 98%, F: 94%, S: 100%)
- knowing other languages helps you to learn new ones (I: 97%, DK: 98%, L: 95%. F: 100%)



Children's interests (according to parents)

Children are interested in learning about new languages and cultures.

Children have asked questions about:

languages and cultures in other countries – I: 73%, D: 89%, L: 72%, F: 78%, S: 86%

language and languages in general – I: 70%, D: 68%, L: 55% , F: 90%, S: 74%

the language(s) used at home – I: 53%, **D: 82%**, L: 60% , F: 73%, **S: 31%**

the language(s) used at school – I: 57%, D: 73%, **L: 56%**, **F: 95%**, S:77%

the origins of the family (country, city) – I: 60%, DK: 84%, **L: 90%**, F: 73%, **S:43%**

the language(s) used with relatives – I: 34%, DK: 71%, L: 65%, F: 45%, S:37%



Parents' views – post experience

Children have asked questions about:

languages and cultures in other countries – **I: 83%**, DK: 51%, F:29%

language and languages in general – **I: 80%**, DK: 42%, F:29%

the language(s) used at home – **I: 63%**, DK: 65%, F:14%

the origins of the family (country, region, city) – **I: 13%, DK: 67%, F:14%**

the language(s) used in the family (with relatives) – **I: 70%**, DK: 65%, F:14%



Parents' views – post experience

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

- knowledge about languages and cultures (I: 100%, DK: 88%. F:71%)
- positive attitudes towards languages and cultures (I: 100%, DK: 88%: F:71%)
- abilities to talk about languages, to analyse languages, to compare languages (I: 100%, DK: 86%, F:71%)



Students' voices – Finland

What did you learn?

I learnt greetings
on different
languages

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

I learnt to greet in
Arabic and official
greetings in
different
languages



Yhteinen vieraspuheprojekti ja kansainvälinen oppimateriaali

Hyvää päivää!

Englanti

Ranska

Arabian kieli

Hebreu



Portugali

Itäli

Kanada

Ukraina



What did you like about the exercise?



I liked
about the
material
and video

Counting how
many language
are spoken in our
classroom

Greetings, video,
greetings in different
languages,
pronunciations

I would like to learn more about the languages that I speak:

- Totally agree and agree 53%
- I don't know 47%

I would like to learn more the languages I study with Finnish/French

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

Conclusions

- Parents and teachers have very positive attitudes towards plurilingual language awareness activities in schools
- Plurilingual teaching activities may contribute to students' reflection on languages and cultures
- The recognition of minority languages and the integration of plurilingual teaching activities in across the curriculum are areas that need emphasis

Questions? Comments?

<https://www.ruc.dk/index.php?id=22283>

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