

Linguistically responsive teaching

Enhancing multilingual students' epistemological access in various contexts

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Soili Norro



UNIVERSITY
OF TURKU

Outline of the lecture

- Background: multilingual students' challenges globally
 - Language of instruction, learning and participation
 - Multilingual students' identity construction
- Teachers' beliefs and language ideologies
- Linguistically responsive teaching
- From theory to practice
 - Principles of linguistically responsive teaching
 - Translanguaging pedagogy

UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Sustainable development goal 4:

Insure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

Acquiring basic literacy and numeracy skills is a prerequisite for quality education and lifelong learning.

Multilingual students' challenges

Multilingual students' challenges

What consequences may learning in a language that the pupil is not proficient in have?

You can write your ideas in the chat.

Language and learning

UNESCO *Global Education Monitoring (GEM) Report*:

Quality education should be delivered in the language spoken at home. However, this minimum standard is not met for hundreds of millions, limiting their ability to develop foundations for learning (UNESCO 2016, 1).

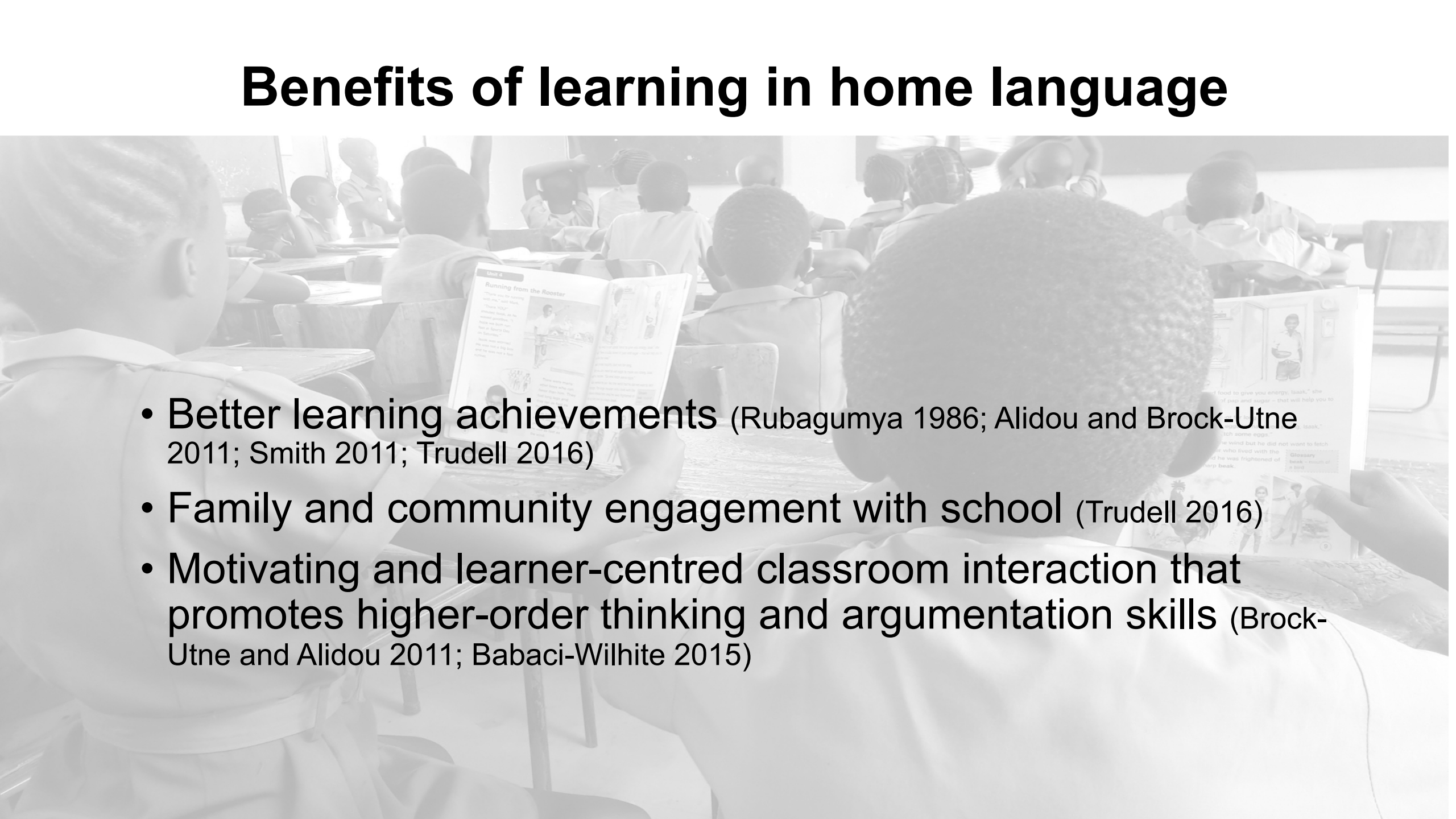
The world Inequality Database on Education (WIDE) statistics show inequalities in learning achievement between those who speak the school language at home and those who do not. This is seen especially in low-income countries, but the disparity grows in high-income countries from primary to secondary.

[WIDE statistics](#)

Learning crisis

- A term coined in UNESCO's annual report from 2014
- In many developing countries, half of adults having completed 5 years of basic education cannot read a whole sentence (UNESCO 2014).
- In East Africa, only 20% of pupils could read and do basic maths in 3rd grade (Mugo & Eyakuze 2014).
- 24% of the pupils had not attained basic literacy and numeracy by the final year of primary school (Mugo & Eyakuze 2014).
- If the current trend continues, about 50–70% of school aged children will not learn basic primary school skills. This will jeopardise global economic growth and have serious social and political consequences (GEM report 2016).

Benefits of learning in home language

- 
- **Better learning achievements** (Rubagumya 1986; Alidou and Brock-Utne 2011; Smith 2011; Trudell 2016)
 - **Family and community engagement with school** (Trudell 2016)
 - **Motivating and learner-centred classroom interaction that promotes higher-order thinking and argumentation skills** (Brock-Utne and Alidou 2011; Babaci-Wilhite 2015)

Multilingual learners' identity construction

- A multilingual identity has been defined as

“an ‘umbrella’ identity, where one explicitly identifies as multilingual precisely because of an awareness of the linguistic repertoire one has”

(Fisher et al. 2020, 449).

- Education that sets the monolingual speaker as a norm and denigrates learners' home languages or multilingual, fluid language practices does not support their identity construction.
- Supporting multilingual learners requires teachers' sociolinguistic awareness, understanding the connections between language, culture and identity, and valuing linguistic and cultural diversity. Teachers can advocate for multilingual pedagogies on different levels regarding material production, teaching practices and language policy (Lucas et al. 2008).

Monolingual norm in education

- The Companion Volume of the CEFR for languages (Council of Europe 2020) broadens the scope of language education and promotes plurilingual competence and intercultural education. <https://www.coe.int/en/web/common-european-framework-reference-languages>
- E.g. the Finnish National Curriculum for Basic Education (Finnish National Agency for Education, 2014) stipulates introducing *multilingual practices* such as observing and comparing the language practices and using one's own language in learning tasks
- Likewise, the Finnish National Curriculum for General Upper Secondary Education (Finnish National Agency for Education 2019) includes *constructing multilingual competence* and communication skills.
- Still, the monolingual norm prevails in education (McKinney & Tyler 2019; Suuriniemi 2023). Formal textual practices are mainly monolingual in school, and students' home languages are used in informal situations only (Tarnanen et al. 2017).

Why does the monolingual norm persist in education?

- Curricula
- Assessment
- Teachers' beliefs and practices
- Societal language ideologies

Teachers' beliefs and language ideologies

Teachers beliefs and ideologies

In a Finnish survey (N=820; Alisaari et al. 2019) investigating teachers' beliefs related to teaching multilingual students were somewhat contradictory. Positive beliefs about multilingualism included:

- Language is an important part of one's identity (81,8%)
- Language, culture and identity are intertwined (82,6%)
- Maintaining the home language does not create difficulty in learning Finnish (85,4%)
- Home language development is an asset to multilingual learners' Finnish language development (82,5%)
- Examining school policies with regard to their possible impacts on multilingual learners (81,7%)
- Using materials that reflect multilingual learners' linguistic and cultural backgrounds is beneficial (60%)

Teachers' beliefs and ideologies

However:

- Only half considered prohibiting the use of students' own languages in classroom unethical (53,3%)
- Almost half thought multilingual learners should not be allowed to write in their own language in the school context (41,7%)
- Over a third thought home languages should always be denied during lessons (39,2%)
- Over half (53,6%) reported they would feel uncomfortable surrounded by people speaking a language they do not understand whereas third (30,5%) reported the opposite.

Justifications for allowing / not allowing the use of home languages in classroom

Table 5

Arguments to justify the monolingual or multilingual ideologies.

| Main THEMES | Allowing the students to use their home languages in the classrooms | N = 480 % | Not allowing the students to use their home languages in the classrooms | N = 204 % |
|-------------|---|-----------|---|-----------|
| SUB THEMES | Curriculum requires it | 1.5 | Main aim is to learn Finnish language | 52.9 |
| | It supports learning | 73.8 | Home languages are used for bullying | 39.2 |
| | Human rights require it | 6.2 | Learning occurs only in Finnish | 2.5 |
| | Usefulness of multilingualism | 6.8 | Teacher has to understand the language | 5.4 |
| | Valuing home languages | 3.2 | | |
| | Everyone's freedom to expression | 8.5 | | |

(Alisaari et al. 2019, 54)

Namibian teachers' beliefs

- Questionnaire exploring teachers' beliefs about the language education policy and its implementation, and their teaching practices.
- Two phases: 2020 data collection (N=37) and 2021 (N=140).
- Similar results:

| Statement (Questionnaire) | I agree | | I disagree | | I don't know | |
|--|-----------|-----------|------------|-----------|--------------|-----------|
| | Article 2 | Article 5 | Article 2 | Article 5 | Article 2 | Article 5 |
| a) Learners learn best when they are taught in their home language. | 81 % | 74 % | 14 % | 18 % | 6 % | 7 % |
| b) English should be the medium of instruction from Grade 1. | 46 % | 61 % | 40 % | 31 % | 14 % | 7 % |
| c) Instruction in the home language should be extended beyond Grade 3. | 47 % | 46 % | 36 % | 40 % | 17 % | 14 % |
| d) Both English and the home languages should be used as medium of instruction throughout the Primary cycle (Grades 1-7) | 57 % | 63 % | 32 % | 26 % | 11 % | 11 % |
| e) The learning outcomes do not depend on the language of instruction. Other factors are more decisive. | 35 % | 45 % | 29 % | 30 % | 38 % | 25 % |
| f) My learners have difficulties in understanding when they are taught in English. | 30 % | 31 % | 55 % | 56 % | 14 % | 14 % |
| g) The existence of many languages in Namibia is a problem | 43 % | 40 % | 49 % | 44 % | 9 % | 16 % |
| h) Every child has the right to be educated in his / her own language. | 67 % | 68 % | 19 % | 17 % | 14 % | 15 % |
| i) The many different languages of Namibia are a resource in education. | 40 % | 56 % | 26 % | 21 % | 34 % | 23 % |

(Norro 2023, 43)

Remarks on teachers' beliefs

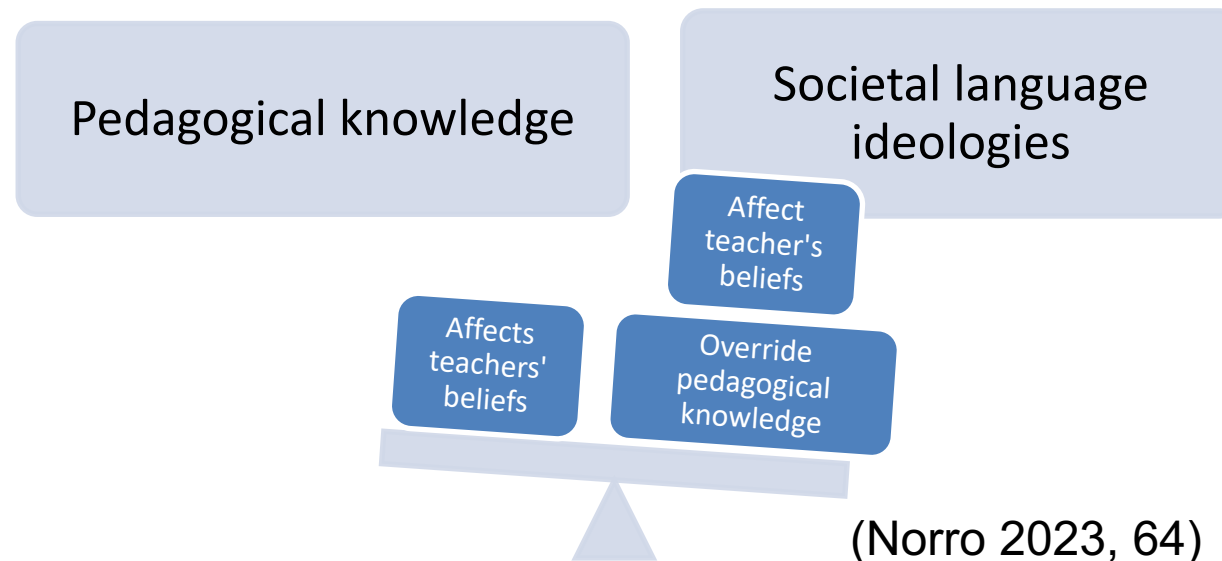
- Most believed that pupils learn best in their home language (81/74%).
- Over half believed that learning in one's own language is a linguistic right (67/68%).
- However, less than half (46/47%) thought mother tongue instruction should be extended beyond grade 3.
- Over half believed a multilingual option would be beneficial (57/63%).
- Most preferred English as the language of instruction (70/69%), whereas a third preferred home language (30/25%).
- Preference for English was most prominent amongst mathematics and science teachers, and it increased the more linguistically diverse the pupils were. Those qualified teaching in home language (41%) preferred it more often than the non-qualified (2%).

Reasons for preferring English

- Difficulties in using languages other than English (LOTE) in multilingual groups
- More teaching material available in English than in other languages
- Teachers' own experiences as students (language of instruction having been English)
- The most common reason was that English is the country's official language and the language of instruction stipulated by the language education policy.
 - alignment to the monolingual and hierarchical language policy prevailing in the society

Language ideologies affecting teachers' beliefs

Teachers possess pedagogical knowledge about the benefits of learning in pupils' own language. However, monolingual ideologies seem to override their beliefs based on the pedagogical knowledge.

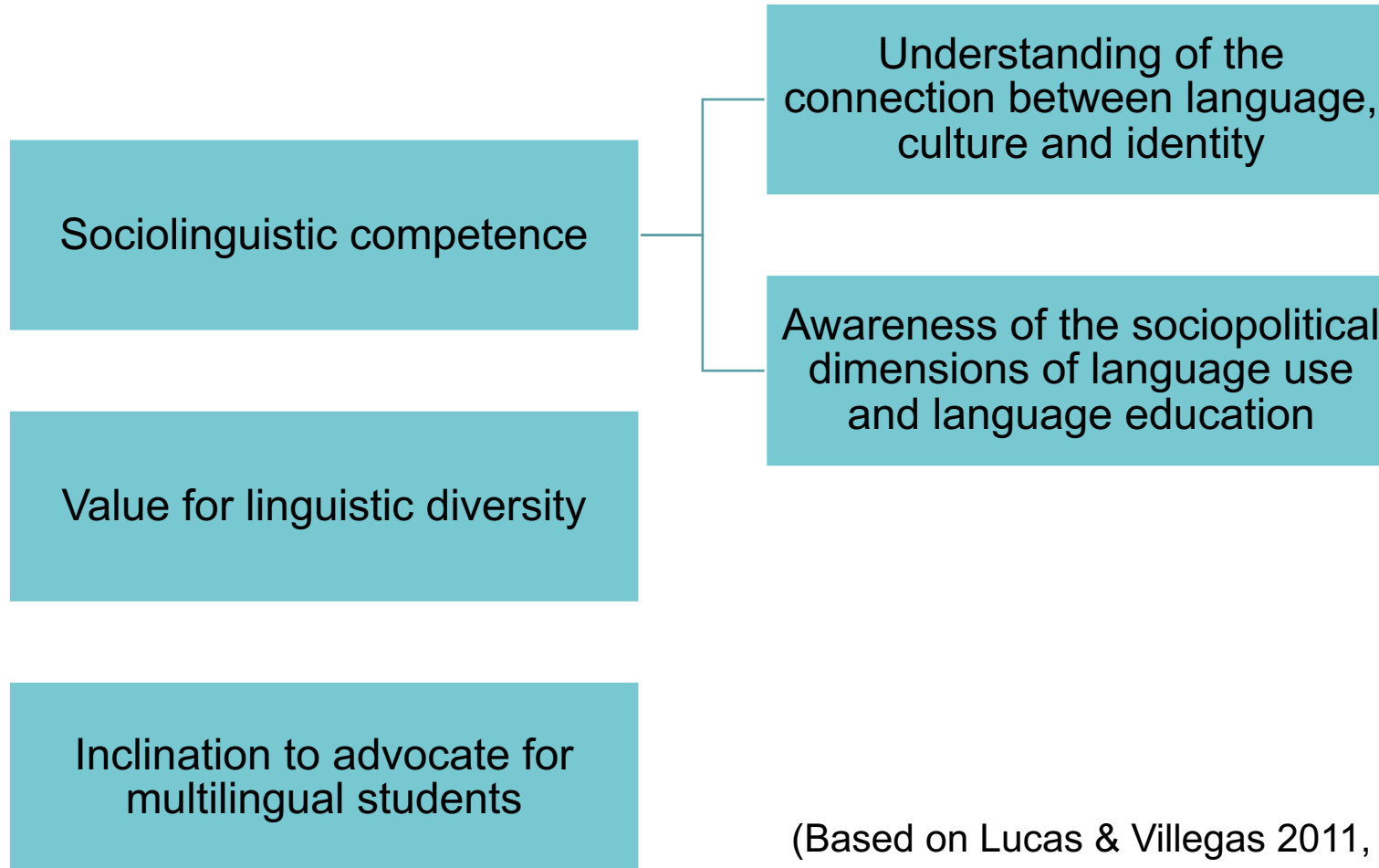


Linguistically responsive teaching

Linguistically responsive teaching

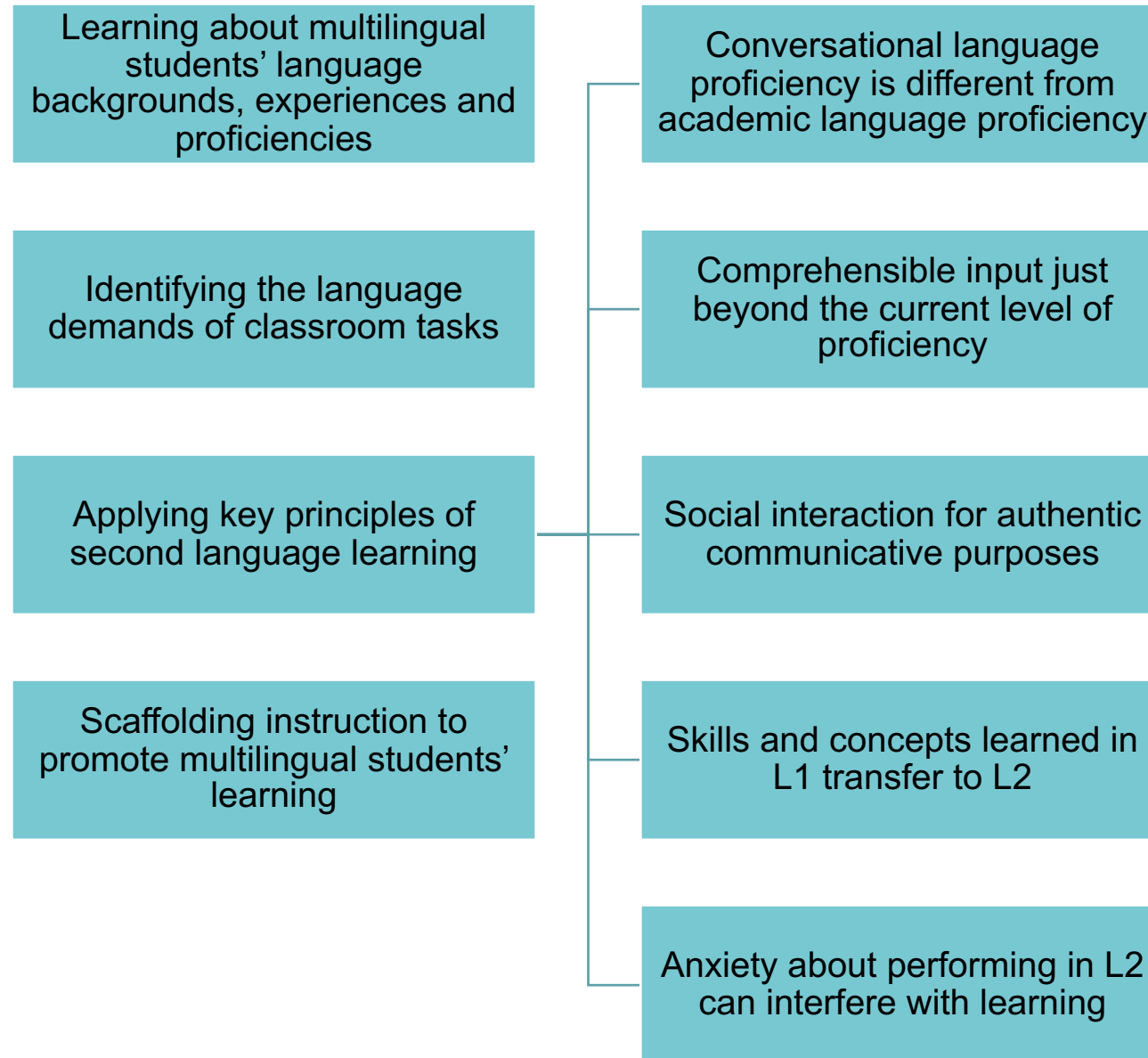
- Lucas and Villegas (2011) have created a framework for linguistically responsive teaching.
- The framework consists of three *orientations* and of the *knowledge and skills* that are necessary for linguistically responsive teachers.
 - **Orientations:** "inclinations or tendencies toward particular ideas and actions, influenced by attitudes and beliefs" (Lucas & Villegas 2011, 56)
 - **Knowledge and skills :** "the complex and interconnected disciplinary knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, knowledge of learners, and pedagogical skills" (Lucas & Villegas 2011, 56)

Orientations of linguistically responsive teachers



(Based on Lucas & Villegas 2011, 57)

Knowledge and skills of linguistically responsive teachers



From theory to practice – how is change possible?

Prerequisites for change

- Curricular changes transpire in classroom practices with a (long) delay (Piippo et al. 2021).
- There are three prerequisites for school reform (Haukås 2016, 13, based on Neuner 2009):
 - 1) Teachers are convinced that the changes lead to more efficient and motivated learning.
 - 2) Teachers are trained in the new approach.
 - 3) Teachers have access to teaching material that facilitate implementing the new approach.

Principles of linguistically responsive teaching practices

(Lucas & Villegas 2011)

- Know your students
 - Multilingual students do not form a homogenous group
 - Past experiences, prior knowledge, language repertoires
- Identify the language demands of classroom tasks
 - Identify key vocabulary and the semantic and syntactic complexity of written materials
 - In what ways are the learners expected to use language (read / draw conclusions / answer questions / make a written or oral report...)?

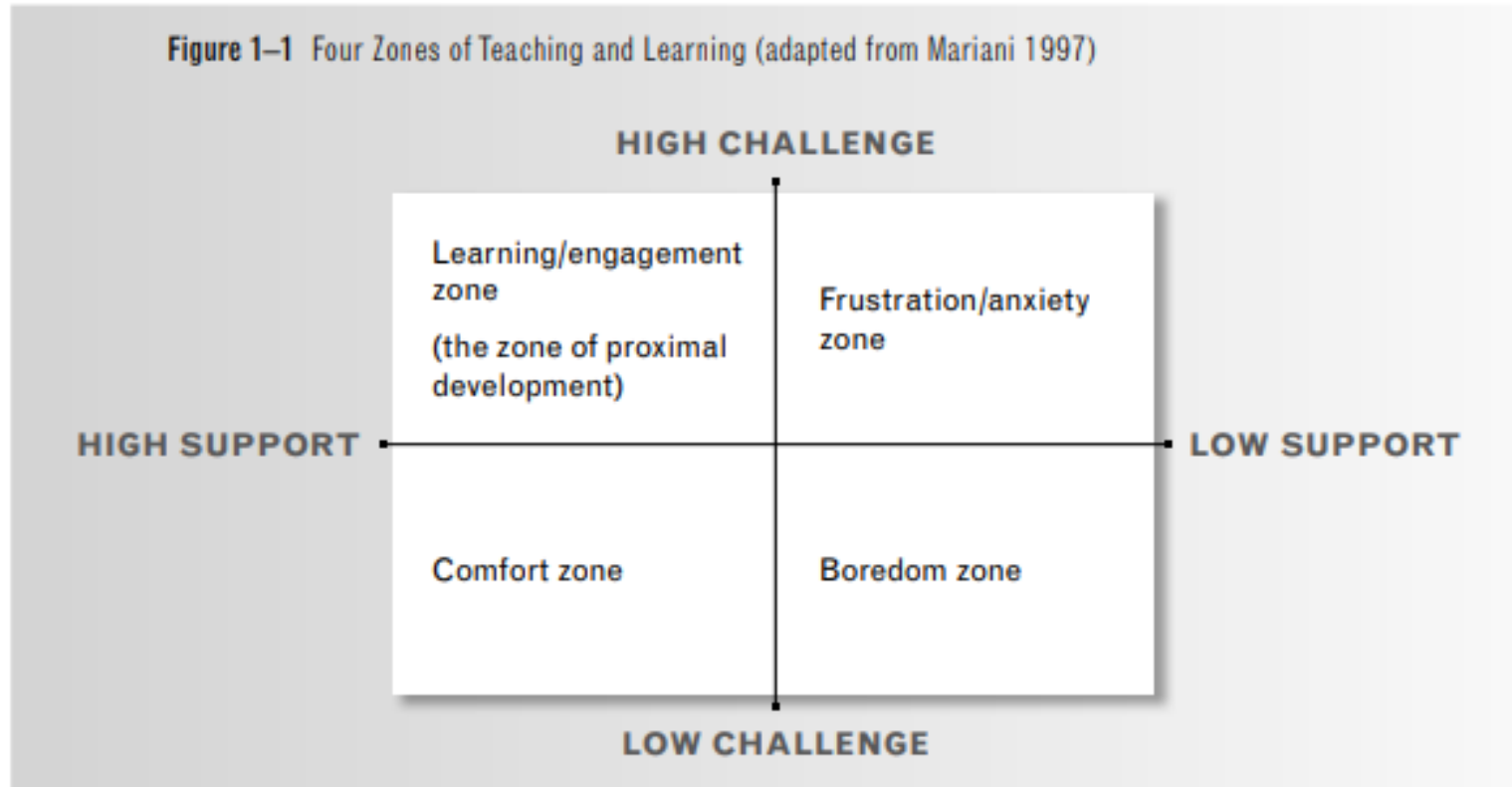
Apply key principals of language learning

- Basic interpersonal communicative skills (BICS) is fundamentally different from cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP).
- Multilingual students need comprehensive linguistic input that is slightly beyond their current proficiency.
- Social interaction for authentic communicative purposes enhances language learning.
 - Negotiation of meaning occurs more naturally in group work.
- Skills and concepts learned in L1 transfer to L2.
 - Proficiency (especially literacy skills) in home language fosters second language and concept learning.
- Anxiety about performing in a second language can interfere with learning (affective filter).

Scaffolding

- Linguistically responsive learning is based on Vygotsky's sociocultural theory of learning in which the *zone of proximal development* is a central concept. It means the space between a learner's current competence and what they are capable of achieving assisted by an adult or a more capable peer.
- Scaffolding means temporary support that helps learners operate successfully within their zone of proximal development and reach beyond their present competence.
- Multilingual learners must operate within their bi-/multilingual zone of proximal development (Moll 2014, 56).

Scaffolding



(Gibbons 2015, 17)

Scaffolding multilingual learners

(Lucas & Villegas 2011, 66)

1) Use extra-linguistic supports

- Visual cues
- Graphic organisers
- Hands-on activities
- Alternative assignments

2) Supplement and modify written text

- Study guides (key words, outline of major concepts)
- Adapted text
- Highlighted text
- Notes in the margins of textbooks
- Summary of central ideas

Scaffolding multilingual learners

3) Supplement and modify oral language

- Minimise the use of idiomatic expressions
- Translate key concepts into students' language
- Explain difficult words and ideas
- Provide outlines of lessons
- Give examples
- Pause more frequently and for longer periods of time
- Build repetition and redundancy into instruction

4) Provide clear and explicit instructions

- List procedures for completing a required task
- Ask students to repeat directions in their own words
- Include all details in the instructions; do not take shortcuts

Translanguaging pedagogy

- Languages are seen as social practices embedded in social and cognitive relations (García & Wei 2014).
- Translanguaging emphasises the multifaceted resources that multilinguals draw on. When translanguaging, multilinguals deploy their whole linguistic repertoire (Jonsson 2017; Otheguy et al. 2015).
- As a pedagogical practice, translanguaging refers to the complex discursive practices that teachers and learners have when communicating, creating academic language practices, making sense and appropriating information (García 2014).
- Learners are taught simultaneously when and where it is appropriate to use certain features of their linguistic repertoire (García & Kleyn 2016).

One example of translanguaging pedagogy

- City University of New York–New York State Initiative on Emergent Bilinguals (CUNY-NYSIEB)
- <https://www.cuny-nysieb.org/>

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soili.norro@utu.fi



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