Immersion students’ individual and shared DLCs

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Internationally, immersion programme is a learning context that aims at developing functional bilin-
gualism among students. Numerous studies have shown that immersion students successfully use
two languages for learning and communication (e.g. Tedick et al., 2011). Swedish immersion pro-
gramme in Finland is unique in introducing multiple languages within the programme, thus, aiming
at functional multilingualism. Research that draws upon questionnaire and interview data has shown
e.g. that Finnish immersion students report to know several languages and perceive themselves as
multilinguals (e.g. Björklund & Márd-Miettinen, 2011).

The aim of this presentation is to better understand the multilinguality of immersion students. The
data consist of students’ self-reported visualizations of their linguistic environment (My language tree
and photographs), individual photo-elicitation interviews, and ethnographic classroom observations.
A Dominant Language Constellation (DLC) approach (Aronin & Ó Laoire, 2004) is applied in the
analysis. Compared to linguistic repertoire (all languages and skills) the DLC approach enables us to
identify the constellation of languages or skills the individual perceives being most important to meet
his/her communication needs. We seek to identify both individual and shared DLCs of the students
and factors that define the DLCs. Initial results show that three languages are most expedient in
the students’ individual DLCs and that different languages appear in their school and out-of-school
DLCs. This indicates that individual students have simultaneous context-specific DLCs. As to shared
DLCs, the results suggest that certain indexicality is connected to DLCs in immersion context.

Reference

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