CHANGES IN LANGUAGE USE – CHANGES IN LANGUAGE EDUCATION?

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Structure of the talk

- Language and language use today
- Data to illustrate how young people make sense of language and their language practices
- Language skills related to future work skills
- Implications for language education
  - Everyday vs. school language
  - Multilingualism in language education
- Data to illustrate teachers' views on multilingualism in the language classroom
- Facing problems – finding solutions?

Changing conditions for language use

■ Classroom is not the only place to learn a new language: globalization and new technologies create new kinds of learning spaces and make unexpected connections possible

■ Current day mobility

– not a new phenomenon, but the pace is faster than ever before
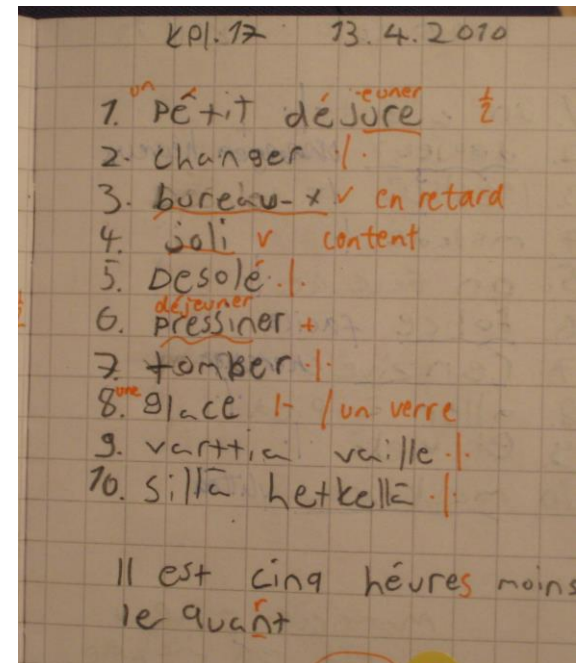
What is language?

- **Language as a fixed system**
  - One language – one nation
  - Language as standardized, with a clear codified grammar, with native speakers
  - *"The notion of bounded languages, with neatly patterned grammatical structures of their own, has been an asset for product-oriented teaching."* (Canagarajah, 2013, 12)

- **Language as a fluid practice**
  - a localized resource used to reach individualized needs and goals
  - Language as genres, registers, styles
  - language is a resource people draw on when engaging in social practices and when aiming at getting things done for particular purposes
  - *"---globalization multiplies exponentially the possibilities of making meaning by switching and mixing codes, modes, modalities, genres, and registers far beyond the simple equivalences provided by dictionaries and standard grammars."* (Kramsch, 2014:301)

Fluctuating relations to and uses of languages

- Languages play different kinds of roles in different spaces and at different times in people's lives
- "*On the Internet, people no longer observe a strict separation between languages; comprehensibility online trumps accuracy and appropriateness*." (Kramsch, 2014: 300)
- Partial competences
- Truncated repertoires
  - *"The repertoires of new migrants often appear to be 'truncated'….: highly specific 'bits' of language … most of which consist of spoken, vernacular and non-native varieties of different languages…"* (Blommaert, 2010, 8-9)
- Hybrid and mixed uses: code-switching, code-shifting, code-mixing, code-meshing

First, second, foreign languages?

- A **first language** (also **native language**, **mother tongue**, **arterial language**, or **L1**) is the language(s) a person has learned from birth or within the critical period, or that a person speaks the best and so is often the basis for sociolinguistic identity.
- A **second language** or **L2** is any language learned after one's first language.
- A **foreign language** is a language indigenous to another country. It is also a language not spoken in the native country of the person referred to. (Wikipedia)

→ **L1, L2, SL, FL defined against the native speaker norm and one nation/area–one language -ideal**

But language boundaries get blurred

- **Problems arise when we take account of**
  - Bilingualism / multilingualism / plurilingualism
  - National languages / transnational uses
  - Minority languages / majority languages
  - Official policies / unofficial policies
  - Language / dialect
  - Identification with languages
  - Varying competences
  - Use (frequency, purposes, etc.)
- **Who defines?**
- **From what position?**
- **For what purposes?**

MAKING SENSE OF LANGUAGE AND ONE'S OWN LANGUAGE PRACTICES

MULTILINGUAL SÁMI CHILDREN

Northern Multilingualism (Prof. Sari Pietikäinen, funded by the Academy of Finland)

Lasse's (11 yrs) linguistic repertoire

Northern Sámi,
blue

Finnish
orange

 English,
 lilac

Merja's (7 yrs) linguistic repertoire

Finnish,
blue

Sámi,
red

Jamakai,
green

Sun Language,
yellow

Sösö Language,
violet

suomi

saame

jamakai

ENGLISH IN YOUNG FINNS' EVERYDAY LIVES

Anne Pitkänen-Huhta & Tarja Nikula

Samuli (16 yrs): Finnish (everyday language) + English (school language)

Finnish and I

English and I

MINÄ JA SUOMENKIELI

- Tässä kuvassa käytin ainoastaan Suomenkieltä koska puhuin isän ja kummisedän kanssa. Suomalaisesta perinteestä avannon teosta.

MINÄ JA ENGLANNINKIELI

- Tässä kuvassa käytän englannin kieltä, koska olen tekemisissä tietokoneen kanssa.

In this picture I only used Finnish because I talked about the Finnish tradition of making a hole in the ice [for fishing]

In this picture I use English because I use the computer

Taavi (16 yrs): Finnish + English

(Groups of) friends
School

Mother tongue

Music
Hobbies
Everyday activities
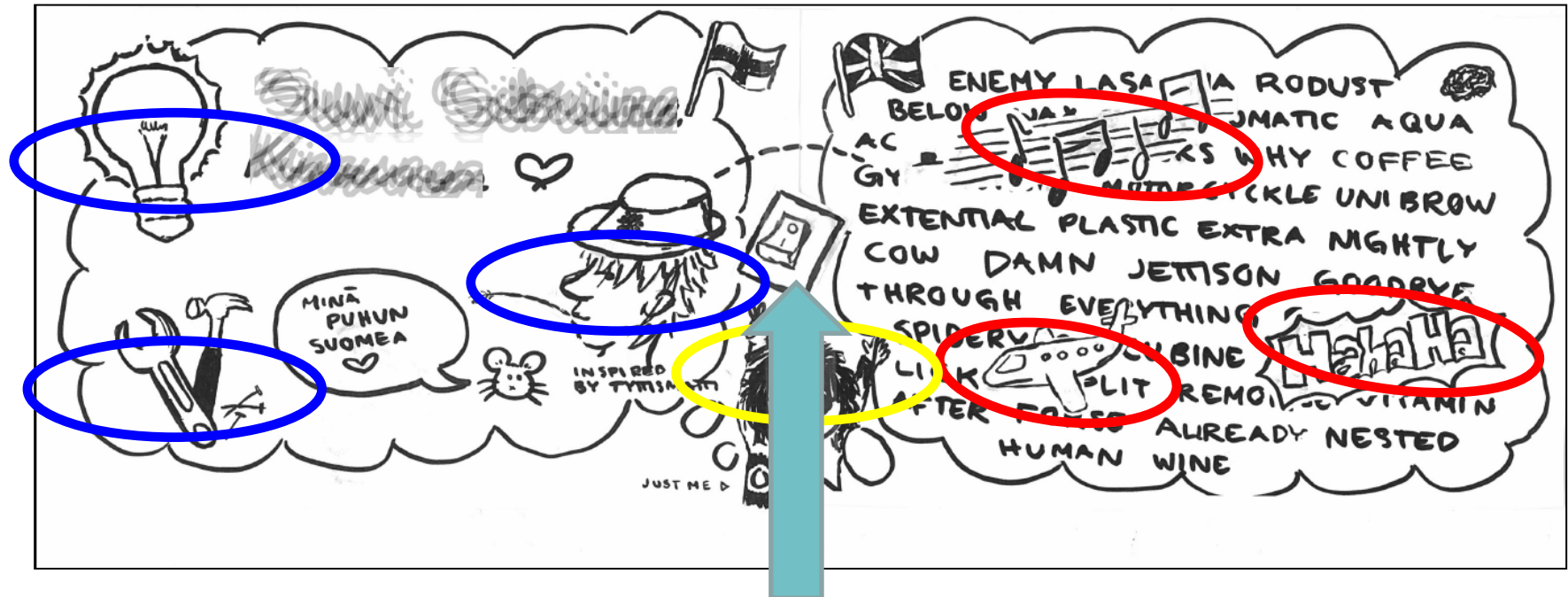
Finland separated from the rest of the Europe

National symbols (flag & map)

International connections
Travelling
Computers

Hobbies (DJing, skateboarding, basketball, football)

14

Siiri (16 yrs): Finnish + English

"and here in the middle there's this fine on-off button, 'cos the difference is kind of, in a way, wavering, so that so that if there's something in one [language] it can also be in the other [language]"

"it changes from English to Finnish like really fast"

Making sense of language and one's language practices

- "I don't use English" → awareness raising
- Developing and fluctuating language identities
- Personal and close relations to many languages
- Pondering over differences between everyday and school languages
- Languages
  - can be clearly separated and bounded resources
  - or languages may not be restricted to the languages taught at school and they do not follow linguistic classifications
- Creative, developing multilingual repertoires

Future work skills – future language skills?
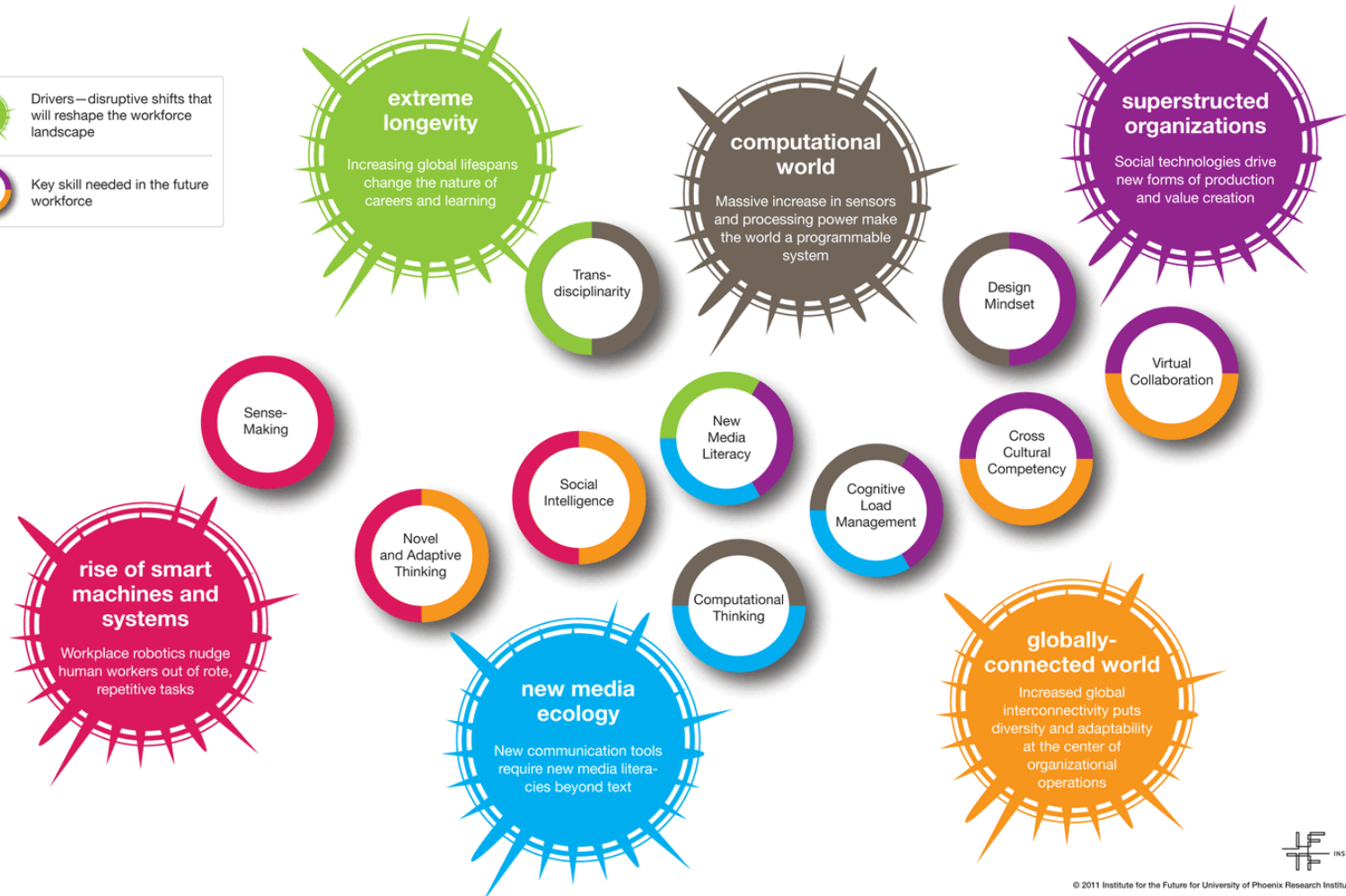
Future language skills?

- New media literacy
- Cross-cultural competence
- Virtual collaboration
- Social intelligence
- Sense making
- Novel and adaptive thinking

→ Not just a competence in a language, but competence in varieties, registers, accents, social practices, intercultural communication, etc.

→ Clash between school practices and societal requirements

→ Multilingualism and multiculturalism in language education

Everyday vs. school practices

- "---*there has never been a greater tension between what is taught in the classroom and what the students will need in the real world once they have left the classroom*." (Kramsch, 2014: 296)

Everyday vs. school practices

■ Our research (Nikula & Pitkänen-Huhta, 2008; Pitkänen-Huhta & Nikula, 2013; Kalaja et al, 2013) has shown that for students

– (language) learning in school contexts
  • is about grammar and structure, about facts and information
  • useful and necessary
  • fit-for-all > not always challenging or interesting
  • language learning 'proper' takes place within the school walls

– (language) learning in out-of-school contexts
  • is about unintentional accumulation of skills
  • fun
  • personally meaningful and rewarding
  • can be an empowering and challenging experience

Multilingualism affects language education

- "*Research on urban multilingual learning contexts increasingly conceptualises these settings as complex, heterogeneous communicative spaces. In such spaces learners transport, re-contextualise and transform a wide range of linguistic, cultural and multimodal resources, practices, aesthetic preferences and narratives.*" (Lytra, 2011: 1)

→ Contexts for language use and for language learning are getting more complex

→ Knowledge and use of "one language" is not enough

Multilingualism affects language education

- ”*More important than learning the elements of one whole symbolic system, ---, is the necessity of learning to move between languages and to understand and negotiate the multiple varieties of codes, modes, genres, registers, and discourses that students will encounter in the real world.*

- *It is also necessary to take advantage of the increasingly multilingual composition of language classes and to draw on the students' multilingual competences, even if they are learning a single language.*”

(Kramsch, 2012)

Multilingualism in foreign language education?

- **from parallel monolingualism**
  - Despite multilingual speakers, society (and education) is organized for monolinguals (e.g. Kramsch, 2012)
- **to dynamic multilingualism**
  - Languages vs. resources/repertoires
  - From language separation to translanguaging as a pedagogical strategy
    - "bilingual students communicate and make meaning by drawing on and intermingling linguistic features from different languages" (Hornberger, 2012: 240)
- **Multilingual resources un- or underused for various reasons** (Pitkänen-Huhta & Mäntylä 2014)

WHAT DO TEACHERS THINK AND SAY ABOUT MULTILINGUALISM IN THE CLASSROOM?

Anne Pitkänen-Huhta & Katja Mäntylä

Who's a multilingual learner?

- **Language background vs. schooling experience/parental expectations**
  - *Depends of course where they come from 'cause in some places it's very important to get as far as possible (Maria)*
  - *A lot of them have very little experience of schooling so they haven't much been to school after childhood (Elisa)*
  - *(.) about the material this (.) I mean reading a teaching material is for some an entirely new thing (Elisa)*

- **Language background vs. learning difficulties**
  - *ability to learn is so different with different pupils (Paula)*
  - *As a language teacher I noticed that where to draw the line so that I can say that their problems to learn foreign languages are not because of that (.) that they don't speak Finnish properly (Lisa)*

Who's a multilingual learner?

- **Language awareness**
  - *An they've got lots of kind of language (.) awareness many of these immigrants much better than Finnish-speakers 'cause they have* to juggle between languages *(Paula)*
  - *And the* ability to compare languages is sometimes overwhelming *(Elisa)*
- **Readiness to communicate**
  - *Speech is on a completely different level you say that Finns always think that is this correct and can I say this they never open their mouths but the the French and others they always open their mouths even though they haven't thought how to say it (Matti)*
- **Operating with several languages**
  - *of course it's tough when you* operate in many languages *(Paula)*
- **Pupils without a "proper" mother tongue**
  - *That they don't have at all (.) any proper one mother tongue (.) that they kind of* lack a language *(Paula)*

Teaching a multilingual group

❑ *it's quite* *fun and interesting and really difficult* *I mean the teaching (Paula)*

❑ *I kind of* *ran out of means* *(Matti)*

❑ *"It [multilingualism] can be* *useful* *and it can be a* *richness* *and you can take advantage of it in learn- learn- (.) I mean in the classroom (Maria)*

■ interaction between monolingual Finnish and multilingual pupils

– *not very much (.) sometimes very little [...] I always ask that how do you say this in your language [...] but they don't – the other pupils don't much ask (.) it's strange actually (Paula)*

■ Comparing languages

– *I often ask that is there anything like this in your mother tongue that how about in your language (Paula)*

Teaching a multilingual group

- "English only" as a solution
  - *If English could be a strong means of teaching while you also teach the language (.) then of course it's easier regardless of your background (Maria)*
  - *at the same time there's this monolingualism that English in English (Anna)*
- Whether or not to allow students to speak their mother tongue
  - *I haven't banned it that you can't speak your own mother tongue at all [...] that it helps to understand the matter but some teachers don't like it they say that we only speak Finnish here (Paula)*

Facing challenges – finding solutions

- The times of one language – one nation are gone (if they ever existed)
- Could we teach multilingual competences?
- Teachers need to create different kinds of spaces for different kinds of participation
- From language specific to language awareness
- Children exploring language and literacy
- Children as experts of "their own language", sharing that expertise with others

Facing challenges – finding solutions

- "*Globalization requires us to focus less on predetermined, stable, predictable facts of a linguistic, functional, or cultural nature, and more on such fluid discourse processes as comparison, contrast, analysis, interpretation, inferencing, and de- and recontextualization.*" (Kramsch, 2014: 308)

- "*--students' plurilingual abilities are built through seven principles that support dynamic plurilingual practices in instruction—heterogeneity, collaboration, learner-centeredness, language and content integration, language use from students up, experiential learning, and local autonomy and responsibility.*" (Garcia & Sylvan, 2011, 398)

Facing challenges – finding solutions

- **Changing classroom practices?**
  - Allowing translanguaging creates opportunities for participation and creates a connection between everyday and institutional practices
  - "*.. a translanguaging approach … is used by participants for identity performance as well as the business of language learning and teaching.*" (Creese & Blackledge, 2010, 112)

Facing challenges – finding solutions

"We use various language resources, and our goal as language educators might be better understood as developing resourceful speakers *rather than some vague notion of native competence."*

(Pennycook, 2012, 170-172)

"The purpose is not to abandon all standard pedagogic norms of language use as the goal of instruction. It is, rather, to strive to make our students into multilingual individuals, sensitive to linguistic, cultural, and above all, semiotic diversity, and willing to engage with difference, that is, to grapple with differences in social, cultural, political, and religious worldviews." (Kramsch, 2014: 305)

Thank you!
Tak!
Kiitos!