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Fostering Plurilingual Competence in Norwegian Lower Secondary Schools: Cross-linguistic Awareness in Bilingual Language Support Classes

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Abstract
This article investigates the use of the home language in bilingual subject instruction in Norwegian lower secondary schools and its role in raising cross-linguistic awareness and strengthening students' plurilingual competence. Being a transitional language support offer, bilingual subject instruction has the potential to equip students with competences needed in mainstream schooling, as well as prepare them to use their holistic linguistic repertoires according to changing circumstances and needs. The study follows a qualitative research design and introduces spoken data from three classroom contexts. The analysis features dyadic interactions between one bilingual Polish teacher and three lower secondary students with Polish heritage, recorded during individual bilingual subject instruction classes. The findings show that the teacher uses an array of practices to uncover tacit linguistic knowledge and create new links between the language systems. Simultaneously, the home language plays a crucial role in metalinguistic activity and provides the students with a base for subject knowledge and understanding. The study contributes to the field of multilingual education by highlighting the bilingual teacher's practices that lead to metalinguistic reflection and equip students with plurilingual competence.

Keywords: *bilingual subject instruction*, *language support classes*, *cross-linguistic awareness*, *metalinguistic awareness*, *plurilingual competence*, *adapted instruction in Norwegian school*

1. Introduction

The role of bilingual subject instruction (in Norwegian: *tospråklig fagopplæring*; henceforth BSI) in the Norwegian education system is to support students with a different home language than Norwegian or Sámi in the transition to ordinary education (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2022). While the primary objective is to assist students in developing their Norwegian language competences and ensuring academic progress, the use of students' home language(s) remains a pivotal factor in BSI. This gives the bilingual teacher the opportunity to promote and build on the students' first languages while supporting both subject and second language learning. Fostering awareness of the positive impact that facilitating the use of students' previous linguistic knowledge has on creating inclusive learning spaces has been the focus of many studies conducted in Norwegian classroom research in recent years (e.g., Burner & Carlsen, 2019; Haukås, 2015; Krulatz & Iversen, 2020; Krulatz et al., 2017; Vikøy & Haukås, 2021). This study fills a gap in existing research by offering a detailed perspective on the practical use of the home language in transitional language support classes and providing fresh insights into dyadic interactions in second language teaching.

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In keeping with the theme of this special issue, transitions in plurilingual education, this article explores how the home language (in this case Polish) can be used to not only strengthen subject knowledge during BSI classes, but also its potential to raise cross-linguistic awareness. The study presupposes that the long-term goal of adapted instruction is to equip the students with plurilingual competence and the ability to communicate and manage their repertoires in line with changing circumstances and needs. Plurilingual competence is defined as 'the ability to use languages for the purposes of communication and to take part in intercultural interaction' (Council of Europe, 2009). Developing a complex and multi-faceted communicative competence requires a degree of control over one's repertoire (Oliveira & Ançã, 2018), making cross-linguistic awareness an important resource in the transition stage between BSI and mainstream education. This article follows a bilingual teacher with Polish heritage (pseudonymised as Ewa) and three of her Polish students in one-on-one lessons in BSI and depicts the classes as a dynamic process of meaning-making, emphasizing the cross-linguistic awareness between the languages in use. By exploring dyadic interaction within the three cases, I address to the following research question: How can the incorporation of the home language in bilingual subject instruction contribute to the development and enhancement of students' cross-linguistic awareness and, consequently, strengthen their plurilingual competence?

Throughout the text, I use the term *home language* to refer to the students' first language to avoid discrepancy between terms, whilst the terms *mother tongue* and *bilingual* are present in terminology used in policy documents and existing research. The term *multilingual* and *plurilingual* both describe the phenomenon of using multiple languages, with the former emphasizing the social dimension and the latter characterizing an individual's ability to utilize several languages (Council of Europe, 2001). I start by introducing the role of BSI and reviewing studies within the field of mother tongue supported teaching in Scandinavia. Then, I outline the theoretical framework, methodology, participants, and classroom setting. This is followed by a presentation of three cases from the BSI classroom, each featuring Ewa's tailored teaching approach to her three students, pseudonymised as Klaudia, Arek and Oskar. These perspectives meet in a final discussion of the role of cross-linguistic awareness in building plurilingual competence.

2. Background

BSI falls within the scope of adapted instruction in Norwegian (in Norwegian: *særskilt norskopplæring*). This is an offer aimed at 'language minorities' and described and regulated by the Norwegian Education Act (1998). Section 2-8 of the policy states that students attending primary and lower secondary school with a home language other than Norwegian or Sámi, are entitled to receive tutoring in Norwegian. If necessary, this can additionally be supported by mother tongue teaching or bilingual subject instruction, until they are proficient enough to follow 'the normal instruction of the school', as stated in the policy document. The policy does not offer further explanation of the phrase 'sufficiently proficient', nor does it specify the extent of the offer, the assessment criteria or pedagogical approach, to name but a few factors. This gives the teachers involved in the different forms of adapted instruction in Norwegian relatively free rein in decisions concerning activities during the tuition. BSI differs from what might be described as traditional mother tongue teaching in the fact that the home language is considered as an aid in subject teaching in Norwegian, rather than instruction in and about the home language itself. Considering the openly phrased regulation, teachers are free to choose how much, or little, the home language should be present during classes.

In Norway, a variety of studies have in recent years investigated different aspects of multilingualism at school, such as teachers' beliefs about multilingualism and language ideologies (Burner & Carlsen, 2019; Haukås, 2016; Iversen, 2019; Vikøy & Haukås, 2021) and creating inclusive language spaces (Krulatz et al., 2017; Krulatz & Iversen, 2020). A number of publications has been

dedicated to the study of newly-arrived youths (Kjelaas & van Ommeren, 2022; Ringrose et al., 2023), however studies directly concerned with BSI are almost non-existent. Spernes and Fjeld (2017) examined what value school leaders ascribe to bilingual instruction and the effect this has on bilingual subject teachers' participation in the schools' learning communities, the findings showing that little attention is devoted to bilingual subject teaching and teachers. A recent article by Alisaari et al. (2023) explores how the neighbouring countries of Norway, Finland, Sweden, and Denmark orient themselves towards mother tongue education in their educational policies. In Denmark and Sweden, in particular, there is considerably greater focus on research dedicated to mother tongue and language support classes, ranging from a comparative study of the two states' position towards mother tongue instruction (Salö et al., 2018), through research on language introduction programmes (Wedin, 2021; Wedin, 2022) to mother tongue teaching as an ideological practice (Møller Daugaard, 2022; Ganuza & Hedman, 2015) and translanguaging space (Ganuza & Hedman, 2017; Straszer et al., 2022). Reath Warren (2016) explores the functions of multilingual practices during multilingual study guidance, a support offer in Swedish upper-secondary schools designed to help the student reach the goals of the curriculum by using available linguistic resources. The programme can be recognized as a Swedish equivalent to the Norwegian BSI, and Reath Warren argues for the recognition and expansion of multilingual spaces and the on-going development of students' multilingual literacies (2016, p. 138). Other than this contribution, the field is largely characterized by research concerned with the ideological and identity-creating aspect of using home languages in education. Beyond this research, I aim to contribute fresh insights by exploring the untapped potential home language use in enhancing learning through the cultivation of cross-linguistic awareness. I delve deeper into this concept in the following section.

3. Cross-linguistic awareness in BSI: a steppingstone towards plurilingual competence

To fully grasp the meaning and scope of cross-linguistic awareness, one must first define the broader concept of metalinguistic awareness. This dynamic and multi-faceted area of research includes an array of terminological and conceptual variation. Terms like *awareness*, *knowledge*, *reflection,* and *competence*, to name but a few, compete in describing overlapping constructs. Metalinguistic awareness has been defined by many in terms of the learners' ability to focus attention on structural features of language (Simard & Gutiérrez, 2018), rather than being a fixed mental state (ex. Bialystok, 2001). In this study, I adopt the view on metalinguistic awareness as the ability to 'focus on linguistic form and switch focus between form and meaning' (Jessner, 2008, p. 277) and, consequently, to 'play with or manipulate language' (Jessner, 2006, p. 42). The term *metalinguistic activity* will also be applied as it refers to the cognitive process of reflecting about language that takes place on a social plane (Simard & Gutiérrez, 2018), which describes the joint practices taking place in the observed BSI classes. Subsequently, I examine the concept of awareness that encompasses the learners' holistic repertoire, namely *cross-linguistic awareness*. The concept is defined as 'the learner's tacit and explicit awareness of the links between their language systems' (Cenoz & Jessner, 2009, p. 127) and as 'a mental ability which develops through focusing attention on and reflecting upon languages in use and through establishing similarities and differences among the languages of one's multilingual mind' (Angelovska & Hahn, 2014, p. 187). This definition reflects Cook's concept of *multi-competence*, understood as the 'knowledge of more than one language in the same mind' (Cook, 2016, p. 3), one of its premises concerning the interrelatedness of all the languages the individual possesses. Cook (1991, 2016) argues that multilingual learners cannot be compared or measured against the monolingual native speaker, and points to the totality of the language system, where the multilingual individual's languages influence each other in a continuous interaction. The learner's prior linguistic resources are therefore an inextricable part of second language learning, a notion upon which BSI is founded.

Having defined the foundations of metalinguistic and cross-linguistic awareness, I turn to describing how these constructs are operationalized in the observed BSI classes. As previously outlined, cross-linguistic awareness encompasses both tacit and explicit dimensions of the individual's linguistic repertoire, involving both implicit and explicit language knowledge. This dual perspective is considered in the analysis of the dyadic interactions. Ellis (2008) defines explicit knowledge as conscious and verbalizable, while implicit knowledge is intuitive, non-conscious and non-verbalizable (p. 418). James (1996) distinguishes between *cross-linguistic intuition* and *cross-linguistic awareness*, with the latter rooted in an explicit (declarative) level of metacognition (p. 139). In this study, the primary data source is explicit, spoken interactions in discussions about linguistic features. Nonetheless, instances of tacit knowledge expressed in these interactions are also considered. The term *metalanguage* (Berry, 2005) is utilized to denote linguistic expressions used for discussing language – a manifestation of the ongoing metalinguistic processes. The language used by both teacher and students is non-technical, revolving around explaining language aspects without the need for technical terms (see Simard & Gutiérrez, 2018). Within this context, I also discuss the possible association between raising cross-linguistic awareness and strengthening plurilingual competence.

Following a major paradigm shift in education, both researchers and teachers state that 'only a holistic conception of the individual's linguistic and communicative competence (…) can provide an adequate response to current education challenges' (Oliveira &Ançã, 2018, p. 238) which stem from the linguistically and culturally diverse society. Plurilingual competence does not refer to any fixed set of competences, but rather to competences gained in tact with the arising need to take part in intercultural interaction, where a person 'has proficiency, of varying degrees, in several languages and experience of several cultures' (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 168). The plurilingual individual builds up a complex communicative competence based on their total linguistic repertoire, which will be activated and updated according to changing circumstances along the way (Oliveira &Ançã, 2018).

4. Methodology and data

This paper is part of a larger doctoral study focused on multilingualism within BSI. The fieldwork was conducted during the 2020-2021 school year and was ethically approved by Sikt, the Norwegian Agency for Shared Services in Education and Research. The data collection draws on qualitative methods and builds on the sociocultural concepts of mediation and scaffolding, emphasizing the crucial role of dialogues between teachers and students in supporting both language and content learning (Gibbons, 2018). This becomes evident throughout temporary, assisted performance which helps the students into new skills, knowledge, and levels of understanding.

Over eight months, I conducted participant observations and recorded classroom interactions between the three teacher-student dyads. I participated in a total of 11 lessons, amounting to 9 hours and 3 minutes. I recorded the audio during each session, transcribed all the recordings, and selectively translated the dyadic interactions. The recordings, combined with field notes and semi-structured interviews with the teacher and students, constitutes the dataset for the doctoral study. The focus of this study revolves around classroom audio documentation. The analytical approach involved a thorough examination of the transcribed classroom interactions, followed by manual coding guided by the theoretical framework underpinning cross-linguistic constructs (Boeije, 2010). Any instance or discussion pertaining to the structural features of the languages in question was classified as metalinguistic activity. This encompasses translation strategies (of words, phrases, and definitions across the two languages), spelling comparison, morphological comparison (word structure and grammar), and phonological awareness. The analysis was conducted for each

individual student and complied into an overview summary. Throughout this process, it became evident that the interaction data yielded a distinctive profile of the teaching situation for each student.

The setting for this study is BSI classes in three different lower-secondary schools in Norway. The bilingual teacher, Ewa, was the connecting factor between the schools, visiting the students in their respective school on specific days, delivering BSI lessons. In the mid 2000-s, Ewa, who was a formally qualified math teacher in a Polish primary school, arrived in Norway with a strong desire to continue her teaching career. After completing a basic Norwegian course, she responded to a demand for bilingual teachers for Polish students in several neighboring municipalities. My introduction to Ewa occurred through the municipality that employed her when the study commenced. I requested permission to observe and record individual lessons with three of her Polish students, aged 13 to 14 at that time. Information letters were handed out to the students and their parents provided written consent to their children's participation in the research project. A corresponding form was signed by Ewa. At the outset of the first data collection session with each student, I introduced myself and outlined the objectives for this study. The students provided their verbal consent for my classroom observations for the duration of the school year, with the meeting points occurring at intervals ranging from one to three months for each student. Table 1 provides an overview of detailed information about the students in the beginning of the data collection, the number of data points and total length of the recorded classroom interactions.

Table 1 Information about students and data

Student's name	Student's age	Time spent in Norway	Number of data points	Total recording length
Klaudia	13	9 months	3	2h 25 mins
Arek	14	3 years	4	2h 55 mins
Oskar	13	10 years	4	3h 43 mins

The classes followed a similar pattern in all three cases, the main language of communication being Polish. All primary interactions concerning the task at hand, discussion about a subject topic or small talk were conducted in the home language. Norwegian was featured as the 'work language', present mostly when Ewa asked a question she wanted answered in Norwegian, referred to vocabulary or when a student read out loud from an assignment. Prior to the participant observation, the interview with Ewa revealed that her primary goal was to prepare students for their regular Norwegian classes. Consequently, the tasks she introduced were largely sourced from the students' current syllabus, particularly from science (Nor. *naturfag*) and social studies classes (Nor. *samfunnsfag*), subjects rich in new and challenging vocabulary. Depending on the students' subject needs, but also physical and mental shape that given day, the tasks varied significantly, starting with oral repetition of the material, throughout tasks concerning words and phrases and applying them in sentences, and ending with word games. The individual form of the tutoring enabled the teacher to plan and execute the classes with consideration to the students' level and needs, a point which I emphasize in the findings.

In the following analysis, the interactions are presented in both their original and translated form. In the translated part, Polish interactions are rendered into English, whilst statements in Norwegian are presented in their original form and italicized. English translations are provided in square brackets, with occasional additional explanation in parentheses. The findings are presented as three cases, where I seek to portray Ewa's dynamic language practices with each of her students, all of whom influence the classes with their identities and needs.

5. Lessons with Klaudia: engrossed in subject preparation

Klaudia was relatively new in Norway when the observations commenced (see Table 1) and much of the tutoring time was spent on repeating the syllabus and preparing for ordinary classes. She appeared to be a motivated student and Ewa's suggestions for activities were received without objection. One of the repetition exercises had Klaudia writing words dictated by Ewa on the whiteboard. Often, discussions about spelling occurred:

Table 2 Klaudia and Ewa, excerpt 1

Original	Translation
1. Klaudia: Słońce, woda i wiatr. 2. Ewa: Czyli po norwesku… 3. Klaudia: *Vindenergi, solenergi og vannenergi.* 4. Ewa: Pięknie. 5. Klaudia: Ech, *vind* przez dwa 'n', nie? 6. Ewa: Nie, d. *V-I-N-D*. (…) 7. Klaudia: I ropa. *Gassenergi*. 8. Ewa: Nie, nie *energi*, to już tylko *gass*. Gaz, ropa i węgiel. Tylko *gass*, jak się piszę? Nie, dobrze napisałaś, tylko jeszcze 's' jedno brakuje. 9. Klaudia: Przez dwa? 10. Ewa: Mhm. Po polsku jest 'z'.	1. Klaudia: Sun, water and wind. 2. Ewa: So in Norwegian… 3. Klaudia: *Vindenergi, solenergi og vannenergi* [Wind energy, sun energy and water energy]. 4. Ewa: Very nice. 5. Klaudia: Ugh, *vind* [wind] with two n's, right? 6. Ewa: No, d. *V-I-N-D*. (…) 7. Klaudia: And oil. *Gassenergi* [Natural gas energy]. 8. Ewa: No, not *energi* [energy], now it's just *gass* [gas]. Gas, oil and coal. But *gass* [gas], how do you spell that? No, you wrote it correct, but you're missing an 's'. 9. Klaudia: With two? 10. Ewa: Yes. In Polish it's 'z'.

The excerpt is an example of a regularly occurring interaction type, where teacher and student discuss linguistic form, while simultaneously maintaining the focus on the words' meaning. Ewa frequently tasked Klaudia with translating phrases between Polish to Norwegian, maintaining a heightened cross-linguistic awareness by pointing out the similarities in spelling between the two languages (*gass – gaz*). She often resorted to explaining Norwegian grammatical concepts in Polish, illustrating them with Norwegian examples. In the following excerpt, Ewa explains hyphenation rules in compound phrases:

> Ewa: Usually in Norway if they write and put in more words, then they put the hyphen in front of 'and'. So *vind* [wind] hyphen og *vannenergi* [and water energy], if it's compound words. So in Norwegian: *sammensatte ord* [compound words].

Using simple metalanguage, Ewa informs Klaudia how to correctly connect two compound nouns with the same ending. Polish is used as the base language, building the foundations of understanding in the student's home language while simultaneously developing second language knowledge. The connection between the two languages is also visible in situations where Klaudia uses Polish words to establish associations with unfamiliar Norwegian words, a strategy introduced and encouraged by Ewa.

A significant amount of time was spent on translating and discussing fragments of textbooks and tasks, which Klaudia often read aloud, while Ewa ensured her student's comprehension of the content. Troublesome words and phrases were often dissected and talked over:

Table 3 Klaudia and Ewa, excerpt 2

Original	Translation
1. Klaudia: *Du har synliggjort at du har nedlagt et godt arbeid*. Em, masz, em… *Synliggjort*? Już to słyszałam. 2. Ewa: Widoczność… że pokazałaś, w znaczeniu, że pokazałeś, tak. 3. Klaudia: Mhm. 4. Ewa: Ale *synliggjort, synliggjøre, gjøre noe synlig*. Czyli coś zrobić, pokazać, zrobić coś, żeby żeby ktoś to zobaczył, prawda? Bo to się składa z dwóch słów, to tak zwane *sammensatte ord*, prawda? 5. Klaudia: że zrobiłaś dobrą pracę?	1. Klaudia: *Du har synliggjort at du har nedlagt et godt arbeid* [You have made visible/shown that you have done a good job]. Hm, you have to, hm… *Synliggjort*? I've heard it before. 2. Ewa: Visibility… In a sense that you show it, yes. 3. Klaudia: Mhm. 4. Ewa: But *synliggjort, synliggjøre, gjøre noe synlig*. So do something, show, do something in order for someone to see it, right? It consists of two words, it's the so-called *sammensatte ord* [compound words], right? 5. Klaudia: That you did a good job?

Here Klaudia struggles with a difficult compound phrase in the past participle form. The metalinguistic activity consists of Ewa explaining the word in Polish and showing Klaudia other forms of the verb, highlighting its compound nature and making it easier for her to see its components and grasp the meaning. She manipulates the word, drawing the student's attention to the linguistic form and explaining the meaning of the separate parts. Ewa's actions aim to increase the student's cross-linguistic awareness by using metalinguistic strategies. Now and then Klaudia struggled also with a word in Polish:

Table 4 Klaudia and Ewa, excerpt 3

Original	Translation
1. Klaudia: *Havner*. 2. Ewa: Port. 3. Klaudia: Co to znaczy port? 4. Ewa: (śmiech) Tam, gdzie na przykład cumują statki. (pauza) To jest port. W tym znaczeniu. 5. Klaudia: Tak jak port lotniczy? 6. Ewa: Było tylko, że, że tutaj jest nie *flyplass*, tylko *havner*, czyli porty dla statków.	1. Klaudia: *Havner* [Harbours]. 2. Ewa: Harbour. 3. Klaudia: What does it mean, harbour? 4. Ewa: (laughs) The place where ships dock. (pause) That is a harbour. In that sense. 5. Klaudia: Like an airport? 6. Ewa: It was like that, only here it's not *flyplass* [airport], but *havner* [harbours], so a harbour for ships.

This excerpt shows the intricacy of the inter-relationship within Klaudia's linguistic repertoire, where the Norwegian word *havn* refers to harbours in this particular context, yet can also be used in the compound noun *lufthavn*, a synonym to *flyplass*, the word Ewa uses when Klaudia associates the Polish word *port* with the place built for aircrafts. The words *havn* and *port* are part of Klaudia's linguistic multi-competence (Cook, 1991, 2016), and this interaction points to the tacit awareness of the links between the two language systems; Klaudia is not fully aware of the similarities in vocabulary between the two languages, yet she shows that she possesses an intuitive ability to forge cross-linguistic connections between phrases that contain nouns she knows. Despite Polish being Klaudia's first language, some words need Ewa's aid to be explained, a goal which is achieved

through leaning on explanations and rephrasing in the home language, as well as mentioning synonyms in the target language. From Klaudia's driven task and subject-focused tutoring, I now turn to Arek's case, where Ewa's ability to maintain a steady subject focus is regularly put to the test.

6. Lessons with Arek: the struggle behind word games

Arek's meetings with Ewa was based on the same premises as Klaudia's, where the aim was to repeat the material from the syllabus and prepare for ordinary classes. However, Arek's expressed lack of interest in both the subjects and school in general, along with his frequent complaints about poor health, significantly influenced the practice. As a result, Ewa had to introduce more straightforward and enjoyable activities for the student. One of these activities was word games. In the following exercise, Ewa and Arek take turns repeating words related to school subjects like science or social studies. Their task is to find words that start with the last letter of the previous word.

Table 5 Arek and Ewa, excerpt 1

Original	Translation
1. Ewa: Dobrze, więc zaczniemy. *Imperialisme*. 2. Arek: E. *Energi*. 3. Ewa: I. Mhm. *Ion*! 4. Arek: (pauza) *Naturlig vitenskap*? 5. Ewa: Mm, na p? *Potensiell*? 6. Arek: L. Na L. 7. Ewa: Znaczy no, jak już trudno ci wymyśleć, no to wiadomo, że możesz sobie pożyczyć inne słówka, ale staramy się znaleźć wszystko które już były. 8. Arek: *Fornybar*. 9. Ewa: Na L! 10. Arek: No ale nie mogę znaleźć! 11. Ewa: To znajdź inne słowo na L. Jeżeli nie możesz znaleźć jakiegoś słówka, które pamiętasz z lekcji, to możesz inne słowo, tylko że norweskie.	1. Ewa: OK, let's start. *Imperialisme* [Imperialism]. 2. Arek: E. *Energi* [Energy]. 3. Ewa: I. Mhm. *Ion* [Ion]! 4. Arek: (pause) *Naturlig vitenskap* [Natural science]? 5. Ewa: Mm, with p? *Potensiell* [Potential]? 6. Arek: L. With L. 7. Ewa: If you have a problem coming up with a word, you can borrow one from somewhere else, but we try to find the ones we already talked about. 8. Arek: *Fornybar* [Renewable]. 9. Ewa: With L! 10. Arek: But I can't think of one! 11. Ewa: Then find a different one that starts with L. If you can't find one from the lessons, you can give a different one, as long as it's in Norwegian.

When Arek has a problem finding a word that starts with the letter L, Ewa agrees to using a word not connected to the subject, stressing however that it must be in Norwegian. In this excerpt we observe Ewa's ability to adapt to the student while still maintaining a focus on the subject in question. Metalinguistic activity is represented by the fact that they must pay attention to the words' beginning and ending. Cross-linguistic awareness becomes essential when Ewa turns to Polish to help Arek in finding a fitting word:

Table 6 Arek and Ewa, excerpt 2

Original	Translation
1. Arek: T… 2. Ewa: Wojna na dwóch frontach, po polsku mówimy… 3. Arek: *Tofrontskrig*? 4. Ewa: Pięknie! (…) 5. Arek: Było coś na I? 6. Ewa: Przemysłowa. 7. Arek: Dobra, wezmę *intelligent*.	1. Arek: T… 2. Ewa: War on two separate fronts, as we say in Polish… 3. Arek: *Tofrontskrig* [Two-front war]? 4. Ewa: Great! (…) 5. Arek: I. Did we have something with I? 6. Ewa: Industrial. 7. Arek: Okay, I'll take *intelligent* [intelligent].

In this excerpt, we see how Ewa uses the home language to provide the definition or Polish translation of a word that starts with the right letter in Norwegian, putting Arek's tacit awareness and language knowledge into use. This activity builds on the notion of linguistic inter-relationship, showing the continuous interaction of the languages the plurilingual learner possesses and being an example of how prior linguistic resources can be mobilized to support second language acquisition. In an alternative version of the game, Ewa lets Arek use words from both languages, further strengthening the cross-linguistic activity.

While during classes with Klaudia there was a strong focus on linguistic form and discussions around Norwegian spelling and grammatical rules, lessons with Arek were centered around the semantic level. Given the somewhat unfavorable conditions for academic reflection, it seemed like Ewa's strategy was to equip Arek with as much subject knowledge as possible. Leaning strongly on the home language, Ewa utilized it as a base for knowledge and understanding. Norwegian words and expressions occurred frequently, however were not scrutinized like in Klaudia's case. Ewa's goal seemed to be to make sure Arek both understood the phrase and the concept behind it and met prepared for ordinary classes. To further ease the burden of sitting on a school bench, Ewa sometimes prepared activities that were connected to an event or holiday, such as Christmas or Polish Constitution Day. They would then discuss traditions and historical facts connected to the occasion in Polish, however regularly comparing them to the Norwegian situation and discussing similarities and differences, peppering the Polish conversation with Norwegian expressions. While discussing Christmas traditions, Ewa explained for instance the difference between Polish sauerkraut and Norwegian *surkål* and laid out the differences between monarchy and republic when the topic concerned national days. In this case, the teacher focuses on equipping the student with competences that transcend the purely linguistic sphere, giving him the tools to understand and navigate within the differences and similarities of the two cultures he lives in. Polish served as a base for communication, yet the goal of the class was not lost on Ewa, as she carefully turned Arek's attention to Norwegian equivalents of the Polish expressions, in a continuous process of raising cross-linguistic awareness. A seemingly school-skeptical and tired Arek was in need of classes that built on his strengths and eased him into the curriculum.

7. Lessons with Oskar: tutoring in the home language

Oskar had the most extensive experience in Norway among Ewa's students at the start of the study (see Table 1) and required the least language tutoring. He was however deemed eligible for BSI, a situation that Ewa gladly took full advantage of by following his progress in ordinary classes and

introducing activities designed to support Oskar's subject learning. Ewa was aware that subject-wise, Oskar's Norwegian vocabulary often dominated his Polish repertoire and seemed determined to even out the differences by focusing on words and definitions in both languages, a practice she often justified to Oskar:

Table 7 Oskar and Ewa, excerpt 1

Original	Translation
1. Oskar: Fe to chlor. 2. Ewa: Fe to *jern* (śmiech).. 3. Oskar: Aaa. 4. Ewa: Ee (pauza)… *Og på polsk*? 5. Oskar: O nie. 6. Ewa: *Og på polsk*. Ponieważ musisz to znać. Wiesz że ja nie darowuję, po polsku musimy umieć.	1. Oskar: Fe is chlorine. 2. Ewa: Fe is *jern* [iron] (laughs). 3. Oskar: Ooh. 4. Ewa: Er (pause)… *Og på polsk* [And in Polish]? 5. Oskar: Oh no. 6. Ewa: *Og på polsk* [And in Polish]. Because you have to know it, I won't let it go, you know you have to know it in Polish.

In this excerpt, Oskar and Ewa repeat chemical symbols, with the teacher emphasizing the importance of the student knowing the names of the elements in both languages. This quick exercise triggered a more extensive repetition of Oskar's recent chemical knowledge, where words and definitions in both languages were equally important:

Table 8 Oskar and Ewa, excerpt 2

Original	Translation
1. Oskar: To jest elektrony, protony i neutrony. 2. Ewa: Właśnie o nich mówiliśmy, zgadza się. Ee… związek chemiczny. Co to takiego. 3. Oskar: *Kjemisk forbindelse?* 4. Ewa: A po polsku. Bo ja wiem że ty znasz norweski. 5. Oskar: Związek wielu, wielu atomów? 6. Ewa: Mhm, wielu atom– wielu pierwiastków, prawda? Czyli na przykład… Jeżeli mamy… 7. Oskar: CO2. 8. Ewa: A co to jest po polsku? 9. Oskar: Ee, dwutlenek węgla.	1. Oskar: It's electrons, protons and neutrons. 2. Ewa: We just talked about them, correct. Ewa: Er… chemical compound. What is this. 3. Oskar: *Kjemisk forbindelse* [Chemical compound]? 4. Ewa: And in Polish. Because I know you know Norwegian. 5. Oskar: A compound of many, many atoms? 6. Ewa: Mhm, many atom-- many elements, right? So, for instance… If we have… 7. Oskar: CO^2. (pronounced in Norwegian) 8. Ewa: And what is that in Polish? 9. Oskar: Er, carbon dioxide.

In this passage, Ewa demonstrates heightened awareness of what language is being used in the given context. In contrast to the two other cases, Ewa finds it most important that Oskar both knows the phrase and manages to formulate a definition in Polish. The teacher's motivation to not only use the home language as an aid in second language learning, but as an important base for knowledge is perhaps most visible in Oskar's case. In addition to focusing on semantics, Ewa also directs Oskar's attention to other linguistic features, as shown in the following excerpt:

> Ewa: We will not write the rest [of the words] because they are alike the Polish versions. And you tell these two apart perfectly in Polish and Norwegian when you speak, you have a completely different intonation.

Here, Ewa explicitly highlights the similarities between the two languages, referring to words with similar spelling (ex. *atom*). She concurrently evaluates upon Oskar's pronunciations of words, emphasizing distinctions between the languages. A similar scenario unfolds as the teacher and student engage in a discussion on the topic of human rights:

Table 9 Oskar and Ewa, excerpt 3

Original	Translation
1. Oskar: *Aller mest oppmerksomhet fikk hun for sine motstand i Tsjekkia.* Nie*, hæ? Krigen i* 2. Ewa: *Tsjetsjenia*. 3. Oskar: Hm? 4. Ewa: Czeczenia. 5. Oskar: To po polsku jest słowo? 6. Ewa: Ogólnie (śmiech) po polsku teraz użyłam słowa, ale tutaj masz *Tsjetsjenia,* to samo napisane tylko że oni inaczej zapisują. 7. Oskar: T-S-J-E-T-S-J-E-N-I-A. 8. Ewa: To jako CZ. T-S-J jako CZ.	1. Oskar: *Aller mest oppmerksomhet fikk hun for sine motstand for krigen i Tsjekkia* [She got the most attention for her resistance to the war in Czechia]. No, *hæ* [huh]? *Krigen i* [War in] 2. Ewa: *Tsjetsjenia* [Chechnya]. 3. Oskar: Hm? 4. Ewa: Chechnya. 5. Oskar: Is that a Polish word? 6. Ewa: In general (laughs) now I used the Polish word, but here it says Tsjetsjenia, it means the same, but they write it differently. 7. Oskar: (spells in Polish) T-S-J-E-T-S-J-E-N-I-A. 8. Ewa: This is for CZ. T-S-J is CZ.

Here, Oskar struggles with pronouncing the word Chechnya in Norwegian. As both the Polish and Norwegian forms are pronounced the same (with a slight tone difference), Ewa helps Oskar decipher the many consonants in the Norwegian version of the word and connects the phoneme /tʃ/ to the spelling rules in both languages. Cross-linguistic awareness consistently underpins Ewa's practice. Through simple metalanguage, the teacher explicitly directs the student's attention to the ways the two languages resemble and differ from each other, thus strengthening the linguistic interrelatedness in the student's multilingual mind and likely affecting his metalinguistic skills. In this case, Ewa often sees the need to reinforce Oskar's knowledge of his home language in subject-related matters, showing that cross-linguistic influence is not a unidirectional concept and further emphasising the holistic conception of the learner's linguistic and communicative competence (see Oliveira & Ançã, 2018). Polish appears to serve as a reliable fallback for addressing any difficulties related to the Norwegian language. In the following, Ewa's practices in all three cases meet in a final discussion of cross-linguistic awareness in BSI and its role in building plurilingual competence.

8. Discussion and conclusion

In this article, I illustrate how the bilingual teacher Ewa uses the students' (and her own) home language to raise cross-linguistic awareness during bilingual subject instruction. The analysis showed that the language support offer takes on a different form depending on the student in question; although Ewa's actions were based on the same script, the practices in the three individual classrooms varied significantly and were adapted to the students' needs and level. The personalized and individual nature of the program enhances its value, providing students with tailored attention that would not be feasible in a larger group or classroom setting. Both the approach and setting

underscore the complexity and breadth of Ewa's competence as a bilingual teacher, encompassing not only linguistic proficiency but also her adaptive capacity. Bilingual teachers face no specific set of requirements other than proficiency in Norwegian, the language of mainstream education. Given the openly articulated guidelines for BSI, as outlined in the policy, Ewa's approach is not predetermined; other teachers may adopt distinct methods, pedagogical approaches, and perspectives on the extent to which the home language should be integrated into instruction. Observing the practices of another Polish bilingual teacher would likely have generated different findings concerning cross-linguistic awareness in BSI.

Despite the differences in approach, the analysis reveals a clear pattern in Ewa's actions, where Polish was the language of reflection and metalinguistic activity, as well as a base for knowledge and understanding. Although the main goal of BSI is to prepare the students for ordinary classes in Norwegian, Ewa uses the time at her disposal to strengthen the home language and make the students aware of the similarities and differences between the two languages. Using simple metalanguage and varying strategies, the teacher navigates the complex network that comprises the students' linguistic repertories, focusing on raising their explicit cross-linguistic awareness of both meaning and form. Ewa's practices show the deeply rooted links between the two languages, the relationship becoming evident through the interactions, where she both uncovers tacit, intuitive knowledge and creates new explicit connections for the students to build on. The findings reflect the concept of multi-competence (Cook, 1991, 2016), as the dynamic practices of those involved in BSI reflect the totality of their language systems. Through the presented examples of classroom activities, cross-linguistic influence proves to be an interactive process, the metalinguistic activity in the classroom being a result of two intertwined systems that influenced each other. The study uncovers the potential that using the students' home language has on strengthening their awareness of the connections between the languages they use in their everyday lives. Cenoz and Jessner (2009) highlight the role that metalinguistic awareness plays in the development of language learning strategies in plurilingual learners and users. The ability of plurilinguals to focus on linguistic form marks the emergence of multilingual proficiency, as they cultivate language learning, language management and language maintenance skills, all of which are intertwined with the metalinguistic dimension (Jessner, 2006, 2008, 2014).

In this paper, metalinguistic awareness is characterized as an *ability* to direct attention and engage in reflective thinking about language. It is a construct that can and should be refined and enhanced, becoming an integral component of the dynamic set of competences possessed by plurilingual individuals. The skills that Ewa imparts to her students through their participation in BSI prepare them to actively utilize their linguistic repertoire in various real-world contexts. This includes their ordinary classes in Norwegian school and other social settings that arise from their pluricultural backgrounds. The ability to view one's linguistic repertoire through a functional lens holds the potential to empower individuals with control over their communication skills, enabling them to adapt effectively to our ever-changing and culturally diverse society. However, adapted instruction in Norwegian is intended as a transitional offer, which raises the unfortunate possibility of weakening cross-linguistic awareness once the tutoring period concludes. This brings us to the discussion of home language teaching and multilingual education as a norm in mainstream schooling.

This study does not examine the impact of the home language on second language acquisition or explore missed opportunities for the teacher to utilize cross-linguistic resources. As a result, I refrain from making claims about the efficacy of using Polish to enhance proficiency in Norwegian. However, focusing exclusively on the advantages of home language teaching for second language learning would contribute to the rather unnuanced debate about the effect rationale of multilingual education, a concern that both Møller Daugaard (2022) and Reath Warren (2016) highlight as current issue in both Denmark and Sweden. Instead, these researchers claim that further discussion should concern the expansion of home language teaching and multilingual practices to other spaces

in school and its long-term effect on developing multilingual literacies (Reath Warren, 2016, p. 138), as well as it being a gateway to developing other competences (Møller Daugaard, 2022). The findings made in this study support these claims, further incorporating the metalinguistic domain and the adaptable nature of applying one's plurilingual competence into the array of advantages offered by multilingualism in mainstream schooling. A promising approach to advance in this direction is to foster the advantages of plurilingualism among both in-service and pre-service teachers. As highlighted by Otwinowska (2013) in her study on language teachers' awareness, it is essential for teachers to possess this ability themselves in order to effectively educate learners. The study by Krulatz et al. (2018) on promoting critical culture and linguistic awareness similarly underscores the significance of teacher reflection as the initial step in establishing culturally and linguistically responsive classrooms. The authors also emphasize the necessity of explicit strategies for promoting language diversity in the classroom. Elevating teachers' awareness could serve as a pivotal strategy for promoting multilingual approaches in classrooms, including fostering an understanding of how to harness cross-linguistic influences. Hegna and Speitz (2020) address the connection between theory and practice in their study of pre-service teachers and their beliefs regarding plurilingualism. The findings reveal that teacher education succeeds in broadening the knowledge of future teachers about plurilingualism as a valuable resource. However, the students express a desire for more practical examples illustrating how to implement these principles in real-world education settings. This suggests that, despite the generally positive attitudes among teachers toward multilingualism (Haukås, 2016), there is a demand for a practical guide on integrating plurilingual resources into the school curriculum (Myklevold, 2021).

This study explored how integrating the home language in BSI contributes to the development of students' cross-linguistic awareness, thereby strengthening their plurilingual competence. The article contributes to the field of multilingual education by highlighting the practices of the bilingual teacher, which promote metalinguistic awareness and enhance subject knowledge during transitional language support practices. By examining micro-interactions in BSI-classes, the study offers a detailed insight into the beneficial role of the home language in the learning context. Moreover, by employing the theory of cross-linguistic awareness, the article emphasizes the interdependence of the linguistic repertoire and underscores the teacher's crucial role in accessing existing resources and creating a foundation for subject and language knowledge.

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