



TEACHING LANGUAGES TO EAL STUDENTS



12 September 2022

Elena Pirovano
The University of Melbourne
elena.pirovano@unimelb.edu.au



What is your experience with EAL students?

1. primary or secondary?
2. language
3. EAL students in your school/classes
4. [PollEv.com/elenapirovano](https://www.pollEv.com/elenapirovano)

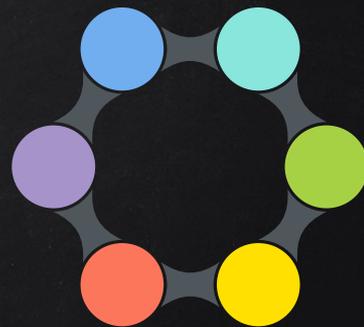
My experience with my EAL students in one word

A word cloud of adjectives describing the experience with EAL students. The words are arranged in a roughly horizontal line, with some overlapping. The words are: goldmine, interesting, tricky, hard, work, thoughtful, positive, skilled, exciting, advance, and challenging. The colors of the words are: goldmine (green), interesting (yellow), tricky (green), hard (blue), work (purple), thoughtful (green), positive (purple), skilled (purple), exciting (purple), advance (green), and challenging (blue).



OUTLINE

- defining EAL students
- resources
- foundational concepts
- examples in the classroom





WHO ARE EAL STUDENTS?

a monolingual view

EAL students:



- X have no language
- X don't have enough language
- X can't read/write
- X are illiterate
- X are not able to participate in the class life
- X can't express themselves



WHO ARE EAL STUDENTS?

a plurilingual view

EAL students may know:



- one or more home/heritage languages
- English (at different levels of proficiency)
- other languages learnt through life experience (e.g. migration, travelling) or school experience
- the language they are currently learning in the Languages program (target language)



SHIFT OF PERSPECTIVE

from a monolingual view



to a plurilingual view

from target language ONLY



to acknowledging their other languages

from what EAL students can't do



to what they bring to the classroom

KNOW THEIR LANGUAGES, THEIR LINGUISTIC AND LITERACY PRACTICES



Avoid assumptions of their linguistic skills and practices based on family background, schooling experience

Actively investigate their linguistic competence in their other language(s)

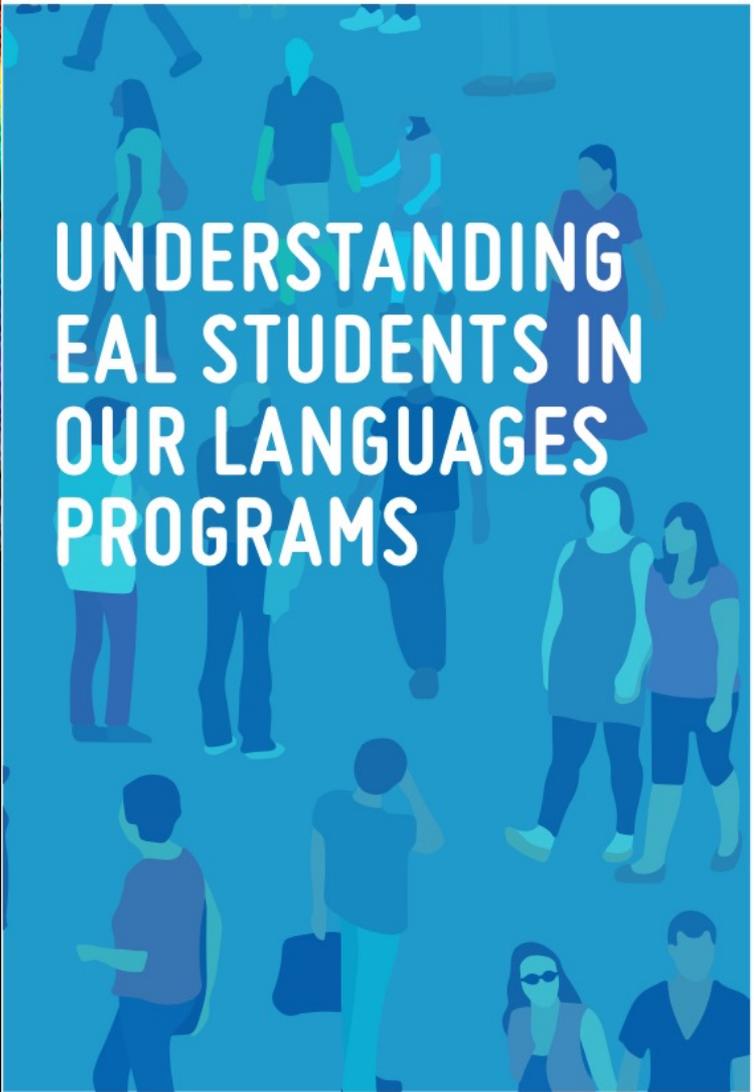
link to webinar:

https://mltav.asn.au/recorded_webinars/

A photograph of large, irregularly shaped rocks. The rocks are illuminated with a vibrant rainbow light, creating a spectrum of colors from red at the top to purple at the bottom. The background is dark, making the colorful rocks stand out.

CREATE INCLUSIVE LANGUAGES PROGRAMS

<https://arts.unimelb.edu.au/research-unit-for-multilingualism-and-cross-cultural-communication/community/information-on-multilingualism>

A blue-tinted graphic featuring silhouettes of various people in different poses and activities, representing a diverse group of individuals. The silhouettes are scattered across the blue background.

UNDERSTANDING EAL STUDENTS IN OUR LANGUAGES PROGRAMS

The benefits of having EAL students in the Languages classroom:

1. EAL students tend to demonstrate greater ability to learn additional languages.

Research suggests that multilingual learners have an advantage in learning additional languages. Based on their previous experience of learning, practising and being exposed to more than one language, they often notice similarities between languages, which facilitates pronunciation and makes grammar and words easier to understand. This may contribute to a deeper engagement in their language lessons at school, helping EAL students to develop a positive sense of identity and increased confidence in their language abilities.



2. EAL students start learning the additional language at the same level as their peers.

EAL students can struggle to adjust to the school experience as their English skills vary when they start schooling in Australia. However, research indicates that in Languages classes, EAL students are at the same level as their classmates who only know English (or even have an advantage). The success of EAL students in learning additional languages can enhance their self-perception as successful students and competent learners. The Languages classroom can be a place where the knowledge they bring to school is recognised and valued by teachers, peers, family and the wider school community, thus boosting their confidence, motivation and engagement in the learning process at school.

3. Teachers can use EAL students' knowledge of other languages in their teaching practice.

Language teaching is moving from a monolingual mindset that focuses on one language at a time to approaches which recognise that individuals are able to access and use a set of different linguistic skills in order to communicate and make sense of their world.

Language teachers can recognise and draw on the linguistic experience and practices of EAL students by acknowledging their linguistic background as a resource, by helping them to maintain connections with their home languages, by making comparisons between languages, and by reflecting on the use of languages in different contexts and for different purposes (these are known as **plurilingual pedagogies**). Language teachers play an important role in supporting the linguistic development of EAL students.

4. Learning an additional language can have a positive impact on EAL students' English.

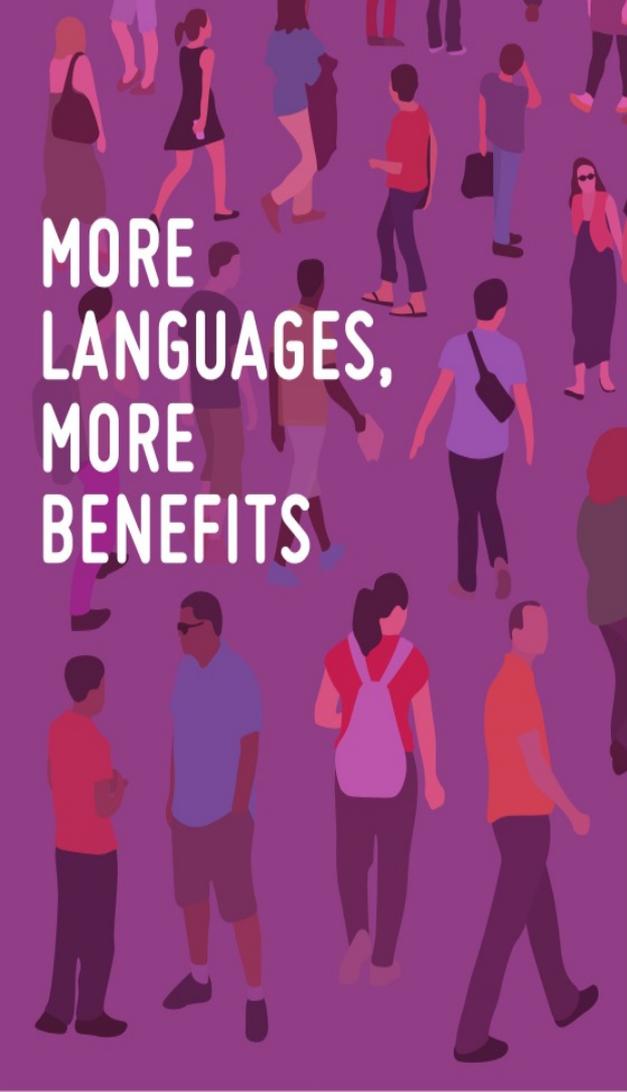
Research indicates that EAL students enrolled in Languages programs can enhance their skills not only in the program language but also in English. By learning an additional language, EAL students gain a deeper understanding about how languages function and how they are acquired, enhancing their understanding of the ways in which language skills are transferrable across languages, including English.



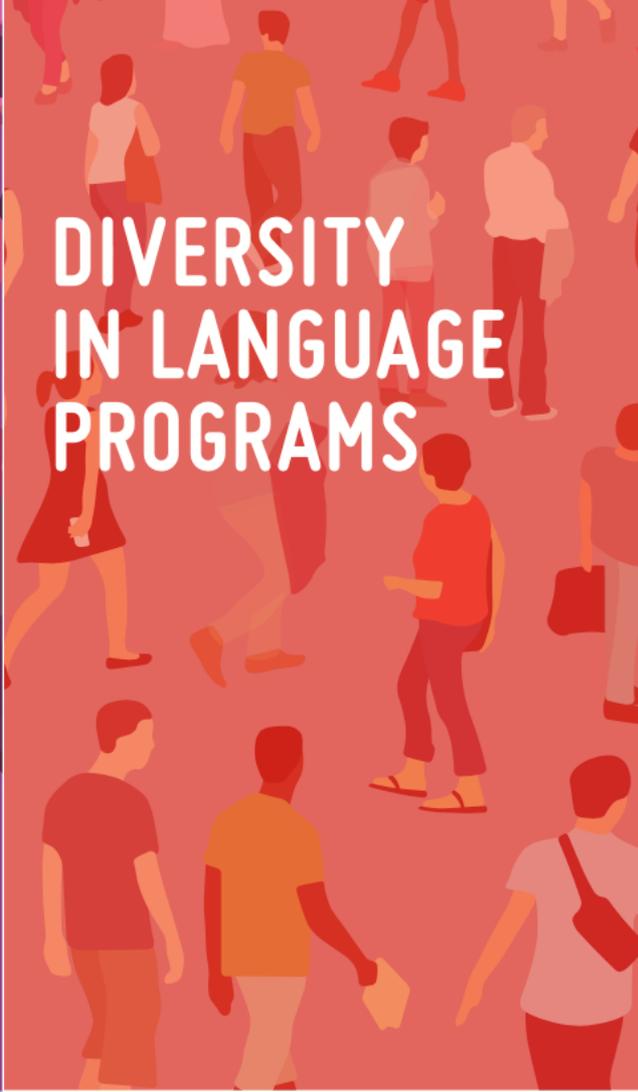
5. The plurilingual space of a Languages classroom is enriched by the languages that EAL students bring with them.

The Languages classroom is by default a space where at least two languages are visible and actively used: the program language and English. EAL students can further enrich this linguistically engaging

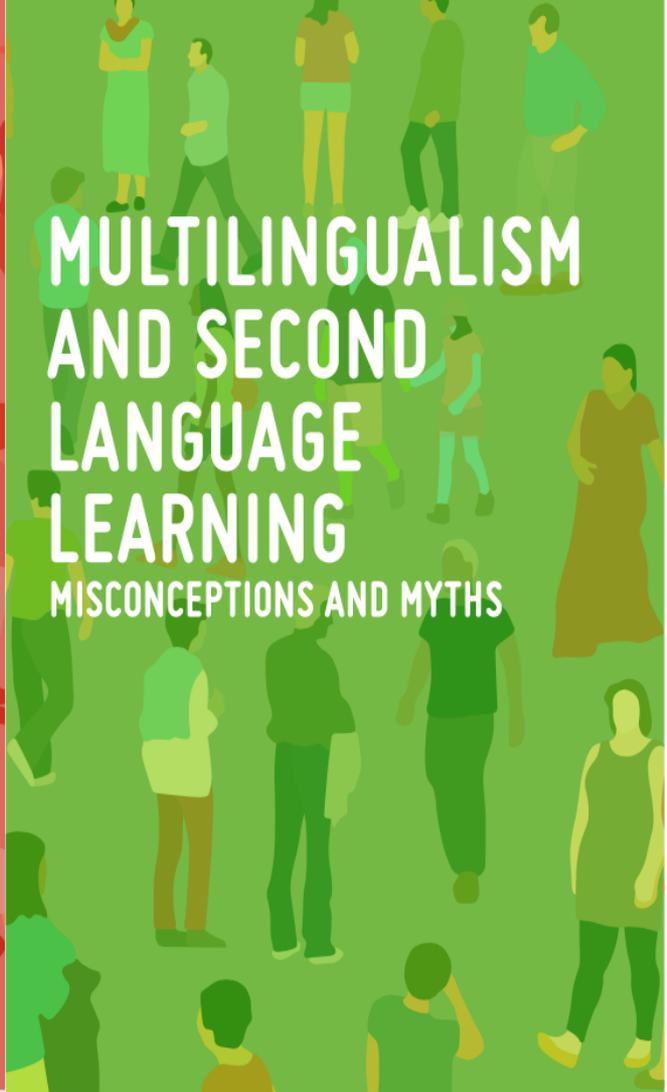




**MORE
LANGUAGES,
MORE
BENEFITS**



**DIVERSITY
IN LANGUAGE
PROGRAMS**



**MULTILINGUALISM
AND SECOND
LANGUAGE
LEARNING**
MISCONCEPTIONS AND MYTHS

RESOURCES FOR TEACHERS

Using multilingual approaches: moving from theory to practice

A resource book of strategies, activities
and projects for the classroom

Kathleen Heugh, Mei French, Janet Armitage, Kerry Taylor-Leech,
Necia Billinghamurst and Sue Ollerhead

https://issuu.com/britishcouncilindia/docs/using_multilingual_approaches_resource_book





RESOURCES FOR TEACHERS



Plurilingual Guide:

Implementing Critical Plurilingual
Pedagogy in Language Education

<https://www.mcgill.ca/plurilinguallab/plurilingual-guide>

**Angelica Galante, Maria Chiras, John
Wayne N. dela Cruz, and Lana F. Zeaiter**

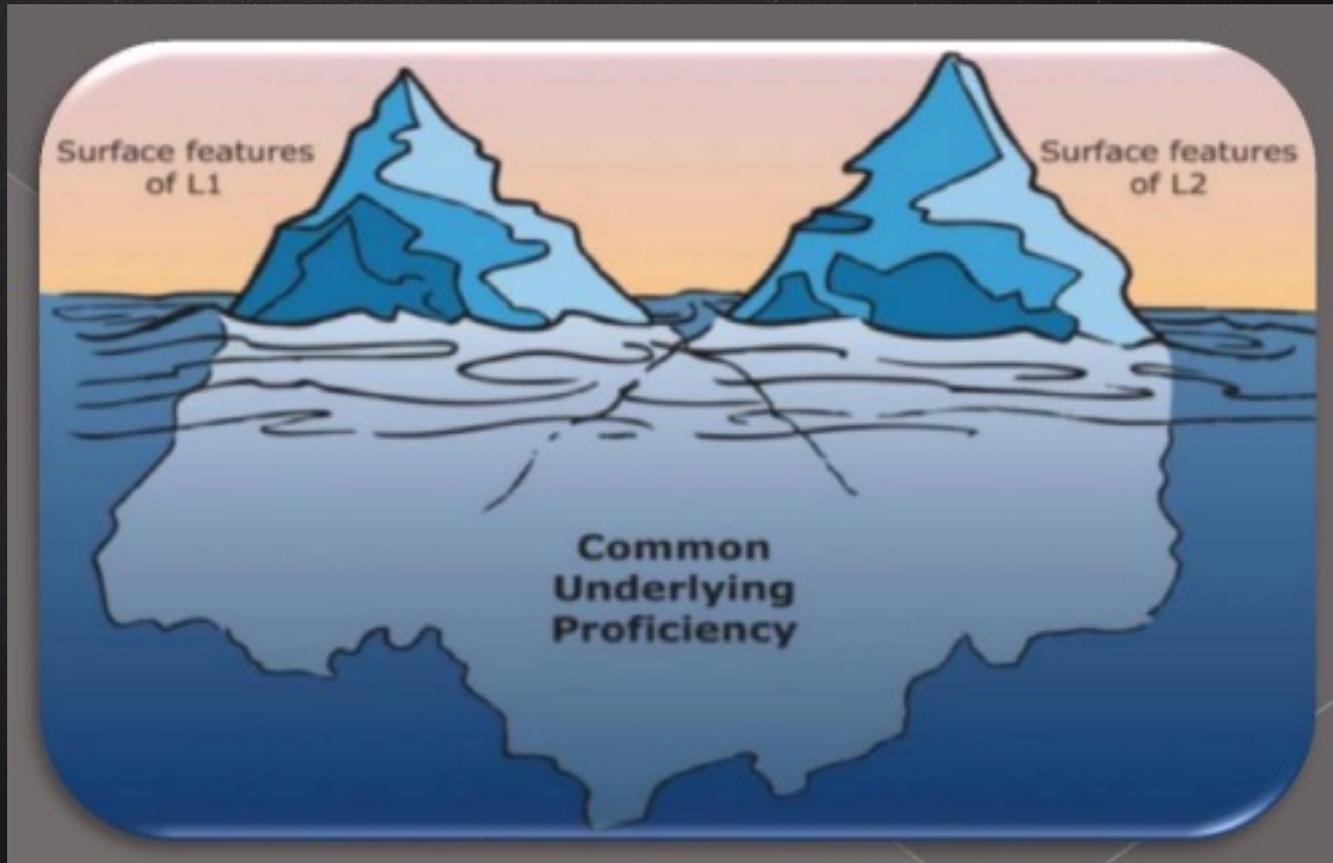
designed by Jade LaFontaine





FOUNDATIONAL CONCEPTS

COMMON UNDERLYING PROFICIENCY





CLASSROOM EXAMPLES

BEFORE WE START...

no need to know the
languages spoken by our
students

no need to use English as
the language of instruction

student agency
competent language
users

for EAL students the target
language may be the safer space

EAL students positioned as experts

research says:

extended linguistic practices

experience in learning languages

tolerance to ambiguity

'multilingualism as a resource'

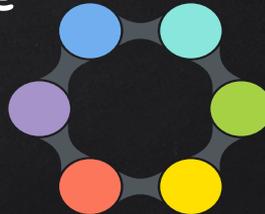
in the classroom:

strategies for transfer
(metalinguistic awareness)

comparisons between languages

start from what they bring to
the learning space

multicultural perspective



in the classroom:

strategies for transfer
(metalinguistic awareness)

comparisons between languages

start from what they bring to
the learning space

multicultural perspective

1-to position EAL students
as experts



2- to help EAL students to
make sense



FIVE STRATEGIES

1

USE YOUR
PRIOR
KNOWLEDGE
OF SINGLE
WORDS

USE THE
LANGUAGES
THAT YOU
ALREADY
KNOW

USE THE
CONTEXT

3

2

COMPARE
WITH THE
LANGUAGES
THAT YOU
KNOW

USE OTHER
CUES:

4

PICTURES,
FACIAL
EXPRESSIONS,
GESTURES,
SOUNDS,
NOISES,
ETC.

LOOKS LIKE



SOUNDS LIKE



5

WORK WITH
OTHERS

strategies for 'making sense'

PHONOLOGICAL TRANSFER

Find three words in your home language for each of the difficult sounds identified:

r

ci/gi

gn

gl

Create a card for each word with:

- the word in Italian
- the word in your language
- a picture

<p>bagnata</p>	
	

Practice the sounds in your group, present to the class your cards and then read aloud the poem in Italian.

MORPHOLOGICAL TRANSFER

NUMERO	CARATTERE	PRONUNCIA CINESE	PRONUNCIA GIAPPONESE
1	一	yi	ichi
2	二	er	ni
3	三	san	san
4	四	si	shi
5	五	wu	go
6	六	liu	roku
7	七	qi	shichi
8	八	ba	hachi
9	九	ju	ku
10	十	shi	ju
100	百	bai	hyaku
1,000	千	qian	sen
10,000	万	wan	man

GENDERED LANGUAGES

masculin	féminin	
Il est italien.	Elle est italienne.	-en → -enne
Il est généreux.	Elle est généreuse.	-eux → -euse
Il est menteur.	Elle est menteuse.	-eur → -euse
Il est bon.	Elle est bonne.	-on → -onne
Il est sportif.	Elle est sportive.	-f → -ve
Il est cher.	Elle est chère.	-er → -ère
Il est secret.	Elle est secrète.	-et → -ète

et encore

gros → grosse	long → longue
gras → grasse	doux → douce
roux → rousse	gentil → gentille
blanc → blanche	beau → belle
	vieux → vieille

COGNATES



SENTENCE STRUCTURE / TEXT DIRECTION

On Saturday morning I played soccer with my brother at the park.

صباح السبت لعبت كرة القدم مع اخي في الحديقة

start from what they bring

THE LANGUAGE EXPERIENCE

Procedure for the language experience approach

The experience

Typically, the language experience approach involves a shared experience such as everyday happenings, common school experiences, a classroom event or hands-on activity, excursions but can also include students' personal experiences or ideas.

Spoken language

The teacher's role in language experience is to support the student to recreate the experience orally as they:

- capitalise on students' interest and experiences
- prompt the students to reflect on the experiences
- ask questions to elicit details about the experience through more explicit language
- help students to rehearse the ideas they will be writing about.

use of words in their language(s)

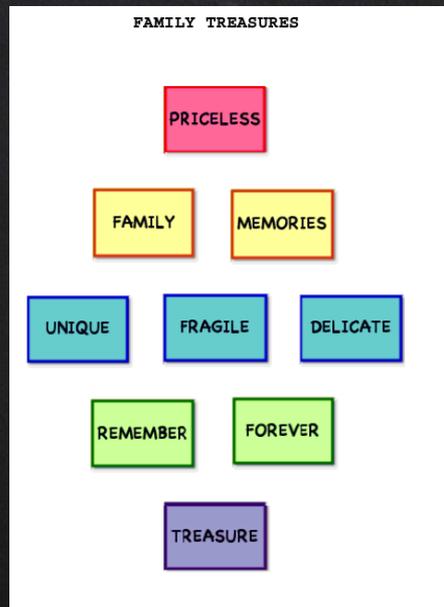
use of objects of their cultural/family tradition

use of gesture

knowledge of literacy in their other language(s)



The Story of Khalid's Family Treasure



IDENTITY TEXTS

use of target language and home language

use of objects

use of pictures/images/drawings

MY NAME

start from what they bring
multicultural perspective

Part 2: Strategies, activities and projects for the classroom

2.1 Introduction	27
2.2 Activities and projects for the multilingual classroom	27
Project 1: My name	31
Project 2: Linguistic landscape	37
Project 3: Our multilingual class	45
Project 4: Maths – language survey	53
Project 5: Cultural artefacts	59
Project 6: Translation study	65
Project 7: Proverbs	71
Project 8: Procedure texts	77
Project 9: Science – growing grass heads	85
Project 10: Science – nature walk	91
Project 11: Maths – graphing	99
Project 12: Festivals	105

Why are these activities useful?

Our names are often our first connection with language. Learning each other's names, how to pronounce and use them correctly and the stories behind them can support positive relationships between students and teachers. It can also be a good starting point for learning about the languages in our classroom

Overview

Grade	Lower and upper primary (Grades 4–8)
Focus	Home or local language, main classroom language and English; translanguageing; questions and answers; oral presentation
Content focus	Social studies, cultural studies
Description	In this set of activities, students explore and share the stories behind their names. This activity is best done with students choosing the language/s they wish to use. The teacher can provide explanations and translations of words as needed. Selecting which language is (or languages are) most appropriate for what you want to do is called 'purposeful' language use.

This project includes four activities:

- 1 The teacher's name
- 2 Finding out about your name
- 3 Preparing your presentation
- 4 Sharing the story of your name

Around The World in 43 Idioms



Level: Intermediate

Plurilingual Strategies: Cross-cultural comparisons to acquire understanding of different forms and meanings of words in English and other languages; translanguaging for meaning making

IDIOMS AND PROVERBS



POSITION EAL STUDENTS AS EXPERTS

choose an idiom from your culture/language

explain the meaning of the idiom:

*picture

*act it out

idioms in the target language



বামুন গেল ঘর তো লাঙল তুলে ধর।
Bengali

When the cat's away,
the mice will play



Andare a letto con le galline
Italian

Going to bed with chickens



ناچ نہ جانے آنگن ٹیڑھا
پکانا نہ جانے بینگن ٹیڑھا

Urdu

You don't know dancing and
think the dance floor is tilted.
You don't know cooking and
think eggplant is slanted.

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B8DB06vMbPskdXJzUjVXdHpLUWM/view?resourcekey=0-YUiiLkAC8drrY3ARC5fg9A>
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B8DB06vMbPskdXJzUjVXdHpLUWM/view?resourcekey=0-YUiiLkAC8drrY3ARC5fg9A>

TO CONTINUE THE CONVERSATION

Do you have more specific questions related to your context?
Would you like to share ideas/teaching practices?

info@mltav.asn.au
elena.pirovano@unimelb.edu.au

THANKS!



Resources:

<https://arts.unimelb.edu.au/research-unit-for-multilingualism-and-cross-cultural-communication/community/information-on-multilingualism>

https://issuu.com/britishcouncilindia/docs/using_multilingual_approaches_resource_book

<https://www.mcgill.ca/plurilinguallab/plurilingual-guide>

<http://www.duallanguageproject.com/printbooklets.html>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DahAZ2DQ738>

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B8DBo6vMbPskdXJzUjVXdHpLUWM/view?resourcekey=0-](https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B8DBo6vMbPskdXJzUjVXdHpLUWM/view?resourcekey=0-YUiiLkAC8drrY3ARC5fg9A)

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B8DBo6vMbPskdXJzUjVXdHpLUWM/view?resourcekey=0-YUiiLkAC8drrY3ARC5fg9A>

References

Cummins, J. (2005). *Teaching for cross-language transfer in dual language education: Possibilities and pitfalls*. TESOL Symposium on dual language education.

de Jong, E., Yilmaz, T., & Marichal, N. (2019). A multilingualism-as-a-resource orientation in dual language education. *Theory Into Practice, 58*(2), 107-120.

Photo credits:

Robertson, S.A., & Graven, M. (2020). A mathematics teacher's response to a dilemma: 'I'm supposed to teach them English but they don't understand'. *South African Journal of Childhood Education, 10*(1). doi: [10.4102/sajce.v10i1.800](https://doi.org/10.4102/sajce.v10i1.800)

<https://thinkspace.csu.edu.au/leaht/2019/05/05/literacy-watered-down/>