A Study on Multilingual Activities Originated by a Primary School Teacher in Japan:

From a Viewpoint of Plurilingualism and Language Awareness

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Abstract

This paper deals with a practice of multilingual activities in a Japanese primary school, which has been designed and implemented by an in-service teacher in Nara, one of the tourist sites in Japan. He has let his students, for example, make multilingual interviews with tourists from abroad, perform multilingual *Manzai* (stand-up comedy) and public speaking. This practice is extremely rare in the Japanese context, where English is almost exclusively designated as the foreign language at school.

The primary purpose of this paper is to demonstrate that this practice can be identified as a realization of language education for plurilingualism and language awareness, in that the students were approaching and achieving the goals of plurilingual education and language awareness through the activities. The outcomes of the practice were clarified by an analysis of the curriculum and their reflection by text mining. The secondary purpose is to discuss teachers' experiences, awareness of their own linguistic competences and the professional competence for practicing multilingual activities. Profiling of the teachers' experiences and competences enabled us to infer that the teacher who tackled multilingual activities would have complicated and diverse language experiences, perception of his own plurilingual competence, and the professional competence to make use of intercultural materials including parents and others, according to children's needs.

Key words：primary school, plurilingualism, language awareness

1. Introduction

The language policy in Japan has been monolingual in a dual way. *Kokugo* (the national language), on the one side, has been the title of a language subject as well as the language for instruction. No one wonders what the national language is, although there is practically no government regulation which designates Japanese as the one. As a result, Japan's image of ethnic, cultural and linguistic homogeneity has been created and widely shared. On the other, English has been given a dominant place as the subject of Foreign Language both in primary and secondary education, so that many Japanese would use the term 'foreign language' as the synonym of English. It seems to be believed that all the

citizens in Japan should establish a national identity with Japanese language for social cohesion and English abilities to respond to the global society.

As a fact, however, not only the global but also the Japanese society has been diversified ethnically, culturally and, as an inevitable result, linguistically. According to the data of Japan National Tourism Organization (2020), for instance, the annual number of inbound travelers topped 30 million for the first time in 2018 and has been growing thereafter. The majority of the visitors are from Asian regions (more than 80%) such as South Korea, China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia and so on. It is envisaged that the population and

diversity of the tourists will continue to expand because of the international events such as the Olympic Games in Tokyo and the World Expo in Osaka.

In addition to the inbound travelers, the number of foreign residents in Japan has been growing and reached a new record (2 million 829 thousand) in 2019 (Ministry of Justice 2019). Accordingly, the Japanese schools have now experienced rapid population growth of the children with a different linguistic backgrounds in the classrooms. Figure 1 and 2 (MEXT 2019) show a transition of the number of foreign children in public schools in Japan and the children who need Japanese language support because of their linguistic background, respectively. As we can see, more than 90,000 foreign children are now enrolled in the public schools and their languages are Portuguese, Chinese, Pilipino, Spanish, Vietnamese and so forth.
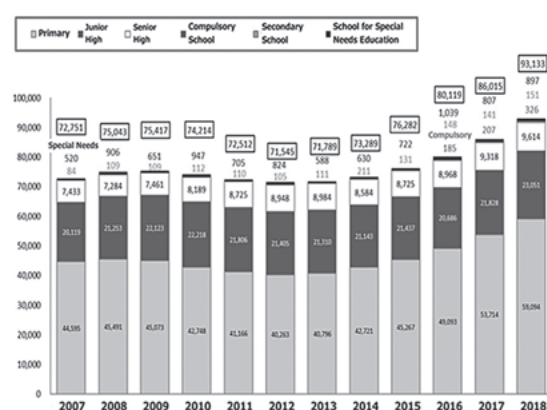

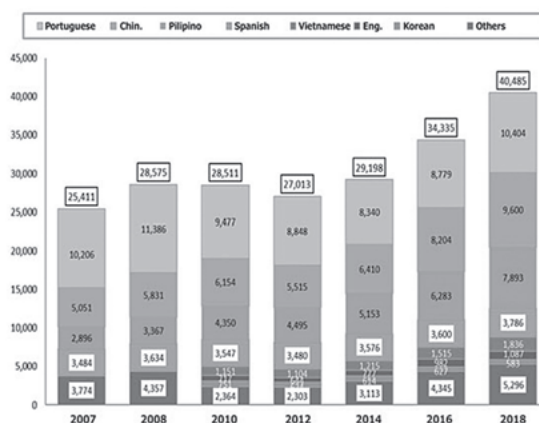**Fig. 1** Foreign children enrolled in public schools (MEXT 2019, author's translation)

Fig. 2 Foreign children who need Japanese language support (MEXT 2019, author's translation)

In the context of this discrepancy between the language education policy and linguistic diversity in the society, a primary school teacher (one of the authors) in Nara has dared to implement multilingual activities in the curriculum. In the activities, students, for example, make multilingual interviews with tourists visiting the sites near the school, perform multilingual *Manzai* (cross talk or stand-up comedy) and public speaking. Dealing with a variety of languages seems to deviate from the Course of Study (Japanese curriculum guidelines) but actually it does not. Rather, it would be an innovative approach from a different perspective in order to achieve the goals of foreign language education in Japan.

Thus, we will firstly observe the curriculum of this practice, depicting what and how the students have been engaged in and clarify the outcomes of the activities from a viewpoint of plurilingualism and language awareness. Secondly, focusing on two specific teachers, one of whom has tackled the multilingualism and the other of whom has been engaged in 'English only' activities, we will discuss the differences between the two and infer the language experiences, awareness and abilities which would characterize the teachers who dare to implement multilingual activities in their classes.

2. Plurilingualism and Language Awareness

Preceding an analysis of the multilingual activities, it would be necessary to describe briefly the perspectives for our discussion: plurilingualism and language awareness.

2. 1. Plurilingualism

Plurilingualism is one of fundamental principles of Council of Europe language education policies and has been known even in Japan since the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (Council of Europe 2001) was translated into Japanese (Yoshijima et al. 2008). According to Beacco and Byram (2007), plurilingualism should be understood in a dual sense that it constitutes a conception of the speaker as fundamentally plural (plurilingualism as a competence in an individual) and a value in that it is the basis of linguistic tolerance, an essential element of intercultural education

(plurilingualism as a value).

As for plurilingualism as a competence, it refers, with pluricultural competence, to 'the ability to use languages for the purposes of communication and to take part in intercultural interaction, where a person, viewed as a social agent has proficiency, of varying degrees, in several languages and experience of several cultures' and it 'is not seen as the superposition or juxtaposition of distinct competences, but rather as the existence of a complex or even composite competence on which the user may draw' (Council Europe 2001: p. 168).

Once the idea of plurilingualism as a competence and a value is adopted, the aim of language education would be profoundly modified (Council of Europe 2001: p.5) as follows:

It is no longer seen as simply to achieve 'mastery' of one or two, or even three languages, each taken in isolation, with the 'ideal native speaker' as the ultimate model. Instead, the aim is to develop a linguistic repertory, in which all linguistic abilities have a place. This implies, of course, that the languages offered in educational institutions should be diversified and students given the opportunity to develop a plurilingual competence. Furthermore, once it is recognised that language learning is a lifelong task, the development of a young person's motivation, skill and confidence in facing new language experience out of school comes to be of central importance.

2. 2. Language Awareness

Language awareness refers to 'a person's sensitivity to and conscious awareness of the nature of language and its role in human life' (Donmall 1985: p.7) and often implies an approach to cultivate awareness of languages. The aims and goals of language awareness as an approach can be illustrated as follows (Baker and Jones 1991):

1. To make explicit a student's implicit knowledge of their first language or languages.
2. To develop skills in studying languages.
3. To develop a perception and understanding of the structure, nature and functions of language.

4. To increase effectiveness in communication in the first, second and/or foreign languages.
5. To give insights into the language learning process and thereby to aid the learning of the first language, second language and foreign languages.
6. To develop an understanding among students of the richness of language variety within the class, school, community, region, nation and world. This may include discussing the variety of spoken and written forms of, for example, Spanish, Chinese, French, English, German throughout the world. This is to mitigate feelings of inferiority amongst those who speak a variety of a language (e.g. English as a second or third language).
7. To foster better relations between ethnic groups by arousing students' awareness of the origins and characteristics of their own language and its place in the world.
8. To help students overcome any feeling of dislocation between the language of the home, the language of the school, of text books and employment.
9. To impart an understanding of the value of language as a crucial part of human life.
10. To develop an understanding of bilingualism and biculturalism in the world

It should be noted that the former half of these (from #1 to #5) are concerned with knowledge and skills to help language learning and the latter half (from #6 to #10) with values and attitudes about languages and language use in a social context. We can find common ground between these and the idea of plurilingualism as a competence and a value. Based on the ideas of language awareness and plurilingualism, the language learners are to be encouraged to expand and use their linguistic repertoire even if it is partial, according to their needs and contexts. Also, they are expected to be aware and tolerant of linguistic diversities in their own competence and in their school, community, nation and world.

3. A Practice of Multilingual Activities in Nara

Multilingual activities are defined here as the activities in which more than one or several languages are dealt with simultaneously and equally in the classes. There are many examples of these in the European context, where the ideas

of plurilingualism and language awareness were originated. *Janua Linguarum* (Candelier 2004) is a broad scale international project, in which sixteen countries in Europe participated. *Éducation et ouverture aux langues à l'école* (EOLE) (Perregaux 2003) is a project in French-speaking Switzerland, which has an established teaching materials and teacher training programs. Although the scale is small, Didenheim project (Young and Hélot 2003) would also be one of the cases, which was initiated and conducted by the in-service teachers with the help of children's family in a small French school.

Even in Japan, we can find some practices of multilingual activities in primary school (Yoshimura et al. 2007, Yoshimura 2011, Iwasaka and Yoshimura 2012, Koïshi 2014, Hata 2014). All of them, however, are the ones that were planned and conducted under the guidance of researchers. We can safely say that there scarcely exists any example of multilingual activities developed by the teachers themselves independently.

The case in Nara here, therefore, would be extremely rare in that one teacher in a school designed, managed the curriculum, developed the teaching materials and coordinated his colleagues toward the implementation of the activities.

3. 1. The Curriculum for the Multilingual Activities

The school concerned is located in the city centre of Nara that is well known as an ancient capital of Japan, full of World Heritage sites and numerous examples of Buddhist and Shinto art and architecture. Consequently, Nara is one of the most popular sites for tourists from abroad as well as from other places in Japan. It is obvious that this school environment affected the curriculum.

The flow of the curriculum can be summarized in Figure 3. The multilingual activities are not implemented exclusively in the class hours of foreign language but rather are cross-curricular ones. Figure 3 shows only the part related to multilingual activities extracted from the whole school curriculum for the fifth and sixth grades,.

The students are supposed to make a research on the Japanese culture in Social Studies. One of their findings is *Kendama*, a traditional toy in Japan. Actually, it is not peculiar to Japan but the students usually believe it is. Then, they practice

Kendama in P.E. classes and verbalize how to do it well. In Foreign Language classes, they translate how to do *Kendama* into English in order to present to foreign tourists in Nara Park, a site for the visitors, during the Period for Integrated Studies. After performing and explaining it to the foreign visitors in English, they would make a short interview asking where they are from, what interests them in Japan, etc. The students also discover many things on the spot, such as how diverse their nationalities, languages, and cultures are, the fact that there are equivalences of *Kendama* even in Europe, and so on.

When they come back from Nara Park for the first time with many discoveries, they share them in the class and begin to collect more information on what interests them, including a variety of languages. In the class of Arithmetic, by the way, they calculate the proportion of foreign tourists by the nationalities or languages on the basis of the number of tourists they met in the park.

After research on the languages that they encountered in the park, they are to perform a *Manzai* dealing with the greetings and
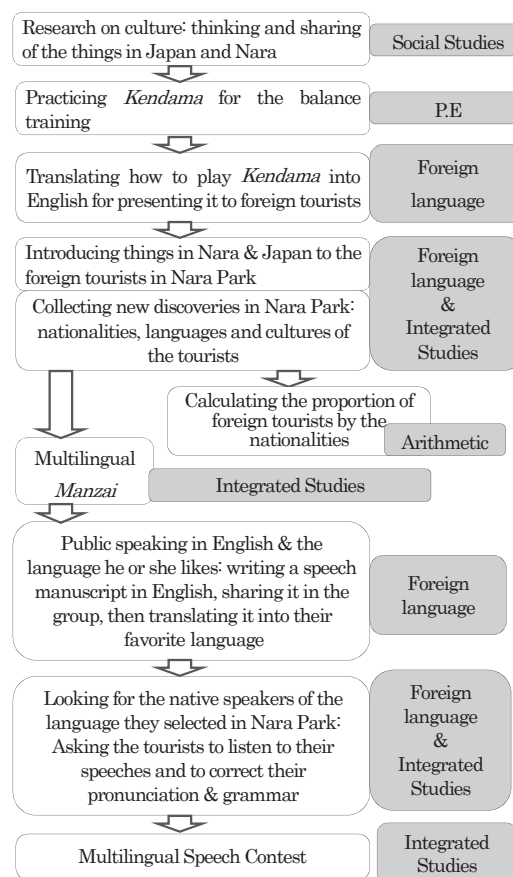

Fig. 3 Flow of the curriculum

characteristics of the language they selected as material. Of course, their performances are given basically in Japanese (*Kansai* dialect) but include simple conversations and the points of pronunciation and expressions of various languages such as Chinese, Korean, French, German, Italian and many others.

As the English textbook for sixth graders contains a chapter titled 'My Dream', the students are supposed to make a speech on their dream in English. They write a manuscript for their speech and share it in a group. The teachers and ALTs revise each manuscript if necessary. Then, the students translate it into their favorite language, using a machine translation on the web both from the Japanese and English versions to be compared and finished as the final draft. The machine translation has a function of pronouncing for most of the familiar languages to the students, so that they can practice reading their draft, imitating the pronunciation on the web.

Next, they go out of school with their manuscript to look for the native speaker of the language they selected. It would be easy for them to find the speakers who are kind enough to help them if they select Chinese or Korean, because more than 70% of foreign visitors to Nara are from these areas. If the languages are Thai, Malay, French, Spanish and Pilipino, it would not be very difficult to find, since the visitors from the areas are increasing recently. Students who selected a less familiar language in Japan, such as Greek, Turkish, Norwegian, Finnish, Ukrainian and others, have to be ready to face the difficulties in finding the speakers (but there were students who actually selected these in the past). Since the time of the Periods for Integrated Studies is limited, not a few students are to visit the site again after school or on weekends with permission of their teacher.

The languages they use in the activities are English, Japanese and the selected language. It means that they have to manage to communicate utilizing every linguistic repertoire in their own plurilingual competence.

The last event for them is a multilingual speech contest in the Period for Integrated Studies at the end of the sixth grade. They tell the audience in which language they make a speech and explain the characteristics of the language they chose before their performance, so that their classmates can be aware of the differences among languages. The total number of languages they use are not less than ten each year. The choice of languages includes not only familiar ones as Chinese, Korean, French, German, Spanish or Italian but also unfamiliar ones as Russian, Turkish, Finnish, Indonesian, Greek, Norwegian, Ukrainian and others.

3. 2. An Analysis of the Outcomes

Brief observations of the activities in the curriculum enable us to recognize that this practice definitely conforms to plurilingual education. As mentioned above, the aim of language education based on plurilingualism 'is to develop a linguistic repertory, in which all linguistic abilities have a place' and 'the languages offered in educational institutions should be diversified and students given the opportunity to develop a plurilingual competence'. These are exactly what the students in Nara experience in various kinds of multilingual activities, especially in their interactions with foreign tourists outside of their school.

Also, they 'make explicit their implicit knowledge of their first language or languages' and 'develop a perception and understanding of the structure, nature and functions of language', which are included in the goals of language awareness, when they inquire into unfamiliar languages for the *Manzai* performance, translate their manuscript from Japanese and English to another language and compare them, and verbalize the characteristics of the language they chose before their speech performance.

Thus, the activities themselves look like the ones which would let the students approach the goals and aims of plurilingualism and language awareness. It does not mean, however, that what the students actually learn coincides with the goals and aims. So, we made an analysis of the students' reflection to see if they were achieving the goals as the outcomes of the practice.

The teacher has the students reflect their learning at the end of their sixth grade every year. He asks them two questions as follows:

Q1. What do you think is good about learning languages other than English?

Q2. What would you like to deepen, try and know in learning languages from now?

Twenty five students answered these questions in 2018. We did a quantitative text analysis of the students' answers for this year to each question with KH Coder (Higuchi 2016), which enabled us to extract typical descriptions in the qualitative data.

Table 1 shows extracted terms which appeared more than once in their reflection and Figure 4 (N 47, E 67, D .062), represents a co-occurrence network based on the words in Table 1 for Question 1. The network diagram demonstrates the words with similar appearance patterns, i.e., with high degrees of co-occurrence, connected by lines (edges) . The size of each circle represents the frequency of the word and the thickness of each line shows the strength of co-occurrence of the words.[1]

If we focus, for example, on the connected circles on the left of Figure 4, we can identify the following sentence (translated by the authors) as a typical answer of children:

'Comparing with English, I notice that each language has different characteristics in pronunciation, such as how to use the tongue;

trills in Russian, German, and Italian, respectively, which are good. I told my dream in Korean but I didn't think it has trilling sounds.

Underlined words occurs frequently in the descriptions, as we can see in the figure.

Considering this as one of typical reflections of the students, we should judge that many students

Fig. 4 Co-occurrence network for Q. 1 (N 47, E 67, D .062)

Table 1 Extracted words which appeared more than once for Q.1

Extracted words	Frequency	Extracted words	Frequency
言語 (language)	23	次 (next)	3
する (N/A)	22	詳しい (detailed)	3
知る (know)	19	発音 (pronunciation)	3
思う (think)	17	聞く (listen)	3
国 (country)	16	方々 (people, N/A)	3
調べる (research)	16	友だち (friend)	3
学ぶ (learn)	14	いう (say)	2
世界 (world)	12	お父さん (Father)	2
外国 (foreign country)	11	したう (love)	2
やる (N/A)	9	しゃべる (speak)	2
人 (people)	9	できる (can)	2
ない (not)	8	また (again)	2
いろいろ (various)	7	まだ (yet)	2
なる (N/A)	7	アルファベット (alphabet)	2
もっと (more)	7	ドイツ語 (German)	2
たくさん (a lot)	6	フランス語 (French)	2
イタリア (Italy)	6	違う (different)	2
話せる (can speak)	6	歌 (song)	2
ある (N/A)	5	活かす (make use of)	2
英語 (English)	5	観光 (sightseeing)	2
言葉 (words)	5	言う (tell)	2
他 (other)	5	国々 (countries)	2
これから (from now)	4	使う (use)	2
スピーチ (speech)	4	似る (resemble)	2
フランス (France)	4	自分 (self)	2
良い (good)	4	少し (a little)	2
インタビュー (interview)	3	先生 (teacher)	2
ノルウェー (Norway)	3	中国語 (Chinese language)	2
遺産 (heritage)	3	中国人 (Chinese people)	2
覚える (remember)	3	特長 (Characteristics)	2
学習 (learning)	3	発表 (presentation)	2
楽しい (pleasant)	3	表記 (notation)	2
今 (now)	3	文化 (culture)	2
今回 (this time)	3	夢 (dream)	2

Table 2 Extracted words which appeared more than once for Q.2

Extracted words	Frequency	Extracted words	Frequency
言語 (language)	23	次 (next)	3
する (N/A)	22	詳しい (detailed)	3
知る (know)	19	発音 (pronunciation)	3
思う (think)	17	聞く (listen)	3
国 (country)	16	方々 (people, N/A)	3
調べる (research)	16	友だち (friend)	3
学ぶ (learn)	14	いう (say)	2
世界 (world)	12	お父さん (Father)	2
外国 (foreign country)	11	したう (love)	2
やる (N/A)	9	しゃべる (speak)	2
人 (people)	9	できる (can)	2
ない (not)	8	また (again)	2
いろいろ (various)	7	まだ (yet)	2
なる (N/A)	7	アルファベット (alphabet)	2
もっと (more)	7	ドイツ語 (German)	2
たくさん (a lot)	6	フランス語 (French)	2
イタリア (Italy)	6	違う (different)	2
話せる (can speak)	6	歌 (song)	2
ある (N/A)	5	活かす (make use of)	2
英語 (English)	5	観光 (sightseeing)	2
言葉 (words)	5	言う (tell)	2
他 (other)	5	国々 (countries)	2
これから (from now)	4	使う (use)	2
スピーチ (speech)	4	似る (resemble)	2
フランス (France)	4	自分 (self)	2
良い (good)	4	少し (a little)	2
インタビュー (interview)	3	先生 (teacher)	2
ノルウェー (Norway)	3	中国語 (Chinese language)	2
遺産 (heritage)	3	中国人 (Chinese people)	2
覚える (remember)	3	特長 (Characteristics)	2
学習 (learning)	3	発表 (presentation)	2
楽しい (pleasant)	3	表記 (notation)	2
今 (now)	3	文化 (culture)	2
今回 (this time)	3	夢 (dream)	2

'make explicit their implicit knowledge of their first language or languages' and 'develop a perception and understanding of the structure, nature and functions of language', which are the goals of Language Awareness.

As for Question 2, extracted words which appeared more than once are in Table 2 and a co-occurrence network is in Figure 5 (N 53, E 89, D .065).

Focusing on the connected circles in the middle and the left of figure 5, the following sentences can be extracted as typical reflections of the students:

'I want to <u>be able to speak</u> and <u>learn</u> <u>various</u> <u>languages</u> <u>other</u> than English.'

'What I want to do is to <u>research</u> more about <u>various</u> <u>other</u> <u>languages</u>, to <u>learn</u> and <u>make use of</u> them, although only one <u>language</u> of a <u>country</u> this time, because there are many <u>other</u> <u>countries</u>.'

'Now I <u>know</u> <u>languages</u> of <u>various</u> <u>countries</u>. I <u>think</u> I should try to use the <u>languages</u> that I <u>research</u> to see if I can communicate with <u>people</u> in the <u>world</u>.'
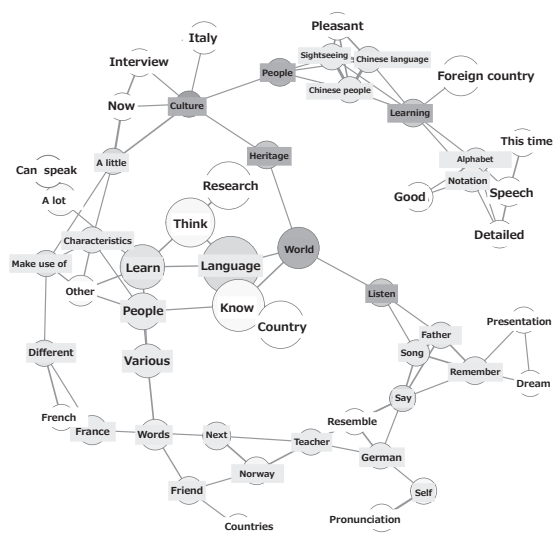

Fig. 5 Co-occurrence network for Q. 2
(N 53, E 89, D .065)

We can safely say that the practice has developed 'an understanding among students of the richness of language variety within the class, school, community, region, nation and world' as a goal of language awareness and developed 'a linguistic repertory' of the students, which is to be aimed at in language education for plurilingualism.

Moreover, what the students have learned here is consistent with the objectives of the foreign language activities in the present Course of Study (MEXT 2008): to 'form the foundation of pupils' communication abilities through foreign languages while developing the understanding of languages and cultures through various experiences, fostering a positive attitude toward communication, and familiarizing pupils with the sounds and basic expressions of foreign languages'. The new Course of Study (MEXT 2017) also includes basic skills to be aware of the differences between Japanese and other languages, to understand the knowledge about them, fundamental abilities to communicate his or her ideas and feelings to each other and to foster attitudes to communicate actively in foreign languages as its objectives.

One 'deviation' of this practice from the Course of Study is that it does not deal with 'only' English but various languages. Still, the practice lets students approach or achieve the objectives of the Course of Study as well as the goals and aims for plurilingualism and language awareness; namely, it goes beyond the Course of Study.

4. Teachers' Experiences, Awareness and Competences Concerning Plurilingual Education

Now, let us go on to our next topic: teachers. What are the differences between the teachers who dare to deal with a variety of languages in their practices and those who would not? Although several factors could be illustrated such as their general experiences, knowledge, skills, attitudes, personality and others, we should concentrate on language experiences, awareness and abilities concerning foreign language education.

Two in-service teachers, X and Y, were selected for the comparison. Teacher X (one of the authors), 44 years old with 17-year teaching experience, is the one who has implemented multilingual activities in his practice. Teacher Y, 35 years old with 9-year teaching experience, has been an expert of primary English lessons since he was hired and deployed as such by the local board of education.

As for the method of comparison, we used *My Languages Profile*, a reflective tool for trainee teachers, which was developed by Hadfield (2018) in Scotland. The Scottish Government

introduced 1+2 languages policy in 2010 to create the conditions in which every child in Scotland will learn two languages in addition to their mother tongue. Accordingly, the Scottish Council of Deans of Education (SCDE) has tried to promote the crucial role and contribution of teacher education in supporting the implementation of the 1+2 languages policy. The language working group of SCDE has created a framework for language education, called *National Framework for Languages: Plurilingualism and Pluriliteracies* (SCDELG 2018, Yoshimura and Hancock 2019) . *My Languages Profile* is a portfolio for language teachers, which was developed under this framework, that is, for the realization of plurilingual education.[2]

Teachers X and Y were asked to do reflection with the portfolio as a case study. Teacher X is one of the authors of this paper but he did his reflection before he was involved in this study, so that he had no idea about plurilingualism and language awareness.

4.1. Teachers' Language Experiences and Awareness of Linguistic Competence

We can compare language experiences and awareness of their own linguistic competences using 'language portrait' in the Profile. The results of Teacher X and Y are represented in Figure 6 and 7, respectively.
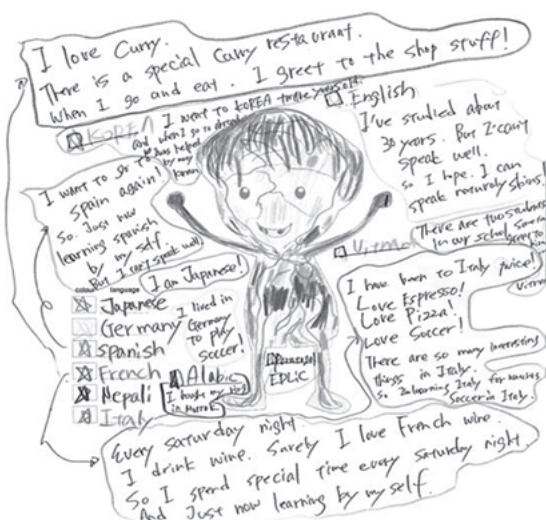

Fig. 6　Language portrait of Teacher X

Seeing these portraits, we firstly notice that both teachers are aware of their competence of

several language varieties including Japanese dialects but X has had much more complicated linguistic and cultural experiences than Y.

For example, X lived in Germany as a football player, which means that he had to work with people who have different linguistic and cultural backgrounds in a German football team. Y, on the other hand, did not have such complicated experiences but studying English passionately and learning Mandarin in his college course.

Another finding is the difference of their perception of linguistic competence. Teacher X perceives it 'as the existence of a complex or even composite competence', as was mentioned earlier as the definition of plurilingual competence. Teacher Y's perception can be 'seen as the superposition or juxtaposition of distinct competences', which was mentioned as an inappropriate understanding of plurilingual competence. This difference might come from their priority concerning language use and language learning: using languages has been prior for X, while learning has been prior for Y.
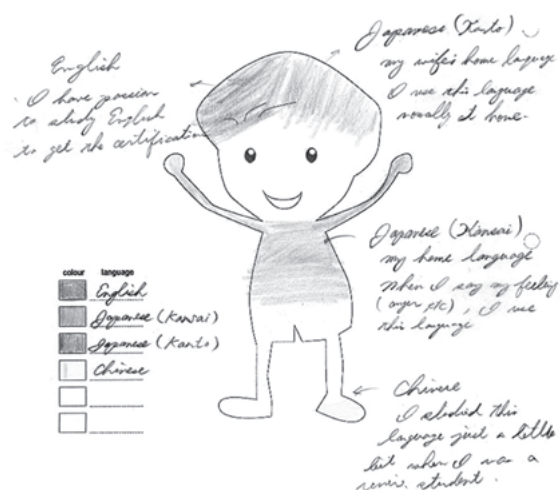

Fig. 7　Language portrait of Teacher Y

4.2. Teachers' Self-reflections on their Professional Competences

Next, we would like to compare their self-reflections on their professional competences as a teacher. In the Profile, they are expected to reflect on their knowledge, attitudes and skills in the four categories: A. Adapting to the context, B. Planning the learning experience, C. Creating a favourable learning environment and D. Observing and supporting each child's

development.

There are many standards for each category as seen in Table 3. They self-evaluated their knowledge, attitudes and skills with each standard on a four point scale. The standards highlighted in black mean that the difference between the two teachers is three points, in light grey, two points.

The differences can be observed in the areas, A, B and D. It should be noted that the differences are apparent concerning the following standards on Cultures in Planning the learning experience:

i. I can evaluate and select a variety of texts, source materials and activities which awaken learners' interest in and help them to develop their knowledge and understanding of their own and the other language cultures (cultural facts, events, attitudes and identity etc.)

ii. I can evaluate and select a variety of texts, source material and activities which help learners to reflect on the concept of 'otherness' and understand different value systems.

iii. I can evaluate and select activities which enhance the learners' intercultural awareness.

iv. I can plan activities to ensure the interdependence of language and culture.

Teacher X rated these competences four, while Y one or two, meaning X thinks that he is good at selecting and evaluating materials concerning languages and culture and Y, on the other hand, is not confident. It is assumed that their self-reflection on these standards could come from their language and intercultural experiences as mentioned above.

Other noteworthy differences are 'taking children's individual needs into account' and 'cooperating with others, especially with the families' in category D. These standards are concerned with rather general competences as a teacher but X might be able to make use of even parents and other stakeholders as the multilingual materials according to the students' needs. Actually, X has utilized the foreign tourists for children's multilingual experiences.

5. Conclusion

We have demonstrated that the practice in Nara can be identified as a realization of language education for plurilingualism and language awareness, on the basis of discussion on each activity in the curriculum and on the children's

reflection as the outcome. It was clarified that multilingual activities enabled students to approach and achieve the goals of education for plurilingualism and language awareness and, at the same time, the objectives of the Course of Study. We can reasonably say, therefore, that multilingual activities should be disseminated in order for the children to respond to the linguistic and cultural diversity of our local and global communities, that is, to try to communicate with linguistically and culturally different others, making full use of his or her plurilingual repertoire in Japanese, English or any other languages.

It should also be noted here that language awareness or plurilingual education does not replace English learning which has taken priority over another language learning in Japan. Rather, it should be 'an add-on' (Baker and Jones 1991) and could enhance the effectiveness of learning English, as we observed in the curriculum of the practice in Nara.

Additionally, we verified the complicated language experiences, a perception of plurilingual competence, and the professional competences probably based on the experiences of the teacher who tackled multilingual activities. These findings may provide a new aspect to teacher training for foreign language education. If we develop a program which encourages them to make the best use of their plurilingual competences, not just English one, they might change the perception of their own and children's linguistic competence and could try to add more languages in the practices. This would be one of our next challenges.

6. Acknowledgement

Notes

1) Since the students' answers were written in Japanese, the tables and the network diagrams were generated from extracted Japanese words which appeared more than once for each question, so that some of the extracted words did not have English correspondents. Thus, N/A in each table indicates "not applicable". "N", "E" and "D" in each figure represent the

Table 3　Teachers' self-reflections on their professional competences

		A	B
A. Adapting to the context			
A. Responding positively to linguistic and cultural diversity:			
	i. I can respond positively to linguistic and cultural diversity and treat the fact that some children are plurilingual and have experience of different cultures as a real resource for the group.	4	3
	ii. I can encourage learners to relate the target language to other languages they speak or have learned.	4	3
	iii. I can take account of the emotional dimension in linguistic exchanges with and between the children.	4	3
	iv. I can understand the personal, intellectual and cultural value of learning other languages.	4	3
B. Organising activities on the theme of language and diversity:			
	i. I can guide the children in their encounters with different linguistic or cultural behaviour and encourage them to talk about the subject.	4	2
	ii. I can draw maximum benefit from the moments when the children start to become aware of the workings of the language.	4	1
	iii. I can relate the language I am teaching to the culture of those who speak it.	4	3
	iv. I can take into account the cognitive needs of learners (communication, problem solving etc.)	4	4
C. Supporting the linguistic development of children with other first languages:			
	i. I can take account of the specific situation of children with other first languages in order to identify their individual abilities and needs.	4	3
	ii. I can help children to draw on their first language in order to make progress in acquiring the language used for exchanges within the group.	4	1
D. Working as a team:			
	i. I can contribute to an effective exchange of practices and ideas between team members.	4	2
I can also…			
B. Planning the learning experience			
E. Theoretical and curricular context:			
	i. I can understand the requirements set in national and local curricula (Es and Os (Experiences and Outcomes), benchmarks etc.)	2	3
	ii. I can understand and integrate the content of European documents (eg. CEFR, ELP) as appropriate in my teaching.	2	1
	iii. I can draw on appropriate theories of language learning, culture etc. and relevant research findings to guide my teaching.	4	2
F. Culture:			
	i. I can evaluate and select a variety of texts, source materials and activities which awaken learners' interest in and help them to develop their knowledge and understanding of their own and the other language cultures (cultural facts, events, attitudes and identity etc.)	4	2
	ii. I can evaluate and select a variety of texts, source material and activities which help learners to reflect on the concept of 'otherness' and understand different value systems.	4	1
	iii. I can evaluate and select activities which enhance the learners' intercultural awareness.	4	1
	iv. I can plan activities to ensure the interdependence of language and culture.	4	1
G. Lesson content:			
	i. I can identify curriculum requirements and set learning aims and objectives suited to my learners' needs and interests.	4	4
	ii. I can set objectives which encourage learners to reflect on their learning.	4	3
	iii. I can structure lesson plans and/or plan for periods of teaching in a coherent and varied sequence of content.	4	3
	iv. I can plan activities to ensure the interdependence of listening, speaking, reading and writing.	4	4
	v. I can plan to teach elements of other subjects using the target language (cross-curricular teaching, CLIL etc.)	4	2
H. Resources:			
	i. I can identify and evaluate a range of coursebook/materials appropriate for the age, interests and language level of the learners.	4	3
	ii. I can design learning materials and activities appropriate for my learners.	4	4
I can also…			
C. Creating a favourable learning environment			
I. Talking to children in the classroom:			
	i. I can tell whether the language I am using is well adapted to the abilities and needs of the children in this age group.	4	4
	ii. I can react effectively and use a variety of strategies when the children do not seem to understand everything I am saying to them (including in the target language).	4	4
	iii. I can make each child feel involved in the discussion.	4	4
	iv. I can conduct a lesson in the target language.	4	3
	v. I can decide when it is appropriate to use the target language and when not to.	4	4
	vi. I can encourage learners to use the target language in their activities.	4	3
	vii. I can present language content (new and previously encountered items of language, topics etc.) in ways which are appropriate for individuals and specific groups of learners.	4	3
	viii. I can evaluate and select a variety of activities which help learners to learn vocabulary.	4	4
J. Organising the lesson:			
	i. I can encourage the children to use non-verbal communication to support oral expression.	4	4
	ii. I can make use of each activity in order to foster the children's language development.	4	3
	iii. I can select from and plan a variety of organisational forms (frontal, individual, pair, group work) as appropriate.	4	4
	iv. I can start a lesson in an engaging way.	4	2
	v. I can be flexible when working from a lesson plan and respond to learner interests as the lesson progresses.	4	3
	vi. I can ensure smooth transitions between activities for individuals, groups and the whole class.	4	4
	vii. I can time classroom activities to reflect individual learners' attention spans.	4	3
	viii. I can finish off a lesson in a focused way.	4	2
	ix. I can stimulate children's curiosity about writing.	4	2
	x. I can help develop each child's confidence in the use of languages.	4	3
	xi. I can cater for a range of learning styles.	4	2
K. Developing receptive skills:			
1. Reading:	i. I can select texts appropriate to the needs, interests and language level of the learners.	4	3
	ii. I can provide a range of pre-reading activities to help learners to orientate themselves to the text.		
	iii. I can encourage learners to use their knowledge of a topic and their expectation about a text when reading.		
	iv. I can apply appropriate ways of reading a text in class (eg. aloud, silently, in groups etc.)		
	v. I can introduce, and help students to deal with, new or unknown items of grammar in a variety of ways (teacher presentation, awareness-raising, discovery etc.)		
2. Listening:	i. I can select texts appropriate to the needs, interests and language level of the learners.	4	3
	ii. I can provide a range of pre-listening activities which help learners to orientate themselves to a text.		
	iii. I can encourage learners to use their knowledge of a topic and their expectations about a text when listening.		
	iv. I can design and select different activities in order to practise and develop different listening strategies (listening for gist, specific information etc.)		
L. Developing productive skills:			
1. Speaking:	i. I can evaluate and select meaningful speaking activities to encourage learners of differing abilities to participate.	4	3
	ii. I can evaluate and select meaningful speaking activities to encourage learners to express their opinions, identity, culture etc.		
	iii. I can evaluate and select a variety of techniques to make learners aware of, discriminate and help them to pronounce sounds in the target language.		
2. Writing:	i. I can evaluate and select meaningful activities to encourage learners to develop their creative potential.	3	2
	ii. I can evaluate and select texts in a variety of text types to function as good examples for the learners' writing.		
	iii. I can help learners to gather and share information for their writing task.		
	iv. I can introduce a grammatical item and help learners to practise it through meaningful contexts and appropriate texts.		
I can also…			
D. Observing and supporting each child's development			
M. Taking children's individual needs into account:			
	i. I can identify each child's communication skills and language needs using appropriate observation instruments.	3	2
	ii. I can help each child progress at his/her own pace.	4	3
	iii. I can guide and assist learners in setting their own aims and objectives in planning their own learning.	4	1
	iv. I can identify strengths and areas for improvement in a learner's performance.	4	2
N. Assessing for learning:			
	i. I can evaluate and select valid assessment procedures (tests, portfolios, self-assessment etc.) appropriate to learning aims and objectives.	3	3
	ii. I can design and use in-class activities to monitor and assess learners' participation and performance.	4	3
	iii. I can help learners to monitor, reflect on, edit and improve their own speaking and writing.	4	2
	iv. I can use peer assessment and feedback to assist the production of spoken and written language.	3	2
	v. I can analyse learners' errors and identify the processes that may cause them.	3	3
	vi. I can provide constructive feedback to learners concerning their errors.	4	4
O. Cooperating with others:			
	i. I can exchange information with the children's families about their progress.	4	1
	ii. I can accept remarks, queries and advice from colleagues or teacher educators and take them into account in my management of the group.	4	4
	iii. I can provide colleagues or secondary school teachers with useful information about the linguistic development of the children for whom I am responsible.	4	3
P. Evaluating and reflecting			
	i. I can evaluate and select a variety of activities which help learners to reflect on their existing knowledge and competences.	4	2
	ii. I can critically assess my teaching on the basis of experience, learner feedback and learning outcomes and adapt it accordingly.	3	2
	iii. I can use the process and results of assessment to inform my teaching and plan learning for individuals and groups (ie. formative assessment).	4	1
I can also…			

number of words (N: nodes), co-occurrences (E: edges) and the number of edges that are actually drawn divided by the number of edges that could exist (D: density), respectively.

2) We can find other frameworks and tools for reflection as *European Portfolio for Student Teachers of Languages: A reflection tool for language teacher education (EPOSTL)* (Newby et al. 2007) published by the Council of Europe or *CARAP - FREPA (A Framework of Reference for Pluralistic Approaches to Languages and Cultures)* (Candelier 2011) It is considered, however, that EPOSTL is basically for monolingual education, which does not reflect the principle of plurilingualism. CARAP is a framework for plurilingualism but it is too long and complicated to use as a teacher's reflection. So, we adopted *My Languages Profile* for our purpose.

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