

## Accomplishing Mathematical Tasks in Bilingual Primary Classrooms

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**Abstract :** Learning in a bilingual classroom not only implies learning in two languages or in an L2, it also means learning content subjects through the means of bilingual or plurilingual resources, which is of a qualitatively different nature than 'monolingual' learning. These resources form elements of a didactics of plurilingualism, aiming not only at the development of a plurilingual competence, but also at drawing on plurilingual resources for nonlinguistic subject learning. Applying a didactics of plurilingualism allows for taking account of the specificities of bilingual content subject learning in bilingual education classrooms. Bilingual education is used here as an umbrella term for different programs, such as bilingual education, immersion, CLIL, bilingual modules in which one or several non-linguistic subjects are taught partly or completely in an L2. This paper aims at discussing first results of a study on pupil group work in bilingual classrooms in several Swiss primary schools. For instance, it analyses two bilingual classes in two primary schools in a French-speaking region of Switzerland that follows a part of their school program through German in addition to French, the language of instruction in this region. More precisely, it analyses videotaped classroom interaction and in situ classroom practices of pupil group work in a mathematics lessons. The ethnographic observation of pupils' group work and the analysis of their interaction (analytical tools of conversational analysis, discourse analysis and plurilingual interaction) enhance the description of whole-class interaction done in the same (and several other) classes. While the latter are teacher-student interactions, the former are student-student interactions giving more space to and insight into pupils' talk. This study aims at the description of the linguistic and multimodal resources (in German L2 and/or French L1) pupils mobilize while carrying out a mathematical task. The analysis shows that the accomplishment of the mathematical task takes place in a bilingual mode, whether the whole-class interactions are conducted rather in a bilingual (German L2-French L1) or a monolingual mode in L2 (German). The pupils make plenty of use of German L2 in a setting that lends itself to use French L1 (peer groups with French as a dominant language, in absence of the teacher and a task with a mathematical aim). They switch from French to German and back 'naturally', which is regular for bilingual speakers. Their linguistic resources in German L2 are not sufficient to allow them to (inter-)act well enough to accomplish the task entirely in German L2, despite their efforts to do so. However, this does not stop them from carrying out the task in mathematics adequately, which is the main objective, by drawing on the bilingual resources at hand.

**Keywords :** bilingual content subject learning, bilingual primary education, bilingual pupil group work, bilingual teaching/learning resources, didactics of plurilingualism

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