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Identifying pluralistic approaches in language subjects in Denmark, Norway, and Sweden – A comparative curriculum analysis

Natascha Drachmann ●[a], Åsta Haukås ●[b] and Adrian Lundberg ●[c]

[a]Department of English, Germanic and Romance Studies, University of Copenhagen, Copenhagen, Denmark; [b]Department of Foreign Languages, University of Bergen, Bergen, Norway; [c]Department of School Development and Leadership, Malmö University, Malmö, Sweden

ABSTRACT

In Scandinavia, plurilingualism has been embraced as an important goal in language curricula. However, research shows that teachers struggle to understand what plurilingualism is and how it can be implemented. To address this lack of clarity, we analysed the curricula for the three main language subjects of schooling in Denmark, Norway, and Sweden with the purpose of identifying which pluralistic approaches can be found in them. We based our analysis on the three main approaches described in *The Framework of Reference for Pluralistic Approaches to Languages and Cultures*: integrated didactic approach (IDA), intercomprehension between related languages (ICRL) and eveil aux langues (EAL). We found several similarities across the Scandinavian countries, but also some major differences, suggesting that plurilingual education in these countries will likely have different learning outcomes for the students. For example, IDA is lacking in the Swedish curriculum, and the goals for ICRL are more ambitious in Denmark than in the other countries. Furthermore, Norway and Sweden include national minority languages in their pluralistic approaches, whereas no attention is given to language diversity in regions with close political bonds to Denmark, such as the Faroe Islands, Iceland, and Greenland.

1. Introduction

In educational research, there has been a strong interest in plurilingualism and plurilingual education in recent decades, both in Europe and in the Scandinavian context (Coste et al., 1997/2009; Daryai-Hansen, 2018; Haukås, 2016; Lundberg, 2019a). Based on the definitional distinction between *multilingualism* as linguistic diversity in a societal, geographical area (Council of Europe, 2008) and *plurilingualism* as 'the repertoire of varieties of language' (ibid., 8) seen from the perspective of those who speak them, we see plurilingualism as a natural condition for all students growing up in a modern world, because all students

learn more than one language as a result of schooling or through life experiences. Therefore, all students in the European context and in Scandinavia (Denmark, Norway, Sweden) can draw on their plurilingual repertoire when learning new languages. In European language policy, strengthening and supporting the implementation of plurilingual education has been one of the main aims for several decades (see, e.g. Allgäuer-Hackl et al., 2018; Beacco et al., 2016a, 2016b; Bernaus et al., 2007; Council of Europe, 2022; Goullier et al., 2015). Despite the political willingness to include plurilingualism as a resource in language education, several studies show that plurilingualism is only integrated to a low extent in school contexts and that language teaching predominantly reflects a monolingual norm (Daryai-Hansen, 2018; Drachmann, 2022; Hult, 2017; Haukås, 2016).

To better support teachers in implementing a pluralistic approach, it is necessary to identify how plurilingualism is represented in the language curricula, and what approach to plurilingualism teachers are expected to implement. To the best of our knowledge, no existing studies have examined which pluralistic approaches are represented in language curricula in mandatory school, neither in Scandinavia nor elsewhere. The article aims to fill this gap by examining the national curricula for language subjects in primary and lower secondary school in the three Scandinavian countries Denmark, Norway, and Sweden. These countries have been chosen for the study because they share many similarities both concerning educational systems, languages of schooling, and demographic factors. Furthermore, intercomprehension is and has long been a stated goal for the citizens of these three Scandinavian countries (Nordisk ministerråd, 2007). Thus, it is interesting to explore to what extent they have similar aims for a plurilingual education in their respective school systems.

The article is structured as follows. First, it provides insights into previous research on definitions of and approaches to plurilingualism among teachers and in curricula for language learning in the Scandinavian context and elsewhere. Second, it presents our operationalisation of different pluralistic approaches based on *The Framework of Reference for Pluralistic Approaches to Languages and Cultures* (FREPA, Candelier et al., 2007) and clarifies main terms related to plurilingualism and language learning used in the study. It then presents results from a qualitative deductive content analysis (Mayring, 2015) of the language subjects Danish/Norwegian/Swedish as L1 of schooling, English as L2 of schooling, and foreign language(s) as L3 of schooling in primary and lower secondary school in Denmark, Norway, and Sweden. Last, by highlighting similarities and differences between the manifestations of plurilingualism in the three countries' curricula, the article discusses perspectives on curriculum development and implications for teacher education in these contexts and beyond.

2. Background

2.1. Defining and enacting approaches to plurilingualism in education

A successful implementation and enactment of a policy is a challenging undertaking, dependent on several factors. Two of those are a clear definition of the central theoretical concept, in this case *plurilingualism*, and the role of teachers as active decision-makers when implementing the policy. Despite its long existence, there is no unified theory or definition of plurilingualism. For example, as noted by Haukås (2022) and Sickinghe (2013), there is a tendency in Norway to associate being plurilingual with people with immigrant backgrounds or speakers of minority languages, thus potentially seeing plurilingualism as only relevant for a subgroup

of the student population instead of seeing all students as plurilingual and thereby aiming for enhancing all students' plurilingualism. Similar discourses can be found in Denmark and Sweden, where the term bilingual and/or plurilingual pupils (*tosprogede/flersprogede/flersprå-kiga elever*) typically refers to children with a migration background and first languages other than the majority language (Holmen, 2019; Kristjánsdóttir, 2018; Lundberg, 2019a). Consequently, discourses about plurilingualism in curricula are often related to mother-tongue instruction or minority languages (Paulsrud et al., 2020).

Nevertheless, the curricula in Scandinavia all include components highlighting plurilingualism as a resource for all students. In the Norwegian context, for example, being plurilingual is embraced as follows in the core curriculum: 'Language gives us a sense of belonging and cultural awareness. […] Knowledge about the linguistic diversity in society provides all pupils with valuable insight into different forms of expression, ideas and traditions. All pupils shall experience that being proficient in a number of languages is a resource, both in school and society at large' (NDET, 2017, p. 7). Similar, resource-oriented formulations can be found in the curricula for the three main language subjects (Norwegian, English, Foreign Languages) where existing studies show that these language subjects all include competence aims that are relevant for a pluralistic approach (e.g. Vikøy, 2021; Haukås, 2022; Myklevold & Speitz, 2022). Nevertheless, plurilingualism is not clearly defined in any of the language curricula, which makes it difficult for teachers to grasp what plurilingualism means and who it includes.

Teachers are generally regarded as central figures in transforming a policy into practice in their role as key policy arbiters (Haukås, 2016; Menken & García, 2010; Johnson, 2013). Concerning pluralistic teaching approaches, existing research from the Scandinavian context has shown that teachers are interested in the topic of plurilingualism; they also see being plurilingual as an advantage, but they are unsure of how to work on enhancing students' plurilingualism in the classroom (e.g. Daryai-Hansen & Albrechtsen, 2018; Haukås, 2016; Myklevold, 2021; Vikøy & Haukås, 2021; Lundberg, 2019a). Similar findings have also been documented in other European contexts (e.g. Lundberg, 2019b; Martí Arnandiz & Portolés Falomir, 2021; Portolés and Martí, 2020). Teachers' limited knowledge of how to implement pluralistic approaches in the classrooms can have several explanations, such as the lack of training in teacher education (Haukås, 2019; Portolés & Marti, 2020) and limited availability of suitable teaching materials (Vikøy, 2021; Haukås, 2017).

So far, scholars have analysed Scandinavian language curricula by noticing to what extent there is a focus on plurilingualism and what competence aims are related to plurilingualism (e.g. Kjelaas & Van Ommeren, 2019; Myklevold & Speitz, 2022; Haukås, 2022; Paulsrud et al., 2020). What remains unclear, however, is which pluralistic approach has been adopted in the respective curricula and what teachers can do to implement a pluralistic approach based on the language subject curricula. Thus, an important step for supporting teachers and teacher educators in developing awareness of and competences about plurilingualism in the language subjects includes identifying what kind of pluralistic approach is expected to be implemented.

2.2. Pluralistic approaches to language learning

Several teaching approaches and models share the objective of fostering plurilingualism in students, such as *translanguaging* (Garcia & Wei, 2014) and whole-school policy models like

Plurcur (Hufeisen, 2018). In the context of this study, however, we take the more established operationalisation of plurilingual education in the European context, as described in *The Framework of Reference for Pluralistic Approaches to Languages and Cultures* (FREPA, Candelier et al., 2007), as our starting point for analysing the Scandinavian language subject curricula. Unlike other operationalizations of plurilingual education, FREPA offers a didactic conceptualisation of how plurilingual education can be implemented in language teaching and, at the same time, shows how plurilingual education reflects a continuum going from strengthening the students' communicative competence to developing their cross-linguistic competence. FREPA distinguishes between four pluralistic approaches to working with linguistic and cultural diversity through 'teaching / learning activities involving several (i.e. more than one) varieties of languages or cultures' (Candelier et al., 2007, 3).

The *intercultural approach* focuses on culture and the development of intercultural competence, whereas the three other approaches, which are investigated in this study, have a linguistic perspective. Common for these approaches is the focus on similarities and differences between languages, but they differ by having different aims and by including language diversity to varying degrees. The first linguistic approach *integrated didactic approach* (IDA)*,* in a German context also known as *Teritärsprachendidaktik* (see, e.g. Hufeisen & Neuner, 2003; Widlok et al., 2010), creates transitions between languages taught in the school curriculum, or integrates in individual learning spaces languages that the learner is familiar with. By focusing on learning strategies and transparency between the known language(s) and the new language, the approach is used as a springboard to strengthen the acquisition of the new language. The second approach, *intercomprehension between related languages* (ICRL), establishes links between languages from the same linguistic family. The languages are examined in parallel and can be related to languages that the learner is already familiar with (e.g. the learner's first language, target language of education, other languages) with the aim of developing the learner's receptive competences in both the known language and the related language (see, e.g. Hufeisen & Marx, 2007). The third approach, *eveil aux langues/Awakening to languages* (EAL), includes a wide range of languages and all sorts of linguistic varieties, e.g. languages of education, other languages in the process of being learnt or languages and linguistic varieties represented in the classroom, in the surrounding environment, or in the world. The aim is to develop the learner's language awareness and sensitivity to language diversity by strengthening cross-linguistic competence (see, e.g. Candelier et al., 2007).
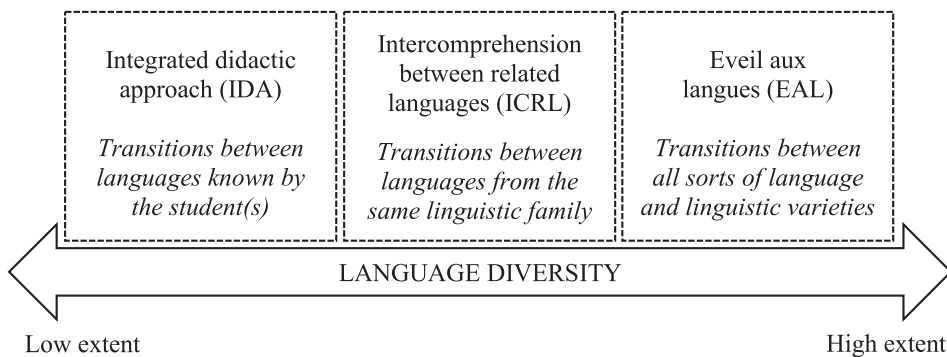
Model 1. Pluralistic approaches to languages

Although the pluralistic approaches to language learning are presented as separate pedagogies, the stippled lines in Model 1 indicate that the distinction between them is a theoretical abstraction and that the boundaries are fluid and overlapping. Nevertheless, there is a distinction in the degree of language diversity in the different approaches. Whereas IDA mainly focuses on fostering awareness across the languages of schooling, EAL, on the other hand, can potentially include the exploration of all the world's existing languages and varieties both known and unknown to the students. The three pluralistic approaches complement each other. While the focus in IDA primarily is on strengthening the students' communicative competence and less on awareness on cross-linguistic relations and sensibility to language diversity, the opposite goes for EAL. By including all three pluralistic approaches, it is thus possible to implement the full potential of plurilingual education.

2.3. Research aim and research question

To sum up, the present study aims to better support teachers and teacher educators in developing awareness of and eventually implementing plurilingual education. The study is guided by the following research question: *Which pluralistic approaches to languages can be identified in the national curricula for the main language subjects in primary and lower secondary school in Denmark, Norway, and Sweden?*

3. Context, data, and method

3.1. Language learning in primary and lower secondary school in Scandinavia

In the Scandinavian context, primary and lower secondary school, the so-called *grundskolen/grunnskolen/grundskolan* covers a 10-year period involving teaching in the main language of schooling, English as the second language of schooling, and a second foreign language as the third language of schooling. Table 1 provides an overview.

As can be seen from the table, there are several similarities across contexts, but also some differences. Whereas Norwegian students start having Norwegian and English as school subjects from the first school year, Danish/Swedish and English become formal school subjects in the second year. Furthermore, a third language of schooling, French or German, is mandatory in Denmark and introduced from school year 6, but optional in Norway and Sweden starting in school year 8 and 7, respectively. Nevertheless, most students in Norway opt for learning a second foreign language, typically French,

Table 1. Main language subjects in primary and lower secondary school in Denmark, Norway, and Sweden.

School year	1	2	3 4 5	6	7	8	9 10
Danish *grundskole*		Danish (L1) English (L2)		German or French (L3)			
Norwegian *grunnskole*	Norwegian (L1) English (L2)					Foreign Languages (L3). (option.)	
Swedish *grundskolan*		Swedish (L1) English (L2)			Modern Languages (L3) (option.)		

German, or Spanish. According to Fremmedspråksenteret (2022), around 74% of the students decide to learn an L3 in Norway. In Sweden, around 90% were learning an L3 in 2020/2021 (Skolverket, 2020). Like in Norway, the most popular languages are French, German, and Spanish, but also other languages such as Chinese and Russian are offered at some schools.

In this study, we use the terms L1, L2, and L3 to refer to the main languages of schooling, with Danish/Norwegian/Swedish, the most dominant language subject in terms of instruction hours, referred to as L1, the second most dominant language English referred to as L2, and the L3 as the second foreign language. It should be noted, however, that these terms do not necessarily reflect the order in which these languages were learned by individual students, nor the importance of the languages in the students' minds. In recent years, all three countries have seen increased immigration, which has led to an increased linguistic diversity in schools. In Denmark, 14,4% are now considered to have immigrant backgrounds or having been born to parents with immigrant backgrounds (Danish Ministry of Immigration and Integration, 2022). The numbers for Norway and Sweden are 18,9% (Statistics Norway, 2022) and 20% (Statistics Sweden, 2022) respectively. Thus, in these countries, there are also other language subjects, mandatory and/or facultative. In Denmark, for example, Danish as a Second Language is a mandatory subject being integrated as part of the mainstream teaching in all subjects across the curriculum if there are any students with a first language other than Danish. In Norway, there are several other language subjects, such as Sami as a first language, Sami as a second language, and mother-tongue teaching for language minorities. An investigation of potential pluralistic approaches in these curricula would add additional insights into our research question. However, it was beyond the scope of this study to also include these language subjects.

3.2. Data analysis

When comparing the national framework for plurilingualism in language subjects in and across the Scandinavian context, our focus is on curricula at a macro level (Beacco et al., 2016a). We analysed the curricula for the three main language subjects of schooling represented in all three countries: Danish/Norwegian/Swedish, English, and the second foreign language (DMCE, 2019a, b, c; NDET, 2019a, b, c; SNAE, 2022a, b, c). Like Pratt (1980, 4), we understand curriculum as an 'organized set of formal education and/or training intentions', and the analysis focuses on the *explicit curriculum* (Eisner, 1985) containing official curricular documents serving as framework conditions for language teaching. The methodological approach in the document analysis is a qualitative deductive content analysis (Mayring, 2015; Weber, 1985) enabling a systematic theory-based coding and categorisation of the data. The basis for the analysis is the elements common for the three countries: aims of the subjects (*Fagets formål og centrale værdier/Fagets formål/Syfte*) and the competence goals, focusing on all 10 years of language teaching in school. Based on the FREPA operationalisation of plurilingual education, the data have been coded in NVivo through the following codes: IDA (integrated didactic approach*)*, ICRL (intercomprehension between related languages), and EAL (eveil aux langues*)*. Through a common coding manual consisting of code definitions, data examples, and coding rules, the data went through two coding processes: In the first process, all three researchers conducted

an initial coding round of selected parts of the data to examine whether the codes were applicable in relation to the research question. In the second process, an all-round double coding was conducted to ensure valid, reliable, and rigorous results and awareness of potential biases (Kurasaki, 2000; Lombard et al., 2002). First, each researcher coded the curriculum of their own country, and second, the researchers were responsible for a code each (IDA, ICRL, EAL) and coded the curricula of all three countries. Any potential differences in the coding were reconciled through joint discussions based on the coding manual. Given the researchers' interest in plurilingualism, we chose an intercomprehension approach to written and oral communication during the research process, communicating with each other in Danish, Norwegian, and Swedish.

4. Findings

In the following, we present the main findings from our analysis. Table 2 provides an overview concerning the language subjects and contexts each of the three pluralistic approaches – IDA, ICRL, and EAL – could be identified with.

The findings are further discussed in separate sections below. However, it should be noted that since the boundaries between the pluralistic approaches are fluid and overlapping, some of the findings are too. Where the findings overlap, we have drawn on the views and traditions of the role of the languages in the educational contexts. In the Nordic schools, e.g. English and German are usually not considered as related languages to the main languages of schooling Danish/Norwegian/Swedish, but as foreign languages offered in school. In the analysis, transitions between these Germanic languages are therefore described as integrated didactic approach (IDA) and not as intercomprehension between related languages (ICRL). This is also the case concerning the findings of the two

Table 2. Pluralistic approaches in national curricula for main language subjects in primary and lower secondary school in Denmark, Norway, and Sweden.

			Integrated didactic approach (IDA)	Intercomprehension between related languages (ICRL)	Eveil aux langues (EAL)
First language of schooling	DK	Danish		Swedish, Norwegian	Variants of Danish
	NO	Norwegian	Languages known by the students	Danish, Swedish, Bokmål, Nynorsk, other Nordic languages	Variants of Norwegian, Sami, other languages
	SE	Swedish		Nordic neighbour languages	Variants of Swedish, national minority languages
Second language of schooling	DK	English	Danish and other languages known by the students		Variants of English
	NO	English	Languages known by the students		Variants of English
	SE	English			Variants of English
Third language of schooling	DK	German	Danish, English, and other languages known by the students	Danish	
	NO	Foreign Languages	Languages known by the students		
	SE	Modern languages			

variants of Norwegian, Bokmål and Nynorsk. In the analysis, they are coded as intercomprehension between related languages (ICRL), but it could be argued that they also belong to eveil aux langues (EAL).

4.1. Integrated didactic approach (IDA)

A main finding related to IDA is that this approach is entirely absent from the Swedish curriculum, but part of the curricula in Denmark and Norway. Furthermore, there are several similarities but also some important differences regarding how IDA is implemented in the curricula in Denmark and Norway. Focusing on the main language of schooling, it is notable that IDA is not expressed in the curriculum for Danish, whereas the curriculum for Norwegian mentions IDA in the subject's aim by saying that literacy skills can be developed through fictional and factual texts also in 'other languages' (NDET, 2019c, 2). Reading, listening, exploring, and reflecting on texts in *other languages* is continually implemented in the curriculum for Norwegian, but these *other languages* are not further described or explicated and could include all languages the students are familiar with, including students' home languages other than Norwegian.

Concerning English and the second foreign language, IDA is to some extent used as an approach facilitating a springboard to the new target language in both contexts. In the curriculum for English in Denmark, there is a focus on developing skills and knowledge about similarities and differences between English and the students' own languages and on language learning strategies, especially guessing strategies, where the students develop techniques to 'utilize resources from other languages' (DMCE, 2019b, 11). To a significantly lesser extent, the same applies in the German curriculum, where German is compared to Danish, especially by focusing on transparent words, and other languages to develop both receptive and productive skills. In the Danish context, it is notable that IDA is sporadically manifested in the early two to three years of language learning after which it disappears from the curriculum. In contrast, the implementation in the Norwegian context is more systematic.

In the curriculum for both English and Foreign Languages in Norway, IDA is represented as part of the aim of the subjects by stating that 'language learning refers to identifying connections between English and other languages the pupils know' (NDET, 2019a,14f) and by transferring the students' 'linguistic knowledge and language learning experiences from other languages they know and are familiar with' (NDET, 2019b, 3) to the second foreign language. In the English curriculum, there is a progression from a focus on finding, discovering, and playing with transparent words and expressions to exploring, talking about, and describing linguistic similarities and differences between English and other languages that the students are familiar with. A similar progression is seen in the curriculum for Foreign Languages, where it is stated that the students shall use their 'experiences from earlier language learning in the learning process' (NDET, 2019b, 5), also across transitions.

4.2. Intercomprehension between related languages (ICRL)

Perhaps not unexpectedly, the ICRL approach can primarily be found in the curricula for the main languages of schooling in the respective countries, Danish, Norwegian, and Swedish. All three curricula include formulations and competence aims related to strengthening students' crosslinguistic understanding and/or knowledge. Still, there are

notable differences across countries. The curriculum for Danish emphasises developing comprehension of Norwegian and Swedish written and oral texts as well as developing communicative skills: 'The student can communicate with Norwegians and Swedes' (DMCE, 2019a, 17). Additionally, students are expected to develop knowledge about similarities and differences between Danish, Norwegian, and Swedish. Although a superregional Nordic common cultural community is emphasised in the Danish curriculum, only the understanding and knowledge of Norwegian and Swedish language and culture are explicitly mentioned. This is striking given Denmark's strong political and historical ties to the Faroe Islands, Iceland, and Greenland. Whereas Danish is taught in school in these three contexts, learning about Faroese, Icelandic, and Greenlandic languages and cultures is absent from the Danish curriculum.

The curriculum for Norwegian likely includes the most comprehensive aims for an ICRL approach. In addition to developing students' listening and reading comprehension of Swedish and Danish texts and the ability to 'explain their content and language features' (NDET, 2019c, 10), the curriculum also includes further languages. To exemplify, students after school year 10 are expected to read fiction and factual prose in Bokmål and Nynorsk and translations from Sami and other languages, and reflect on the purpose, content, genre features, language features, and literary devices in the texts.

The most dominant ICRL approach in the curriculum for Norwegian, however, is the systematic development of the students' intercomprehension and use of Norway's two main languages of schooling, Bokmål and Nynorsk. Starting with receptive skills from the first school years, students 'listen to and talk about fiction and factual prose' (NDET, 2019c, 6) in both Bokmål and Nynorsk, they 'explore the differences and similarities between written Norwegian first-choice language and written Norwegian second-choice language' (ibid., 7), whereas in lower secondary school they learn to write in both languages. Thus, a particular model of the ICRL approach is used within Norway to develop the students' language intercomprehension and productive competencies of the two major national languages of schooling, Bokmål and Nynorsk.

Unlike the curricula for Danish and Norwegian, the curriculum for Swedish is not explicit about which neighbour languages in the Nordic context should be explored, thus also possibly including Finnish, Icelandic, and minority languages. Interestingly, the Swedish curriculum only has competence aims related to developing students' ability to reflect on Swedish and other Nordic languages as systems, whereas there are no competence aims related to developing students' intercomprehension skills to communicate with their neighbours. Thus, the main aim for assessment of ICRL in Swedish is that the student (should) reflect on some aspects of language and language use in Sweden and the Nordic countries (SNAE, 2022c).

Regarding the curricula for English and the second foreign languages, there are few or no signs of an ICRL approach in the three countries. This is unsurprising given that they are rarely defined as neighbour languages, neither linguistically, geographically, nor politically. The only exception is the curriculum for German in Denmark which includes the competence aim: 'The student has knowledge of the close linguistic relatedness between German and Danish' (DMCE, 2019c, 10).

4.3. Eveil aux langues/Awakening to languages (EAL)

Instances of the EAL approach were found in all three Scandinavian contexts. In line with the idea of developing learners' language awareness, sensitivity, and openness to language diversity, students in Denmark, Norway, and Sweden are brought in contact with different languages or varieties of languages throughout their mandatory education and are made aware of similarities and differences across social, geographical, and cultural contexts.

Generally, students' interest for local and national linguistic and cultural diversity is meant to be stimulated in a range of ways in the examined contexts. To illustrate that, the curriculum in Norway states, for instance, that 'the Norwegian subject shall provide the pupils with insight into the rich and diverse language and cultural heritage in Norway' (NDET, 2019c, 2). Explorations of the current language situation and its historical background in Norway is understood as the equivalent of reflections on variations of Danish in the curricula in Denmark and learning about Swedish dialects and sociolects in the curricula in Sweden. However, a focus on plurilingualism consisting of migration-induced linguistic diversity is not explicitly mentioned in any of the curricula for the three main languages of schooling in the three contexts. Regarding minority or indigenous languages, it is worth noting that an awareness of Sami is mentioned in both the Norwegian and the Swedish curriculum. However, as it is simply mentioned as one of the official minority languages in Sweden, considerably more focus exists in Norway, where students are familiarised with the pronunciation of place names and personal names that contain Sami letters. Such content is clearly connected to students' awareness-raising regarding language diversity.

Moving on to the English language subject, students' exploration of linguistic diversity is enriched with experiences of and reflections on different types of English in the world, including various unspecified regional, and social variants. Nevertheless, English is also used to illustrate the overarching importance of plurilingualism as 'the foundation for communicating with others, both locally and globally, regardless of cultural or linguistic background' (NDET, 2019a, 2) and to stimulate their interest in language and culture (SNAE, 2022). Generally, less focus on EAL was detected in the curricula for second foreign languages, which might be explained by the unspecified languages in Norway and Sweden. However, even in Denmark, where the curriculum for German as a second foreign language was analysed, no instance of EAL could be detected.

Finally, embedded in the interdisciplinary topic of democracy and citizenship, the Norwegian curriculum strives to promote students' curiosity and engagement, which should lead to a prevention of prejudice (NDET, 2019c). Such an aim is clearly in line with the theoretical foundation of EAL.

5. Discussion

5.1. Perspectives on curriculum development

The present study showed consistent similarities between the representation of the three pluralistic approaches in the language subjects across countries but also pronounced differences concerning the extent of and how the language subjects include pluralistic

approaches. Nevertheless, the school curriculum for Norway seemed to have the most comprehensive inclusion of pluralistic approaches.

In terms of IDA, for example, the curriculum for Norway had the most systematic implementation across language subjects and transitions of schooling by stating that all language learning in school must be at the basis of the students' previously acquired linguistic resources. In the curricula for Denmark and Norway, the languages of schooling are used as a springboard from one language (subject) to the next: Danish/Norwegian creates transitions to English, and Danish/Norwegian and English creates transitions to German/the foreign language. A major difference, however, is that while the transitions between languages of schooling in the Danish curriculum mainly seems like a didactic tool only for early language learning (see also Drachmann, 2022), the transitions between languages of schooling is an integrated, continuous part of the curriculum of Norway. Given the similarity between the language subjects and the order in which they are represented in the Scandinavian schools, it is therefore remarkable that links between languages of schooling are totally absent in the curriculum for the language subjects in Sweden. These differences call for further investigations, as a lack of an integrated didactic approach in Sweden may result in different learning outcomes for the Swedish students, including a lower degree of crosslinguistic awareness and other plurilingual language learning benefits compared with the Danish and Norwegian students (Jessner, 2008). This hypothesis remains a speculation at this point but should be followed up in future research.

Common to the three Scandinavian countries is the goal of intercomprehension between the Scandinavian languages, which is included continuously throughout all school years for the first language of schooling, Danish/Norwegian/Swedish. While curricula from Denmark go furthest in the Nordic common cultural community – as students here must develop communicative competence across the Scandinavian languages – the focus in the curriculum for Norway is both knowledge of and receptive competences, whereas Sweden only includes an understanding of similarities and differences across languages. Thus, if these competence goals are followed up in the classrooms, the different ambitions of the three may lead to a difference in intercomprehension across the countries in the long term, with the Danes being best prepared to communicate with their Scandinavian neighbours. Nevertheless, while intercomprehension between the neighbouring languages Danish, Norwegian, and Swedish is most extensive in the curriculum for Danish, the Nordic language community is not limited to only Scandinavian languages but also other Nordic languages in the curricula for Norwegian and Swedish. Particularly noteworthy is the fact that the curriculum in Denmark does not take Faroese into account, despite close linguistic familiarity and the fact that the Faroe Islands are part of the Kingdom of Denmark, albeit as an autonomous country. Similarly, Icelandic is also absent in the curriculum even though Iceland was a former Danish colony until 1944.

In relation to EAL, there are clear similarities across the three countries, as EAL is represented in the first and second language of schooling through an inclusion of variants of Danish/Norwegian/Swedish and of English. Whereas in Denmark, EAL is limited to an awareness of dialects and sociolects of Danish, curricula for Norway and Sweden are more inclusive in their approach by emphasising exploration of languages in general and national minority languages including Sami. Greenlandic,

on the other hand, is not mentioned in the Danish curriculum despite the country's close ties to Denmark and the fact that Greenlandic students are learning Danish in school.

Another important finding in the intersection between IDA and EAL is the lack of an explicit inclusion of students' knowledge of languages other than the three main languages of schooling. Although students' home languages and other language resources known by the students are included in curricula for Denmark and Norway by referring to 'resources from other languages' (DMCE, 2019b, 11) and 'other languages the pupils know' (NDET, 2019b, 3), this reference is likely too implicit for teachers and students to clearly see how they can include and explore these languages in the language classrooms as resources for building the students' plurilingual repertoire. In the Swedish context, for example, Hult (2017, 278) has pointed out that teachers of English are simply instructed to 'use their judgment in deciding when the use of a language other than English is appropriate'. Based on the findings in the present study, it seems important to point out that curricula in all three countries should be more explicit regarding the inclusion of students' home languages and full linguistic repertoires. Otherwise, there is a risk that these languages continue to be treated as less valuable and relevant for a pluralistic approach, and as a basis for language learning, than the languages belonging to the main languages of schooling (Drachmann, 2022; Haukås, 2022; Kjelaas & Van Ommeren, 2019).

5.2. Implications for teacher education

The analysis has shown that pluralistic approaches exist in the Scandinavian curricula, but to a varying degree in the different subjects and contexts. Although differences are not automatically problematic, they imply that the learning goals and outcomes may be quite different for Danish, Norwegian, and Swedish school students. Nevertheless, the enactment of a policy, such as the curricula investigated in this study, is largely dependent on teachers' own decision-making when designing and implementing lessons (Haukås, 2016; Menken & Garcia, 2010; Johnson, 2013). It is therefore critical to discuss implications for teacher pre – and in-service education in the Scandinavian countries and beyond.

First and foremost, different pluralistic approaches in the curricula need to be followed up by schools and teachers in the respective countries. Whereas this study may support teachers in identifying which pluralistic approaches can be adopted for the various subjects, this is likely insufficient for providing teachers with a secure knowledge base for making necessary changes in their teaching. To support the enactment of pluralistic approaches in education, several studies therefore ask for more teacher training concerning plurilingualism (e.g. Haukås, 2016; Lundberg, 2019a; Otwinowska, 2014). Lundberg (2019b), reporting from German-speaking Switzerland, where foreign language teachers were obliged to attend a long, mandatory further education in connection with a new curriculum based on pluralistic approaches, concludes with a call for teachers' continuous professional development. Even though the current Swiss curriculum features many aspects of pluralistic approaches in education, teachers were insecure concerning their pedagogical language management. In other words, to support Scandinavian teachers in their implementation of pluralistic approaches in

the long run, we recommend a steady offering of professional development courses that include reflective and hands-on activities. Such a continuous approach to professional development is also in line with a conclusion drawn by Haukås (2016), who states that adapting teachers' beliefs towards more pluralistic approaches usually takes time.

Furthermore, our analysis suggests a clear need for intensified language teacher collaboration. If pluralistic approaches in education are meant to represent a continuous emphasis throughout mandatory schooling, teachers need to establish more horizontal and vertical collaboration. Teachers of all language subjects, including main languages of schooling, foreign languages, second language and mother tongue, are supposed to critically reflect and navigate the implementation of pluralistic approaches. Hence, they need to look across the borders of their own subjects and explore together with teachers of other language subjects how they can define common goals and provide an optimal plurilingual education for their students (Drachmann, 2022; Haukås, 2016). Such collaboration should be initiated and established already in pre-service education, so that future language teachers become acquainted with the potential of working together across the language subjects' borders.

6. Concluding remarks

The main objective of this study was to examine which pluralistic approaches can be identified in the curricula for the three main language subjects of schooling in Denmark, Norway, and Sweden. Basing our analysis on *The Framework of References for Pluralistic Approaches to Languages and Cultures* (Candelier et al., 2007), we found that all three countries have included pluralistic approaches in their language curricula, but to a varying degree. These differences indicate different ambitions for a plurilingual education in Scandinavia, likely also leading to different learning outcomes for the students. As this study's findings are based on the analysis of curriculum documents, future studies need to examine the enactment of the curricula in schools and any learning effects of the pluralistic approaches identified in the main language subjects of schooling in these countries. Furthermore, there is a need to analyse pluralistic approaches in all other language subjects in school, including subjects for minority languages and mother-tongue instruction. Only such a more holistic and integrated conceptualisation of plurilingual education, with identifiable pluralistic approaches in various language subject curricula, can be expected to contribute to a sustainable plurilingual education for all students in and beyond Scandinavia. In fact, future curriculum studies should also aim to identify pluralistic approaches in curricula outside of Scandinavia, to better understand how plurilingualism can be promoted in contexts with different language constellations than the Scandinavian. Finally, in line with studies reporting from other countries, our findings call for an increased emphasis on plurilingualism in pre- and in-service teacher education to better prepare teachers to implement pluralistic approaches in and across the language subjects.

Disclosure statement

ORCID

Natascha Drachmann 🆔 http://orcid.org/0000-0002-5564-8985
Åsta Haukås 🆔 http://orcid.org/0000-0002-5831-7823
Adrian Lundberg 🆔 http://orcid.org/0000-0001-8555-6398

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