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“Take on my role” – A case study on multilingualism  
and language alternation by a non-native foreign  
language teacher in a multilingual classroom

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## Zusammenfassung

Im Fremdsprachenunterricht lehren nicht immer *native speakers* die Fremdsprache. Doch welche Rolle spielen die mehrsprachigen Fähigkeiten der Lehrkräfte bei der Vermittlung des Deutschen als Fremdsprache (DaF) und wie werden diese von ihnen in Unterrichtssettings eingesetzt, gefördert oder von Lernenden gefordert? Im Beitrag wird anhand einer Fallstudie aus dem DaF-Unterricht mit erwachsenen Lernenden in Jordanien untersucht, welche Sprachen der *non-native foreign language teacher* bei der Vermittlung von DaF einsetzt und welche kommunikativen Strategien er dabei nutzt. Die Ergebnisse verdeutlichen, dass sich die eigene mehrsprachige Biographie des Lehrers positiv auf die Verwendung mehrsprachiger Ressourcen im Kursraum auswirkt (z.B. bei Aufgabenerklärungen). Nach einem theoretischen Einstieg in den Untersuchungsgegenstand wird ein Überblick über die Fallstudie und das Design gegeben. Anschließend wird unter Berücksichtigung des Fremdsprachenunterrichts diskursanalytisch untersucht, in welchen Unterrichtsphasen die Lehrkraft die Sprachen wechselt und ihre mehrsprachigen Ressourcen aktiv verwendet. Im Fokus stehen dabei die interaktionalen Strategien der Lehrkraft.

**Schlagwörter:** Fallstudie; Mehrsprachigkeit; Sprachenwechsel; Fremdsprachenlehrkräfte; Unterrichtsinteraktion

## Abstract

In foreign language teaching, native speakers are not always the ones teaching the target language. But what is the role of a teacher's multilingual skills when teaching German as a foreign language (GFL), and how are these skills used, promoted, or required by learners in the classroom? Using a case study of GFL taught to adults in Jordan, this article examines the languages, communicative strategies and multilingual practices employed by the non-native foreign language teacher. The results show that the teacher's own multilingual profile positively influences the presence of multilingualism in the classroom. This article provides a theoretical introduction to the topic, followed by an overview of the case study and its design. In the context of foreign language teaching, the specific phases of a lesson and the reasons why teachers switch languages and use multilingualism will then be investigated using discourse analysis methods. The focus is on the teacher's strategies during classroom interactions.

**Keywords:** case study; multilingualism; language alternation; (non-native) foreign language teachers; classroom interaction



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## 1 Multilingual or not? A theoretical framework for the language biographies of non-native foreign language teachers

This study examines a teacher's verbal interaction with a multilingual group of learners with Arabic as their first language in a GFL course at level B1.1. The aim of this article is to analyse and highlight the use of multilingual resources and strategies corresponding to the teacher's own multilingual profile (linguistic repertoire). Particular attention is paid to conversational sequences in a videotaped lesson with GFL learners, in which the teacher uses Arabic and English to explain grammar, for instance. After presenting a theoretical introduction in this first section, section 2 outlines the case study's aim and the methodological considerations on which this article is based. Section 3 carries out video analysis; selected lesson sequences are examined and discussed. The article concludes with a summary of the findings and a brief comments regarding future research into multilingual classroom interactions (section 4).

### 1.1 Non-native foreign language teachers vs. native foreign language teachers – what makes a difference?

Do native speakers really make better teachers? Which skills could make a quantifiable difference? Language researchers have long subscribed to the myth that native speakers make better foreign language teachers because their language skills are perceived to be superior. In foreign language courses, non-native speakers are often the ones teaching the language in question. Their role and, to some extent, their function as classroom role models who can demonstrate multilingual practices should not be underestimated (Kalkavan-Aydn 2023, 2024). Previous international research has focused on teachers of English as a foreign language (e.g. Medgyes 1994; Braine 2010; Alzu'bi 2023). Bracker and Polizio (2021) investigated the self-assessments of 60 teachers in Spain and Portugal who teach GFL. Their written survey, conducted across Portuguese and Spanish universities and Goethe-Institutes, builds on the work of Reves and Medgyes (1994), who also investigated the self-assessments of foreign language teachers in relation to English language teachers. Bracker and Polizio (2021: 32–33) conclude that differences in the teachers' responses to the survey are mainly due to independent preferences, such as specific teaching behaviours, and not due to their first language(s). They also mention that believing there were such differences was more the exception than the rule. Greater discrepancies between the two groups surveyed are evident in their feedback regarding oral expression and a variety of teaching methods and materials. For example, non-native foreign language teachers state that they focus on fluency or formal correctness and accuracy in the classroom. The authors attribute these statements, predominantly made by non-native foreign language teachers, to socialisation and different learning traditions in different countries, schools, and training programmes (Bracker & Polizio 2021: 32). However, Braine (2010: 28) argues that non-native foreign language teachers often have a better understanding of language and grammar and a greater ability to empathise with learners.

It should now be emphasised that teachers' individual language biography and repertoires represent a crucial factor when developing specific language strategies. In foreign language classes, teachers can decide whether to use their multilingual abilities to explain tasks or to translate, for example. Yet what role does an individual's linguistic profile play when teaching GFL and (how) do non-native GFL teachers use their multilingual abilities and

resources in classroom discourse? The target group here, multilingual teachers of GFL who have Arabic as their first language (this includes the Arabic-speaking world), has been rather underrepresented in research focused on teaching GFL and the influence of Arabic as a first language (see for example Alkhafeel & Elkhoully 2022).

## 1.2 Multilingualism and language alternation

Studies on *multilingualism*, *code-switching*, or *translanguaging* in multilingual classrooms often revisit the critical discussion around terminology: how *code-switching*, *translanguaging*, and the concept of *language alternation* differ from each other (García 2009; García & Wei 2014; Auer 2022). While García and Wei (2014) refer to the term *translanguaging* mainly in terms of the concept's social and communicative dimensions, Auer (2022) asserts that code-switching, a well-established construct in linguistics, also involves the communicative and interactional relationship between speakers. According to Auer (2022), *translanguaging* is a new term for a phenomenon that has long been studied in second and foreign language research, incorporating different settings for communication (e.g. in the classroom or other pedagogical settings; Kalkavan-Aydın 2024). In this article, *code-switching* is understood through Auer (1984: 7–8), as a “particular type of language alternation”, while “‘language alternation’ is the cover term of *locally functional usage of two languages in an interactional episode*”:

Language alternation may occur between two turns, or turn-internally; it may be restricted to a well-defined unit or change the whole language of interaction; it may occur within a sentence, or between sentences. (Auer 1984: 7–8)

The issue of multilingualism also concerns research into GFL, in terms of whether it makes a difference if the foreign language is taught by native or non-native speakers. In the context of tertiary language learning, it is thought that learning GFL after English may have a positive impact. Various models have been developed in this context, addressing the benefits and relevance of multilingualism when learning GFL, and highlighting advantages that should be directly integrated into foreign language didactics (Hufeisen 2004: 8). Models for “multiple language learning” such as the *Dynamic Model of Multilingualism* (Herdina & Jessner 2002) or the *Factor Model* (Hufeisen 2001) have been developed (Hufeisen 2004: 8). A key idea in tertiary language didactics and in these models is that learners’ existing cognitive and emotional experiences should be taken into account during the acquisition of a third language (Hufeisen 2004: 9).

## 1.3 Language biographies and multilingualism

Teachers’ and learners’ linguistic backgrounds are determined by individual factors. In multilingual and sociolinguistic contexts, multilingual backgrounds influence the teaching and learning of a foreign language (e.g. Mendelowitz & Ferreira 2007; Busch 2016, 2017). It also provides an opportunity for teachers and students “to engage with multiple voices and to (re-)position themselves in relation to a multiplicity of perspectives and experiences” (Mendelowitz & Ferreira 2007: 487). Various sociolinguistic studies show that “a person’s linguistic autobiography is not static, but dynamic” (Holzer 2021, no page number, referring to Franceschini 2001). Since the migration of refugees from Syria, Iran and Afghanistan to

Germany in 2015, particular attention has been paid to language acquisition (e.g. Hochholzer & Ritter 2019) and language alternation in multilingual classrooms, which includes learners with Arabic as their first language (e.g. Kupetz & Becker 2024).

In the context of Arabic, we find case studies around linguistic backgrounds and types of self-identification, such as the discussion of Polish-Arabic trilingualism and the Polish diaspora in Cairo (Dzierżawin 2022). Dzierżawin (2022: 1–2) outlines the “extremely complex linguistic environment” in Egypt for Polish speakers, discussing the languages and different Arabic dialects which are spoken in Egypt: Modern Standard Arabic, Egyptian Colloquial Arabic, English and local languages spoken by ethnic minorities (Berber, Nubian languages). Jordan also has a wide variety of dialects, such as the Jordanian or the Palestinian dialect<sup>1</sup>. Modern Standard Arabic is Jordan’s official language, while “NSA [Non-Standard Arabic] is the mother tongue variety which marks each country from the other” (Saidat 2018: 580). English is another language which is now established in institutions and taught as a first foreign language. Many young people see English as an attractive, useful and important language, so English as a foreign language in Jordan enjoys a “prestigious” status (Al-Saidat 2009: 162), and is growing in popularity across different institutions (Zurairq et al. 2023).

## 2 Multilingual communication in L2 classrooms: case study objectives; theoretical and methodological considerations

The data in this paper is based on the *Multilingual Classroom Interaction (MuCI)* study, which is being conducted in cooperation with the *German Jordanian University* (Amman) and the *German Language Center*. It is funded by the *German Academic Exchange Service* and the *Federal Ministry of Education and Research* (2021–2026). The main part of the project deals with video recordings of adult learners in Jordan during GFL course lessons. A second part of the data consists of a questionnaire study for teachers and students. The aim of this study is to analyse how multilingual interaction takes place during GFL courses. The courses were held in Jordan, so there is a wide variety of linguistic profiles among the learners (for example, in terms of Arabic dialects). On these courses, there are speakers of the standard version of Arabic (Al-Fusha), but not exclusively: Jordanian and Palestinian dialects are particularly noticeable as well. Many students from Palestine, Jordan, Morocco, Tunisia, and Yemen attended the classes.

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<sup>1</sup> Cleveland (1963) had already attempted to classify the dialects in Jordan in the 1960s. Even today, different categorisations of the various dialects are still used in research (e.g. the distinction between northern regional and southern regional dialects, urban (modern) Arabic, Bedawin Arabic and the Aqaba dialect).

## 2.1 The study's design and its methodological approach

In the *MuCI* study, data from a written survey is triangulated with classroom videos in order to provide information about the course, its teacher and participants, and to enable a multimodal analysis of video data (see Section 2.3; Couper-Kuhlen & Selting 2018: 29). The case study method is used to analyse the data on which this article is based (see Section 2.2).

The aim of this study is to identify the communicative strategies and multilingual practices deployed by the teacher during classroom interactions (Filipa & Markee 2018a). The study seeks to answer two main questions: how are multilingual classroom resources (in Arabic, German and English) used by the teacher, and which communicative strategies and interactional practices (Couper-Kuhlen & Selting 2018: 29) can be identified?

The first step was to analyse all the verbal exchanges where the teacher and/or the learners used language alternation. These sequences were then examined with the aims of filtering out language alternation taking place in the context of teaching, and examining strategies and practices used by the teacher.

The linguistic backgrounds of the teacher and the learners were collated in a survey, while the main data source is the video-enhanced collection of GFL lessons. The questionnaire was completed by participants after the lesson, and it was pre-coded to the data. Biographical information included: age, first language, foreign languages, and background, as well as contact with the German language and any friends, family, or jobs in Germany. Participants were also asked to explain whether and how they use their individual multilingualism in everyday life and in the classroom, and their opinion on multilingualism's relevance to foreign language learning.

## 2.2 Defining the “case”

To describe the methods of case study research, Ridder (2017: 282) begins his article with the following sentence: “Case study research scientifically investigates into a real-life phenomenon in-depth and within its environmental context. Such a case can be an individual, a group, an organization, an event, a problem [...]”. In academic and pedagogical discourse, case studies are given particular importance when it comes to the professionalisation of teaching. A case-based approach can, on the one hand, promote professional awareness and, on the other hand, enable an intensive engagement with the research object. Working with cases is a method used in the casuistic model, which allows for the construction of a theory-practice relationship, the identification of specific problems or factors, and an analysis of and reflection on teaching (Wittek et al. 2021: 8). Figure 1 illustrates the stages of the case in this study, revealing which communicative practices the teacher uses in multilingual contexts. The meta-information about the teacher's language biography has therefore been triangulated with the videotaped lessons. Case research aims to describe and explain a phenomenon in an authentic context. In general, a case study is a linear, but also an iterative process (Yin 2017). The various phases, from planning to discussing results, interact with each other. Case studies focus on current situations or social problems and the factors influencing them. There are different types of case studies: clinical, experimental or naturalistic/systematic case studies (Channaveer & Baikady 2022: 316). This case study

method has been chosen in order to explore a real phenomenon with data in a natural setting (Bromley 1990; Channaveer & Baikady 2022: 317). In this study, the phases of case research as defined by Yin (2017) are used (Figure 1):

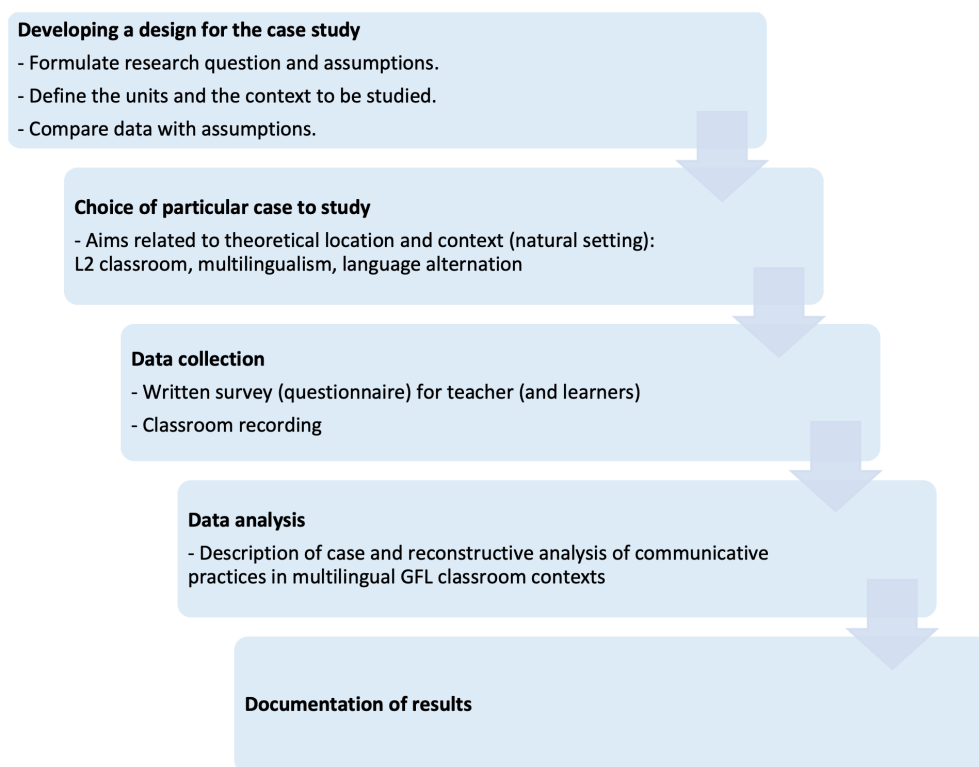


Figure 1: Stages of the case study (based on Yin 2017)

### 2.3 Video-recorded GFL lessons

In classroom discourse, teachers and learners collectively make up the reality of the classroom (Hallet & Königs 2013: 191; Schwab, Hoffmann & Schön 2017: 7; Filipi & Markee 2018a). Multimodal analysis offers a broader insight into classroom events, where social interaction is not exclusively verbal but also non-verbal (Seedhouse 2004; Walsh 2011; see also interactional linguistics in Couper-Kuhlen & Selting 2018). The transcribed video data and sequentially structured teacher-student interactions are therefore analysed here in terms of linguistic acts and multilingual practices. However, video-recorded data in the context of GFL teaching in a multilingual and Arabic environment is a research desideratum. The *MuCI* study aims to fill this research gap.

When analysing the videos, it is important to distinguish between two basic attitudes to observation: *invasiveness* (intervention in everyday practice) and *selectivity* (i.e. highlighting select aspects of what happens in the classroom). For this data collection, the videography took on a 'passive' role, observing the actions of teachers and students in habitual classroom situations – although the presence of videography during habitual interactions may appear self-contradictory. This is an exploratory approach in order to further the assessment of multilingual activities in GFL (Herrle & Breitenbach 2016: 33). The methodology chosen in this case is reconstructive data collection and a qualitative case-specific evaluation of the video analysis (Dinkelaker 2016: 51). The classroom recordings are characterised by 'over-complexity' (German *Überkomplexität*, Dinkelaker 2016: 51). A reconstructive approach

allows for an exploration of classroom contexts, with observations that are relevant to the research question, which is only possible through repeated (recurrent) examination of the video recordings (Dinkelaker 2016: 51).

Video-based transcripts offer the possibility of documenting visible moments including non-verbal gestures like eye contact. The focus here is on the interaction between teacher and learners, especially in relation to the use of multilingualism in the classroom (in explaining tasks, in discussions, and for support activities such as scaffolding and feedback). In this case study, the teacher has several options to promote comprehension through multilingualism and language alternation in the classroom (Lin 2013). Language alternation entails a linguistic process that can be linked back to the content being taught (for example, task discussions about grammar rules) and to the linguistic aspects of the target language. Here, the different (linguistic) backgrounds and profiles of teachers and learners in L2 classrooms need to be analysed in order to see how teachers support learners to turn *input* into *intake* and *output* (VanPatten 2020), while teaching is understood as a social interaction.

The videos were recorded from two camera perspectives (front/blackboard and rear), which were edited and merged into simultaneous videos together with audio recordings (Figure 4). In general, GAT 2 (a conversation analysis transcription system) is used for classroom discourse (Selting et al. 2009; Farag 2019, 2023; Krause & Wagner 2023). This data was studied using discourse and interaction analysis (Walsh 2006, 2013; Sert 2015) to identify the teacher's multilingual strategies and practices (Couper-Kuhlen & Selting 2018: 29).

### 3 Analysis and results of the case study

In this study, the case is based around the language biography (in response to the written survey) of a non-native foreign language teacher and the videotaped lesson in a B1.1-GFL course with this teacher. Using the results of the questionnaire in section 3.1, this chapter first examines the teacher's linguistic and professional profile. The lesson will subsequently be analysed in section 3.2. The teacher's communicative multilingual practices and language alternation will be appraised.

#### 3.1 A multilingual teacher on the GFL course

In the written survey for the study, teachers and learners were asked to answer questions about their linguistic and educational backgrounds, as well as any academic and professional experiences. In this way, after asking for general details such as age and gender, as much information as possible was collected regarding individual factors relevant to analyses in the *MuCI* study. Table 1 shows information from the questionnaire about the teacher's linguistic and biographical profile.



<b>Foreign languages</b>	Standard Arabic (L1/L2, C2); French (L3, C1); English (L4, C2); German (L5, C2); Polish (L6, A1)
<b>Studies</b>	Completed BA German Studies in 2018 and MA GFL (in Jordan) in 2020 <b>Subjects:</b> Literature; history; media in teaching GFL courses; contrastive linguistics; theories of language teaching and learning; culture and language; didactics and methodology of the German language; multilingualism and multicultural didactics; scientific work.
<b>Experience abroad in Germany</b>	First contact with Germany in 2017 as part of a university summer course at the Otto-Friedrich-University Bamberg; 2019/2020 semester abroad at LMU Munich; 2020 Consultant at DVG Deutsche Vermögensberatung (on a temporary basis); summer 2023 GFL activity at IIK Düsseldorf.
<b>Teaching experience</b>	At a language center for German since February 2021; previously, in Morocco as a hobby during his BA; in Germany as part of studies at the LMU in Munich; all course levels except C2 and some uses of technical language (electrical engineering, renewable energies, etc.); teaching experience online with MS Teams and Zoom.
<b>Further training</b>	Grammar in action-oriented foreign language teaching at a Goethe-Institute. Internal training at Hueber Press which included hybrid teaching.

**Table 1:** Key points in the teacher's multilingual biography

The effort put in by the teacher and his contact with German and Germany demonstrate how much he appreciates using German authentically and naturally in routine communication (Example 1).

**Example 1:** Survey – Please describe your contact with the German language

I try to go to Germany every year to improve my language skills and to look for new job opportunities. I also visit friends in Germany and do my annual shopping there. I talk to people who speak German every day, and I also listen to German music and personal development audiobooks on the way to work, *The Seven Ways to Be Effective* by Steven Covey.

The personal details given by the teacher indicate a general interest in languages. Above that, he actively uses five languages in daily life, through various opportunities within the teaching profession and in his private life. An *awareness of multilingualism* (Kalkavan-Aydın 2024) is reflected in his biography, and his mention of different linguistic registers (e.g. technical language). In the questionnaire, the teacher answers questions about his attitude towards multilingualism in everyday life and in the classroom, and whether and how learners should use their multilingualism in the classroom:

**Example 2:** Survey – Please describe your attitude towards multilingualism in everyday life and in classroom interactions. Are learners allowed or encouraged to use their multilingualism? Do you use your own multilingualism in the classroom? If so, how and to what end?

Multilingualism is a fundamental part of foreign language teaching, especially when the target group is international. The multilingual teacher can easily understand participants' cultural and linguistic intentions and transform them into targeted synergies. I always advocate for this principle in teaching to maintain a better, clearer vision. The teacher should keep students focused on the target language and teach strategies for transferring meanings more accurately into that target language. The higher the language level, the less the teacher should employ multilingualism. Personally, I follow this principle. As you know, we have complex skills with a wide range of previous experiences. I am currently teaching level 5, B1.1, B1.2 and preparation for the xx-GFL. I use multilingualism the least at this level because the students should have a wide vocabu-

lary. I try to use synonyms and rephrase as much as possible so that my students get used to this method and can prepare more efficiently for the lexemes that appear in the exam. Grammar is based on vocabulary. There is no grammar without vocabulary.

The teacher implicitly confirms his linguistic awareness and his analytical, reflective use of multilingualism in a pedagogical context. He reflects on strategies to promote learner autonomy whilst also emphasising the relevance of multilingualism through giving examples of linguistic contrasts. As we can see from his answers, his strategic and thoughtful approach is based not only on personal experience but is also informed by his professional training and education as a foreign language teacher.

### 3.2 The lesson: communicative strategies and language alternation

The data collected by *MuCI* covers different dates. This case analysis refers to a specific teacher and to a lesson he taught (Table 2).

Call name and number	tag02_grp01_DaF-B1.1
Recording date	31. October 2023, 8:00–9:30
Duration of recording	68:05 min.
Recording location	Madaba, Jordan
Speakers	1 teacher and 19 students
Recording medium	Video
Short description	German as a foreign language, course level B1.1

**Table 2:** *Information about the conversation (as recorded on video)*

Not all multilingual language teachers use their resources and abilities in all their classroom interactions. Some of them almost exclusively use German when teaching lessons. However, there are additional strategies involved to encourage speaking and interaction and to promote understanding of content, or to create opportunities for output through dialogic feedback methods. Table 3 gives an overview of the lesson, demonstrating how the non-native foreign language teacher uses his multilingualism.

<b>Introduction</b>	Welcome	Plenum
	Reviewing tasks and grammar from last lesson: students explain the rules for using connectors in German on the smartboard	
<b>First phase of practice</b>	Repeating connectors in exercises	Partner work
<b>Consolidation phase</b>	Exercises on the smartboard	Plenum
	Revision of grammar rules for connectors: students write explanations on the smartboard and teacher helps with explaining examples	
<b>Second phase of practice</b>	Correcting homework together on the smartboard	Plenum
	Teacher and students explain connectors	
<b>Third phase of practice</b>	Tasks and problem-solving tasks on using connectors	Partner/group work
<b>Final phase</b>	Short discussion of results and adopting the grammar rules	Plenum

**Table 3:** *Overview of the teaching process in phases (tag02\_grp01\_DaF-B1.1)*

In this lesson, the following functions of language alternation in German, Arabic and English in plenary or group work can be identified:

- (1) motivating students to interact with the teacher and with each other (especially through feedback strategies)
- (2) explaining grammar (metalinguistic explanations and translations)
- (3) giving examples (from everyday life or about learning strategies)
- (4) managing comprehension and understanding (for example, by asking questions).

The teacher follows a clear plan and divides his lessons into phases, where he switches between tasks, methods, and forms of interactive learning (e.g. group work). He starts the lesson by greeting the students and asking them about the topic they talked about in the previous lesson. To begin with, he has prepared three sentences as examples on the board and begins to explain the main task (Figure 2). The teacher first moves around the classroom and addresses the learning group directly ("Hey guys"). He then moves to the desk next to the board and maintains direct eye contact with the students. When explaining the task, he also turns to the board and points to the example sentences and, specifically, to the connectors, shown in a different colour (pink; punctuation marks are turquoise and other parts of the sentence are yellow).



**Figure 2:** Introduction: tasks and grammar rules for using connectors

As the introductory phase continues, Student 1 explains the rules for word order and the function of the connector displayed on the board (*deshalb, wegen*; Transcript excerpt 1).

**Transcript excerpt 1:** (00:00:25 – 00:01:32): 'Take on my role'

Teacher: was haben wir gestern geSEHEN oder geMACHT? (-----) bezüglich der gramMATik? =

*What did we see or do yesterday? About grammar?*

Student: u über das gramma äh gramm äh grammatik desHALB deswe äh: (.) des[wegen];

*On grammar 'therefore'.*

Teacher: [SEHR] schön; ja konnektOREn das sind konnektoren ja, deshalb (--) also äh desWEgen (--) daher- gut (.) GUT, äh A. war gestern nicht da: ja? wer wollte (-) also einfach (.) an die tafel kommen ((zeigt auf die Tafel)) und ihm einfach so erKLÄren ja, also was wir gestern geSEHEN haben-- NUR kurz. ((0,5s))

*es ist nicht so (----) komplIZIERT.*

*ich bin mir sicher sie (--) wissen also sie KENnen das schon (.) gut;*

*ja ich habe hier (.) also einige BEIspiele (.) geschrieben;*

*hier zum BEIspiel,*

*ich habe wenig GELD-- desHALB kann ich nicht reisen.*

*JA?*

*also was ist die funkTION von deshalb ja? ((0,5s))*

*was haben wir gestern geSEHEN;*

*ja wer möchte einfach an die TAFel kommen--*

*meine rolle übernehmen (--) und A. erklären*

*(--) ja (.) was wir gestern ge (.) sehen haben (--) ja?*

*Very nice, yes these are connectors, yes that's why, that's why, therefore (...). Good. Good. A. wasn't there yesterday, yes, whoever wanted to, so just come to the board and simply explain to him, yes, what we saw yesterday. Only briefly. It's not that complicated. I'm sure you know, you're good at it. Yes, I have given some examples here (...). 'I don't have a lot of money, so I can't travel.' So what's the function of 'therefore' yeah? (...)*  
*Who would like to come to the board, take on my role and explain to A. what we saw yesterday, yes?*

The student then begins to explain the rules in German, switching to Arabic in a few places, when looking for the 'right' metalinguistic (grammatical) words. Verbal support from the teacher is in German throughout. The teacher builds on the explanations and motivates the student 'to take on [his] role'. This strategy is used again when he says that there are many teachers in the class (Transcript excerpt 2) or when he explains that they don't have to worry about making mistakes (Transcript excerpt 3).

**Transcript excerpt 2:** (00:03:32 – 00:03:35): *Motivation strategy (a)*

Teacher: wir haben hier so viele LEHRer by the way ja?  
*We have so many teachers here, by the way, yes? (during the plenary session the teacher addresses the group loudly and with a friendly voice and also looks at the cameraman, who is standing at the back of the room with the tripod)*

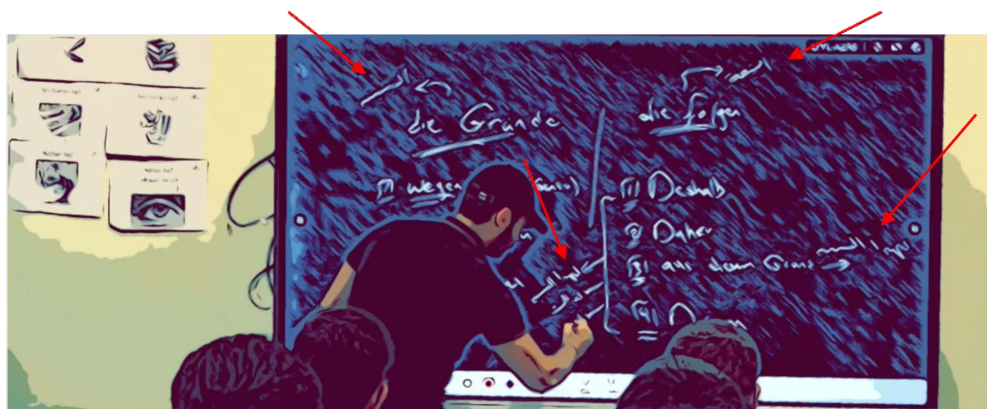
**Transcript excerpt 3:** (00:23:46 – 00:23:49): *Motivation strategy (b)*

Student: ḥarbaṭet anā kān qaṣdī 'DENN' ba'dīn ṭala't hūn tawattarat  
*I got confused, I meant 'because', and then got nervous when I got here.*

Teacher: <<:--> mā tatwattar> rela:x ((beruhigende Handbewegung)) (.)  
*no worries, JA?*  
*No stress, relax. No worries, ok?*

After this exchange, the teacher summarises what has been said and concentrates on metalinguistic explanations – again in German.

Student 2 takes part in another teacher-oriented example exercise, explaining the use of connectors on the board. An interesting difference to the previous student is that Student 2 asks to use the blackboard function to write out his explanation (Figure 3). He switches languages to explain grammar orally in Arabic as well as in German, and writes on the board in both languages. The teacher allows this and indirectly supports this approach by occasionally making language comparisons during the lesson.



**Figure 3:** *Bilingual explanation of the use of connectors in German and Arabic*

During the practice phases, the teacher gives individual feedback and talks to pairs of students about their solutions. He does this mostly and continuously in German, but when he is asked in Arabic or English, he does not hesitate to translate rules and tasks to ensure the students grasp concepts better (Transcript excerpt 4).

**Transcript excerpt 4:** (00:14:00 – 00:14:29): *Individual feedback*

Teacher: desHALB is not because. desHALB (.) das ist that's why; bi'ṭīnī an-natiġah. (.)  
*'Deshalb' is not because. 'Deshalb' is 'therefore'. It gives me the result.*

Student: ((...))

Teacher: ((nickt zustimmend)) ja ja ja, li-dālik, THAT's why; ja das ist like CONsequence. reSULT (.) it gives us a result; okay? gut.  
*Yes, right, therefore. That's why, consequence, result. It gives us a result. Okay? Good.*

In the next conversation exchange, the teacher observes two learners who have difficulties forming sentences in German during a communicative task in a partner work phase. The teacher encourages them to use their other foreign languages. Here he talks about foreign languages and tries to build a bridge between languages by pointing out possible similarities between German and English, and by encouraging the students to use these similarities as a learning strategy (Figure 4; Transcript excerpt 5).



**Figure 4:** *Language alternation during an interaction with learners*

**Transcript excerpt 5:** (00:58:24 – 00:58:39): *Interaction in partner work*

Teacher: SPREchen sie einfach ja--  
 SPREchen sie schreiben sie wie sie wie sie wollen;  
 ((nickt einem Studenten zu))  
*Just speak, ok?  
 Speak how you want to.*

Student: ((...))

Teacher: also zum beispiel als (.) als sie ENGLISH gelernt haben;  
 es muss (.) nicht unbedingt DEUTSCH sein; ((1,1s))

also auch so eine andere fremdSPRAche.  
 ((Lehrer senkt seine Stimme und spricht direkt zu den zwei Lernenden, indem er auch den Blickkontakt hält))  
*Yes, also with modern languages, yes? Write that, write in English, German, yes? (...) Just talk, okay?! Just speak, for example when you learned English. It doesn't necessarily have to be German; it can also be another foreign language.*  
 (Teacher lowers voice and speaks directly to the two learners, maintaining eye contact.)

While the learners employ code-switching as a strategy to fill in word gaps in their target language, the teacher uses code-switching infrequently to provide direct, short feedback discussions in order to translate or explain (Transcript excerpt 6).

**Transcript excerpt 6: (00:12:47 – 00:12:49): Metalinguistic explanation**

Teacher: schön (.) okay. 'wegen' das ist eine präposition mit genitiv, ja, das gibt uns GRUND; wegen DES schlechten wetters ((zeigt beim Vorlesen auf den Satz an der Tafel))  
 schlecht das ist ein Adjektiv, ja?  
 also es MUSS (.) hier sein-- bin ich nicht DRAUßEn gegangen;  
 li'anu-l-ğau saiyi' mā qadart aħruğ. oKAY? ((0,9s))  
 ist es KLAR?  
*Nice, okay. 'Because of' is a preposition with the genitive. It gives us a reason. Because of the bad weather: 'bad' that's an adjective, right? It must be one here. Because of the bad weather, I couldn't go outside. Okay? Is that clear?*

The teacher motivates the students to use other modern languages such as English when speaking and comparing languages and their rules (especially connectors, syntax, or positioning verbs in a sentence). In the same way, the students also switch languages when they are explaining solutions to tasks. The teacher does not interrupt them, but instead corrects, confirms or repeats the rules in the same language or in German (Transcript excerpt 7).

**Transcript excerpt 7: (00:22:41 – 00:24:56): Translation and explanation in Arabic and German**

Teacher: A. ((6,0s)) erKLÄRen sie mal;  
*A. Please explain.*  
 Student: 'annu auwal šay' al-- äh::  
*First this.*  
 Teacher: es gibt hier so einen FEHler--  
*So there is a mistake here.*  
 Student: modalverb position ZWEI-- fa-ma'nāhu 'denn' huwa position zero.  
*Modal verb position, this means that 'denn' is on position zero*  
 ((...))  
 eš ma'nāhā?  
*What does that mean?*  
 Teacher: ja genau erKLÄren sie mal den satz;  
*Yes, right. Explain the sentence.*  
 Student: ok, anā mā bħib ad-dirāsah online-- li'annī badrus li-ħālī  
 ba-kün mumil  
*Ok, I don't like learning online because I learn alone and it's boring.*  
 Teacher: ja: er mag keinen ONLINE-unterricht, huh (.) ja (.) he--  
 er mag keinen online-unterRICHT, waRUM?

DENN (--) allein lernen ist langweilig okay?  
GUT. aber TROTZdem applaus ja? GUT; guys li-mādā huh (--) mā bħib  
ONline-unterricht ja, waRUM; weil (.) allein  
lernen zuhause sitzen ja aLLEIN (.) ist LANGgweilig ja? ((1,6s))  
nicht wie hier, interaktIV ja? GUT.  
*Yes. He doesn't like online classes. He doesn't like  
online lessons, why? Because learning alone is boring. Okay, good.  
But let's hear it anyway. Yes, good.  
Why doesn't he like online lessons? Yes why? Because being alone  
learning, sitting at home, yes alone, is boring. Not like here,  
interactive. Yes? Good.*

In Transcript excerpt 7, a student first explains causality as a grammar rule about using the correct connector. The teacher repeats the Arabic translations of the learners' exercises in German after repeating the correct form in Arabic. The teacher frequently uses translations and comparisons between Arabic and English to create "learning opportunities" (Filipi & Markee 2018b: 220), and to describe relationships between everyday language use and grammatical rules on a metalinguistic level (Transcript excerpt 8):

**Transcript excerpt 8:** (00:22:10 – 00:22:20): *Therefore – for this reason*

Teacher: deshalb DARum aus diesem grund (--) daher--  
((spricht laut und deutlich)) also nach (.) diesen äh (.)  
konnektoren ((mit der Deixis 'diesem'  
verweist er auf den Konnektor 'deshalb')) kommt IMmer ein verb  
(.) das ist ein Indikator (.) ok?  
((Lehrer spricht laut und deutlich))  
*Then, for this reason, there is always a verb after this  
connector (with the deixis 'this' he refers to the connector  
'deshalb', that's why)! That's an indicator, ok?!  
(Teacher articulates loudly and clearly.)*

The teacher explains in the survey that he wants to include multilingualism in his lessons to foster a holistic environment for language learning. Nevertheless, exercising his function as a language role model, the teacher speaks in German consistently during interactions and gives continuous feedback. This is also reflected in how he regulates his voice: he speaks loudly when addressing the class and quietly in short dialogues with individual learners, which can be further supported by language alternation. The teacher also maintains eye contact with individual learners during their partner work phrases. He varies his roles as an active teacher, an observer and an advisor.

In summary, the teacher demonstrates awareness of his multilingual skills and those of the students in the classroom. Using different languages always serves a function: the teacher mobilises his multilingualism in a very precise way, appropriate to the particular contexts where he explores it as a strategy. As a graduate with a master's degree in GFL he has learnt to plan, carry out, and critically reflect on foreign language teaching. He has also been a GFL teacher for approximately three years since graduating and teaches language courses at various levels. The conscious use of language alternation in his teaching style and in his classroom interactions shows that he strives to be a role model for his students.



## 4 Conclusion

The case study shows that multiplicity and the power of multilingualism in L2 classrooms can be observed not only when students communicate but also in pedagogical strategies during classroom interactions. We can conclude that the teacher in this case study motivates students by strategically allowing them to assume the teacher's role and by using multilingual resources to explain and understand language rules. The teacher himself makes use of multilingualism in specific situations once he recognises that some learners need additional support. Even so, the teacher predominantly favours using German when communicating. This harks back to his principle: "The higher the level, the less the teacher should focus on multilingualism."

At the same time, the teacher feels able to use his first language, Arabic, as well as English as a 'modern language' to boost interactions and fluency. Language alternation, as well as the strategy of changing roles and perspectives, appear to be sufficient in motivating learners to speak in the target language. Moreover, students do not hesitate to use metalinguistic knowledge of their first language, Arabic, and other modern languages for translations or comparisons.

From a methodological point of view, this case study offers great potential for teacher professionalisation through its analytical and reflective approach to lesson recordings and observational foci. Further empirical studies are needed in order to draw didactic conclusions for teaching GFL in the contexts of multilingual learners and teachers. These studies should focus on multilingual educational exchanges and conduct sequential analyses to isolate and examine strategies for teaching and learning.

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