

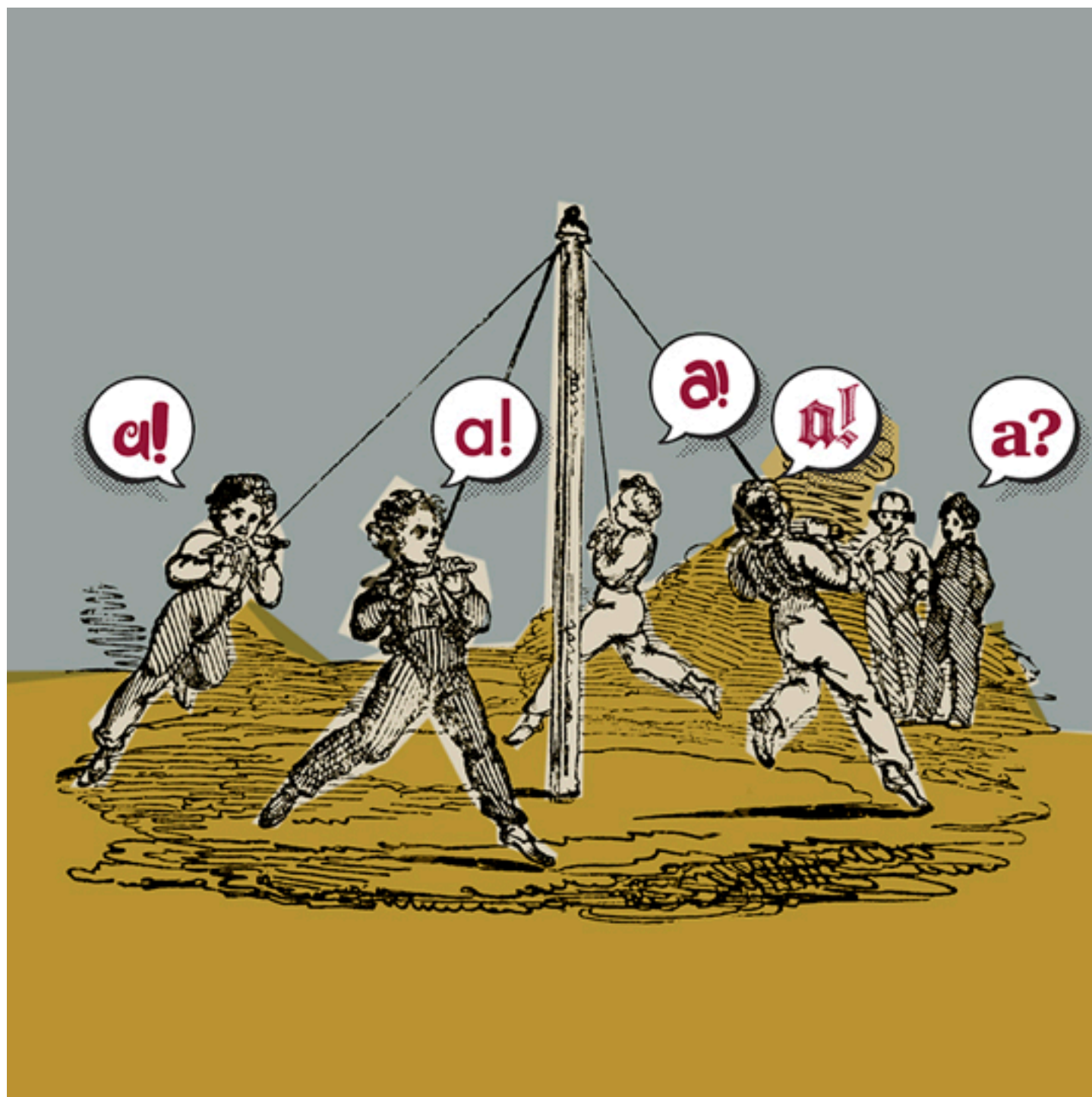


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Multilingualism and home language

When new students come to school, we often think too quickly in what they cannot do, like "their poor knowledge of the (new) language," forgetting that these students have already gained knowledge about a lot of things in their time before this (new) school, but in a different linguistic or cultural context.

As a teacher, you must ensure that students use all the knowledge they bring with them, and in doing so, it is essential that students are encouraged to stay actively engaged with their home language. After all, their home language is not only a source of knowledge, but is also the foundation on which the new language is built. And moreover, the home language is and will continue to be a large part of these students' identity, and for their social-emotional development, it is therefore important that teachers recognize, value and functionally utilize those home languages. As a team, it is good to pay attention to this in team trainings, but especially to discuss this with students and parents and really listen to each other.



Some practical tips and focus areas:

- Do not see multilingualism as a problem, but as a talent and exploit it;
- Ensure a shared vision within the school on multilingualism and make agreements with each other;
- Use students and parents as experts;
- Try to get a clear picture of the language biography of students
 - What languages run in their family?
 - What skills do they have?
- Try to create language buddies (in the classroom, or throughout the school);
- Think together about how the home language can be used functionally and continue to inspire each other about it;
- Encourage parents to keep using the home language (because this is better than 'crooked' new language);
- Make home languages and cultures visible and audible in the school:
 - In student work
 - In posters/materials/decorations etc.
 - In outings and workshops (by parents?)
 - In the library

