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Translanguaging stance of preschool teachers working with multilingual children in Luxembourg

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ABSTRACT

In today's linguistically and culturally diverse schools, it is important that teachers use inclusive pedagogies, such as translanguaging. This pedagogy assumes that teachers have positive attitudes towards children's home languages and cultures (translanguaging stance), which we explored in our study with 40 preschool teachers in Luxembourg. The teachers participated in the professional development course on translanguaging over six months. To identify teachers' stance before and after the course, they completed questionnaires and participated in focus groups, and after completing the course, teacher-child interactions in the classroom were videotaped and analysed. Empirical findings of the questionnaires demonstrate that teachers' attitudes towards children's multilingualism and home languages increased significantly after participating in the course. In the focus groups, the majority of teachers expressed a mild translanguaging stance, meaning that they were afraid that the inclusion of children's home languages will hinder children's development of the school language, Luxembourgish. Finally, in the videotaped observations, the foci teachers demonstrated their positive stance in one activity and a negative stance in another. Following the study's multi-method approach, we conclude that teachers' attitudes were ambivalent and paradoxical, which depicts a rather realistic picture of preschool teachers' attitudes in Luxembourg.

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Introduction

More than ever, teachers working in today's schools, in which the linguistic, cultural, and social diversity is increasing daily due to the perpetual migrant and refugee movements, require the use of inclusive pedagogies. One such pedagogy is translanguaging. However, to understand and implement linguistically, culturally, and socially inclusive pedagogy – such as translanguaging – it is necessary that teachers have a positive attitude towards children's home languages and cultures, and unfortunately that is not always the case. In addition, the methodologies used to identify teachers' attitudes towards children's

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multilingualism that lead them to design inclusive activities, produce findings that are not always coherent, as we will show in our study.

Translanguaging pedagogy, that includes recognising, valorising, and actively including all home languages with all their variations, is important in multilingual societies, such as the trilingual Grand Duchy of Luxembourg in the heart of Europe, where multilingual early education has been mandatory since 2017. The preschool teachers in the present study participated in the professional development (PD) course on translanguaging pedagogy over six months. In this paper, we focus on identifying their attitudes towards children's multilingualism and home languages, and more specifically, translanguaging (*translanguaging stance*), following a multi-method approach. We start by defining translanguaging and translanguaging pedagogy, present a review of the studies on translanguaging stance, and focus on the present study's methodology and findings.

Translanguaging

Initially used as an illustrative term for a specific bilingual language practice of Welsh and English introduced by Welsh educator Cen Williams in the 1990s, translanguaging evolved into a broadly used theoretical concept and pedagogical form of applied linguistics (e.g. Creese & Blackledge, 2010). Scholars like Ofelia García describe translanguaging as the enactment of dynamic bilingualism, because the linguistic repertoires of bilinguals are both fluid and dynamic and not simply composed of two or more separate linguistic repertoires that are acquired and used additively, separately, or linearly (e.g. Kleyn & García, 2019). Otheguy et al. (2015) define translanguaging as the 'deployment of a speaker's full linguistic repertoire without regard for watchful adherence to the socially and politically defined boundaries of named (and usually national and state) languages' (p. 283).

In practice, translanguaging embodies both the *natural discourse practices* of bilinguals through the linking of various linguistic repertoires into one dynamic and fluid repertoire, and the *pedagogical practice* that taps into this natural discourse practice of bilinguals in an active and flexible way to teach 'rigorous content and develop language practices for academic use' (Hesson et al., 2014, p. 3). The pedagogical practice of translanguaging supports bi- and multilingual students, as it builds on 'bilingual students' strengths to help them use language and literacy in more academic ways, to pose challenging material, to notice differences in language and to develop bilingual voices' (Celic & Seltzer, 2013, p. 3). Whilst the successful implementation of a translanguaging pedagogy can guarantee the ability of bi- and multilingual students to successfully balance and use standardised languages and therefore support their cognitive and socio-emotional development, the education, attitudes, and approach of the teachers are ultimately the deciding factor for the success of the students (Günther-van der Meij et al., 2020).

Translanguaging pedagogy and the focus on translanguaging stance

In teacher education programmes, it is important that teachers shift from the idea that teaching bilingualism should be purely separate and additive, to the more dynamic approach, where bilingualism is seen and understood as a dynamic process (García & Tupas, 2018). This first means that when bilingual/multilingual students have the

opportunity to translanguage naturally, the teachers could use this resource in their classrooms to support their dynamic multilingualism instead of insisting on language separation and an additive approach (García & Tupas, 2018). Second, with this understanding, it is also necessary that teachers take on a positive inclusive attitude towards the home languages of the students and their translanguageing (*translanguageing stance*), design teaching units that include all the home languages of the students (*translanguageing design*), and shift the teaching units according to the proficiency in languages of the students (*translanguageing shifts*; García & Tupas, 2018; Sherris, 2017; Kleyn & García, 2019; García et al., 2017). These are three major elements of *translanguageing pedagogy* (García et al., 2017).

By taking a translanguageing stance, the teacher fully embraces the language repertoires of the students as ‘a human right and resource’, transforming classroom practices (Sherris, 2017, p. 591). More specifically, the teacher views the home languages of the students as a resource ‘to learn, think, imagine and develop commanding performances in two or more languages’ (García & Kleyn, 2016, p. 21). The use of a translanguageing pedagogy is not to achieve the end goal of acquiring the school language (scaffolding stance), but to enable students’ full engagement in the classroom, the improvement of students’ academic performance, and lastly, the transformation of language hierarchies (transformative stance) (García & Kleyn, 2016; Kleyn & García, 2019).

Even though Allard (2017) showed that a translanguageing stance is absolutely needed for translanguageing strategies to have positive results, Menken and Sánchez (2019) show that the stance is not an absolute requirement for the establishment of a successful pedagogy. Their research showed that teachers’ inclusive stance towards the home languages of the students were acquired from learning about translanguageing and trying out specific strategies themselves (Menken & Sánchez, 2019). Another study, however, showed that teachers’ positive attitudes towards children’s home languages and translanguageing practices created safe spaces and trusting relationships with young emergent bilingual children and their families, which contributed to children’s inclusion in the classroom, their well-being, learning, and development of literacy (Mary & Young, 2017).

Moreover, in other studies, teachers’ positive attitudes towards children’s multilingualism encouraged children to communicate multilingually and multimodally (e.g. Kirsch, 2018). However, a recent study showed that teachers’ attitudes towards translanguageing are in fact ‘paradoxical and ambivalent’ (al-al-Bataineh & Gallagher, 2021, p. 386), where even though translanguageing in writing was seen as meshing different languages, which was seen as a threat to the development of the standard language, the teachers still produced texts by using translanguageing.

Finally, in Luxembourg, Kirsch and Seele (2020) cautioned that despite teachers’ positive attitudes towards children’s home languages and translanguageing, some teachers in their study, while translating and using home languages, were not aware of their students’ real linguistic needs and did not reflect on how to include them in the classroom. This was corroborated by our recent study in which, during the home language activity where children were asked to choose the flags of their home countries, teachers insisted that Portuguese and Serbian children choose Portuguese and Serbian flags despite children’s obvious refusal and desire to choose the Luxembourgish flag so that they feel included in the class (Aleksić & García, 2022).

Context of the study

This study is situated in the context of early education in Luxembourg. The primary education in Luxembourg is divided into four cycles: Cycle 1 (for children ages 4-5), Cycle 2 (ages 6-7), Cycle 3 (ages 8-9), and Cycle 4 (ages 10-11). In this study we focus on Cycle 1, which is the mandatory (free of charge) preschool education provided for all children ages 4–5 in Luxembourg. The three official languages of Luxembourg are Luxembourgish, German and French. The language of instruction in preschool education is Luxembourgish. In Cycle 2, children (age 6) start reading and writing in German, which becomes the language of children’s literacy and the teaching language throughout primary education. Children then begin learning French (age 7) a year later. The reality of Luxembourg’s early education population is that almost 67% of preschool aged children do not speak the school language, Luxembourgish, at home (MENJE, 2022). The increasing, ongoing awareness of the need for multilingual pedagogy is mostly reflected in the implementation of the mandatory multilingual education for preschoolers following the enactment of the new law in 2017 (Kirsch & Seele, 2020). With this legislation, the Children and Youth Act of 2017, the government aimed to facilitate the integration of children with migrant backgrounds into the Luxembourgish trilingual education and society and thus promote social justice for these youngest members of society (Simoes Lourêiro & Neumann, 2020). The law validates the pedagogical focus on the development of Luxembourgish while introducing the necessity of children’s familiarisation with French and the valorisation of their home languages (Kirsch & Seele, 2020). The addition of German as the primary language of instruction in primary school, French as the primary language of instruction in secondary school, and English (additive approach) language learning in secondary school add to this complex language ecology. The policy was not enthusiastically welcomed, and it was highly debated before its implementation in 2016/2017 (Kirsch & Aleksić, 2021). For example, in one study we found that 44 teachers and educators who had participated in a training programme on multilingual pedagogies reported having negative or ambiguous attitudes towards the new multilingual education policy (Kirsch & Aleksić, 2018). Other studies have shown that many teachers and educators embrace monolingual ideology and beliefs in language separation, even those who work in bilingual centres (e.g. Neumann, 2015; Seele, 2016; Kirsch & Aleksić, 2021). The diverse linguistic landscape and the new law, but also teachers’ reactions to the new law, opened the pathway for professional development courses on multilingualism offered to preschool teachers in Luxembourg, such as our course on translanguaging pedagogy.

Methodology

Research questions

In our project we aimed for an improvement of early education classroom quality through teachers’ acquisition of practical and theoretical knowledge and skills regarding multilingual education, more specifically through their participation in a professional development course on translanguaging pedagogy. Overall, we expected that translanguaging pedagogy will allow the teachers to successfully navigate the diverse linguistic landscape of their classrooms. In this paper we specifically focus on the identification of teachers’ attitudes towards children’s multilingualism, their home languages, and translanguaging,

as this is the first important element of translanguaging pedagogy. Without positive attitudes and beliefs in children's multilingualism as a resource, teachers would not necessarily engage in translanguaging pedagogy with multilingual children in their classrooms. Thus, it is important to explore and analyse teachers' attitudes towards translanguaging, namely their translanguaging stance. Therefore, our main research question is:

RQ1. What are teachers' attitudes towards children's multilingualism, their home languages, and translanguaging?

Furthermore, we were interested in applying multiple methods to allow us to identify their attitudes, which we employed during the course evaluation. This was also important as we are not aware of other studies that identified teachers' attitudes by applying simultaneous and multiple methodologies that could help portray a fuller picture of teachers' attitudes in Luxembourgish early education. Therefore, our second research question is as follows:

RQ2. How can we best identify teachers' attitudes towards children's multilingualism, their home languages, and translanguaging?

PD course

We delivered the professional development course on translanguaging pedagogy (García et al., 2017) for preschool teachers (June–December 2019) in eight sessions (a total of 22 hours) focusing on the topics of multilingual ecology, home–school collaboration, multilingual brain, multilingual oracy and multiliteracies, and translanguaging pedagogy. These topics were based on the translanguaging guide (Celic & Seltzer, 2013) developed from the CUNY-NYSIEB project in New York (2020) and the guide for multilingual classrooms (Chumak-Horbatsch, 2019). During seven sessions, we presented the latest theory and research on the topics and focused on related practical activities. In the eight session, the teachers were invited to present some activities they have used in their classrooms, and they described classroom experience with multilingual children. After the final session, we visited the schools and filmed classroom activities implemented by teachers following the PD course. Finally, to provide resources to teachers, parents, and interested public, the first author created the 'transla' website and uploaded more than 100 practical activities related to the topics of the PD course that had been gathered by the second author (<https://transla-program.org/>).

Participants

Responding to the advertisement of the PD course posted on the National Education Training Institute's website, participants registered online and received credits for their participation. Overall, 40 participants, divided into four groups, took part in the translanguaging course ($N = 17$, $N = 11$, $N = 6$, $N = 6$). They came from five different schools from four different corners of the country (North, East, South, Centre). The teachers who participated in the study were all female, with five of them under the age of 30 years, 14 between 30 and 39 years, and 21 older than 40 years. Of these 40 teachers, 30 reported having a Bachelor's degree in educational sciences, which is a requirement

for a teaching position, while one stated that she had both a Bachelor's and a Master's degree in education. In addition, the teachers were all speakers of Luxembourgish, German and French, which is also a requirement for teaching positions in Luxembourg as these are the three official languages. Moreover, 17 teachers reported fluent and 12 reported advanced language skills in English. English is the fourth language introduced in the eighth grade to students during their education. Other languages spoken by teachers were Italian (3 teachers), Spanish (3 teachers), and Portuguese (3 teachers). Approximately 75% (i.e. 31 teachers) reported more than 10 years of work experience. They all worked in the compulsory formal educational sector for children aged 4–6 years. Regarding the languages of the children in their classrooms, all teachers reported at least five languages, and the most frequent were Luxembourgish, French, Portuguese, German and Serbian. All teachers had students in their classrooms who spoke Portuguese or Serbian. Teaching in a class with more than five languages was reported by 25 teachers, with 12 of these teachers reporting up to 11 languages in their classes (e.g. Italian, Spanish, Polish, Russian, Persian, Romanian, etc.), which corresponds to the national statistic that almost 67% of preschool children speak a home language other than Luxembourgish (MENJE, 2022). Before the course, all participants (teachers, parents and children) gave their informed consent, and the study was approved by both the Ethics Review Panel at the University of Luxembourg (ERP 19-020) and the Ministry of Education.

Methods

The project draws on *design-based research* (Cobb et al., 2003), where researchers study learning in a designed environment that is also subject to change (Cobb et al., 2003). For this paper, we analysed teachers' attitudes (i.e. their translanguaging stance) identified through the PD course on translanguaging pedagogy (RQ1). To explore and identify teachers' translanguaging stance, we used both quantitative (questionnaires) and qualitative methods (focus groups and video observations; RQ2). Taking this a step further, we were also able to explore and identify potential differences or changes in teachers' translanguaging stance through application of the questionnaire and the focus groups before and after the course, as well as through the video observations of teacher–children interactions after the course.

The questionnaire

The questionnaire, distributed before (June 2019) and after (December 2019) the PD course, consisted of two main parts: (1) teachers' background information, and (2) attitudes towards children's multilingualism, the use of Luxembourgish and home languages (51 items; Kirsch & Aleksić, 2018). The response options were presented on five-point Likert scales ranging from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree'. Because our focus was on teachers' attitudes towards children's multilingualism, we created three outcome variables (Kirsch & Aleksić, 2018): (1) attitudes towards children's multilingualism (5 items: e.g. 'The use of words from different languages in the same sentence is a sign of incompetence'), (2) attitudes towards the use of Luxembourgish (5 items; e.g. 'Communication in languages other than Luxembourgish within the institution has negative effects on the acquisition of Luxembourgish'), and (3) attitudes towards children's home languages

(6 items; e.g. 'All children should have the opportunity to express themselves in their home language within the institution'; *Cronbach's alpha* for all scales was 0.96).

The focus groups

The focus groups were conducted before (June 2019) and after the PD course (December 2019) in Luxembourgish, and they centred on the translanguaging stance of the teachers while also incorporating questions about their needs and expectations of the course. We did not aim to pose exactly the same questions in the two focus groups, and we aimed to avoid 'attitude' in the questions themselves as attitudes towards children's multilingualism may be considered 'taboo' (Valsiner, 2000). In this paper, we only focus on the questions regarding teachers' attitudes.

There were four groups of teachers. Before the course, there were five participants in the first focus group (Centre of the country), 16 in the second (North), 10 in the third (South), and 11 in the fourth (East). Thus, originally there were 42 teachers of which two dropped out after the first session. After completion of the course, there were seven participants in the merged first and the third group (3 from the Centre and 4 from the South), 15 in the second group (North), and 11 in the fourth group (East), which amounted to 33 teachers in total.

The questions of the two focus groups are presented in [Table 1](#).

The researchers also took field notes during every session (eight sessions of approximately three hours duration) of each group (four groups), amounting to 88 hours of the course for the four groups overall.

Video observations

After completion of the course, in four different schools, we videotaped approximately four hours of teachers' activities with their students that were based on the activities proposed in the translanguaging course. The videotaped activities, for example, involved a parent reading a book in a home language, multilingual counting, or teachers sing a song or telling a story in children's home languages. In this paper, we specifically focus on the activity in which the teachers sang a song in Serbian, a language that none of them spoke.

Data analysis

T-test was used to identify teachers' attitudes towards children's multilingualism, the use of Luxembourgish, and their home languages, and any possible differences before and after the PD course. We firstly aggregated three outcome variables presented as

Table 1. The selected questions for the focus groups.

Pre-Course Focus Group	Post-Course Focus Groups
What do you think are the advantages of working with language minority children?	What translanguaging activities did you do?
What are the challenges and possible solutions?	How did you gain new ideas or inspiration?

statements as the following: (1) multilingualism (5 items; e.g. 'Being multilingual means being able to accurately use multiple languages fluently'), (2) the use of Luxembourgish (5 items; e.g. 'I speak exclusively Luxembourgish with the children'), and (3) children's home languages (6 items; e.g. 'The development of the home language is a pre-condition for the acquisition of other languages'; Kirsch & Aleksić, 2018, p. 6). We then conducted the paired *t*-test to explore any significant differences between the outcomes, before and after the course.

Regarding the analysis of the focus groups, we used thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) to identify the common themes in the focus groups transcriptions. A theme 'captures something important about the data in relation to the research question, and represents some level of *patterned* response or meaning within the data set' (p. 82; original italics). The discussions in the focus groups were transcribed in detail in Luxembourgish and then translated into English. In total, there were seven transcriptions of the focus groups, before and after the PD course, for each group. The coding process was thorough and inclusive and the themes were consistent and coherent and not based on simply a few examples (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Based on the literature review, we particularly focussed on teachers' attitudes and beliefs towards children's multilingualism, and we aimed to identify teachers' translanguaging stance in particular (García et al., 2017; García & Kley, 2016).

Furthermore, regarding the video observations, we initially transcribed the significant scenes in the original languages in which they occurred (i.e. Luxembourgish, Portuguese, and Serbian) and subsequently translated them into English. To obtain a broader view of teachers' translanguaging pedagogy, we used moment analysis (Li, 2011) to evaluate the videotaped material, which allowed us to transcribe and interpret the significant moments of teacher's stance in the interactions. Li (2011) defines moment analysis as the 'spontaneous, impromptu, and momentary actions and performances of the individual' (p. 1225) where a moment can be 'a point in or a period of time which has outstanding significance' (p. 1224).

Results

In this section, we will present the findings on teachers' attitudes towards children's multilingualism, their home languages and translanguaging (RQ1) obtained through the questionnaires, focus groups and video observations (RQ2).

Questionnaires

The *t*-test showed that there was a (1) significant increase of teachers' positive attitudes towards children's multilingualism and translanguaging before ($M = 3.79$, $SD = 0.45$) and after the course ($M = 4.10$, $SD = 0.48$), $t(35) = -3.83$, $p < .001$). Moreover, the analysis showed that there was a (2) significant decrease of teachers' focus on exclusive use of Luxembourgish before ($M = 3.48$, $SD = 0.96$) and after the course ($M = 3.10$, $SD = 0.83$), $t(34) = 3.45$, $p < .001$). Finally, there was a (3) significant increase of teachers' positive attitudes towards children's home languages before ($M = 4.42$, $SD = 0.36$) and after the course ($M = 4.60$, $SD = 0.37$), $t(34) = -3.27$, $p < .001$). The second and the third findings were corroborated by another study with 46 early-years practitioners who participated in the PD course

on multilingual education in 2016 (Kirsch & Aleksić, 2018). Although these results were very encouraging, especially regarding a significant positive increase in attitudes towards children's multilingualism, translanguaging and their home languages, the analysis did not capture all teachers' attitudes, which we will see from findings of the focus groups and the video observations (RQ2).

Focus groups

The results from the first focus groups showed that none of the 40 teachers who decided to participate in our course were completely convinced that their students can progress linguistically and cognitively and engage socio-emotionally in a Luxembourgish-only classroom that does not acknowledge their linguistic and cultural differences in any way. Therefore, there was no strict monolingual stance that was clearly identified. Their voluntary participation in the course already indicated that they do think the inclusion of the home languages can help the children to some degree. The goals of this inclusion were, however, not always the same. The differences in goals offer a distinction of the teachers into three groups:

- (1) Acquisition of Luxembourgish in the fastest and most effective way: a few participating teachers wanted their students to learn Luxembourgish in the fastest and most effective way possible. These teachers had what we call a mild monolingual stance, meaning that they in fact prefer a Luxembourgish-only classroom, but they see value in the inclusion of the cultures and sometimes the home languages of the students in specific and controlled instances for the achievement of their goal (N = 3 teachers);
- (2) Well-being of children and acquisition of Luxembourgish: the majority of the participating teachers wanted their students to engage in the classroom and feel good about themselves while placing the educational focus on the acquisition of Luxembourgish. They had what we call a mild translanguaging stance, meaning that they do know that the children progress and feel better in the classroom if their home languages are included, but they fear that this inclusion will hinder the students' development and progress in Luxembourgish (N = 33 teachers; i.e. 26 teachers from both focus groups plus 7 from the first focus group);
- (3) Free use of entire linguistic repertoire in the classroom: a small group of teachers wanted their students to have the possibility to use any language necessary to express themselves and engage in the classroom. They had what we call a true translanguaging stance, in that they are aware of the need of the inclusion of the home languages of the children for the children's well-being and academic progression and thus actively try to enable their students to make use of their entire linguistic repertoires in the classroom (N = 4 teachers).

The teachers who began the course with a *mild monolingual stance* reported several reasons why they thought a true multilingual approach was not feasible or attainable in their classrooms. Foremost, they expressed that learning Luxembourgish is the main priority of early education, that children do not even have enough knowledge in their home languages because they think that their parents do not speak to them enough

or well enough in their languages, and that children are overwhelmed by multilingualism. Some even believed that the approach of one person/one language should be adopted. One teacher who only participated in the first session can be considered somewhat representative of the mentality encountered by the researchers in the group of teachers that is openly opposed to all multilingual ideas or activities:

I think that it is important, simply for the integration in Luxembourg, that you learn Luxembourgish. This is the main priority, and this has nothing to do with me being a racist or something like that, no, it simply has something to do with the integration in the country. I let my children [students, researcher's insert] alone during free play or recess, I have no problem if they speak other languages, or during a game or something, but if we do activities, then I want things to run in Luxembourgish, simply because this is academics and it is part of it and I do not separate that. Maybe I am too strict in this, I don't know. (Teacher A, School 5, first focus group)

This very small group of teachers stayed firm in their monolingual idea with the focus on learning the school language. Their attitudes towards multilingual daily activities did not change throughout the course, and all our suggestions were met with resistance. One teacher in this group, coming from a French-speaking household and convinced that the level of the home language of the children is insufficient as a good base for learning Luxembourgish, was very adamant about the need of language separation and the necessity of Luxembourgish remaining the priority in the classroom:

I think that children should know Luxembourgish for them to be able to go to primary school afterwards. We sometimes have children who speak in their mother tongue in the classroom, and back in the day it was said that we should then say that they should speak their mother tongue at home and Luxembourgish at school, and I think that with this project [new law, researcher's insert] everything gets twisted upside down so that one does not know what to do anymore when you have children who express themselves in another language. (Teacher B, School 1, first focus group)

This teacher held strongly to her beliefs throughout the duration of the course, and this led to situations directly challenging the researcher giving the course. The field notes show that the teacher softened up a bit after a confrontation in the second session, but she appeared to be more detached than other participants although she did open up slightly in the final session. During the last focus group, the teacher shared her negative experience with using the home languages of her students, although she was still convinced that the level of their home languages is simply not high enough to be used in the classroom:

I asked for the song Merry Christmas, but no one could tell me what Christmas is in Portuguese. (Teacher B, School 1, second focus group)

The teachers with a *mild translanguaging stance* do not completely oppose the use of multilingual activities as they serve the purpose of learning Luxembourgish better and faster. These teachers do, however, see no long-term benefits in creating a translanguaging space and allowing the children to use their linguistic repertoires to express themselves freely. The majority of participating teachers have a mild translanguaging stance, that is, they do not fully believe in adhering strictly to a monolingual educational approach, but welcome multilingual and multicultural activities in their classrooms. However, they do not create a completely multilingual classroom space because they

fear that the inclusion of the home languages will hinder the development and progression of Luxembourgish and/or that it might be too strenuous for them to use all the home language of the children all the time. This is especially the case for teachers with classes composed of large groups of one language minority like French for example. One teacher explained in the questionnaire and during the course how she wants to prepare the children for primary school in the best possible way:

I wish to find ways to valorise the mother tongues of the children in the school and give them room, while simultaneously allowing children to acquire Luxembourgish skills without pressure, because I think that this facilitates integration, but I particularly think that it gives the children better qualifications for primary school to learn German and therefore be successful in school. (Teacher C, School 4, first questionnaire)

During the second focus group, this teacher showcased a true change in her attitude. Even though she is still sometimes on the fence on how to promote Luxembourgish and create an open translanguaging space (expressed in follow-up talks), the presence of diversity and multiple languages is now something the teacher sees as valuable:

I always fall back into old habits, but we were, for example, at a pedagogical farm [...] the animators let the children speak in different languages and I again had the tendency that I had the feeling 'Oh my God, they cannot express themselves enough, I did not teach them enough Luxembourgish'. After that I thought that I look at it as more enriching that they speak different languages and that it is not like they do not know anything and are not capable of nothing, my prejudices that I maybe had, but that they maybe cannot do everything, they communicate what they can, and I became aware that children know a lot of things, things that I do not maybe know. I do not think that there is nothing just because they cannot say something. (Teacher C, School 4, second focus group)

Another group of teachers with a *mild translanguaging stance* did not experience change in their beliefs as much. Being unsure about how to tackle the new law and the linguistic diversity in the classroom, one teacher said in the first focus group:

Back in the day it was clear, they always said that children should really try to speak Luxembourgish at school, and we have attended many courses in the meantime where this has been revised and that we should now support that the children really can speak their mother tongue, but I personally really do not know what is right. (Teacher D, School 1, first focus group)

The course was well received in this group (except by Teacher B), and the teachers were participating and expressing their opinions freely. This free exchange enabled us to see that most of the teachers thought that the inclusion of the home language of the children is something valuable that helps to strengthen children's well-being. Despite this knowledge and their openness – and therefore somewhat to our surprise – the teachers mostly agreed with teacher D in the final session:

Such concrete things once or as a theme more intensively also for 3–4 weeks, but constantly the whole time is simply too time consuming, just overwhelming. (Teacher D, School 1, second focus group)

The third, smallest group of teachers already followed a *true translanguaging stance* when they came to the course. They not only valorise the home language of the children in small random multilingual and/or multicultural activities, but they actively enable the

children to use their linguistic repertoires in the classroom. One teacher demonstrated this attitude in the questionnaire:

I support, every day or at every opportunity, the family language of the children. I am honoured to witness this or experience how they play 'interpreter' for others. (Teacher F, School 6, first questionnaire)

In this same small heterogeneous group, the teachers were generally very aware of all the positive effects of the free use of the home languages on children and enabled the free expression of their students in the classrooms. Due to the open and good nature of exchange with this small group, even the slightest change in attitude became apparent. One teacher reported overcoming her own linguistic shame of English for the sake of communicating with an English-speaking child:

I noticed that I changed a bit if I do not understand something. I tell the children then honestly 'Hey, tell me this again because I did not understand you', because beforehand if I did not understand something then I just talked around it until the child gave up [...] I was always told when you do not speak a language 100% that you will only confuse a child or teach it something wrong [...] well the essential thing is that the children understand me. (Teacher G, School 4, second focus group)

All in all, we identified three different stances of teachers, and we observed that their stances did not change very radically after the course. The teachers who came to the course with a rather monolingual approach continued to handle their classrooms in their monolingual way. Some teachers who were indecisive about how much they should use the home languages reported that they changed their stance on multilingualism in their classroom. Derived from the follow-ups, however, it would be rather too optimistic to think that these changes produced a real continuous change in the classroom. The last group, consisting of teachers who had a true translanguaging stance to begin with, also changed although only slightly, as these teachers already enabled a translanguaging space in their classrooms and attended to the course to get inspiration and new ideas. Thus, we were reluctant to measure the change as such because, and as we will see from the other methods (RQ2), teachers mostly expressed ambivalent opinions.

Video observations

To better understand teachers' translanguaging stance, we will now focus on one video recorded scenario in which the Luxembourgish teacher is singing a song in the children's home language, namely Serbian (Table 2), a language she did not understand. The teacher prepared the song together with the child's mother and asked the second author to verify the pronunciation. This was the activity for inclusion of children's home languages, following the proposed activities in our course. In this scene, the teacher starts singing the song in Serbian. A second teacher (they are teaching partners) is involved in the scene but not singing, and both teachers report that they speak Luxembourgish, French, German and English. When the first teacher starts singing, we see that the Serbian student, Ivan, immediately becomes very involved in the process. At the same time, both teachers who do not understand Serbian, create a space for teacher-student co-learning (Vogel & García, 2017). Ivan appears to be very happy that his home language is used in the classroom and tries to help the teachers in pronouncing certain sounds, thus

showing his knowledge in Serbian. There are two other children, Dara and Simona, who also speak Serbian but do not get involved. The teachers recognise Ivan's expertise to contribute to the meaning making for his teachers and fellow students. These teachers belonged to the group of teachers who expressed a *mild translanguaging stance* in the focus groups.

Several times, we see that the teachers are communicating their difficulties in trying to sing the song in Serbian, a language they do not understand (lines 1, 6, 15, 19). They identify the Serbian-speaking children, Ivan, Dara, and Simona, who can help teachers to sing the song. For example, the teacher asks Ivan twice whether she was right in pronouncing (lines 11 and 13). In the video we can see that Ivan is not only an expert, correcting the teacher, but he is also very physically involved and encourages the teacher by exclaiming 'Bravo!' when the teacher sings in Serbian.

Teachers' engagement in this activity shows that they are validating children's home languages, and that by expressing their own difficulties in singing the song, identifying

Table 2. Singing in Serbian.

1	T1	Ech hunn elo nach ee Problem. Ech kann et net ëmmer richtig soen. Ivan an Dara mussen elo oppassen wann mir schwätzen fir ze kucken ob et richtig ass. An d'Simona och nach, jo. Wann et falsch ass, musst Dir ais soen wéi et richtig gesot gëtt. Also. Добар дан другови, како сте? War datt richtig?	I also have another problem. I cannot always say it correctly. Ivan and Dara need to pay attention now when we speak to see if it is correct. And Simona also, yes. If it's wrong, you need to tell us how it is said correctly. So. Hello dear friends, how are you? (Ivan sings along) Was that right?
2	Ivan	Jo.	Yes.
3	T1	Dann nach eng Kéier. Добар дан другови, како сте? Добро смо, нисмо добро, овако и онако. Добар дан другови, како сте?	Then once again. Hello dear friends, how are you? We are well, we are unwell, like this and like that. Hello dear friends, how are you? (Ivan sings along)
4	C1	War datt, war datt op Serbesch?	Was this, was this Serbian?
5	Ivan	Jo.	Yes.
6	T1	Et war e bësse falsch, well mir mussen dat e bësse méi üben, et ass schwéier fir, fir ...	It was a little wrong because we need to practice a little more, it is difficult for, for ...
7	Ivan	Et ass guer net schwéier.	It's not difficult at all.
8	T2	Ah, dann hu mir eppes gutt gemaach, okay.	Ah then we did something good, okay.
9	T1	Et ass e bësse wéi polnesch? Ech kann et net maachen, awer mir probéieren et nach eng Kéier an dir hellëft. Als éischt den éischte Satz. Добар дан другови, како сте? Nach eemol. Добар дан другови, како сте? Dobар дан другови, како сте? An da kënnt gutt oder schlecht, dat heescht Добро смо, нисмо добро.	It is a little like Polish? I cannot do it, but we will try it once more and you will help. First, the first sentence. Hello dear friends, how are you? Once again. Hello dear friends, how are you? Hello dear friends, how are you? (Ivan sings along) And then there is good or bad, meaning good, we are well, we are unwell.
10	Ivan	Браво!	(Go)od!
11	T1	Wéi seet en?	How is it?
12	Ivan	Добро.	Good.
13	T1	Ass dat richtig, Ivan? Ivan? Добро смо, нисмо добро. Okay. Добро смо, нисмо добро, онако и овако.	Good. Is that correct, Ivan? Ivan? We are well, we are unwell. (Ivan repeats) Okay. We are well, we are unwell, like this and like that. (Ivan sings along)
14	Ivan	Jo.	Yes.
15	T2	Dat ass awer schwéier.	This is hard.
16	C1	Mega schwéier.	Super hard.
17	T1	Nach eng Kéier. Добро смо, нисмо добро, онако и онако. Добар дан другови, како сте?	Once again. We are well, we are unwell, like this and like that. Hello dear friends, how are you?
18	C2	Dat ass schwéier fir mech.	This is hard for me.
19	T1	Dat ass schwéier, jo.	This is hard, yes.
20	T2	Mir mussen üben an op eemol kënne mer et.	We need to practice and suddenly we know it.

Note. Luxembourgish is in normal font; Serbian is in bold. T1, T2 = teachers; C1, C2 = children in the class.

the mistakes, and repeating the text several times (lines 9 and 20), they also acknowledge that it is hard work for multilingual children to communicate, make meaning, and learn in the language they do not understand. This is very important, because teachers become aware that it is not a given to simply start understanding the new language, and by this they begin to develop a translanguaging stance, which is most important for a translanguaging design (García et al., 2017). Although it might seem that a lot of time is needed to develop a translanguaging stance, in fact, it is essential for teachers to take a first step, which in this scenario is the inclusion of a song in Serbian. Not only do the teachers express that singing in Serbian is difficult for them, Ivan's peers do so also (line 16 – 'super hard'). This activity clearly demonstrates these teachers' positive translanguaging stance in which they also acknowledge that becoming multilingual can be difficult especially for language minority children who start learning in the school language they do not understand. This understanding and stance led to the translanguaging design and shifts and opened the space for valuing children's multilingual repertoires.

However, for the sake of comparison for this paper, the same teachers with the same class, organised another activity in which they involved children's home languages. In this activity, the immigrant children were invited to choose the card with the flag of their own country and name their home languages (Aleksić & García, 2022). Four children, three Portuguese and one Serbian, chose cards with the Luxembourgish flag and, as arguments for their choice, they stated that they speak Luxembourgish at home and their siblings and parents did, too. However, the teachers insisted that the children choose the 'correct' Portuguese and Serbian flags, convincing them that they do not speak Luxembourgish at home, and that even their siblings and parents only use Luxembourgish 'a little bit'. In the video, we observe the children's non-verbal withdrawal and the teachers' raciolinguistic ideologies (Aleksić & García, 2022).

Therefore, even though the same teachers showed a positive translanguaging stance identified in the questionnaires, a mild translanguaging stance in the focus groups, and a positive translanguaging stance in the video recordings, that indeed led them to design activities with the inclusion of children's home languages, we have a paradoxical situation. In the singing activity, the same teachers created a co-learning space with the children, in which they allowed them to be the experts in their own language and demonstrated how hard it is to learn a new one, while in the flag activity they denied the children the right to choose Luxembourgish as their language and excluded them from this activity. They sent a very clear message to the children that only Luxembourgers can speak Luxembourgish. In the flag activity, these teachers showed that they did not understand translanguaging pedagogy and, despite their good intentions, they designed an activity in which the use of home languages was artificial and even harmful for the immigrant children (Aleksić & García, 2022). They also neglected the fact that a flag does not always indicate a language as, for example, is the case for the pluricentric language Portuguese.

Discussion

Teachers who have a translanguaging stance view the home languages of their students as a resource and not a hindrance for teaching and learning. This open and inclusive stance stands opposite a strictly monolingual educational ideology. Even though

Luxembourg's multilingual education system is a longstanding norm that the teachers in question all experienced themselves, this does not guarantee that their ideology towards early education is also completely open to multilingualism in their own classrooms (Kirsch & Aleksić, 2021). Until 2017 and the introduction of the new law, the sole focus, attributed to a monolingual ideology, was on the acquisition of Luxembourgish in early education. The inclusion of French and the valorisation of the home languages of the children mandated in early education by this new law in 2017 created a novel situation that somewhat undermines this monolingual ideology. This new law did not, however, turn every early education teacher with a monolingual bias into a proponent of multilingual education as much as the absence of this explicit law did not hinder the attitudes of early education teachers who firmly believe in an inclusive teaching stance towards all languages in the classroom.

In this paper, we aimed to identify teachers' attitudes towards children's multilingualism, home languages and translanguaging (RQ1) and explore the methods that identified these attitudes, especially teachers' translanguaging stance (RQ2). It was important to identify teachers' translanguaging stance in particular as this is an important first element of translanguaging pedagogy. Forty teachers participated in our professional development course on translanguaging pedagogy over six months. To identify teachers' translanguaging stance, we used questionnaires and focus groups, administered and delivered before and after the PD course, and video observations after the course. The results from the questionnaires showed that there was a significant increase in teachers' positive attitudes towards children's multilingualism, translanguaging and their home languages. In addition, we identified a significant decrease regarding the exclusive use of Luxembourgish, the school language, in the classrooms. However, although these results were encouraging, they are statistical summaries and we could not pinpoint possible social biases or teachers' individual attitudes (RQ2). Thus, we turned to the findings obtained from the focus group sessions and the video observations of the classroom interactions (RQ2).

In the focus groups, we identified three groups of teachers: (1) those with a *mild monolingual stance* who valued children's home languages but preferred maintaining a Luxembourgish only classroom (3 teachers), (2) those with a *mild translanguaging stance* who understood that the use of children's home languages is important for their well-being but were afraid that this will still hinder their development of Luxembourgish (33 teachers), and (3) those with a *true translanguaging stance* who understood translanguaging pedagogy and children's linguistic repertoires and actively implemented this in the classroom (4 teachers).

In the video observations, we focussed on two teachers who expressed positive attitudes towards children's multilingualism and home languages in the questionnaire and a mild translanguaging stance in the focus groups. In the analysed scenario of teachers' singing in Serbian, the teachers showed a positive translanguaging stance towards children's home language. They were open to corrections and admitted the difficulties they had with pronunciation and in becoming multilingual in general. Other children empathised with the teachers by saying that singing in Serbian was 'super hard'. However, in the flag activity, the same teachers, with the same class, denied three Portuguese children and one Serbian child the right to choose the flag of Luxembourg and identify Luxembourgish as their home language (Aleksić & García, 2022). In fact, if we

focus on these two teachers, for example, we will see that the same teachers expressed strong positive attitudes in the questionnaires, a mild translanguaging stance in the focus groups, and they portrayed a positive stance in one videotaped activity but a negative stance in another. Had we only used one of the methodological tools (RQ2), we would not have identified these ambivalent and paradoxical findings (RQ1), which in fact show a realistic picture of the majority of preschool teachers in early multilingual education in Luxembourg (e.g. Kirsch & Aleksić, 2018; Kirsch & Seele, 2020). Other recent studies have reported ambivalent attitudes and difficulties in understanding and implementing translanguaging pedagogy (e.g. al-Bataineh & Gallagher, 2021; Charalambous et al., 2016; Vaish, 2019). Although our approach was to gather information from as many sources as possible (questionnaires, focus groups and video observations; RQ2) to identify understand teachers' attitudes (RQ1), we can only conclude that the majority of teachers displayed ambivalent attitudes, which correspond to what teachers with *mild translanguaging stance* expressed in the focus groups. This was in fact ambivalent as teachers expressed that they perceive the advantages of translanguaging pedagogy, they are afraid that this will hinder children's development in Luxembourgish. Perhaps these teachers were still progressing towards understanding translanguaging pedagogy, and perhaps they needed more time to experience it. However, it is also possible that the teachers wanted to reproduce the monolingual and monoglossic ideologies firmly tied to the status of Luxembourgish (Kirsch & Aleksić, 2021), as we have identified in the two groups of teachers expressing a mild monolingual and a mild translanguaging stance. In an earlier PD course, teachers reported negative or ambiguous attitudes towards the new multilingual education policy (Kirsch & Aleksić, 2018), and findings reveal that many teachers and educators still hold monolingual ideology and beliefs in language separation (e.g. Neumann, 2015; Seele, 2016; Kirsch & Aleksić, 2021). Therefore, with this study we contribute to the research area of exploring teachers' attitudes towards children's multilingualism – necessary for the implementation of inclusive pedagogies – but we also demonstrate that different methods can identify these attitudes differently and provide ambivalent results. We are not aware of other studies that identified teachers' attitudes through different methodologies that resulted in ambivalent findings in Luxembourg. Future research should also focus on the longitudinal element of exploring attitudes, which can allow researchers to identify its stability and the potential change aspect.

Conclusion

The aim of this paper was to identify and describe the translanguaging stance of preschool teachers in Luxembourg who participated in a professional development course on translanguaging pedagogy over six months. We used three types of assessment – teacher questionnaires, focus groups and video observations – to gain a fuller picture of teachers' attitudes. Most of the teachers expressed a positive stance in the questionnaires, a mild translanguaging stance in the focus groups, and both a positive and negative stance in the video observations, thus displaying ambivalent and somewhat paradoxical attitudes, which in fact might be an accurate portrayal of most preschool teachers in Luxembourg following enactment of the law in 2017. Therefore, providing more professional development courses and experiences with inclusive pedagogies over time might lead to different findings, which can be demonstrated within the framework of

longitudinal research. For future research we advise the use of different methodologies because, as our study has shown, the findings can be used to tell the complete story, also when it is ambivalent and paradoxical.

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