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International approaches towards professional development of teachers for multilingual education

A recent and growing trend in multilingual education is aimed at softening the borders between languages, while actively using several languages in instruction. Conteh & Meier (2014) and May (2014) speak of the multilingual turn in language education and Flores & Beatens-Beardsmore (2015) describe so-called heteroglossic approaches in which minority, and immigrant languages as well as regional minority are incorporated in instruction. Cenoz & Gorter (2015) refer to the “Focus on Multilingualism” approach in which the natural multilingual practices of pupils are closely related to the ways in which languages are taught. However, less research has covered the issue of the professional development of teachers for the implementation of such approaches. The present symposium aims at exploring different paths for professional development within the area of multilingual education in four national settings in order to map best-practices and challenges. Through this international comparison, the symposium aims to answer the following research questions:

- (1) What cross-national possibilities and limitations are associated with multilingual education?
- (2) How do the different teachers operationalise the concept of multilingual education to serve their specific purposes?

Paper 1 presents a design-based approach for the professional development of 24 teachers in the North of the Netherlands, in which a translanguaging-based approach was developed in a co-construction process between teachers, researchers and teacher trainers.

Paper 2 discusses the professional development of multilingual pedagogies as well as coaching that was carried out with several practitioners over the course of a year. The paper draws on a survey and interviews.

Paper 3 presents the professional development they have carried out over the period of a year with teachers, child care educators and heritage language teachers in Germany.

Paper 4 shows research conducted with both students, teachers and scholars on the constraints and opportunities that can be expected while implementing translanguaging in Dutch classrooms.

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Professional development for translanguaging-based approaches in the Netherlands

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The typical insistence on the national languages as main languages of schooling (Kroon & Spotti 2011) is currently being challenged by research supporting the use of several languages in instruction. In fact, García's concept of "translanguaging" (2009) points towards the relevance of using family languages in instruction. As pedagogical approach, the concept refers to the use of the learner's full language repertoire in teaching and learning. The implementation of such an approach is, however, not widely accepted by the pedagogical practice. In this paper, we present research on the professional development of 24 teachers and 12 school principals for the implementation of a translanguaging based-approach in primary education in the Netherlands. At the core of the project's methodology is a design-based approach (Cobb, Confrey et al. 2003), in which tailored didactical units are developed in co-construction between teachers and researchers through iterative development rounds over a longer period of time. Results show that teachers first need to operationalise the concept of translanguaging for their own pedagogical purposes. Further, the more didactical units they develop, the greater their sense of ownership. Implications of the study reinforce the need for bottom-up co-development with teachers for a sustainable implementation of approaches for multilingual education.

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Developing multilingual pedagogies in the early years in Luxembourg

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Dynamic theories of bilingualism acknowledge that language learning is fluid and flexible and that learners activate the entire linguistic repertoire when languaging. Pedagogies that foster multilingualism are promising in our globalised, heterogeneous and fast developing world, as they call for transglossic spaces and are inclusive (García 2017, Cenoz 2017). The call for the development of multilingual education has been taken up by the Ministry of Education responsible for the formal and non-formal early years education in Luxembourg. Professional standards for practitioners in early years are very high (Wiff 2011) and, therefore, it may be a paradox that poor linguistic knowledge and inadequate pedagogical skills have been reported (Gogolin et al. 2011, Thoma & Tracy 2012). Research findings on professional development indicate that the most effective training is long-term and collaborative, involves more than one person of the same institution, encourages active involvement and reflection, and offers opportunities for transfer (Gogolin et al. 2011, WIFF 2011). The model of professional learning communities where participants collaboratively research their own practice through action-research seems particularly promising (Kincheloe 2012). The professional development that Kirsch, Andersen, Mortini and Günnewig carried out within the research project MuLiPEC takes account of these research findings. The research team offered a 15-hour course to a group of 50 teachers and care-takers, as well as mentoring and coaching sessions to seven participants over the course of one academic year. Topics included language development, multilingualism and activities to promote emergent

literacy. A survey of all participants and two interviews with the seven long-term participants demonstrated that the training contributed to changing beliefs and practices.

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Developing multilingual practices across institutions in Germany

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The early years lay the foundation of multilingual speakers' language attitudes and use (Bialystok 2001). It has been suggested that formal instruction in the heritage language determines the level of the attainment in that heritage language (Kupisch & Rothman 2016; Polinsky & Kagan 2007). Our project examines the connection between the backgrounds and linguistic skills of multilingual children with and without heritage language education aged five to eight, and their educational contexts in Germany. One particular focus is the transition period between pre-school and primary school. We assessed the children's language competence and background. The data comprises results of 103 children forming two main groups: first, Italian-German children with formal instruction in L1 and L2, and, second, children with diverse language backgrounds without formal instruction in languages other than German. Their language performance was assessed on vocabulary, reading, and

grammar in German and, where applicable, in Italian. The children's language background was thoroughly assessed in a detailed parent questionnaire. Our data show a decline in the family use of heritage languages (e.g. book reading etc.) around the entry into the school setting. However, the instruction in the heritage language Italian leads to a small increase in the productive language abilities that depend on the number of hours of instruction. Our results are transferred into a collaborative one-year training for teachers and child care educators and heritage language teachers across educational settings. Our subsequent training cycle aims to increase awareness of multilingual education, differences between German and other languages, bilingual literacy etc. Participants are also trained on specific practices in fostering multilingual language development in daily interactions. Best-practice examples from the different institutions complement the cycle. Challenges of these collaborative efforts are discussed and suggestions for further necessary measures are outlined.

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Making translanguaging concrete: general constraints and opportunities of translanguaging in various multilingual classrooms

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In the present study, we considered translanguaging as pedagogy in multilingual classrooms, in which linguistic resources of *all* students are seen as a potential source for learning.

Although the actual research base into the implementation of translanguaging is still scarce, the concept has been labelled as too abstract, too ideological, romanticizing or simply as an old idea with a face-lift. The goal of the present study was to provide an overview of general constraints and opportunities that can be expected while implementing translanguaging. For this purpose, we visited five different multilingual high schools (ages 12 to 18 years old) in the Netherlands and Germany. Furthermore, we conducted interviews with an iterative and

phenomenological focus, with 16 scholars, 8 teachers and 31 multilingual students. Students had different language levels, different personal goals and languages with different power statuses. Examples of debates are *side-effects of other languages*, *the use of English as second lingua franca* and *confusion*. Teachers and researchers can use these seven debates as starting point in further implementing translanguaging and further investigating its implications and effects.

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