

Language policy, professional development and sustainability of multilingual approaches

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Abstract

Policies and professional development which focusses on pedagogical skills, beliefs, and agency are essential to ensure the sustainability of multilingual teaching approaches. This chapter begins with an overview of research studies on language policies, teacher agency and beliefs with a focus on multilingual settings. The intertwining of policy and teaching practice is then illustrated by means of the Finnish case, demonstrating how recent ECEC policies advocating diversity and plurilingualism have gradually changed teacher beliefs. The second part of the chapter focuses on professional development (PD) in so far as it is able to support teachers in implementing policies, changing pedagogical practices, and amending beliefs. This section presents different pathways for professional learning and explores the effectiveness of various models of professional development. These observations are taken up in two empirical studies on teachers' professional development within multilingual preschool classes in Luxembourg and primary schools in the Netherlands. The interview and observation data provided in the two contexts point to the centrality of teacher beliefs and agency in moving towards multilingual practices and sustainable change. Furthermore, it unveils the ways in which teachers' beliefs, knowledge, and practices change over time, and how effective PD programmes can support teachers in interpreting policies and developing new practices.

1. Introduction

The previous chapters of this volume present the ways in which teachers and educators in many countries have implemented multilingual approaches in preschool, primary, and secondary school. In some cases, teachers developed strong partnerships with parents, collaboration being essential for the child's well-being and educational success. They enable parents to develop a better understanding of teaching and learning, and help teachers to capitalise on children's linguistic and cultural resources. Thus, the range of empirical studies

presented in this book shows encouraging results. Nevertheless, there is a need to continue to apply such approaches and ensure they are sustained. This chapter focuses on two means of doing so: language policies and professional development. Given that policies are interpreted by teachers with an intent to appropriate and implement them (e.g. Ricento & Hornberger, 1996), it is important to look into teachers' agency as well as their beliefs. Priestley and Biesta (2013) demonstrated that teachers have some agency when it comes to policy implementation. They negotiate, adapt, and transform policies, thereby supporting or undermining policy intentions. To make multilingual practices sustainable, it is important for teachers to develop whole-school policies. Furthermore, professional development (PD) is needed to introduce practitioners to multilingual approaches and help them reflect on their beliefs and practices. Professional development can be effective in developing knowledge, skills, and practices, which in turn, can improve the quality of teaching and school effectiveness (Pelemen et al., 2018). Particularly promising are models where practitioners research their own practices collaboratively with an intent to change them (Todd & Dickerson, 2018). The present chapter outlines key concepts related to language policies and PD. It also looks into the dynamic relationship between policy, PD, and the change of beliefs and practice, by providing examples of research studies from the authors.

2. Language policies and teacher agency and beliefs

This section weaves together policy, agency, beliefs, and practices. It thus provides some insights into teacher beliefs towards multilingualism, as well as factors influencing beliefs and practices and changes thereof.

Language policy

Ever since the influential so-called 'LPP (Language Policy and Planning) onion' metaphor was introduced—in which language planning levels and agents are seen as constituting layers to be 'unpeeled' (Ricento & Hornberger, 1996) or the onion to be 'sliced' (Hornberger & Johnson, 2007)—educational language policy has generally been conceptualised and researched as multi-levelled and multi-directional phenomena involving complex and interacting processes (Johnson & Ricento, 2015).

'Language policy' can however be conceptualised in different ways. Some see language policy as a result of preparatory and deliberate language planning to influence the function, structure, or acquisition of languages within a speech community (Kaplan & Baldauf, 1997, 2003). Others understand it as an overarching concept which encompasses processes of 'language management and planning' (i.e., efforts to manipulate the language situation, whether explicitly or not) in a particular community of speakers, their 'language practices' (i.e., what they actually do with the language(s)), and the 'language ideologies and beliefs' (i.e., their shared assumptions about how language(s) should be used) (Spolsky, 2004). In a classroom context, the language policy of a particular speech community can then be described as a function of the agents involved (such as teacher and students), their explicit or implicit activities of language management, their actual language practices, and the language beliefs and ideologies attached to management and practice. Bonacina-Pugh (2012) uses an alternative terminology of interacting dimensions, and refers to 'declared', 'practiced', and 'perceived policies'.

In order to portray different language policy layers, Johnson (2013) analytically proposes three processes: 'creation', 'interpretation', and 'appropriation'. From this perspective, policies are first created as a result of intertextual and interdiscursive links to past and present policy texts and discourses, which are then interpreted by those who appropriate or implement them in practice. Importantly, the processes are not to be seen as top-down, but 'educational language policies [which] are created, interpreted, and appropriated within and across multiple levels and institutional contexts' (Johnson & Johnson, 2015, p. 223). The activity of appropriation of language policies is described by Johnson and Johnson (2015) as an act of 'creative interpretive practice' which may, or may not, fill macro-level intents. In this process, the teacher is in a key position as an interpretative and creative policymaker.

Teacher agency and beliefs

Although Ricento and Hornberger (1996) placed the teacher at the very heart of language policy (at the centre of the 'onion'), Biesta, Priestley, and Robinson (2017) argue that teachers' agency and teachers' active contribution to shape their work and conditions have only relatively recently been acknowledged in curriculum policy. The

edited volume by Menken and García (2010) was therefore ground-breaking in that it collected a number of studies emphasising educators and their role as policymakers in multilingual classrooms. It enabled the authors to conceptualise policymaking and argue for a need to 'stir' the LPP onion (see Schwartz, 2018 for a recent volume on early childhood education and care (ECEC) teacher agency).

'Teacher agency' has been researched from different perspectives. One line of research focuses on teacher cognition (see e.g. Kubanyiova & Feryok, 2015) whereas another one builds on Ahearn's (2001, p. 112) definition of agency as 'the socio-culturally mediated capacity to act'. In the latter case, teacher agency is seen essentially as a relationship that is co-constructed and co-negotiated with others in the social setting (Kalaja, Barcelos, Aro, & Ruohotie-Lyhty, 2016). Based on an ecological understanding, Biesta et al. (2017) regard agency as something you do (rather than have) and something that is achieved by means of (rather than simply in) the actual settings, conditions, and circumstances in which it takes place. Drawing on Emirbayer and Mische (1998), they argue that teacher agency is a function of influences from the past (the iterational dimension), engagement with the present (the practical-evaluative dimension), and orientations towards the future (the projective dimension) (Biesta, Priestley, & Robinson, 2015, 2017).

'Teacher beliefs' is a key element of teacher agency. Beliefs can, in the simplest sense, be seen as a proposition that an individual (or a community) holds to be true (Palviainen & Bergroth, 2018, p. 264). By contrast, 'attitudes' refer to an evaluation of a particular entity with some degree of favour or disfavour (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993). At the same time as beliefs about languages or learning are context-dependent, dynamic or even conflicting (Kalaja et al., 2016), they have a strong evaluative and affective component. This implies that beliefs are not easily changed (Borg, 2011). Similarly to teacher agency, teacher beliefs have been theorised and researched from mainly two perspectives. The first tradition has focused on the cognitive and systemic nature of beliefs and of what teachers think, know or believe, whereas a second tradition takes contextual, sociocultural or discursive perspectives (e.g. Kalaja et al., 2016). In Biesta et al.'s model (2015) that conceptualises ways in which teacher agency is achieved, cultural ideas and beliefs are part of the practical-evaluative dimension involved in the teacher's engagement with the here-and-now. The

beliefs that teachers hold are strongly connected with their personal and professional experiences (the iterational dimension). Teachers' beliefs and attitudes about multilingualism have been extensively researched. One line of empirical study has shown some teachers to have monolingual beliefs in theory and practice. They regard the maintenance of home languages as a personal and family-based matter, rather than an educational goal in schools. This is based on their belief that the development of home languages can confuse learners and cause delay in learning the dominant language(s) (e.g., Angelis, 2011; Gkaintartzi, 2015; Tarnanen & Palviainen, 2018). Other studies indicated that educators hold positive attitudes towards multilingualism, while at the same time, showing little enthusiasm for drawing on or developing children's multilingualism. This is due to a perceived subjugation to a language hierarchy, which sees migrant languages as less valuable for instruction, as well as practical implications (Haukås, 2016; Kouritzin, Piquemal, & Nakagawa, 2007; Lee & Oxelson, 2006; Tolbert & Knox, 2016). Such practical concerns may be supported by a lack of resources and time, as well as the demands of standardised testing. Furthermore, researchers revealed that teachers who followed a bi- or multilingual teacher education programme, or had experience of a multilingual context, are more likely to have positive beliefs towards multilingualism, have a deeper understanding of it, make use of resource-based approaches, and use several languages in the classroom (Kaptain, 2007; Tolbert & Knox, 2016). The literature indicates clear relationships between multilingual teacher training, exposure to and experience of multilingualism, and monolingual ideologies permeating teacher beliefs, their knowledge, and practice.

Processes of change—a Finnish case

Despite the fact that beliefs are fairly resistant to change, they are sometimes challenged and subject to reinterpretation. A first incentive to change beliefs and practice can come from new official policies, which teachers are to interpret and appropriate. To illustrate this, new national ECEC and school curricula in Finland appear approximately once every 10 years. The most recent core curricula for school and ECEC that came into effect in 2016 are more open towards diversity, advocate plurilingualism, and promote 'language awareness' in comparison to previous ones (e.g., Söpanen, 2019; Zilliacus, Holm, &

Sahlström, 2017). In this transgressive phase between old and new curricula in Finland, Alisaari, Heikkola, Commins, and Acquah (2019) and Tarnanen and Palviainen (2018) showed that primary school teachers held fairly positive beliefs about multilingualism, but also expressed beliefs that multilingual practices in the classroom prevent (majority) language development. Tarnanen and Palviainen (2018) concluded that beliefs change only slowly, and that interpretation and appropriation of new policies will therefore take time to have an effect. Alisaari et al. (2019) suggested further professional development for Finnish teachers to move away from monolingual mindsets. Furthermore, Bergroth and Hansell (2019) and Sapanen (2019) have shown that curriculum reform can also result in fairly substantial and fast changes in teacher beliefs. When Finnish ECEC teachers were explicitly asked to elaborate and reflect on the concept of language awareness, a key term in the newest curricula, ECEC teachers were open to renegotiate old beliefs as well as practices.

Furthermore, facing concrete realities and problems can lead to changes of beliefs. Palviainen, Protassova, Mård-Miettinen, and Schwartz (2016) showed how five ECEC teachers, representing three different bilingual classroom contexts (Hebrew/Arabic, Russian/Finnish, and Swedish/Finnish) changed their classroom practices over time from strategies based on language separation to mixed-language practices, as they realised that separating languages was ineffective for language development. Their agency to change the language practices was a response to a situation that they experienced as problematic (Biesta et al., 2015). Johanna, the bilingual teacher in the Swedish-Finnish classroom, strongly believed in separating languages. However, encouraged by the principal of the ECEC unit and the researchers who followed her work, she began to challenge her own beliefs by creating and implementing a bilingual practice with the monolingual Finnish-speaking children (Palviainen & Mård-Miettinen, 2015). When she noticed how smooth and intuitive the bilingual practices were, and received a positive response from the children and their parents, she felt empowered and her beliefs changed along the way. In terms of language educational ideologies, she was ahead of her time since the curriculum had a monolingual norm (Pyykkö, 2017). She also experienced tensions, for example from colleagues who did not share her beliefs and practices. In a recent follow-up interview, about four years after the study, when she had been relocated to another

Finnish ECEC in which she continued with her bilingual practices, she explained that the new ECEC curriculum had eventually given her official legitimacy as well as conceptual tools that helped her in her work. Johanna was hence a creative policymaker who reacted to a complex reality and carried out interpretative and intuitive practices that only complied with macro-level intents several years later (Biesta et al., 2015; Johnson & Johnson, 2015; Menken & García, 2010).

A further possible way of changing beliefs and practices has been related to professional development.

3. Professional development, beliefs, and practices

Professional development is perceived to be a key method to change professionals' attitudes, knowledge, skills, and practices. While there is consensus that PD can be transformative to some extent (Egert, Fukking, & Eckhardt, 2018; Peleman et al., 2018), few studies have focused on language learning or multilingualism. The following section reports the findings of studies that evaluated the influence of PD on changing beliefs and practices, particularly in language education and ECEC.

Definition, types of PD, and pathways to changing practice

PD has been defined as the systematic effort to ensure that professionals are adequately qualified, and to provide them with opportunities to complement, consolidate, and develop their attitudes, knowledge, and skills (Egert, 2015). PD has been associated with various models and aims. It can take the shape of training models, where practitioners update discrete skills, or learn to implement policy changes or new curricula. It can also be based on transformative models where professionals intend to change their practice through research of their own practice. Other models include coaching or mentoring which may be organised along networked communities of practice. Different models can complement each other: in a synthesis of 62 European research studies compiled in Eurofound, Peeters et al. (2014) identified 36 professional development models based on an 'integrated approach', where on-site and/or off-site training was combined with coaching and supervision.

PD can be based on different conceptions of professional learning, of which three are presented next. Based on Bandura's (1986) social

learning theory, change can be the result of observing others, 'noticing' specific aspects, and implementing these in one's own practice. The concept of 'teacher noticing', explored particularly in mathematics education, refers to identifying noteworthy aspects of a classroom event, understanding the situation, and relating the relevant aspect to theories about teaching and learning (Jacobs, Lamb, & Philipp, 2010). Star and Strickland (2008) showed that teachers can develop their ability to notice. Following training, the participant pre-service teachers were able to notice and recall more features of a lesson. Videos have been frequently used in PD in language education to help teachers identify effective strategies. This was the case in the study by Hamre et al. (2012) where early childhood teachers learned to identify effective techniques. Compared to the control group, the teachers in the experimental group demonstrated more knowledge of interactional strategies, were more skilled in identifying effective teacher-child interactions in videos, and were more likely to apply them in their own classroom. A different model of learning is based on the understanding that knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs can lead to a change of practice. Desimone, Smith, and Philips (2013) and Fukkink and Lont (2007) were among those who presented a sequential model of professional development. This holds that training can influence the professionals' attitudes, knowledge, and skills, which, in turn, can influence their practice, and which, finally, can influence children's development. There are empirical studies—albeit few—that demonstrate effects of PD on teachers' knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs, as well as child development (Egert et al., 2018). As seen in the section on the Finnish case, a change of belief does not necessarily lead to a change of practice given the complex relationship between beliefs and practices (Pajares, 1992). By contrast, a change of practice and concrete experiences can affect teacher beliefs, as shown by Palviainen et al. (2016) or Levin and Wadmany (2006). The latter found that teachers changed their beliefs regarding the use of ICT through the actual experience of using the tools, and through reflection with the researchers.

Effectiveness of PD to change knowledge, beliefs, and practices

The following section draws mainly on four meta-studies. Egert (2015) reviewed 55 quantitative studies, Egert et al. (2018) 48, almost exclusively in the United States, with some in Canada and Australia,

and five in Europe. Peeters et al. (2014) and Peleman et al. (2018) reported on a project commissioned by Eurofound which includes 21 quantitative and 41 qualitative studies carried out in 15 countries in Europe. These research projects comprise intervention studies and reports on actors' perspectives and beliefs. The majority of the projects mentioned in the meta-studies were carried out after 2007 and only a handful investigate language learning. In what follows, we will present some training effects on knowledge and beliefs and explain their impact on practice. Other effects such as improved teamwork and relationships with parents will not be reviewed.

The findings of the meta-studies consistently show that professional development can improve practitioners' pedagogical awareness and knowledge as well as their understanding of learning and teaching (Egert, 2015; Egret et al., 2018; Peeters et al., 2014; Peleman et al., 2018). For instance, some teachers reconceptualised their role as educators (Bleach, 2013). Realising that children are active learners, the teachers listened to and observed children more carefully, and planned age-appropriate activities based on their needs, rather than on preconceived ideas of what needs to be taught. In studies focusing on language and literacy, teachers were seen to change the curriculum and pedagogy. They planned more language and literacy activities around storytelling and music, created a balance between play and work-based activities, encouraged interaction and collaboration, and scaffolded child-initiated learning processes (Joplin, Whitmarsh, & Hadfield, 2013; Hayes, Siraj-Blatchford, & Keegan, 2013). Intervention studies aiming to improve the quality of interaction were effective, in that professionals learned and applied language-supportive strategies, such as giving time to talk, asking questions, engaging children in dialogue and peer interaction, expanding answers, and giving corrective feedback (Fukking & Tavecchio, 2010; Girolametto, Weitzman, & Greenberg, 2012; Simon & Sachse, 2013). These studies revealed an increase in teacher conversational strategies after training, some effect on children's language development (e.g. vocabulary), and an increase in the professionals' initiatives in engaging in verbal interactions (e.g. more talk) (Buschmann & Jooss, 2011; Simon & Sachse, 2013). One similar study was carried out with bilingual children in Germany. The preliminary results indicate that the teachers changed their language behaviour and that the children improved their competences in German (Sachse, Schuler, & Budde-

Spengler, 2016). Furthermore, some studies showed that the training helped professionals—particularly those who were bilingual—improve their knowledge and skills in assessing children’s language competences, and diagnose language problems (Stitzinger & Lüdtkke, 2014).

Finally, some researchers demonstrated positive outcomes of PD on teacher beliefs (King, 2014; Ottley et al., 2015). The early childhood teachers in the experimental group in Hamre et al.’s (2012) study reported stronger beliefs about the relevance of taking an active role in teaching. Their beliefs and deepened knowledge of interactional strategies enabled them to support effective instructional interactions. Furthermore, the European meta-studies indicated that professionals began to question and redefine beliefs and values once they had developed their understanding of teaching and learning. Some teachers actively supported relevant decision-making processes in their school and developed a sense of agency (Peeters et al., 2014; Peleman et al., 2018).

Reflexivity and effective professional development

The meta-studies examined in this section, as well as many other studies, indicated several factors contributing to the success of PD: professional development needs to be built onto the local needs of professionals and the institutions; be based on a sound pedagogical framework; encourage collaboration; offer opportunities for active learning and transfer; be performance-based and enquiry-based, and, finally, promote reflection. Particularly promising are models where practitioners research their own practice with an intent to change it, for example through action-research or in professional learning communities where actors try to solve locally situated problems (Gaikhorst, Beishuizen, Zijlstra, & Volman, 2017; Trodd & Dickerson, 2018). Furthermore, PD is more effective in integrated approaches than in training sessions that focus on the development of discrete skills (Peleman et al., 2018). Short-term initiatives can be effective in developing language-promoting practices and child outcomes, with trainers using video-recordings to give the professionals feedback in addition to the training sessions. The use of video-recordings can lead professionals to engage in systematic reflection of their planning and teaching, and is helpful in sustaining this reflection. Long-term PD can be effective if it focuses on ‘learning in practice’ and offers pedagogical

guidance and coaching (Peeters et al., 2014). In other words, active involvement and reflection are key elements of professional learning. Professionals are likely to engage and learn if the PD addresses their needs and involves them in the transformative process. They are then likely to take control, ask questions, question taken-for-granted assumptions, and engage in their own enquiries. They not only develop knowledge, skills, and confidence but also reflexivity (Peeters et al., 2014). They learn to relate theory to practice and become more able to identify and address gaps between their own practice and the intended pedagogical principles and practices.

4. Examples of two effective PDs

The following section will provide two concrete examples of professional development courses and learning processes of teachers, carried out as part of two research projects led by Kirsch and Duarte, respectively. The first took place in Luxembourg, the second in the Netherlands.

Example of an effective PD: the MuLiPEC project in Luxembourg

The research project 'Developing Multilingual Pedagogies in Early Childhood' (MuLiPEC) addresses the call for multilingual education in formal and non-formal education institutions. We offered an integrated model of PD that included a 15-hour course, coaching, and six network meetings (Kirsch & Aleksić, 2018; Kirsch, Aleksić, Mortini, & Andersen, forthcoming). The PD focused on perspectives of multilingualism, theories of language learning, pedagogical principles, activities with books, rhymes and songs in multiple languages, and language-supporting strategies. Our aim was to analyse the influence of the PD on the practitioners' beliefs, knowledge, attitudes, and practices. A total of 46 participants took part in the first course. Of these, seven were selected to continue from September 2016 to September 2017. They were coached and further developed their understanding of multilingual pedagogies through discussing their video-recorded activities in our meetings. In what follows, we will present some of the findings related to changing knowledge, attitudes, and practices of three early-years professionals: Ms Vivian, who worked with four-year-olds in a preschool, and Ms Carla (teacher) and Ms Jane (caregiver), who were in charge of three-year-olds in *éducation précoce* (non-compulsory year of preschool education). The

three professionals spoke Luxembourgish, German, French, and English. Ms Vivian was also competent in Spanish and Ms Carla in Portuguese. (Details can be found in Chapter 2.) The findings presented here draw on 89 observations and 12 interviews.

The results show that the three practitioners deepened their understanding of language learning over time. They understood that there is no need for strict language separation for language learning to take place, and were reminded that language learning is a long-term process which happens when children interact in a meaningful context. A first change became apparent after three months. At the beginning of the PD, Ms Carla and Ms Jane focused on Luxembourgish because none of the children in their class spoke Luxembourgish. They had a negative view of the children's competence in this language and felt that they made little progress despite their structured approach. They felt reassured when other participants evaluated the children's skills more positively and realised the youngsters could not acquire Luxembourgish within one academic year.

Ms Carla, Ms Jane, and Ms Vivian began to question their teacher-centred approach. They came to understand that for language learning to happen, they needed to both plan language activities and provide children with opportunities to interact in meaningful ways with others. In their words:

Ms Carla: I am now aware that children learn much more through daily language use than I thought. I had always thought that I had to prepare a language learning activity to teach the language. I was not aware how much the children had already learned.

Ms Jane: Yes, that's it. They learn with the drills I use. But by simply talking to them, uh, children will acquire much more.

(Interview, September 2017)

This understanding helped them reconceptualise their view of themselves as teachers and design a different learning environment as shown later (Hayes et al., 2013; Joplin et al., 2013). Furthermore, the three practitioners changed their attitudes towards multilingual education, and began to question the habitus of focusing exclusively on Luxembourgish, the national language. While they believed that multilingualism was an asset and let children use home languages during free-play, they were nevertheless sceptical regarding multilingual education. They were used to implementing monolingual policies and feared that the use of home languages could hamper the

learning of Luxembourgish. The actual experience of implementing activities in languages other than Luxembourgish—a requirement of our PD—made them realise that children enjoyed these activities, participated well, and continued to develop skills in Luxembourgish.

I became aware how focused I was on Luxembourgish. Without this professional development, I would never have taught rhymes in German and French. I would probably not have told them stories in a language other than Luxembourgish. I would not have changed my perspective. . . . I became aware that the children did not learn less Luxembourgish when I told them stories in German or French from time to time.

(Interviews with Ms Vivian, July and September 2016)

Seven months into the PD, the three practitioners were observed designing a child-centred language learning environment, where children encountered multiple languages both in daily activities and in guided activities such as dialogic reading, storytelling, games, songs, and rhymes. They had created a meaningful learning environment where children had repeated opportunities to hear key vocabulary and use it in authentic situations (Alstad & Tkachenko, 2018; Gort & Sembiente, 2015; Kirsch, 2017). Changes of practice—in our case from monolingual to multilingual pedagogies, and from teacher-centred to child-centred—have similarly been reported in several meta-studies (Egert et al., 2018; Peeters et al., 2014).

The implementation of inclusive multilingual pedagogies was only possible through translanguaging. As seen before, the practitioners realised that translanguaging was not detrimental to language learning, but rather, facilitated it (García, 2009). The discussions around the video-recorded activities indicated that the practitioners had increased the quantity of talk, and improved the quality of the interactions with the children through translanguaging. Thus, the children received more language input. Furthermore, this opening up to languages made children react differently to Ms Clara and Ms Jane, and made the teachers more responsive (interview, September 2017). All three practitioners monitored their language use and translanguaged ‘responsibly’ (García, 2009; Mård-Miettinen, Palviainen, & Palojärvi, 2018; Palviainen et al., 2016). They switched consciously between Luxembourgish, French, and home languages when possible and needed, in order to ensure comprehension and meaning-making, and contribute to the children’s well-being. The

teachers realised the relationship between well-being, respect, trust, and learning as expressed by Ms Vivian.

At the beginning I spoke a lot of Spanish with him because I think that children also have to be able to build an emotional relationship with me, and only then can learning processes take place. Only when children trust me and the school and when they feel secure, then children can learn something.

(Interview with Ms Vivian, March 2017)

The findings of our integrated training are in line with those of several meta-analyses (Egert et al., 2018; Peeters et al., 2014; Peleman et al., 2018). They also show that PD can lead to a change in beliefs, knowledge, and practice when it is performance-based, inquiry-based, and long-term and when professionals research and reflect their own practice.

PD at Dutch primary schools: more opportunities with multilingualism

In the officially bilingual province of Friesland in the Netherlands, teachers struggle with particular challenges in relation to language(s) education (Duarte & Günther-van der Meij, 2018a). The main challenge deriving from this particular setting is how to combine the demands of an education system including a national, a minority, and a foreign language with the requirement to cater for the needs of different multilingual pupils, including migrant pupils. An answer to this challenge is currently being developed within the four-year project 'More Opportunities with Multilingualism'. Grounded in a design-based research approach (McKenney & Reeves, 2013), the 24 teachers of 12 primary schools participating in the project are developing and implementing a holistic multilingual education intervention that acknowledges and uses several languages in instruction. The model was developed in order to work with teachers to develop tailored interventions that tackle new language education needs. The model was labelled 'holistic', as it aims at being suitable for: both minority and migrant pupils; different school types; combining various approaches towards multilingual education; and tackling attitudes, knowledge, and skills needed by teachers to implement multilingual education in a successful and sustainable way. The holistic model combines the language learning requirements of pupils with the needs of teachers, in relation to the implementation of multilingual education. As such, it operates at three levels, tapping into the needs

of both pupils and teachers. A summary of the dimensions involved in this process is provided in Table 11.1.

Table 11.1 Dimensions of operationalisation of holistic multilingual education from pupils' and teachers' perspectives

Source: Duarte & van der Meij, 2018b, p. 38.

Dimension	Pupils' perspective	Teachers' perspective
Symbolic	Acknowledging all languages in education fosters positive attitudinal and motivational aspects that, according to research, enhance school outcomes in the long run.	Acknowledging all languages raises teachers' own language and cultural awareness which has positive attitudinal and motivational aspects towards implementing a multilingual approach.
Linguistic	Fostering language comparison and raising meta-linguistic knowledge enhances language learning strategies of pupils.	Fostering language comparison and raising meta-linguistic knowledge improves language teaching methodology of teachers.
Cognitive	Linking multilingual language learning to content knowledge across the curriculum causes high cognitive engagement of pupils in all learning areas.	Linking multilingual language learning to content knowledge across the curriculum causes higher understanding of teachers for the basic requirement of language education as transversal task.

The activities developed so far within the project are based upon these principles. However, they also add the central aspect of teacher PD for multilingual education, which is a key aspect in the success of the project. PD of teachers and language development of pupils thus go hand in hand. As such, the model is not to be implemented without the design-based research methodology for the work with teachers. The cyclic design-based approach (Cobb et al., 2003; McKenney &

Reeves, 2013) allows teachers to develop their own didactical experiments, and only implementing these on a small scale in their teaching. In order for this to succeed, teachers need to: create safe spaces in which to experiment with multiple languages in the classroom; operationalise the various approaches for multilingual education for their own context and particular aims; and combine them in ways that allow them to tackle real challenges they face. A case-study was conducted with one of the schools to evaluate the professional development of teachers during the implementation of the interventions.

The school where the data was obtained is a trilingual Frisian-Dutch-English school which has recently enrolled Polish and Syrian pupils. The school's aim is to welcome all home languages spoken by the pupils, and to integrate a holistic multilingual approach in the whole school. As the principal puts it: 'To us, it is very important to acknowledge the children in their own languages.' She mentions that the Polish pupils were hesitant to speak Dutch, and by encouraging them to use Polish with each other, they can now translate important information from Dutch, supporting both their language development and their participation in class. Before the project, the school was hesitant to allow Polish in the classroom, as teachers could not control what the children would be discussing. But as the interviewed teacher says:

Eventually we felt slightly ashamed for that attitude since it is their language, their way of communicating and their only way of communicating. If we forbid it, how can they communicate with us? How can they express how they feel, what is going on inside them? So, for us it was important to let them feel 'you're welcome here, whatever language you speak'. And for us it is difficult to learn your language as well.

(Interview with Ms Lilly, May 2018)

The school decided to develop its own operationalisation of Cummins' interdependence hypothesis, based on the idea of teaching for language transfer (Cummins, 2001). After one year of implementation, the principal now highlights the fact that languages are not in competition, but in fact reinforce each other. As a result, migrant languages are not seen as a threat to learning Dutch or Frisian. She indicates that:

Actually, we see that because the pupils are already familiar with certain concepts in their mother tongue, they can more easily link a second concept onto that, and that enables us to compare languages in the middle and upper grades.

(Interview with Ms Delia, May 2018)

From the focus group discussions with four pupils it became clear that the pupils themselves are very positive about the use of several languages at their school. They feel that it allows them to understand many types of languages from across the world (which is useful, for example, when on holiday), and to have contact with other children. They learn Arabic words from their classmates and in return teach their peers Frisian. As one pupil remarks:

It is very interesting when you visit another country to be able to speak the language spoken there.

(Interview with Karl, November 2018).

They also value highly the multicultural aspect of their school, and they find it interesting to have several cultures at their school, and to learn about the customs of different families. Further, pupils are curious about and positive towards each other's languages. In relation to the Arabic alphabet, one pupil mentioned in the focus group:

There is a girl from Syria in my class. When she writes in Arabic, the signs she uses are very beautiful.

(Interview with Alisha, November 2018).

In sum, the short implementation of the model does not yet allow for the assessment of quantifiable effects on teachers' professional development. What we can so far tentatively conclude is that it takes time for teachers to engage with the model and implement it. This requires a long-term commitment of teachers in relation to PD related to the area of multilingual education. This commitment extends to the fact that implementation should be carried out by the majority of the team, and not by isolated teachers.

5. Conclusion

This chapter has provided concrete examples of multilingual approaches in Finland, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands, focusing on the policy level, teacher beliefs, teacher practices, and professional

development. The chapter illustrates the interplay between beliefs, agency, policy, and practice, and shows that beliefs and practices are amenable to change through professional development. The teachers involved in our studies were aware of the diverse language and cultural backgrounds of their students. They were also interested in developing a pedagogy that draws both on the children's home languages, and develops their skills in other majority or 'foreign' languages. They were motivated to reflect on their practice and able to make changes. In this they were aided by PD that took account of individual needs and interests, and engaged teachers in researching their own practice. We could observe changes in beliefs and practices as a result of the interaction of theoretical input, experience of a (new) practice or policy, observation of others, and reflection. While professional development can lead to change, it is important to note that it may also present challenges. Professional learning is complex, dynamic, multi-layered, and takes time and effort.

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