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Effectiveness of Multilingual Education Programmes on (Academic) Language Proficiency, Home Literacies and Teachers Perspectives

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Discussant: Ratha Perumal (University of East London)

Despite some improvement in the educational situation of migrants and minorities, ethnic disparities remain a challenge in many Western countries (Autorengruppe Bildungsberichterstattung, 2018). The pupils' (academic) language skills are a significant predictor of their performance in different school domains and, therefore, they are often used to explain achievement gaps. Empirical studies showed that pupils with a migration background have lower (academic) language proficiency than their monolingual peers (Heppt et al., 2012) in the languages of instruction. Disadvantages are already manifest upon entering primary school when these children's second language (L2) skills are less well developed than the language skills of their monolingual peers (Leseman & van Tuijl, 2006; Scheele, 2010). Although not unequivocally confirmed, numerous indications show that the conceptual knowledge basis built up in the heritage languages facilitates L2 learning (Verhoeven, 2007).

In order to address these disparities many language education programmes have been implemented in European schools to promote the (academic) language development of pupils with a migration background. So far, there is no evidence of how effective these programs are for the language development of multilingual children. In general, research studies that assess the influence of language education programmes on children's language proficiency in both the majority language and the heritage language are scarce (Lengyel, 2017). Some qualitative studies suggest that children who participate in programmes promoting both languages have higher (academic) language skills in both languages than children who visit mainstream education without a target promotion of their heritage language (cf. Reich, 2011; Roth & Terhat, 2015). However, these are qualitative studies, that neither included a longitudinal perspective and nor assessed language development.

In addition to promoting (academic) language skills, some multilingual language programmes focus also on parental involvement in school to support literacy learning at home (Elfert & Rabkin, 2009). Several studies on home literacy carried out with young children point to a causal relation between literacy activities and (the development) of the (academic) language skills of both mono- and multilingual children (Scheele, 2010). In this case multilingual language programmes may have a double effect on promoting (academic) language skills through enhancing the home literacy environment.

Professionals' attitudes and views are particular important for the successful implementation of multilingual education programs and, therefore, for the effectiveness of these programmes. Professionals need to break with monolingual practices based on monolingual ideologies. One way to challenge monolingual practices is the pedagogy of translanguaging (García et al., 2017). Translanguaging pedagogies offer a space to all languages and give children the opportunity to draw on their resources for learning.

While taking an international perspective, the main aim of this international symposium is to shed light on multilingual education programmes and their effects on, firstly, the pupils' (academic) language development and their home literacy environment and, secondly, the professionals' attitudes on multilingualism.

The first contribution focuses on changing preschool teachers' perspectives on and knowledge of multilingualism during a professional education training in Luxembourg. The second paper presents findings of a four-wave evaluation study examining the effectiveness of the multilingual education programme "Rucksack Schule" on (academic) language skills in German and Turkish of pupils in primary school. The third presentation is linked to the evaluation and investigates the effects of "Rucksack Schule" on home literacy of bilingual German-Turkish pupils. The fourth contribution presents an intervention for plurilingual secondary education in the Netherlands, zooming in specifically on the dynamics of the resulting multilingual interactions.

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Presentations of the Symposium

Papers in Symposium: 4

National Perspectives: 3

Changes of Early Years Practitioners' Perspectives on Multilingual Education through Professional Development in Luxembourg

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National perspective: Luxembourg

Following calls for multilingual education in early childhood education, some multilingual programmes have been implemented in Europe. However, their focus frequently remains on the majority language and home languages are given little space (Kratzmann et al., 2017). For multilingual programmes to be inclusive and empowering, professionals need to break with monolingual practices based on monolingual ideologies. The resource-oriented pedagogy of translanguaging, which challenges hegemonic practices, is one way in which professionals can give space to all languages, leverage children's resources for learning and contribute to their development (García et al., 2017). Professional development is one way to support practitioners in reflecting on beliefs and ideologies, developing knowledge and understanding, and implementing multilingual programmes (Egert et al., 2018). The present study is based in trilingual Luxembourg where a new law on language education was voted in 2017. Early years practitioners in both formal and non-formal education settings are required to develop the children's skills in Luxembourgish, familiarize them with French, and value their home languages. The present paper examines the change of beliefs and knowledge related to multilingual education, translanguaging, and language learning and teaching of seven professionals, who took part in a professional development from May 2016 to September 2017. The data stem from observations in the settings, video-recorded activities, observations during the professional development, and interviews. The data analysis drew on thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2013), Seedhouse's (2005) 'sociocultural approach to conversation analysis' and triangulation (Flick, 2011). The findings show a change of perspectives and knowledge construction of all professionals: they developed a positive stance towards multilingual education and developed knowledge and skills enabling them to design a language-stimulating environment and support language learning (Kirsch & Aleksić, 2018). The change came as a result of the theoretical input in the training sessions, the feedback through coaching, the reflection on language activities in the network meetings, and most importantly, the reflection on the changing practices. The professional learning depended among others on the professionals' qualification, the formal or non-formal education institution they worked in, and meso and micro-factors, which influenced their practices such as the practiced language policies and the diverse language backgrounds of the enrolled children. The findings contribute to our understanding of the ways in which long-term, collaborative and performance-based professional development can affect teacher outcomes (Egert et al., 2018; Peleman et al., 2018).

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The Effectiveness of the Multilingual Education Programme “Rucksack Schule“ on Bilingual German-Turkish Pupils' (Academic) Language Development

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National perspective: Germany

This contribution presents findings from the evaluation of the multilingual education programme “Rucksack Schule” in Germany. “Rucksack Schule” focuses mainly on the promotion of the (academic) language development in primary schools, especially of children with a migration background (LaKI – Landesweite Koordinierungsstelle Kommunaler Integrationsstellen, 2013). The project promotes (academic) language skills in German as well as in the heritage language. In order to investigate the effects of “Rucksack Schule” on children's (academic) language proficiency in German and in the heritage language, the evaluation study follows a longitudinal design (four measurement points). The sample of 70 German-Turkish bilingual children is divided into an intervention group that includes children participating in “Rucksack Schule” (N=37) and a control group with children who visit a regular school. The evaluation study was conducted in the rural district of Unna in North Rhine-Westphalia/Germany. The first wave of data collection was in 2015, when the children attended the first grade of primary school and started with the programme. The second, third and fourth wave followed in 2016, 2017 and 2018. Productive (academic) language skills in German and Turkish were measured at all four waves using the oral language assessment “HAVAS 5” (Reich & Roth, 2004) in wave one and two and the literal language assessment “Tulpenbeet” (Reich et al., 2008) in wave three and four. Furthermore, we gathered important information on the family background characteristics through a parent questionnaire at wave one and three. We also administered an intelligence test at wave one and a listening comprehension test in English at wave four. The descriptive analysis of the language skills data revealed a more balanced bilingualism in the intervention group at wave two and three compared to the control group. An independent sample t-Test

showed disadvantages of the intervention group in German language skills in some test items. The final regression analysis of the data from wave four revealed the effectiveness of the treatment on the German language skills (p

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Connections between Home Literacy Activities and Language Skills in a Heritage-Language Context: An Examination of German-Turkish Bilingual Children

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National perspective: Germany

The Children's linguistic development is determined by a range of different factors, the family being of central importance (Baumert et al., 2006). Through it, a child receives linguistic input and socialization in reading and writing (literacy). So-called home literacy activities have special potential concerning children's language skills. A number of studies detected direct as well as indirect effects on (academic) language skills that significantly determine the children's successful academic performance (Senechal et al., 2002; Leseman et al., 2007). Whereas those studies mainly concentrated on monolingual children (in elementary school), studies focussing on children growing up bilingually remain a desideratum (cf. Scheele 2010). Yet, home literacy activities seem to be particularly complex in multilingual families, and correlations between literacy activities and language skills can be found in regard to the different languages in use as well as concerning transfer effects (Leseman et al., 2009, Scheele, 2010). While home literacy activities are performed within the family context, there are also programmes targeted at stimulating those activities. One of these programmes is "Rucksack Schule" which, apart from the building block of "Parental Education – Literacy", aims to further children's language skills. The present study is based on the data gathered in the above-mentioned project. It concentrates on bilingual practices in Turkish-German families. The first step focusses on the question: "How are home literacy activities shaped in the family? To what extent and in which language are they performed?" The second step examines the relation between these home literacy activities and the children's language skills in Turkish and German. The sample comprises 52 children at the end of primary school, between eight and eleven years of age. While the description of bilingual literacy practice will take place in a descriptive format, regression analysis will be employed to research correlations. Apart from essential contextual factors such as socio-economic status and cultural capital, I controlled for the participation in the "Rucksack Schule" programme. I expect to see results that indicate that home literacy activities in the families are conducted bilingually and that parents taking part in the programme conduct these activities more frequently than parents who do not take part in it. I assume there are positive correlations between the conducting of home literacy activities and children's (academic) language skills in both languages, and I hypothesise that participation in "Rucksack Schule" may exert (positive) influence over this.

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Plurilingual Interaction in Dutch Secondary Education: Plurilingualism to learn or learning to act plurilingually?

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National perspective: The Netherlands

In this presentation recent developments around plurilingual secondary education in the officially bilingual province of Friesland, the Netherlands, are presented. Several languages play a role in everyday life in the province: the dominant language Dutch, the regional minority language Frisian, a growing number of migrant languages and also typical school foreign languages, such as English or German. Despite this variety of languages, schooling is mainly solely in the national language, Dutch. In fact, there is still a widespread belief that it is best to teach target languages through immersion without any interference from the other languages, leading to language separation pedagogies. Even in Frisian trilingual education the three closely related target languages Frisian, Dutch and English are offered separate from each other (Arocena & Gorter, 2013; Duarte & Günther-van der Meij, 2018). Different studies have shown, though, that to enhance learning, it is important to use all language knowledge pupils have at their disposal (Cenoz & Gorter, 2011; Cummins, 2008). These insights led to the Holi-Frysk project (a holistic approach towards Frisian in secondary language education) that focused on: a) less separation between the three languages of instruction (Frisian, Dutch and English); b) creating bridges between foreign languages in secondary education (German and French) and c) valuing and including migrant languages in mainstream education. Three different types of secondary schools participated in the project. The project works with a bottom-up approach in which the questions from the schools regarding multilingualism were foremost in the development of multilingual activities. The activities and accompanying materials were created in co-construction between teachers and researchers in design-based research (Cobb et al., 2003) during three cycles of development and implementation (McKenney & Reeves, 2013). The developed activities were implemented and evaluated by means of analysing classroom video-recordings and interviews with the teachers. The collected data were used to zoom in on the forms of interaction that were used in the classroom and on teachers' beliefs on using multiple languages in teaching, both of which will be discussed in the presentation. Results will show several examples of the role of plurilingualism in education, but also ways in which teachers learn to act plurilingually by using all languages available in their classes.

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