Conclusion and future research

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This volume has brought together authors from Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Germany, England, and Finland as well as Nebraska and Brazil who have researched teaching and learning in multilingual classrooms. Taken together, the accounts are rich and complex because the countries differ on grounds of their diverse populations, their educational systems, and the educational responses to diversity. The authors present multilingual approaches at various school levels (early years, primary, secondary, higher education), focussing on methods or pedagogy. Some examine translanguaging (Chapters 2, 4, 5, 11), others intercomprehension (Chapters 2, 6, 7, 10) and others assessment accommodations, specific materials, or the pedagogy as a whole (Chapters 2, 4, 6, 8). While teachers are foregrounded in Chapters 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 11, the attention elsewhere is on students (Chapters 4 and 6), parents (Chapters 9, 10), teacher trainers (Chapter 7), and policy (Chapter 11). Most chapters present recent or ongoing empirical studies (Chapters 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 11) and some review literature which will be helpful for future studies (Chapters 7, 8, 9, 10).

The 11 chapters share some common themes explained next. They attempt to help overcome what Cummins (2014, p. 62) called 'willful blindness'. By this he meant 'the phenomenon whereby individuals choose to remain ignorant of information that might challenge or contradict their beliefs or convictions'. This volume, which demonstrates that multilingual approaches promote learning and that drawing on pupils' home languages in schools is beneficial, asks teachers, researchers, and policy-makers not to turn a blind eye to multilingualism but, rather, capitalise on it. Many authors emphasise the need for students to develop multilingual competence in our everchanging globalised and interconnected world. This, in turn, requires inclusive, innovative, linguistic, and culturally sensitive approaches that develop students' multilingual and multimodal repertoires to raise standards (Chapters 1, 3, 4). Multilingual pedagogies aim to be inclusive, empowering, and supportive of social justice and social practice (García, Johnson, & Seltzer, 2017). They address social hierarchies and power relationships, and have the potential to be transformative for learners, teachers, and schools. They acknowledge the existence of multiple languages in educational institutions and attempt to leverage the students' semiotic systems to support meaning-making and learning. Studies have shown that translanguaging can facilitate communication, promote language learning, deepen understanding, develop identities, and raise achievement (Baker & Wright, 2017; Esquinca, Araujo, & de la Piedra, 2014; Poza, 2018) (Chapters 2, 11). However, programmes that value the linguistic and cultural backgrounds of ethnic minority students, can (and do) conflict with dominant societal discourses based on language

hierarchies (Dlugaj & Fürstenau, 2019, Chapters 1, 3). Teachers, therefore, have to pay attention that, while solving some differences, they do not inadvertently create others. While they may wish to include all students by acknowledging their diverse backgrounds, they may unintentionally create situations where differences are emphasised and language-minoritised students are made to feel different. This process is called 'othering' (Mecheril, 2018). Teachers are aided if they operate from an intercultural power-sensitive and power-critical perspective (Chapter 10) and are aware of how monolingual discourses, language hierarchies, and power relationships play out in educational settings. This will also help them reflect on their role as educators and develop ways to empower multilingual pupils.

Professionals' openness to children's and parents' backgrounds and their beliefs towards language learning and multilingualism were another recurrent theme. Sensitivity to students' diverse language and cultural backgrounds, and interest in their multilingual repertoires are prerequisites for multilingual approaches (Chapters 2, 3, 5, 11). Professionals who embrace multilingualism, are also more likely to develop positive relationships with parents and consider them as educational partners (Chapters 9, 10). If teachers and parents jointly develop (multi-)literacy activities for children, they decrease the risk of discontinuity between home and school literacy practices, and raise the likelihood of success (Bradley, McKelvey, & Whiteside-Mansell, 2011; Reynolds, Hayakawa, Ou et al., 2017).

A positive stance (García et al., 2017), one pillar of multilingual education, goes well beyond positive attitudes: it expects teachers to move away from monolingual ideologies and practices (Chapters 2, 5, 11). Furthermore, to implement this pedagogy and design multilingual learning situations, teachers need a sound understanding of multilingualism, theories of language learning, and multilingual didactics, as well as their pedagogical skills (Fürstenau, 2016). Given that there is no one-size-fits-all approach (Canagarajah, 2011), teachers need to tailor their model in the light of students' needs and the curricula. Approaches such as intercomprehension have proven to be effective: they positively influence language awareness, increase the learners' language repertoire, and contribute to the development of reading comprehension (Morkötter, 2016) Chapters 6, 7). In spite of these positive empirical findings, intercomprehension approaches, like translanguaging pedagogies, have only been implemented selectively in mainstream curricula (Chapters 2, 5, 11). Teachers also seem to find it difficult to develop multilingual assessment procedures which would enable students to draw on their entire linguistic repertoire (De Backer, Slembrouck, & Van Avermaet, 2019, Chapter 8).

Several chapters considered factors that may aid or hinder effective multilingual approaches, among them language-policies and curricula. The latter do not necessarily change practices and guarantee sustainable change (Chapter 11). Teachers, for instance, have been found to respond to learners'

specific needs regardless of policies (Chapter 4). Therefore professional development (Chapters 3, 5, 10, 11) and initial teacher education play a central role in the implementation of multilingual approaches. They make student teachers and professionals aware of ideologies, beliefs, and perceptions of normality, help them (re)consider their teaching approaches, develop sound understanding of learning as well as develop the pedagogical skills necessary to design a linguistic and culturally sensitive learning environment (Chapters 6, 9, 11).

While this volume has brought together a wide range of perspectives and themes on multilingual education, others have not been broached, partly because research findings are scarce. Among these are children's perspectives and parents' experiences with multilingual education and multilingual approaches in special education. This book will end with some research gaps which could be taken up in future studies.

Several authors in this volume called for studies on teachers', parents', and students' beliefs of multilingual education (Chapters 3, 9). Other authors encouraged the documentation and analysis of teaching and assessment strategies as well as of practices that include home languages (Chapters 2, 3, 5, 8). The focus could lie on the experiences of teachers, students or parents, multilingual interactions, or the effectiveness of approaches. For instance, there is scope for research on teachers' (lack of) competence in specific languages used in multilingual teaching, or for the deployment of teachers' and students' semiotic repertoire for communicating and meaning-making (García & Otheguy, 2019). There is also a need to explore the influence of multilingual approaches, for instance on intercomprehension competence or receptive and interactive language skills. Based on García et al.'s (2017) translanguaging pedagogy, further studies could explore teachers' classroom design and languaging shifts to accommodate for students' needs. Collaboration with parents is an essential element of curriculum design as it offers opportunities to expose children to several languages and connect home and school languages. No recent studies have examined the professionals' and parents' perspectives on collaboration and their expectations thereof. Few analyse how collaboration is established at a micro-level and few examine cooperation from an intercultural perspective (Lengyel & Salem, 2016). Furthermore, few authors study collaboration and multiliteracy in conjunction (Pietsch & Heckt, 2016). To develop understanding of the efficiency of multilingual approaches and of teaching and learning processes, it is advisable to use mix-method designs such as surveys, observations, and interviews in longitudinal designs. We hope that this volume will encourage teachers to open up to multilingual approaches and show them concrete pathways. Our wish is also that policy-makers and curriculum developers acknowledge the potential of multilingual approaches and call for their implementation. Researchers can contribute to this process by researching the implementation and effectiveness of these approaches.

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