C·E·P·S *Journal*

Center for Educational Policy Studies Journal
Revija centra za študij edukacijskih strategij

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The CEPS Journal is an open-access, peer-reviewed journal devoted to publishing research papers in different fields of education, including scientific.

Aims & Scope

The CEPS Journal is an international peer-reviewed journal with an international board. It publishes original empirical and theoretical studies from a wide variety of academic disciplines related to the field of Teacher Education and Educational Sciences; in particular, it will support comparative studies in the field. Regional context is stressed but the journal remains open to researchers and contributors across all European countries and worldwide. There are four issues per year. Issues are focused on specific areas but there is also space for non-focused articles and book reviews.

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In 2001, the Centre for Educational Policy Studies (CEPS; see http://ceps.pef.uni-lj.si) was established within the Faculty of Education to build upon experience acquired in the broad reform of the national educational system during the period of social transition in the 1990s, to upgrade expertise and to strengthen international cooperation. CEPS has established a number of fruitful contacts, both in the region – particularly with similar institutions in the countries of the Western Balkans – and with interested partners in EU member states and worldwide.

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Revija Centra za študij edukacijskih strategij je mednarodno recenzirana revija z mednarodnim uredniškim odborom in s prostim dostopom. Namenjena je objavljanju člankov s področja izobraževanja učiteljev in edukacijskih ved.

Cilji in namen

Revija je namenjena obravnavanju naslednjih področij: poučevanje, učenje, vzgoja in izobraževanje, socialna pedagogika, specialna in rehabilitacijska pedagogika, predšolska pedagogika, edukacijske politike, supervizija, poučevanje slovenskega jezika in književnosti, poučevanje matematike, računalništva, naravoslovja in tehnike, poučevanje družboslovja in humanistike, poučevanje na področju umetnosti, visokošolsko izobraževanje in izobraževanje odraslih. Poseben poudarek bo namenjen izobraževanju učiteljev in spodbujanju njihovega profesionalnega razvoja.

V reviji so objavljeni znanstveni prispevki, in sicer teoretični prispevki in prispevki, v katerih so predstavljeni rezultati kvantitavnih in kvalitativnih empiričnih raziskav. Še posebej poudarjen je pomen komparativnih raziskav.

Revija izide štirikrat letno. Številke so tematsko opredeljene, v njih pa je prostor tudi za netematske prispevke in predstavitve ter recenzije novih publikacij.

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Pluri/Multilingual Education

In recent decades, there has been growing interest in the pluri/multilingual learner's language repertoire and foreign language learning. Multilingual learners use their linguistic repertoire and cultural knowledge in everyday life and interact fluidly with other speakers and texts in different languages. According to the Council of Europe (2001: 34), individual language components are "unevenly differentiated according to the learner's experience and in an unstable relation as that experience changes". Several studies provide arguments in favour of multilingual education because it (1) enhances multilingual learners' cognitive and multitasking skills; (2) enables higher language proficiency in multiple languages; (3) promotes cultural awareness and understanding of cultural diversity; (4) improves academic achievement in a variety of areas, not just language-related subjects; (5) equips learners with problem-solving, interpersonal and intercultural communication skills; and (6) promotes empathy and tolerance. Plurilingual learners can better appreciate diversity and belonging in multicultural societies. In addition, various European Commission policy documents underline the importance of pluri/multilingual education.

In teaching contexts and everyday life, however, plurilingual education presents various challenges: lack of resources and support, diverse needs of students, curriculum design, assessment methods, prestigious languages, sustainability of languages used outside the classroom, etc. Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive approach, wise language policies, community engagement and cooperation between government agencies.

In this context, the editors invited submissions that investigate different aspects of plurilingual education in diverse learning and teaching contexts and the associated challenges and opportunities. More specifically, this special issue welcomed articles that discuss the following issues/questions: multiple language acquisition and learning additional languages, translanguaging, psycholinguistic and neurolinguistic aspects of plurilingualism, literacy in multiple languages, languages of schooling, minority languages, heritage languages, multilingual language policies, assessment challenges of plurilingual learners, non-dominant and indigenous languages in education, materials design and development, multilingual identities, multilingual strategies and pedagogies, pluralistic approaches, parents' involvement, inclusive education through multilingual pedagogies, multiliteracies etc. We were pleasantly surprised by the enthusiastic response from the numerous contributors who sent in close to 40

abstracts on pluri/multilingual education. After a careful selection process, six articles have been accepted as the focus articles of this issue. Next to these, the issue also brings three varia articles and one book review.

The first article, entitled *Fostering Language Awareness in a Plurilingual Learning Environment* and written by Špela Jolić Kozina, Silva Bratož and Mojca Žefran, highlights the importance of promoting language diversity and nurturing language awareness from an early age. The authors present the findings of a qualitative study analysing the potential of using pluralistic approaches to language teaching for developing young learners' language awareness. By exposing the participants to a set of plurilingual activities following the DivCon model, the authors could observe and identify their language awareness development. The results of the study indicate positive outcomes, demonstrating an enhanced level of language awareness among the pupils, as well as an increased appreciation of language diversity.

Since plurilingual competence is crucial for effective communication, cultural understanding, cognitive development, and professional and personal growth, it should also be prioritised in education to enable the continuous development of individuals. However, there is little research on pupils' perceptions of plurilingualism and its role in providing a stimulating environment at the primary level. The second article, entitled *Slovenian Primary School Pupils' Perception of Plurilingual Competence* and written by Tina Rozmanič, Ana Kogovšek, Žan Korošec and Karmen Pižorn, therefore investigated primary school students' perceptions. The results indicate that pupils are inclined towards language learning, perceive the importance of plurilingual competence, and express confidence in speaking foreign languages. However, pupils seem unable to assess their metalinguistic and metacultural knowledge and skills.

The next article, entitled *'English is a Subject that You Should Teach Yourself': Power and Learner Identity in the Language Introduction Programme in Sweden* and submitted by Jenny Bergström, explores students' perspectives on English language learning regarding the Language Introduction Programme in Sweden, which is an individual transitional programme for newly arrived immigrants that seeks to rapidly transition adolescents into further education or the job market. The results show that the importance of proficiency in English for a successful educational transition from the Language Introduction Programme is rarely communicated to students. Furthermore, English is positioned as a subject of low importance within the organisation. The results also show that monolingual norms and language hierarchies limit the students' ability to use their first language when learning English.

In the following paper, *Survey on the Attitudes of School Community*

Members Regarding the Role of the Language(s) of Schooling in the Integration Process of Pupils with an Immigrant Background in Slovenia, Tina Čok presents the results of research on the role of languages of schooling in the success of all pupils in Slovenian primary education institutions, with a particular focus on those with an immigrant background. The study found that while school staff recognise the importance of multilingual education and linguistic integration, there are significant gaps in teacher training and support mechanisms. Although schools generally support the use of multiple languages, there is a lack of cross-language awareness and visible promotion of multilingualism in the school environment.

The next article, *Examining Indonesian English as a Foreign Language Lecturers' Attitudes Towards Translanguaging and Its Perceived Pedagogical Benefits: A Mixed-Methods Study* written by Mohammed Yassin Mohd Aba Sha'ar and Nur Lailatur Rofiah, examines Indonesian lecturers' attitudes towards translanguaging and its pedagogical benefits in their English as a foreign language classroom. The findings reveal that, in general, Indonesian lecturers hold optimal, virtual and maximal attitudes towards translanguaging. They perceive translanguaging as beneficial, as it facilitates student-student and student-teacher interactions, scaffolds students' understanding, and creates a familiar and secure classroom atmosphere.

The last article of the focus part of the issue, entitled *Language-Related Expressions of Personality* and written by Željko Rački, Željka Flegar and Mojca Juriševič, aims to bridge the gap between prospective multi/plurilingual education and overarching personality psychology by examining how language constructs and basic personality traits are interrelated in pre-service teachers, who are fundamental to language education. The findings suggest that there are personality-embedded nuanced language-related expressions of trait structures reflecting psychological needs for language competence, relatedness and autonomy in (co-)creation. The research underscores the importance of considering both language constructs and internationally validated personality traits in teachers and their students.

The first varia article, entitled *Remote Learning and Stress in Mothers of Students with Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder during the Covid-19 Lockdown* and written by Daniela Cvitković, Ana Wagner Jakab and Jasmina Stošić, aimed to examine the spatial and technical preconditions and the quality of support for children with ADHD during remote learning, and to determine the burdens faced by the mothers of these children with regard to school tasks during the first lockdown. The perspective of mothers showed that spatial conditions were inappropriate for holding online classes. Furthermore, teaching

materials during online classes were not adapted to the child's needs, teachers did not send teaching materials through the available online services in a proper manner, and more than a third of the mothers stated that there was no interactive teaching at all and that there was no individual contact with teachers.

The second varia article, entitled *The Impact of the 5E Learning Model Improved with Concept Maps on Motivation* and written by Lütfiye Varoğlu, Ayhan Yilmaz and Şenol Şen, examined the use of the 5E learning model with concept maps to support students' motivation and compared the 5E approach and the classical approach to teaching chemistry in terms of motivational dimensions. The main subject of this study was an assessment of students' motivation using the 5E learning model, which promotes student-centred teaching. It was determined that the EG students' motivation scores showed a significant difference with regard to the CG students' motivation scores. A significant difference was also established between the EG and CG students' intrinsic goal orientation and test anxiety post-test scores.

The last varia article, *Primary School Teachers' Personal and Professional Beliefs on Diversity* written by Željka Knežević, presents research conducted among Croatian primary school classroom teachers and subject teachers regarding their personal and professional beliefs about diversity. The results indicate that teachers show different levels of openness towards certain aspects of diversity in the domains of both personal and professional beliefs, but that their personal beliefs are statistically more positive than their professional beliefs. The results also indicate a need for further research in this area, that is, research that primarily investigates the factors that influence teachers' professional beliefs.

The issue ends with a book review by Andreja Retelj, who selected *Multilingualism and Identity: Interdisciplinary Perspectives* edited by Wendy Ayres-Bennet and Linda Fisher. This monograph consists of 18 contributions by eminent researchers in multilingualism and is characterised by its interdisciplinary insight into the various aspects of multilingualism in our society. The authors' contributions cover fields such as applied linguistics, sociolinguistics and education, among others, illustrating the book's commitment to exploring the complex and multifaceted nature of multilingualism. Multilingualism cannot be seen as a rare phenomenon, but rather as a shared social phenomenon with many benefits and challenges. These challenges have given rise to much of the research in the field of multilingualism and identity that is reflected in this volume. The contributors see more potential than problems in multilingualism, and their studies present findings relevant to both the immediate and broader social contexts.

We hope researchers and practising teachers alike will find much on of-fer here to enhance their understanding of pluri/multilingualism in education.

Andreja Retelj and Karmen Pižorn

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Fostering Language Awareness in a Plurilingual Learning Environment

Špela Jolić Kozina[1], Silva Bratož[1] and Mojca Žefran*[2]

～ Developing young learners' language awareness is becoming an important educational goal in a rapidly globalised world characterised by linguistic and cultural diversity. Drawing upon previous research in the field, the article highlights the importance of promoting language diversity and nurturing language awareness from an early age. We present a qualitative study's findings to analyse the potential of using pluralistic approaches to language teaching for developing young learners' language awareness. The study was based on a case study format involving pupils aged five and six years. By exposing the participants to a set of plurilingual activities following the DivCon model, we were able to observe and identify their language awareness development. In addition, the pupils' responses to language awareness activities and their perceptions of different languages were analysed through a survey in the form of interviews. The results of the study indicate positive outcomes, demonstrating an enhanced level of language awareness among the pupils, as well as an increased appreciation for language diversity.

Keywords: language awareness, linguistic diversity, pluralistic approaches, young language learners

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Spodbujanje jezikovnega zavedanja v raznojezičnem učnem okolju

Špela Jolić Kozina, Silva Bratož in Mojca Žefran

∼ V današnjem svetu, zaznamovanem z jezikovno in s kulturno raznolikostjo, postaja zgodnje razvijanje jezikovnega zavedanja pomemben izobraževalni cilj. Ta članek na podlagi dozdajšnjih raziskav na tem področju poudarja pomen spodbujanja jezikovne raznolikosti in razvijanja jezikovnega zavedanja že od zgodnjega otroštva. Predstavljamo izsledke kvalitativne študije, v kateri preučujemo možnosti uporabe pluralističnih pristopov k poučevanju jezikov za razvijanje jezikovnega zavedanja mlajših učencev. Raziskava je temeljila na študiji primera, ki je vključevala učence, stare pet in šest let. Z udeleženci smo izvedli sklop raznojezičnih dejavnosti, ki so temeljile na modelu DivCon, hkrati pa smo opazovali in ugotavljali stopnjo njihovega jezikovnega zavedanja. Poleg tega smo z učenci izvedli intervjuje, katerih cilj je bil raziskati odzive učencev na izvedene dejavnosti in njihovo dojemanje različnih jezikov. Rezultati raziskave so pozitivni in kažejo na izboljšano raven jezikovnega zavedanja pri učencih ter večje sprejemanje jezikovne raznolikosti.

Ključne besede: jezikovno zavedanje, jezikovna raznolikost, pluralistični pristopi, mlajši učenci tujih jezikov

Introduction

In present-day society, characterised by increasing linguistic and cultural diversity, fostering young learners' language awareness has become an important educational goal. Although researchers agree that learners' positive attitudes towards other languages should be encouraged and linguistic and cultural awareness developed, little research focuses on young learners (YL) (Chik & Melo-Pfeifer, 2020; Muñoz, 2013). Our research, conducted in the form of a qualitative study, was aimed at analysing the potential of using pluralistic approaches to language teaching to develop young learners' language awareness. For that purpose, we designed and carried out a set of plurilingual activities based on the model 'Linguistic and Cultural Diversity in Context' (DivCon), which promotes systematic exposure to linguistic and cultural diversity (Bratož & Sila, 2021, 2022).

We start with a review of relevant research in the field of language awareness, with particular emphasis on young learners and pluralistic approaches to language learning, where we focus on the DivCon model. In the second part of the paper, we present the results of a qualitative study conducted in two groups of first-grade pupils. The main aims of the study were to investigate young learners' language awareness, their perceptions and attitudes towards other languages, and to observe their responses to the activities aimed at developing linguistic and cultural awareness.

Theoretical background

Language awareness and young learners

Language awareness refers to an individual's understanding and knowledge of language. It involves being conscious of language as a system and being able to reflect on language in various contexts (Hawkins, 1999; Muñoz, 2013). One of the key components of language awareness is metalinguistic awareness. According to Bialystok (2001), metalinguistic awareness involves actively focusing attention on explicit language properties. This implies the ability to reflect on linguistic structures, recognise grammatical rules and manipulate language for various purposes. Furthermore, Gombert (1997) explains metalinguistic awareness as the ability to use metalanguage in reference to all aspects of language, i.e., phonological (e.g., recognising and manipulating individual sounds, syllables and rhymes), syntactic (e.g., being able to recognise and use grammatical structures and sentence patterns), semantic (e.g., understanding the meaning of words and the relationships between them), or pragmatic (e.g.,

understanding the use of language in different contexts and being able to use language in different social and pragmatic contexts).

According to Muñoz (2013), few studies have focused on young or very young learners' language awareness and attitudes towards language learning. Chik and Melo-Pfeifer (2020) came to a similar conclusion in their meta-analysis of 44 papers on exploring language awareness using visual methodologies, arguing that there is a lack of extensive research focused on young learners' language awareness. Both Hawkins (1999) and Muñoz (2013) agree that developing learners' language awareness from an early age has many benefits, including facilitating YL's metalinguistic awareness and fostering their cultural understanding. Wagner (2020) reports that 4–5-year-olds show awareness of their own languages, are able to express their language preferences and even demonstrate emerging metalinguistic awareness. According to Roehr-Brackin (2018), researchers have found that children between the ages of 5 and 8 show great improvement in their metalinguistic development. As Roehr-Brackin (2018) maintains, children aged 6 to 7 begin to develop metalinguistic awareness by realising that words fundamentally serve as labels for objects, actions, and similar and are therefore able to understand synonymy and grasp the idea that different languages use different words. In another study on language awareness, in which Kurvers et al. (2006) compared illiterate adults to preschool children and literate adults, it was shown that children demonstrate a considerable level of phonological awareness as they are able to identify and produce rhymes, as well as segment words into syllables; they also show semantic awareness by being able to identify content words. However, they have more difficulties in other aspects of language, such as sentence segmentation and textual awareness.

Language awareness is also argued to play a significant role in the development of multilingualism and plurilingual competence (Cots, 2008; Finkbeiner &White, 2017; Oliveira & Ança, 2009; Svalberg, 2007). Another important aspect of developing language awareness is also positive attitudes towards different languages and linguistic diversity in general (Little et al., 2013). By promoting linguistic diversity, pluralistic approaches aim to develop positive attitudes towards different language varieties and contribute to the development of multilingualism and language awareness (Sayers & Láncos, 2017).

Cultural awareness is an additional concept that is closely related to language awareness and linguistic diversity. According to Chen and Starosta (1998), cultural awareness is a cognitive aspect of intercultural communication that involves understanding and recognizing cultural differences and similarities and refers to the knowledge and recognition of cultural norms, values, beliefs, and practices of different cultures.

Pluralistic approaches

The previous two decades have witnessed several initiatives aimed at promoting linguistic diversity in Europe. These endeavours are today commonly labelled as 'pluralistic approaches to language teaching' and refer to educational strategies that promote the appreciation of linguistic diversity and cultural understanding and recognise and value all languages, including home languages, dialects, sign languages, and regional languages, rather than focusing solely on 'foreign' or 'second' languages (Candelier et al., 2010). This is also emphasised by the Framework of Reference for Pluralistic Approaches to Languages and Cultures (FREPA), which provides a set of descriptors and guidelines for the development of plurilingual and intercultural competence. FREPA encourages educators to move beyond a monolingual and monocultural perspective in language education and underscores the idea that language learners should be exposed to and appreciate a variety of languages and cultures, including their home languages, regional languages, and languages of migration (Candelier et al., 2010). One of the approaches that developed from this idea is the 'evlang' or 'language awakening' approach (Candelier & Kervran, 2018; Darquennes, 2017; Finkbeiner & White, 2017), which aims to promote the appreciation of language diversity in the classroom and encourages learners to think about language as a system. The main idea of the approach is to help learners understand the role of language diversity both in their own lives and in society as a whole, or as Darquennes (2017) points out, the aim is not language learning as such but, more importantly, raising awareness of linguistic diversity.

Several projects have been carried out in Europe in the past twenty years that have promoted language diversity, as well as plurilingual and intercultural education. In Portugal, for instance, Szelei and Alves (2018) carried out a study aimed at promoting teacher learning for diversity. The authors emphasised the importance of in-service teachers' professional development aimed at fostering cultural awareness and developing competences for working in culturally and linguistically diverse educational environments. In Slovenia, the language-awakening approach was implemented with the *Janua Linguarum Comenius* project (*Ja-Ling*). The main objective of the project was to enhance the awareness of linguistic and cultural diversity among primary school pupils by creating effective plurilingual materials (Fidler, 2006). Fidler (2006) found that both the teachers and the pupils, as well as their parents, showed positive attitudes towards the materials and the approach itself. Another initiative for promoting multilingualism and interculturalism in Slovenia was undertaken by Pevec Semec (2018), who proposed the implementation of cross-border learning

mobility for primary and preschool teachers, aimed at developing teachers' plurilingual and intercultural competences.

Another concept that is closely related to language diversity and challenges monolingual ideologies is translanguaging (García & Otheguy, 2020; García & Wei, 2014), which is a pedagogical approach that encourages the use of a learner's complete set of language abilities, including their home language(s), in the learning process. Translanguaging practices foster fluency in separate languages and promote the idea that learning new languages is not just about acquiring another foreign language but about developing a broader linguistic and cultural repertoire. Through this, it promotes the idea that language diversity is a valuable asset, encourages the development of a bilingual or multilingual identity and aims to break down language barriers and power hierarchies by recognising and valuing all languages and language varieties (Garcia & Wei, 2014).

One of the most recent pluralistic approaches aimed at promoting awareness of linguistic and cultural diversity among preschool children (aged 4–6) is the DivCon model (*Linguistic and Cultural Diversity in Context*) (Bratož & Sila, 2022). It integrates six basic aspects: the journey metaphor, exposure to linguistic diversity, exposure to cultural diversity, progression from concrete to symbolic level, effective second language teaching approaches, and children's participation. The model conceptualises the development of plurilingual competence as a journey on which children experience different languages and cultures through multi-sensory perceptions. It incorporates activities such as movement, singing, tasting, and artistic expression to enhance the learning experience. The DivCon model emphasises the importance of providing a context that promotes linguistic and cultural diversity. The model uses the journey metaphor to create a framework for children to explore and generate new ideas, which effectively develops their awareness of diversity. Another crucial aspect of the DivCon model is children's active participation. The model encourages children to actively engage in activities that expose them to linguistic and cultural diversity. Active participation allows children to develop positive attitudes towards different languages and cultures and enhances their perceptions of diversity. The model's focus on context and participation ensures that children have meaningful and immersive experiences with linguistic and cultural diversity, leading to the development of linguistic awareness and positive attitudes towards diversity at an early age (Bratož & Sila, 2022).

Our research was carried out in the form of a qualitative study aimed at analysing the potential of using pluralistic approaches to language teaching for developing young learners' language awareness. The main objectives of the

study were:

- to investigate young learners' (aged 5 and 6) language awareness
- to examine young learners' perceptions and attitudes towards other languages and cultures
- to observe young learners' responses to the activities aimed at developing linguistic and cultural awareness

Method

Participants

The study was based on a case study format involving two groups of first-year pupils aged 5 and 6 (N = 42) from a Slovenian primary school. In the first group, there were 14 male and 8 female participants; in the second group, there were 11 male and 9 female participants; 38 pupils were from Slovenia, three from Ukraine and one from Kosovo.

Instruments

Several tools were used to collect data. An observation sheet was used to record 1) pupils' reactions to the activities and 2) their comments on the activities, languages and cultures. In addition, the observation sheet also contained the Leuven well-being and involvement scales (Laevers, 2005), which involve five levels ranging from very low to very high. The scales were used to observe and identify the pupils' well-being and engagement during the lessons.

Furthermore, the pupils' perceptions of different languages, their attitudes towards other languages and their knowledge of words/phrases in other languages were analysed through a survey in the form of interviews. The interviews were carried out both before and after the intervention. The participants responded to three questions: 1) Which languages would you like to speak? 2) Do you believe that it is good to speak more languages? Why? and 3) Can you think of interesting words from other languages? The pupils' responses were then qualitatively analysed.

Research design

Since the research was conducted with young learners, we followed the methodological guidelines for studying children's attitudes proposed by Bratož et al. (2019). The study was carried out over a one-month period in February 2023. In the first part, we designed a set of eight lessons aimed at developing children's language awareness based on the DivCon model developed by Bratož and Sila (2022). An intervention in the form of a set of activities was carried out

in which pupils 'visited' eight different countries (one in each lesson): Slovenia, Italy, France, Great Britain, Austria, Croatia, as well as Portugal and Japan, which were chosen by the pupils when being encouraged to choose their own destinations. The activities were aimed at developing different aspects of plurilingual competence and language awareness and were based on pluralistic approaches to learning languages. As they 'travelled around' the countries, pupils were exposed to different languages and cultures through a variety of activities involving multi-sensory, cross-curricular, TPR and other approaches.

Results and discussion

Children's language awareness

During the activities, children showed aspects of an enhanced linguistic, phonological and cultural awareness. This was reflected in their ability to use words in different languages (Table 1), their ability to compare and identify languages (Table 2), their ability to notice differences and similarities between sounds (Table 3) and their comments on the links between language and culture (Table 4).

Table 1

Examples of words and phrases in different languages given by the pupils before and after the intervention

	Words given before the intervention	Words added after the intervention
English	*hello, goodbye, good morning, good night, a teddy bear, a ball, a doll, a plane, a train, a car, board games, dog, cat, mouse, notebook, coloured pencils, glue, school bag,*	*thank you, a bike, a bus, fish, shark, dolphin, giraffe, 'We're going on a beach!', passport*
French	*konjtravoje (sl. konj travo je = eng. the horse is eating grass)*	*merci beaucop, bonjour*
German	*guten morning, guten tag*	*danke*
Spanish		*[h]ola*
Italian	*ciao bella, arrivederci*	*grazie, pizza*
Croatian	*dobar dan, doviđenja, dobra puta, dođi, kuča, zeko, hvala*	*ajkula, morski lav, 'Doviđenja Jegulja Klepetulja.'*
Japanese	*sushi, konnichiwa, geisha, 'piscanec pa liz',*	*yo-yo*
Portuguese	*Ronaldo*	*girafa, tigre*

When the pupils were asked to give us some examples of interesting words in other languages before the intervention, they mostly reported

greetings (in English, Croatian, German, Italian and Japanese). They also listed words for toys (*a teddy bear, a ball, a doll*), means of transport (*a plane, a train, a car*), school supplies (*notebook, coloured pencils, glue, school bag*) and animals (*dog, cat, mouse, zeko*). Most of the words were in English. After the intervention, the most common words were still greetings, with the addition of French and Spanish (*bonjour, hola*). The children also added expressions of gratitude in English, French, German and Italian (*thank you, danke, merci beaucoup, Grazie*). As we can see from examples in Figure 1, before the intervention, the most common words and phrases reported by the children were in English and Croatian, whereas after the intervention, they offered examples of words in all the languages they were exposed to during the activities. This partly reflects the findings of other researchers (Kurvers et al., 2006; Roehr-Brackin, 2018), who claim that even young children show a certain degree of linguistic awareness by recognising content words and connecting them to their meanings.

Furthermore, the pupils exhibited a certain degree of linguistic awareness (Figure 2), which was reflected in their ability to notice and compare words and phrases in different languages, such as recognising that the word *yo-yo* is similar in Japanese, Chinese, English and Slovene (*They say yo-yo the same in Japan in China. And also in English. Well, in Slovene we also say jo-jo.*).

Table 2

Examples and comments reflecting pupils' linguistic awareness

Situation	Pupils' comments
General comments on different languages:	*'How do you say Slovenija in English?'* *'English and Italian are stealing words from our Slovene.'* *'Your mum is also margherita, just like pizza. – No, she is Margareta.'* *'In which language will you sing to us today?'* *'Maybe the language in Mojster Jaka is similar because the French flag is also similar to Italian.'* [Portuguese] *'is a bit weird; it is maybe similar to French.'* *'They say yo-yo the same in Japan in China. And also in English. Well, in Slovene, we also say jo-jo.'* *'It could be Bosnia or Serbia; they all speak similarly.'*
When singing *Frère Jacques* in French, they commented:	*'This language is similar to the one we had last time when you sang in Italian.'*
When listening to the Japanese version of Brother John, a pupil commented:	*'I can't understand a single word they are saying.'*
Comparing the words basketball, handball and football:	*'they all have the word ball in them … žogo.'*

Situation	Pupils' comments
Comparing the word 'tennis' in Slovene, English, Italian, Spanish and German:	*'it is all so similar, but they say it weird.' 'To me it sounds the same, just as 'boks'(eng. boxing) – everywhere they say the same.'*
A conversation between two pupils:	*'Why didn't this Jegulja say anything in Italian?' – 'But she did, she said pica.' – 'Yes, I know, but I think this was Slovene pica, not Italian, don't you think so?'*
When introducing Slovene words taken from German, a girl commented:	*'My grandma and grandpa speak German every day.'*
When asked if they can communicate in Croatian, they said:	*'Well, yes. It's pretty similar, and you can also show with your hands, and it works.';* *'Of course, I understand them when they speak Croatian, and they understand me when I speak Slovene.'*
When learning the word 'dolphin', one child commented:	*'Another word that is similar to Slovene. There's more and more of them.'*

The results presented in Table 2 also indicate that the children exhibit emerging metalinguistic awareness, as was also shown by other researchers (Bialystok, 2001; Roehr-Brackin, 2018; Wagner, 2020). The pupils were able to identify and compare words with the same meaning in different languages ([dolphin] – '*Another word that is similar to Slovene.*'), they were able to recognise which languages the words belong to ('*Why didn't this Jegulja say anything in Italian?' – 'But she did, she said pica.*'), and they also commented on their own ability to use other languages ('*Of course, I understand them when they speak Croatian and they understand me when I speak Slovene.*'). Moreover, they demonstrated the ability to identify similarities between languages belonging to the same language family ('*it could be Bosnia or Serbia, they all speak similarly'; when singing Frère Jacques in French, they commented '*this language is similar to the one we had last time when you sang in Italian*'). Finally, we found that they are aware that communication is not limited only to verbal language but also involves nonverbal communication ('*Well, yes. It's pretty similar, and you can also show with your hands, and it works.*'). From the children's comments, we can also observe their emerging metalinguistic awareness, as they were able to talk about the differences and similarities between languages; for instance, by commenting on the structure of the words basketball, handball, football ('*they all have the word ball in them … žogo*') or explicitly observing similarities between languages ('*This language is similar to the one we had last time when you sang in Italian.*').

Another aspect that can be seen in the results is children's enhanced phonological awareness (Table 3).

Table 3

Examples and comments reflecting pupils' phonological awareness

Examples and pupils' comments	– Noticing that in the word *krokodil/crocodile/crocodilo,* the sound /k/ is represented by the letter K in Slovene, but in English in Portuguese they use the letter C. – Noticing the similarities between the Slovene, English and Portuguese words: *krokodil/crocodile/crocodilo, tiger/tiger/tigre, žirafa/giraffe/girafa.* – Showing surprise that the word *robot* in Japanese is more similar to Slovene than to Chinese. – Noticing that Japanese and Chinese use different symbols and letters to write words. – *'Pizza nogavica also rhymes.'*

As we can see from the examples in Table 3, pupils were able to observe the differences between the sounds or pronunciation of words and their written representation (e.g., children commented that the Slovenian word '*krokodil*' is written differently than '*crocodile*' in English and '*crocodilo*' in Portuguese; they also noticed that Japanese and Chinese use different symbols and letters to write words). Another example showing their emerging phonological awareness is their ability to come up with new rhymes (e.g., *'Pizza nogavica also rhymes.'*), which was also shown by Kurvers et al. (2006), who found that preschool children exhibit a considerable degree of phonological awareness, which is reflected in their ability to identify and produce rhymes.

Table 4

Examples and comments reflecting pupils' cultural awareness

Examples and pupils' comments	– *'We can't go to Japan by train. It's too far.'* – *'I always confuse China and Japan. Do the Japanese also eat with chopsticks?'* – When hearing the song *Bruder Jakob*, they said that their schoolmate's name is also Jakob and asked whether this is an Austrian name and if they should call their classmate Jaka in Slovenia. – When looking at the Chinese flag, one child commented: *'Do these stars mean that China is also in the European Union?'*

Finally, as is shown in Table 4, the pupils also commented on the cultures and compared them, displaying a certain level of intercultural awareness (*'I always confuse China and Japan. Do the Japanese also eat with chopsticks?'*)

According to the results of our study, the pupils were able to notice the differences and similarities between the languages and words, which indicates the development of their linguistic awareness and a certain level of meta-language development. They also displayed a considerable level of phonological awareness by being able to notice the differences between pronunciation and written

representation of words, as well as identify and make their own rhymes in different languages. They showed great interest in the activities, also contributed their own suggestions and ideas, and displayed very positive attitudes towards other languages and cultures, which is presented in more detail in the following chapter.

Children's involvement in and their responses to the language awareness activities

The analysis of the children's responses recorded in the observation sheets indicates a very high level of pupils' involvement as well as their well-being in the activities dedicated to exploring Slovenia, Italy, Croatia, the United Kingdom, Portugal and Japan. During the activities, the children were excited, lively, actively engaged and eager to contribute their ideas. This goes in line with the findings of Bratož and Sila's (2022) research, which examined pre-school children's linguistic and cultural awareness using the DivCon model. Their results also revealed high levels of children's involvement in the activities and positive attitudes towards linguistic and cultural diversity. They eagerly shared their experiences with the countries, telling us they went skiing in Italy and that they spent their summer holidays in Croatia, saying all the words that they learned there. One girl said that she visited London and was really excited to learn more about the UK. With activities focusing on France and Austria, however, some variation in pupil engagement and well-being was observed, although the levels never dropped below moderate. Based on the Leuven scales, the children's involvement and their well-being when exploring France were estimated as high, whereas in Austria, the levels of pupils' involvement and well-being were estimated as moderate. According to the learners' responses, none of them had been to France, so they were not familiar with it. When learning about the waltz and polka in Austria, the Ukrainian pupil shared a popular dance from her country (*hopak*), which was well accepted among the other children. The children, however, were not particularly fond of waltz and polka, commenting that they 'would rather dance hip-hop'. We observed that learners' involvement and well-being were related to their prior experience of the country or language in focus and the opportunity to actively participate in the decision-making process regarding the choice of their destination. As Rutar (2014) emphasises, participation plays a crucial role in learning and teaching as it ensures that all children are actively engaged in the educational process, which creates a learning environment where children can collaborate and express themselves and their understanding of the languages to which they are exposed. When our participants were given the option to choose their next

destinations, they were excited and shared their ideas and suggestions (for example, when talking about Japan, they also suggested 'visiting China, which is close to Japan' and comparing Japanese and Chinese as 'they are so similar'.)

The children's responses and comments regarding the activities were overall positive. At the beginning of each lesson, we first inquired about learners' experiences with the country and its language and observed that they were more likely to actively participate in the activities if they had more experience and were more familiar with the countries and languages. For example, the most positive responses were observed when exploring Slovenia, Croatia, and Italy, as they were very familiar to the children and the United Kingdom, and the children felt confident using the English language. In contrast, when exploring countries they were not very familiar with (e.g., Austria and France), they needed some encouragement to participate in the activities.

After completing all of the tasks, the children were asked to tell us what they liked most about the activities. As shown in Figure 1, most of them (N = 30) chose different countries (Slovenia and Croatia were chosen by six children, Great Britain and Italy were pointed out by five children, Portugal and Japan were chosen by four pupils), while three pupils pointed out the activity where they created fish tanks, and three pupils chose the activity where they made pizza. Individual learners also pointed out Japan, the *Pizza Margherita* song, and new flags, and two of them reported liking everything.

Figure 1

Children's favourite elements and activities from the lessons aimed at developing linguistic and cultural diversity
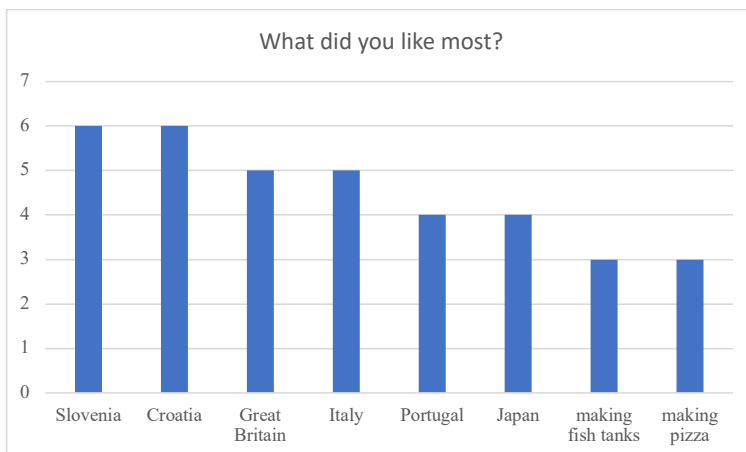
When asked whether they felt embarrassed speaking in other languages, the children showed no inhibitions, reporting that they didn't mind speaking other languages. This shows that the activities offered a safe and encouraging environment, where children were able to experiment with the languages, and thus enhancing their willingness to communicate in other languages as well as fostering positive attitudes towards those languages.

As the results from the observation sheets indicate, the children show high levels of involvement and well-being during the activities, which is reflected in their willingness to participate and their collaboration; they shared their own ideas and readily accepted the ideas of their peers. They showed genuine interest in discovering new languages and cultures and eagerly embraced the journey metaphor by offering their passports and boarding their imaginary train to travel to their destinations. The journey metaphor has proved to be an extremely strong scaffold in providing the learners with a meaningful learning context with the help of concrete aids (e.g., passport, the Brother John doll, the train engine) through which they can experience, compare and explore new languages and cultures, which also reflects the findings of Bratož and Sila (2022), who emphasise the role metaphor in providing an efficient contextual framework for fostering linguistic and cultural diversity.

Children's perceptions and attitudes towards other languages

One of the aims of the study was to establish the participants' perceptions of different languages and whether their perceptions would change after the implementation of the planned activities. We therefore interviewed the children before and after the intervention. The children were first asked which languages they would like to speak. The responses to this question asked before the implementation of the activities are shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2

The languages the participants would like to speak before being exposed to the activities aimed at promoting linguistic and cultural diversity
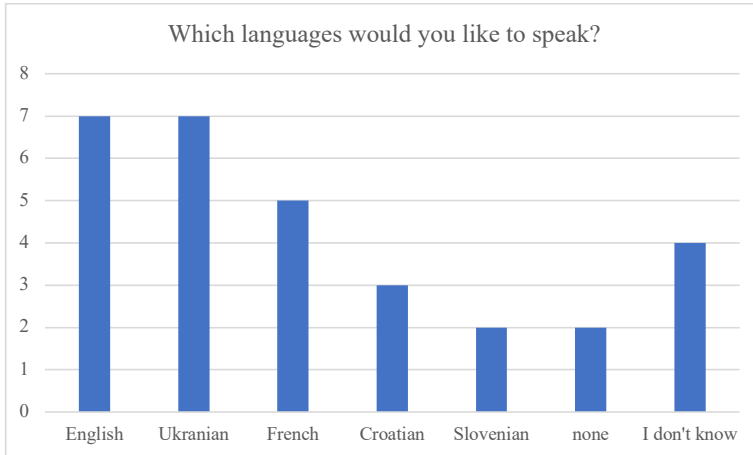
As shown in Figure 2, seven pupils responded that they wished to speak English, and the same number of pupils chose Ukrainian. Furthermore, French (N = 5), Croatian (N = 3) and Slovenian (N = 2) were mentioned. Four pupils reported that they did not know which language to choose, whereas two responded with 'none'. Individual participants also mentioned the following languages: Spanish, Portuguese, Russian, Turkish, Serbian, and Japanese, and some of them chose two languages: English and Russian (N = 2), English and Ukrainian (N = 2), English and Croatian, English and Slovenian.

The same question was posed to the children after being involved in the activities. The results are shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3

The languages the participants would like to speak after being exposed to the activities aimed at promoting linguistic and cultural diversity
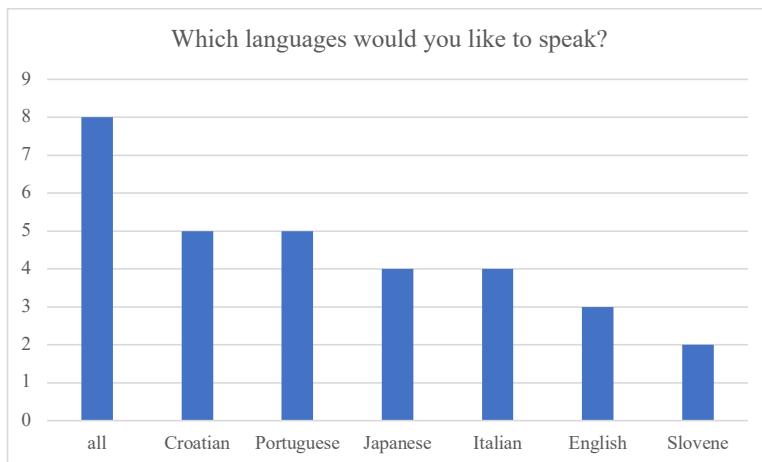
After being involved in activities aimed at promoting linguistic and cultural diversity, eight pupils expressed a desire to speak all languages, suggesting that the activities motivated them to learn about many languages and cultures. All the other learners' responses involved languages they were exposed to during the activities: they mentioned Croatian (N = 5), Portuguese (N = 5), Japanese (N = 4), Italian (N = 4), English (N = 3), and Slovene (N = 2). Other responses also included German, French, 'maybe English and German', French and Italian, English and Japanese (N = 2), Chinese and Japanese (N = 2), and English and Croatian (N = 2). In the second interview, no one responded that they did not want to speak any language.

As we can see from the results, the attitudes of the children changed after the intervention, with nearly a quarter of the pupils wanting to speak all languages. We might conclude that the intervention positively affected their perceptions of other languages, enhancing their positive attitudes and willingness to speak other languages.

The children's positive attitudes towards other languages are even more clearly reflected in their responses to the second question in which they were asked whether they believe it is good to speak other languages and why. In both interviews, almost all the responses were positive, with the exception of two pupils in the first interview, who could not decide. Among the most common reasons for speaking other languages, they explained that it is beneficial

when we want to travel to other countries. Some of them reported that knowing other languages helped them communicate with classmates who came from other countries, and some of the reasons reported were '*so that I can listen to English songs*', '*so that I can understand cartoons*' and '*so that I can play computer games*'. We can conclude that children's motivation for learning other languages mostly lies in their desire to be able to communicate when travelling and being able to understand songs, cartoons and computer games, which partly reflects the findings of Mihaljević Djigunović (1993) and Nikolov (1999), who studied young learners' foreign language learning motivation.

In the last question, they were asked to give examples of the most interesting words in other languages (also shown in Table 1). The most common words reported among the pupils were greetings in other languages (*hello, bye, good night, Guten tag, Guten morning, dobar dan, doviđenja, arrivederci*), many of them mentioned names of toys (*a teddy bear, a ball, a doll, board games*), means of transport (*a train, a plane, a car*), school supplies (*notebook, coloured pencils, glue, school bag*) and animals (*dog, cat, mouse, zeko*). Most of the words were in English. After the intervention, their responses were similar, but they added more words, which were not limited only to English. The most commonly listed words were still greetings, adding the greetings in Spanish and French (*hola, bonjour*); they also added expressions of appreciation (*thank you, danke, merci beaucoup, grazie*), more animal names (*fish, shark, dolphin, giraffe, ajkula, morski lav*), and food (*pizza*). Many pupils also pointed out that they liked all the words in foreign languages.

The results suggest that children hold positive attitudes towards languages and find words from other languages interesting, which was also established by several other researchers (Bratož et al., 2022; Enever, 2011; Mihaljević Djigunović, 2012). An interesting observation from our study is that before the intervention, the majority of the words offered by pupils were English, which changed after the intervention when they also added words from the languages they were exposed to during the intervention. This might suggest that the activities aimed at developing children's language awareness successfully enhanced their language awareness and their interest in other languages.

Conclusion

In this paper, we investigated different aspects of first-graders' language awareness and their attitudes towards different languages and cultures. The results indicate that children show sensitivity to linguistic and cultural diversity and are able to develop linguistic and phonological awareness at an early age by

being able to recognise and compare different languages, identify similarities and differences between words across languages and even use metalanguage when talking about languages. Our research has shown that the planned activities aimed at promoting linguistic and cultural diversity offer systematic exposure to linguistic and cultural diversity, which helps develop language awareness and positive attitudes towards diversity at an early age. The activities incorporated the journey metaphor, which provided an efficient context for children to explore and generate new ideas. Active participation of children was a key element of the activities, allowing them to engage in activities that enhance their perceptions of diversity. The learners showed great levels of interest and participation as well as well-being throughout the activities. We have observed that their involvement also depends somewhat on their previous experiences with the languages/countries and the opportunity to participate actively in the choice of destinations, topics, and activities. Since the activities encouraged learner participation and offered a safe and encouraging learning context, the learners' responses to the activities were very positive, demonstrating an enhanced level of language awareness and an increased appreciation for language diversity. Our findings are consistent with prior studies conducted by other researchers (Bratož & Sila, 2022; Bratož et al., 2022; Fidler, 2006; Hawkins, 1999; Muñoz, 2014), who have argued that pluralistic approaches in language education offer benefits such as enhanced language learning and cultural awareness, and provide a holistic and inclusive framework for language education, promoting learners' engagement, motivation, and intercultural competence.

Our study, however, has some limitations. First, the relatively small sample limits the generalisability of the results. We would suggest further research on the impact of the proposed activities on children from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds to determine if such activities are equally effective for all children. Furthermore, longitudinal studies could be conducted to examine the development of language awareness and metalinguistic skills in young learners over an extended period, providing a deeper understanding of the factors influencing language learning and awareness at different stages of development. Studies could also focus on exploring the reasons behind children's motivation for learning particular foreign languages, which could contribute to developing effective language learning strategies. Another aspect worth exploring is the role of the teacher in implementing activities aimed at promoting linguistic and cultural diversity and identifying strategies to further enhance their support and stimulation of children's language experiences. In conclusion, based on the results of our study, we would like to argue that by fostering language awareness and embracing linguistic and cultural diversity, teachers can cultivate positive

attitudes towards languages and cultures in young learners, facilitating both their language acquisition process and their ability to communicate confidently in diverse environments.

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Biographical note

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Slovenian Primary School Pupils' Perception of Plurilingual Competence

Tina Rozmanič*[1], Ana Kogovšek[2], Žan Korošec[3] and Karmen Pižorn[3]

∼   Since plurilingual competence is crucial for effective communication, cultural understanding, cognitive development, and professional and personal growth, it should also be prioritised in education to enable the continuous development of individuals. One of the most critical aspects of achieving plurilingual competence is creating a stimulating environment that ensures that language learning and use take place in a way that appeals to all pupils. However, there is little research on pupils' perceptions of plurilingualism and its stimulating environment at the primary level. Therefore, the study's main aim was to investigate their perceptions, which resulted in a primarily quantitative research method. As a data collection tool an online survey with a combination of a questionnaire and Likert-scales statements, which were based on the Framework of Reference for Pluralistic Approaches to Languages and Cultures, was developed. For this reason, the article concentrates on determining the level and quality of primary school pupils' knowledge, skills and attitudes regarding languages and their associated cultures, as well as on identifying pupils' opinions, perceptions, and motivational factors. The research study addressed pupils aged 9 to 14. The results indicate that pupils are inclined towards language learning, perceive the importance of plurilingual competence, and express confidence in speaking in foreign languages. However, pupils seem unable to assess their metalinguistic and metacultural knowledge and skills.

Keywords: plurilingual competence, primary school pupils, Framework of Reference for Pluralistic Approaches to Languages and Cultures

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Zaznave slovenskih osnovnošolcev o raznojezični zmožnosti

Tina Rozmanič, Ana Kogovšek, Žan Korošec in Karmen Pižorn

∼   Ker je raznojezična zmožnost ključna za učinkovito komunikacijo, razumevanje kultur, kognitivni razvoj ter za poklicno in osebnostno rast, bi morala biti prednostno obravnavana tudi v izobraževanju, da bi omogočila kontinuiran razvoj posameznika. Eden najpomembnejših vidikov doseganja raznojezične zmožnosti je ustvarjanje spodbudnega okolja, ki zagotavlja, da učenje in raba jezika potekata na način, ki je privlačen za vse učence. Obstaja pa malo raziskav o tem, kako osnovnošolci zaznavajo raznojezičnost in za raznojezičnost spodbudno okolje. Zato je bil glavni cilj študije raziskati njihove zaznave, zaradi česar je bila uporabljena predvsem kvantitativna raziskovalna metoda. Kot orodje za zbiranje podatkov je bila razvita spletna anketa s kombinacijo vprašalnika in trditev po Likertovi lestvici, ki so temeljile na Referenčnem okviru za pluralistične pristope k jezikom in kulturam. Članek se osredinja na ugotavljanje ravni in kakovosti znanja, spretnosti in stališč osnovnošolcev o jezikih in z njimi povezanih kulturah ter na ugotavljanje mnenj, zaznav in motivacijskih dejavnikov učencev. V raziskavi so sodelovali učenci, stari od 9 do 14 let. Izsledki kažejo, da so učenci naklonjeni učenju jezikov, da zaznavajo pomen raznojezične kompetence in izražajo zaupanje v govorjenje v tujih jezikih. Zdi pa se, da učenci ne znajo oceniti svojega metajezikovnega in metakulturnega znanja in spretnosti.

Ključne besede: raznojezična zmožnost, osnovnošolci, Referenčni okvir za pluralistične pristope k jezikom in kulturam

Introduction

Societies have become increasingly linguistically and culturally diverse due to the influence of globalisation, a transformation of traditional moral values, and the emphasis on individual choice and migration (Strobbe et al., 2017). The world is becoming more plurilingual than ever before (UNESCO, 2019), and it is believed that half of the world's population is at least bilingual, if not plurilingual (Grosjean, 2010; Rocafort, 2019). However, plurilingualism is still often perceived as a major challenge for individual and/or social development. In most cases, the only advantage attributed to the plurilingual individual is the competence to use two or more languages. Moreover, monolingualism seems to be treated as the norm, especially by monolinguals who might even show a patronising attitude towards those whose first language(s) is not the official language(s) of the community. Proponents of the monolingual ideology (one nation, one language) tend to view plurilingualism and linguistic diversity as an insurmountable obstacle to nation-building (Chibaka, 2018; Duff, 2015; Taylor et al., 2008).

As in other domains of society, linguistic and cultural diversity is also present in the educational domain, where students should have the right to develop their language repertoires and empower their cultural identities, where linguistic capital is enhanced, where the plurilingual teaching approach as one of the most important constructs to emerge from the contemporary phenomena of migration and globalisation is acknowledged to contribute to social integration, openness, respect and plurilingual and intercultural competencies in all learners, and finally to more harmony in our schools and society (Coste et al., 2009; Council of Europe, 2001; EU-Council of Europe declaration on multilingualism, 2011; Pevec Semec, 2018; Piccardo, 2015; Sheils, 2004). Kramsch (2012) justly points out that, despite plurilingualism, society and the education system are still largely organised for monolinguals. A major challenge for education systems is to equip learners during their schooling with the skills that will enable them to act effectively as citizens, acquire knowledge, and develop an open attitude towards otherness. This approach to teaching languages and cultures is called plurilingual and intercultural education. Plurilingual education embraces all language learning, for example, home language/s, language/s of schooling, foreign and second languages, and regional and minority languages. It also supports the development of an awareness of languages, communication, and metacognitive strategies. Such language awareness enables students to expand beyond mandatory school languages and recognise regional and minority languages, raise consciousness of language plurality, and develop more positive

attitudes towards linguistic and cultural diversity (Candelier, 2003; Moore & Gajo, 2009; Sabatier, 2004). The advantages associated with language awareness make a compelling argument for the need to conduct further research into language education and, more precisely, into plurilingual education in students' perceptions and attitudes (Meier, 2017).

The concept of plurilingualism and plurilingual and pluri/intercultural competence (PIC)

Europe, Slovenia being no exception, is linguistically less diverse than other parts of the world like Africa or Asia (Canagarajah, 2009; Canagarajah & Liyanage, 2012). In addition, the processes of nation-building and language standardisation in the last few centuries have resulted in the prevalent image of rather homogeneous language communities that are only in contact at their borders or peripheries via tourism, trade or political relations but fundamentally monolingual in the sense of 'one state, one language' (Lüdi, 2022). Such perspectives are rooted in immemorial ideologies, specifically in the popular belief that the normal human being speaks only one language and lives in a homogeneous linguistic community, as illustrated by the biblical story about the Babylonian confusion of tongues. In this sense, a famous professor of the University of Cambridge affirmed in 1890: 'If it were possible for a child to live in two languages at once equally well, so much the worse. His intellectual and spiritual growth would not thereby be doubled but halved. Unity of mind and character would have great difficulty in asserting itself in such circumstances' (Laurie, 1890, p. 15).

In the late 1990s, the concept of plurilingual and pluri/intercultural competence was first introduced (Coste et al., 1997) and has had a strong impact on language teaching and learning ever since. Several pluralistic teaching methodologies have emerged, including integrated didactics, wherein the teaching of diverse languages complements each other, and awakening to languages, aimed at cultivating learners' appreciation for the linguistic diversity in their surroundings. Moreover, approaches like intercomprehension focus on fostering comprehension within language families (Melo-Pfeifer & Reimann, 2018; Reissner, 2010; Tost Planet, 2010). These innovative teaching strategies reflect a paradigm shift towards embracing and harnessing linguistic and cultural diversity in education.

Creating a stimulating learning environment for developing plurilingualism

Plurilingualism refers to the ability of individuals or societies to use and interact with multiple languages. It goes beyond bilingualism, which typically involves proficiency in two languages. Plurilingual individuals are comfortable using and navigating various languages in different contexts. This concept emphasises the dynamic and interconnected nature of language use in diverse linguistic environments (Cenoz, 2013; Garcia & Otheguy, 2020; Glaser, 2005). The *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* – CEFR (Council of Europe, 2001) views plurilingualism as a comprehensive concept encompassing the language knowledge and experiences acquired by an individual. It emphasises that an individual's communicative competence is built by perceiving experiences and knowledge as a whole rather than isolated incidents. As per this framework, plurilingual competence signifies an individual's ability to functionally communicate across diverse cultural and linguistic contexts (Conteh & Meier, 2014; Esteve et al., 2017; Kubota, 2016; Meier, 2017; Melo-Pfeifer, 2014).

Creating a stimulating learning environment for developing plurilingualism involves fostering a setting that encourages the acquisition and use of multiple languages. Plurilingualism refers to the ability to use and communicate in several languages, emphasising a dynamic and interconnected language proficiency (Glaser, 2005; Grosman, 2009). Research indicates that deeply ingrained beliefs formed during childhood and influenced by family, school, and societal factors can be resistant to change. The acceptance of plurilingualism faces similar challenges (Vallejo & Dooly, 2020). Stakeholders, including parents, educators, students, and pupils, must actively participate for its successful integration into the educational system. Educational institutions play a crucial role, providing an environment where linguistic and cultural development aligns with pupils' needs. Involving parents and teachers positively influences learning outcomes, suggesting the incorporation of pupils' first languages into the curriculum to foster plurilingualism (Celaya & López-Flores, 2023). Despite various factors shaping pupils' beliefs about plurilingualism, open communication is crucial. Recognising the difficulty some individuals face in expressing their beliefs, persistent efforts are needed to uncover different perspectives.

Foreign language teaching in Slovenia

Slovenia's linguistic landscape is diverse, with Slovenian as the official language and Italian and Hungarian as co-official languages in certain regions.

In areas with Italian and Hungarian communities, children attend either bilingual schools or schools where the community language is a compulsory subject. English (or German in some parts of Slovenia) is introduced in Grade 1 (age 6). Initially, students receive two hours of English (German) instruction per week from Grades 1 to 4, increasing to three lessons weekly thereafter. From Grade 4 onwards, students can choose to learn a second foreign language, with popular choices being German, French, Spanish, and Italian. This structured approach to foreign language teaching reflects Slovenia's commitment to plurilingual education, accommodating both national and minority language needs.

Research problem

Nowadays, plurilingualism is becoming increasingly important, both in terms of raising awareness and spreading tolerance towards other languages and cultures, especially regarding linguistic and cultural diversity (Cenoz, 2013; Galante, 2022). Plurilingualism is also important due to its positive effects on the human brain. It has been shown that learning and using multiple languages builds important connections in the brain that prevent early cognitive decline (Bialystok et al., 2012). However, despite all the research findings and the obvious positive advantages and benefits of learning multiple languages, monolingualism remains the norm in today's society and educational systems (Bailey & Marsden, 2017; Clyne, 2008; Ellis, 2008; Major, 2018; Ndhlovu, 2015). As stated by the Council of Europe's CEFR (2001), the goal of primary education is for each individual to fully realise their potential for plurilingualism and establish an enriching atmosphere that fosters the inclusion of all pupils. With this in mind, the current study is focusing on understanding the plurilingual competence of Slovenian primary school pupils. Our inquiry seeks to delve into their knowledge of languages and cultures, the skills they are developing, their perspectives on plurilingualism, the intensity of these views, and the motivation driving them to cultivate their plurilingual abilities. Additionally, certain factors have been researched and identified as effective in establishing a conducive and stimulating learning environment for the cultivation of plurilingual competencies.

Research questions

We have formulated the following questions:
1. What are the predominant factors that motivate pupils to learn languages?

2.   Are there differences in the motivation to develop plurilingual compe-
tence between pupils who started learning a foreign language at different
ages?

3.   How do learners evaluate their own linguistic competence? Are there
differences between groups of pupils who started learning a for-
eign language at different times in their attitudes regarding linguistic
competence?

4.   Are there differences between female and male pupils in their self-as-
sessment of language competence?

5.   Which attitudes towards plurilingualism are most prominently ex-
pressed by primary school pupils?

6.   How do primary school pupils perceive their language skills in the realm
of plurilingualism? Are there differences between groups of pupils who
started learning a foreign language at different times in their attitudes
towards these skills?

7.   Which factors are most commonly perceived by primary school pupils
as supportive in creating a stimulating learning environment for the de-
velopment of plurilingual competence?

8.   What skills do primary school pupils possess in the domain of
plurilingualism?

Method

Participants

The employed sampling strategy is non-probability, purposive, compris-
ing pupils in Grades 4 to 9 (aged 9–14) from 16 primary schools in Slovenia
(3.5% of all Slovenian primary schools) during the 2019/20 school year that si-
multaneously participated in the project *Languages Matter*. The main goal of the
project was to determine which factors support and which hinder the creation
of a supportive learning environment for the development of plurilingualism in
the Slovenian school context. Based on data from target analyses and identified
variables, guidelines were developed to help create a plurilingualism-friendly
educational environment. By introducing intercultural aspects in linguistic and
non-linguistic subjects, learners were taught to recognise and consciously ac-
cept various linguistic and cultural realities. This enabled them to avoid break-
downs and misunderstandings in intercultural communication and develop
critical cultural awareness. With its modern and innovative web portal, the
project's long-term goal is to overcome the distinction between linguistic and
non-linguistic subjects by promoting plurilingualism and developing digital

competencies to connect different subject areas with all the languages present in the Slovenian environment. Furthermore, the project aimed to reach beyond the educational context into local communities and thus give meaning to both subject content and competence development. The project paid particular attention to the less widespread or in our educational environment, the lesser taught languages, the languages of immigrants and languages towards which the school policy has been less favourable in recent decades (Latin, Greek).

A total of 1752 primary school pupils took part in the survey, 49.01% of whom were girls and 50.99% boys. Most of the pupils who took part in the survey were in Grades 6 (358) and 9 (357). There were 318 pupils in Grade 8 and 294 in Grade 7. At the time of the survey, 214 pupils were in Grade 5, and the lowest number, 211, were in Grade 4. To facilitate a clearer data interpretation, the pupils were categorised into two groups, namely the 2nd cycle (Grades 4 to 6) with 782 pupils (44.06%) and the 3rd cycle (Grades 7 to 9) with 970 pupils (55.40%).

Table 1

Overview of primary school pupils divided into cycles

	Grade	f	f %	f	f %
2nd cycle	4	211	12.00		
	5	214	12.20	782	44.60
	6	357	20.40		
	7	294	16.80		
3rd cycle	8	318	18.20	970	55.40
	9	358	20.40		
Total		1752	100.00	1752	100.00

Instrument

The data collection employed surveys and attitude measurements, utilising a questionnaire and a Likert-type attitude scale as instruments. The adequacy of the measuring instruments was also checked. Sensitivity and objectivity were increased by providing a 5-point scale for the former and the same questionnaires and instructions for all participants, closed-ended questions and anonymity of responses for the latter. Validity was ensured by rational content validation by the experts involved in the project, and reliability was ensured by the calculation of the Cronbach Alpha coefficient, which gave a value of 0.76. The present value means that the reliability of the questionnaire is good. These tools were developed and compiled on the web portal www.1ka.si. The survey targeted pupils in primary school Grades 4 to 9 (ages 9-14) during the 2019/20

school year. The measurement characteristics were ensured by constructing the questionnaire using FREPA (A Framework of Reference for Pluralistic Approaches to Languages and Cultures) descriptors (Candelier et al., 2017). Due to the extensiveness of the FREPA descriptors, we incorporated only those we assumed to be the most important for investigating pupils' perceptions towards plurilingualism. This decision was based on our experience and familiarity with the Slovenian school system. The instrument comprised three sections: the first addressed respondents' demographic information through closed-ended questions, the second delved into the language they used, the initiation of language learning, and the purposes for language use. Additionally, the questionnaire featured sets of statements pertaining to different languages and language learning. The questionnaire consisted of a total of 36 questions: 15 questions in the demographic section, 19 questions in the language use section and 2 questions with 63 statements in the section on knowledge, skills and attitude towards plurilingualism.

Research design

The data was collected between September and December 2019. Participation in the survey was anonymous and voluntary as respondents' right to exit the study without explanation and at any point during the research process was infallibly maintained. The teachers involved in the project *Languages Matter* administered the online questionnaire in their schools during regular lessons. The data collected during the survey were statistically processed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

Results and discussion

Even though there is similar research on students' perceptions of multilingualism or plurilingualism (Benzehaf, 2023; Doiz et al., 2012; Hlatshwayo & Siziba, 2013; Ibarraran et al., 2008; Lindholm-Leary, 2016; Melo-Pfeifer, 2017; Orcasitas-Vicandi & Leonet, 2020; Prasad, 2020; Wang & Kirkpatrick, 2020), most of these studies do not include pupils of primary and lower-secondary level (aged 9-14) who learn foreign and second languages in a Slavic educational context. Therefore, this section presents the outcomes of the research in accordance with the predefined research questions. The results are systematically presented in tables, each accompanied by an interpretation of findings that address the specific research questions.

Research question 1: What are the predominant factors that motivate pupils to learn languages?

Statements regarding motivation for language learning:

1. Knowledge of foreign languages is important to be able to communicate with other people.
2. Knowledge of one's mother tongue is quite sufficient.
3. Nowadays, knowledge of English is perfectly adequate.
4. People who speak several languages are more successful in their profession.
5. Knowledge of a foreign language contributes to personal development.
6. Anyone who speaks a foreign language can develop as a person.
7. Those who speak more languages hold a higher societal status.
8. I am very interested in foreign languages.
9. I am interested in the similarities and differences between my own language/culture and the language/culture of other countries.
10. Knowledge of foreign languages is important for my friends.
11. I would like to be able to speak several foreign languages.
12. I am happy when I can use the languages I learn in my everyday life.
13. I love foreign language lessons.

Table 2

Motivating factors for learning languages

Statements	I totally agree.		I agree.		I can't decide.		I disagree.		I do not agree at all.		Total	
	f	f %	f	f %	f	f %	f	f %	f	f %	f	f %
1.	**1065**	**65.10**	460	28.10	70	4.30	23	1.4	18	1.10	1636	100.0
2.	198	12.10	211	12.90	257	15.70	**660**	**40.3**	310	18.90	1636	100.0
3.	223	13.60	**448**	**27.40**	398	24.30	420	25.70	147	9.00	1636	100.0
4.	**878**	**53.70**	444	27.10	173	10.60	104	6.40	37	2.30	1636	100.0
5.	290	31.70	**350**	**38.30**	189	20.70	49	5.40	36	3.90	914	100.0
6.	194	26.90	164	22.70	**196**	**27.10**	88	12.20	80	11.10	722	100.0
7.	**461**	**28.20**	443	27.10	349	21.30	246	15.00	137	8.40	1636	100.0
8.	**587**	**35.90**	504	30.80	320	19.60	142	8.70	83	5.10	1636	100.0
9.	384	23.50	**492**	**30.10**	460	28.10	211	12.90	89	5.40	1636	100.0
10.	355	21.70	483	29.50	**555**	**33.90**	158	9.70	85	5.20	1636	100.0
11.	**837**	**51.20**	423	25.90	234	14.30	85	5.20	57	3.50	1636	100.0
12.	**657**	**37.30**	569	32.30	325	18.40	56	3.20	29	1.60	1636	100.0
13.	521	31.80	**522**	**31.90**	377	23.00	120	7.30	96	5.90	1636	100.0

A total of 1,636 respondents, constituting 93.38% of the sample, actively shared their perspectives on the provided statements. However, it is noteworthy that participation varied, with some statements garnering even fewer responses. We hypothesise that this discrepancy between the response and the actual sample may be attributed to factors such as time constraints, limited attention span, the questionnaire's length, or other potential influences on respondents' engagement.

An overwhelming majority of the respondents (93.20%) agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that knowledge of foreign languages is important to be able to communicate with people from diverse backgrounds. A smaller percentage, 4.30%, remained undecided, while 2.50% of surveyed pupils expressed disagreement. A similar study on students' (and parents') perceptions of trilingual education was conducted by Wang and Kirkpatrick (2020) in Hong Kong primary schools, where students expressed eagerness to learn foreign languages (English in their case) to be able to communicate with other people that do not share their mother tongue. As highlighted also by Kač et al. (2010), acquiring proficiency in multiple languages is crucial for developing the competencies necessary to engage in a plurilingual and pluricultural society. Regarding the statement that knowledge of one's mother tongue is quite sufficient, 15.70% of the respondents were undecided, while 25.00% of them (totally) agreed. Even though most pupils agree that knowledge of foreign languages is important, more than 40% believe their mother tongue is sufficient. Research indicates that many pupils perceive the use of their mother tongue in education as beneficial. One study found that mother tongue-based instruction helps improve students' cognitive abilities, reasoning, interaction, and comprehension. Pupils can better express their ideas and feelings when using their native language, which positively impacts their learning experience and academic performance (Aktürk-Drake, 2024).

However, many experts (e.g., Candelier et al., 2017; Meier, 2017) advocate for pluralistic approaches, urging a shift from monolingualism to understanding the world through diverse cultural perspectives. That knowledge of English is perfectly adequate nowadays was confirmed by 41.00% of the respondents, while 34.70% disagreed, and 24.30% were undecided, possibly due to a lack of knowledge or experience of plurilingual context. The majority of the participants (80.80%) agreed that people who speak several languages are more successful in their profession, 10.60% were undecided, and 8.70% disagreed. The statement claiming that knowledge of a foreign language contributes to personal development received agreement from 70.00% of the respondents, with 20.70% undecided and only 9.30% in disagreement. The statement that

anyone who speaks a foreign language can develop as a person received agreement from 49.60% of the surveyed pupils, with 27.10% undecided and 23.30% in disagreement. Many respondents (55.30%) agreed that those who speak more languages hold a higher societal status, while 21.30% were undecided, and 23.40% disagreed. Regarding the interest in foreign languages, 66.70% of the participants affirmed, 19.60% were undecided, and 13.80% were not interested. A significant number of respondents (18.30%) are not interested in the similarities and differences between their own language/culture and the language/culture of other countries, and 28.10% were undecided, possibly due to limited exposure to incomprehension and language awareness to learning and teaching languages, and those answering negatively likely lacked such experiences. As observed by Dewaele and Botes (2020), being a multi/plurilingual can help a person to establish a more multi/pluricultural personality. Therefore, those who do not speak foreign languages are also not interested in other languages and cultures. Concerning the importance of foreign languages for friends, 51.20% agreed, 33.90% were undecided, and 14.90% disagreed, suggesting varying awareness levels among pupils. Most respondents (77.1%) expressed a desire to speak several foreign languages, while 69.60% agreed that they are satisfied when using the languages they learn in their daily lives. Lastly, 63.70% of pupils enjoyed foreign language lessons, 23.00% were undecided, and 13.20% disagreed. These results highlight positive attitudes towards language learning; as pupils wish to learn more foreign languages, they are interested in them and enjoy them. The results of our study are consistent with the results of studies reported by Enever (2011) and Nikolov and Mihaljević Djigunović (2019). Similarities regarding motivation for learning languages could also be drawn with several other well-known studies that also focus on foreign language motivation and factors predicting motivation (e.g., Dörnyei, 1998; Masgoret & Gardner, 2003; Mihaljević Djigunović, 2012).

Research question 2: Are there differences in the motivation to develop plurilingual competence between pupils who started learning a foreign language at different ages?

In order to examine the differences in their average agreement scores, pupils were divided into three groups according to when they started learning a foreign language (i.e., in preschool, 1st cycle, or 2nd cycle). As scores significantly differed from a normal distribution, non-parametric tests, namely Kruskal-Wallis, were employed to check for differences between several independent groups, followed by Dunn's post hoc test of pairwise comparisons. Statements that referred to motivation were the same as with RQ1.

Table 3

Results of Kruskal-Wallis tests with Dunn's post hoc tests for statements related to motivation

Statements	Kruskal-Wallis				Dunn's post hoc test*	
	Mean ranks	χ^2	*df.*	*p*	*Sample 1-Sample 2*	*p*
1.	Preschool: **782.93** 1st cycle: 797.36 2nd cycle: 853.77	8.159	2	**.017**	Preschool–2nd cycle 1st cycle–2nd cycle	.037 .040
2.	Preschool: 862.90 1st cycle: 808.95 2nd cycle: **776.13**	7.177	2	**.028**	Preschool–2nd cycle	.022
3.	Preschool: 832.98 1st cycle: 830.45 2nd cycle: **758.54**	8.421	2	**.015**	1st cycle–2nd cycle	.019
4.	Preschool: **772.59** 1st cycle: 786.54 2nd cycle: 880.64	17.806	2	**.000**	Preschool–2nd cycle 1st cycle–2nd cycle	.001 < .0005
5.	Preschool: **425.70** 1st cycle: 438.86 2nd cycle: 480.53	7.602	2	**.022**	/	
6.	Preschool: **339.64** 1st cycle: 363.40 2nd cycle: 366.62	1.760	2	.415	/	
7.	Preschool: **747.42** 1st cycle: 791.07 2nd cycle: 890.32	22.029	2	**.000**	Preschool–2nd cycle 1st cycle–2nd cycle	< .0005 .001
8.	Preschool: **731.94** 1st cycle: 782.73 2nd cycle: 916.35	39.019	2	**.000**	Preschool–2nd cycle 1st cycle–2nd cycle	< .0005 < .0005
9.	Preschool: **787.93** 1st cycle: 792.74 2nd cycle: 858.63	7.324	2	**.026**	1st cycle–2nd cycle	.036
10.	Preschool: **795.46** 1st cycle: 796.56 2nd cycle: 846.32	4.094	2	.129	/	
11.	Preschool: **741.40** 1st cycle: 807 2nd cycle: 865.11	15.910	2	**.000**	Preschool–2nd cycle	< .0005
12.	Preschool: **778.78** 1st cycle: 800.16 2nd cycle: 851.67	6.197	2	**.045**	/	
13.	Preschool: **772.02** 1st cycle: 795.84 2nd cycle: 864.26	9.888	2	**.007**	Preschool–2nd cycle 1st cycle–2nd cycle	.014 .026

*Showing only significant pairwise combinations.

For 11 out of 13 statements (all but 6th and 10th), we can conclude that there are statistically significant differences in agreement scores across all three groups. Pertinent data-gathering was conducted on a 5-point scale, where 1 meant *completely agree*, and 5 stood for *do not agree at all*. Because of that, the lowest mean rank actually implies the highest degree of accord with a particular statement. Thus, by inspecting mean ranks, it is safe to surmise that those who started learning a foreign language in pre-school customarily express a higher degree of concurrence with selected statements than the other two groups of pupils who started learning later. The exceptions to this are the 2nd and 3rd statements, with which those who began learning in the 2nd cycle agree the most. However, these two statements semantically do not refer to plurilingualism but are either bound by a conceptualisation of monolingualism or a limited perception of the importance of foreign languages. Such views were, on average, not supported by those who started learning earlier. Dunn's post hoc tests revealed significant differences in pairwise comparisons for nine statements; in every such case, 2nd cycle group was found to differ significantly from either one or occasionally from both other groups. There was no statistically significant difference between those who started learning a foreign language in preschool and pupils who started in the 1st cycle of primary school. However, differences in motivation to develop plurilingual competence begin to emerge in the 2nd cycle with older pupils. Motivation towards learning foreign languages evolves as children transition from preschool into primary and secondary school, highlighting developmental differences and educational contexts that shape their attitudes and engagement with language learning. Studies conducted by Enever (2011), Masgoret and Gardner (2003), and Mercer et al. (2012) provide valuable insights into these developmental and contextual influences.

Research question 3: How do learners evaluate their own linguistic competence? Are there differences between groups of pupils who started learning a foreign language at different times in their attitudes regarding linguistic competence?

Statements relating to self-assessment of language competence:
1.   I always feel a bit uncomfortable when speaking in a foreign language.
2.   When I speak in a foreign language, I am always afraid of making a mistake.
3.   I have confidence in my own ability to learn a foreign language.

Table 4

Respondents' attitudes toward their own linguistic competence

Statements	I totally agree.		I agree.		I can't decide.		I disagree.		I do not agree at all.		Total	
	f	*f %*	*f*	*f %*	*f*	*f %*	*f*	*f %*	*f*	*f %*	*f*	*f %*
1.	256	15.60	**421**	**25.70**	322	19.70	365	22.30	272	16.60	1636	100.00
2.	421	25.70	**524**	**32.00**	252	15.40	252	15.40	187	11.40	1636	100.00
3.	475	29.00	**593**	**36.20**	414	25.30	114	7.00	40	2.40	1636	100.00

Many respondents (41.30%) agreed or strongly agreed that they feel a bit uncomfortable when speaking in a foreign language. About the same number of respondents, 38.90%, disagreed or strongly disagreed. The majority of respondents (57.7%) agreed that they are afraid of making a mistake when speaking in a foreign language. Approximately two thirds of respondents (65.2%) agreed that they are confident about their ability to learn a foreign language. More than a quarter (25.3%) could not decide.

Table 5

Results of Kruskal-Wallis tests with Dunn's post hoc tests for statements related to respondents' linguistic competence

Statements	Kruskal-Wallis				Dunn's post hoc test*	
	Mean ranks	χ^2	*df.*	*p*	*Sample 1-Sample 2*	*p*
1.	Preschool: 899.70 1st cycle: 798.85 2nd cycle: **768.26**	16.913	2	**< .001**	Preschool–1st cycle Preschool–2nd cycle	.002 .000
2.	Preschool: 868.07 1st cycle: 805.61 2nd cycle: **778.48**	7.654	2	**.022**	Preschool–2nd cycle	.019
3.	Preschool: **745.04** 1st cycle: 796.19 2nd cycle: 882.75	19.956	2	**< .001**	Preschool–2nd cycle 1st–2nd cycle	.000 .003

Showing only significant pairwise combinations.

We formed groups exactly as was done in RQ2; statistical significance was verified in the same manner due to the quality of applicable parameters. Results demonstrate that there are differences between groups for all three

statements; however, when assertions denote either a sensation of discomfort or being afraid of mistakes when speaking in a foreign language, those who started learning the latest (i.e., in 2nd cycle) in fact express the highest degree of agreement (mean rank for 1st statement is 768.26 and 778.48 for 2nd statement). The situation changes when asked about their confidence; here, pupils who started learning sooner (or rather at the earliest during preschool) convey the highest degree of concurrence among all three groups (their mean rank for 3rd statement is 745.04; for an explanation of why the lowest mean ranks imply the highest degree of agreement, consult previous RQ).

As the Kruskal-Wallis test showed significant differences, we conducted Dunn's post hoc testing as well to find significant differences between pairs of groups. In all three statements, a significant difference was found between those who started learning in preschool and pupils who began with a formalised instruction of a foreign language in their 2nd cycle of primary school. Based on Table 5, students who started later tended to report a higher degree of discomfort and fright when using a foreign language than others from their cohort who started sooner (this is why there are differences not only between the 1st and 3rd groups but occasionally even between other combinations).

Research question 4: Are there differences between female and male pupils in their self-assessment of language competence?

Statements relating to self-assessment of language competence:

1.   I am always a bit uncomfortable when speaking in a foreign language,
2.   When I speak in a foreign language, I am always afraid of making a mistake.
3.   I have confidence in my own ability to learn a foreign language.

As normality testing (Shapiro-Wilk) proved that the distribution of dependent variables differs significantly from normal distribution, which was also corroborated by QQ-plots, all three statements were verified with Mann-Whitney U test.

Table 6

Testing significant differences between male and female pupils regarding their self-assessment of language competence

Statements		Mann-Whitney U Test				
	n	*Sample mean*	*Median*	*Mean ranks*	*U*	*p*
1.		Male: 2.96 Female: 3.01	Male: 3.00 Female: 3.00	Male: 808.85 Female: 828.25	326619.00	**.396**
2.	Male: 822 Female: 814	Male: 2.71 Female: 2.39	Male: 2.00 Female: 2.00	Male: 869.67 Female: 766,83	292491.00	**< .001**
3.		Male: 2.11 Female: 2.25	Male: 2.00 Female: 2.00	Male: 782.09 Female: 855.27	304624.50	**.001**

For the 1st statement, we retain the null hypothesis as self-assessment scores do not significantly differ between male and female pupils. Self-assessment is presented on a 5-point scale (1 defined as *completely agree* and 5 as *do not agree at all*; thus, the lower the average, the higher the agreement with the statement). With the 2nd and 3rd statements, significant differences were found between male and female pupils, based on which the decision to reject the null hypothesis can be made. However, female pupils, on average, agree more with the 2nd statement about making mistakes, whilst male pupils concur more with the 3rd statement regarding trust in their own language competence. It can be concluded that male pupils often prioritise fluency, focusing on the ability to communicate ideas quickly and effectively, even if this means making more grammatical mistakes. In contrast, female pupils tend to prioritise accuracy, paying closer attention to grammatical correctness in their language use. Our study's findings align with those of Dewaele et al. (2016), which showed that female participants exhibited more concern about making mistakes and demonstrated less confidence in using a foreign language compared to their male counterparts. This comparison underscores the consistent observation across studies that gender differences impact language learning experience and self-perception (Oga-Baldwin & Nakata, 2017).

Research question 5: Which attitudes towards plurilingualism are most prominently expressed by primary school pupils?

1. Knowledge of one foreign language helps you learn another.
2. Knowing your mother tongue has a positive effect on learning a foreign language and vice versa.

3.   I love Slovene lessons.
4.   A good knowledge of Slovene is important for a successful life in Slovenia.
5.   If I want to master a foreign language well, I do not necessarily have to know the culture it comes from.
6.   Learning a language is a long and arduous process.
7.   It is easier to learn a foreign language if we like the culture associated with it.
8.   At least two foreign languages should be taught at school.
9.   It is good to have friends of different nationalities.
10.   I respect everyone's language, so they should use it at every opportunity.
11.   I respect everyone's culture.

Table 7

Respondents' attitudes towards plurilingualism

Statements	I totally agree.		I agree.		I can't decide.		I disagree.		I do not agree at all.		Total	
	f	f %	f	f %	f	f %	f	f %	f	f %	f	f %
1.	337	20.6	**499**	**30.5**	442	27.0	236	14.4	122	7.5	1636	100.0
2.	339	20.7	436	26.7	**597**	**36.5**	182	11.1	82	5.0	1636	100.0
3.	444	27.1	**537**	**32.8**	290	17.7	192	11.7	173	10.6	1636	100.0
4.	**895**	**54.7**	468	28.6	154	9.4	91	5.6	28	1.7	1636	100.0
5.	156	17.1	250	27.4	**292**	**31.9**	155	17.0	61	6.7	914	100.0
6.	417	25.5	**554**	**33.9**	335	20.5	229	14.0	101	6.2	1636	100.0
7.	556	34.0	**563**	**34.4**	358	21.9	95	5.8	64	3.9	1636	100.0
8.	**540**	**33.0**	415	25.4	390	23.8	163	10.0	128	7.8	1636	100.0
9.	**634**	**38.8**	551	337	340	20.8	63	3.9	48	2.9	1636	100.0
10.	**642**	**39.2**	591	36.1	320	19.6	49	3.0	34	2.1	1636	100.0
11.	**744**	**45.5**	544	33.3	255	15.6	57	3.5	36	2.2	1636	100.0

Approximately half of the respondents (51.1%) believe that proficiency in one foreign language aids in learning another, while 21.9% disagree, and 27.0% are undecided. Regarding the impact of the mother tongue on learning a foreign language, 47.4% see a positive connection, while 36.5% are undecided. More than half (59.9%) enjoy Slovene lessons, and 22.3% dislike them. Regarding the importance of Slovene proficiency for success in Slovenia, 9.4% are unsure, and 7.3% disagree. When asked about proficiency in a foreign language independent of its culture, 44.5% agree, 31.9% are undecided, and 23.7%

disagree. The majority (59.4%) perceive language learning as a lengthy process. Only 9.7% believe cultural affinity eases language acquisition. Encouragingly, 58.4% favour learning at least two foreign languages in primary school, while 17.8% disagree. The majority (72.5%) value friendships with people of different nationalities, indicating positive experiences. Respect for everyone's language is affirmed by 75.3%, with 78.8% agreeing that language should be used when helpful. Overall, the respondents' perspectives highlight varying opinions on language learning and cultural influences.

Table 8

Results of Kruskal-Wallis tests with Dunn's post hoc tests for statements related to respondents' perceived language skills in plurilingualism

Statements	Kruskal-Wallis				Dunn's post hoc test*	
	Mean ranks	χ^2	*df.*	*p*	*Sample 1-Sample 2*	*p*
1.	Preschool: 779.99 1st cycle: 802.69 2nd cycle: 846.23	4.745	2	.093	/	/
2.	Preschool: **742.20** 1st cycle: 827.23 2nd cycle: 828.75	9.592	2	**.008**	Preschool–1st cycle Preschool–2nd cycle	.011 .022
3.	Preschool: **768.44** 1st cycle: 801.56 2nd cycle: 856.47	8.112	2	**.017**	Preschool–2nd cycle	.019
4	Preschool: 775.43 1st cycle: 818.17 2nd cycle: 821.53	2.557	2	.279	/	/
5	Preschool: 474.02 1st cycle: 435.97 2nd cycle: 458.56	3.352	2	.197	/	/

Significant differences between the three groups were found for the 2nd and 3rd statements (RQ6 statements), for which those who started learning in preschool expressed the highest degree of agreement (mean rank for the 2nd statement is 742.20 and 768.44 for the 3rd statement).

Based on post hoc testing, significant differences were found between those who started earlier (1st group) and pupils who started learning a foreign language later (2nd and 3rd group, respectively). Overall, pupils who commenced with foreign language instruction before school are more inclined to incorporate words from foreign languages into their everyday speech and link mutual respect with varied language use more strongly than their cohort colleagues.

Research question 6: How do primary school pupils perceive their language skills in the realm of plurilingualism? Are there differences between groups of pupils who started learning a foreign language at different times in their attitudes towards these skills?

Statements relating to language skills:

1. More important than speaking the language correctly is having the courage to speak it at all.
2. I often use words from foreign languages when talking to my peers.
3. Where people respect each other, we can use different languages.
4. Knowledge of foreign languages contributes to understanding differences between individuals and their differences.
5. I present and explain the linguistic and cultural behaviour in my own environment to the foreign interlocutor and compare it with the linguistic and cultural environment of the foreign interlocutor.

Table 9

Respondents' perceived language skills in plurilingualism

Statements	I totally agree.		I agree.		I can't decide.		I disagree.		I do not agree at all.		Total	
	f	f %	f	f %	f	f %	f	f %	f	f %	f	f %
1.	519	31.7	**581**	**35.5**	392	24.0	86	5.3	58	3.5	1636	100.0
2.	**599**	**36.6**	523	32.0	308	18.8	125	7.6	81	5.0	1636	100.0
3.	406	24.8	541	33.1	**543**	**33.2**	90	5.5	56	3.4	1636	100.0
4.	423	25.9	548	33.5	**552**	**33.7**	66	4.0	47	2.9	1636	100.0
5.	141	15.4	259	28.3	**337**	**41.2**	85	9.3	52	5.7	914	100.0

The survey also delved into pupils' attitudes on statements assessing their plurilingual skills. Notably, 67.2% believe daring to speak a foreign language is more crucial than speaking it correctly, with 24.8% undecided and 8.8% in disagreement. Regarding incorporating foreign words into conversation, 68.6% affirm doing so often, while 12.6% rarely do, and only 18.8% are undecided, highlighting their ability to integrate foreign language elements seamlessly. The third statement, affirming the use of different languages where mutual respect exists, received agreement from over half (50.9%), with 33.2% undecided and 8.9% in disagreement. Another statement, linking foreign language knowledge to understanding differences, garnered agreement from 59.4%, while 33.7% were undecided, and 6.9% disagreed. These responses underscore pupils' adeptness

in language transfer, cultural awareness, and tolerance for differences. Regarding the 5th statement, 48.20% of pupils did not respond at all, while from those who responded (55.9%), 43.7% agreed, and 41.2% could not decide. The results from the RQ6 may indicate that nearly half of the respondents may not have been able to answer the question about their metalinguistic and metacultural skills. The answers of the pupils also show that those who did respond were not able to decide whether they were able to compare languages and cultures.

Research question 7: Which factors are most commonly perceived by primary school pupils as supportive in creating a stimulating learning environment for the development of plurilingual competence?

1. The school has enough literature in foreign languages to support learning.
2. The textbooks we use in school for language learning are of high quality.
3. Teachers of other subjects know how important it is for pupils to master foreign languages.
4. In non-linguistic subjects, teachers remind us of the correct use of Slovene.
5. Foreign language learning should take place at different levels of difficulty.
6. At our school, foreign languages are also taught in other subjects.
7. At our school, the teachers of other subjects also give us foreign language literature to read.
8. I believe that the school I attend encourages learning foreign languages and getting to know other cultures.
9. At home, my parents encourage foreign language learning.
10. We have enough foreign language literature at home to help me learn.
11. My parents allow me to use digital resources (e.g. internet, TV, computer, radio, etc.) when I read content in a foreign language.
12. Foreign language teachers know how to motivate us to learn foreign languages.
13. In other subjects, we also learn a foreign language.
14. The school I attend encourages language learning.

Table 10

Respondents' perceived factors of a supportive learning environment for the development of plurilingual competence

Statements	I totally agree.		I agree.		I can't decide.		I disagree.		I do not agree at all.		Total	
	f	f %	f	f %	f	f %	f	f %	f	f %	f	f %
1.	458	28.0	**544**	**33.3**	470	28.7	108	6.6	56	3.4	1636	100.0
2.	473	28.9	**546**	**33.4**	434	26.5	112	6.8	71	4.3	1636	100.0
3.	**565**	**34.5**	537	32.8	401	24.5	85	5.2	48	2.9	1636	100.0
4.	473	28.9	**524**	**32.0**	393	24.0	173	10.6	73	4.5	1636	100.0
5.	**515**	**31.5**	487	29.8	474	29.0	90	5.5	70	4.3	1636	100.0
6.	253	15.5	341	20.8	**412**	**25.2**	377	23.0	253	15.5	1636	100.0
7.	279	17.1	384	23.5	**492**	**30.1**	264	16.1	217	13.3	1636	100.0
8.	**586**	**35.8**	556	34.0	384	23.5	61	3.7	49	3.0	1636	100.0
9.	**740**	**45.2**	476	29.1	309	18.9	72	4.4	39	2.4	1636	100.0
10.	422	25.8	**479**	**29.3**	459	28.1	177	10.8	99	6.1	1636	100.0
11.	**711**	**43.5**	475	29.0	300	18.3	90	5.5	60	3.7	1636	100.0
12.	**539**	**32.9**	509	31.1	414	25.3	96	5.9	78	4.8	1636	100.0
13.	239	14.6	311	19.0	**448**	**27.4**	348	21.3	290	17.7	1636	100.0
14.	**736**	**45.0**	517	31.6	289	17.7	49	3.0	45	2.8	1636	100.0

Regarding the adequacy of literature in foreign languages at school, 61.3% agreed, 10.0% disagreed, and 28.7% were undecided. On the quality of language learning textbooks, 62.3% deemed them good, 11.1% disagreed, and 26.5% were undecided. Concerning teachers' awareness of the importance of foreign languages in non-language subjects, 67.3% affirmed, 8.1% disagreed, and 24.5% were undecided. About the encouragement of foreign language learning by the school, 69.8% agreed, 6.7% disagreed, and 23.5% were undecided. In terms of parental support for foreign language learning, 74.3% felt encouraged, 6.8% disagreed, and 18.9% were undecided. Regarding the availability of literature in foreign languages at home, 55.1% affirmed, 16.9% disagreed, and 28.1% were undecided. On the use of digital resources for foreign language reading, 72.5% agreed, 9.2% disagreed, and 18.3% were undecided. Concerning foreign language teachers' ability to motivate pupils, 64.0% agreed, 10.7% disagreed, and 25.3% were undecided. Regarding the integration of foreign language learning in other subjects, opinions were divided, with 39.0% disagreeing, 33.6% agreeing, and 27.4% undecided. On the general encouragement of language learning

by the school, 76.6% agreed, 5.8% disagreed, and 17.7% were undecided.

The ELLiE study found that successful foreign language acquisition is strongly influenced by the development of speaking and listening skills, a positive and supportive environment, access to a variety of materials, and the active involvement of learners in language activities (Enever, 2011; Pižorn, 2009). Similar research regarding a supportive learning environment for promoting plurilingualism was also conducted by Busse (2017) in Bulgaria, Germany, the Netherlands and Spain, where the obtained data suggested that even though dedicated teachers and adequate teaching materials are important, an even more substantial effort has to be made concerning educational policies, schools and their curriculum, parents, etc. Forey, Besser, and Sampson (2015) state that a child's academic achievement depends on parents' cultural beliefs, their knowledge of various foreign language learning strategies, and their involvement in their child's learning. Tamis-LeMonda and Rodriguez (2009) also point out that experiences in the child's home environment, such as various home learning activities (e.g. reading), parental support and a variety of learning materials (e.g. books, toys, etc.), have a significant impact on a child's language learning. On the use of digital resources for foreign language reading, 72.5% agreed, 9.2% disagreed, and 18.3% were undecided.

Research question 8: What skills and attitudes do primary school pupils possess in the domain of plurilingualism?

Statements relating to knowledge in the realm of plurilingualism:

1. Language is an inseparable part of culture.
2. We can start learning a foreign language as early as possible.
3. Knowledge of Latin is useful for learning some other foreign languages.
4. It is important that the school also offers the opportunity to learn a classical language (e.g., Latin), as this gives pupils a good insight into European cultural heritage.
5. If you want to master a language well, you also need to know the history and geographical features of the country in which it is spoken.
6. Learning a foreign language in childhood has a negative impact on mother tongue skills.
7. If you learn several languages at the same time, it is difficult to master each one well.

Table 11

Respondents' perceived skills in the realm of plurilingualism

Statements	I absolutely agree.		I agree.		I can't decide.		I disagree.		I do not agree at all.		Total	
	f	f %	f	f %	f	f %	f	f %	f	f %	f	f %
1.	**626**	**38.3**	517	31.6	386	23.6	52	3.2	55	3.4	1636	100.0
2.	**659**	**40.3**	496	30.3	282	17.2	129	7.9	70	4.3	1636	100.0
3.	221	13.5	366	22.4	**630**	**38.5**	228	13.9	191	11.7	1636	100.0
4.	222	24.3	**272**	**29.8**	270	29.5	90	9.8	60	6.6	914	100.0
5.	242	14.8	342	20.9	**490**	**30.0**	364	22.2	198	12.1	1636	100.0
6.	193	11.8	232	14.2	**439**	**26.8**	361	22.1	411	25.1	1636	100.0
7.	360	22.0	**533**	**32.6**	421	25.7	205	12.5	117	7.2	1636	100.0

A majority (69.9%) affirm that language is integral to culture, with 23.6% undecided and 6.6% in disagreement. Concerning the starting point of learning foreign languages, 70.6% supported early initiation, while only 12.2% disagreed, and 17.2% were undecided. Regarding the usefulness of Latin for learning foreign languages, 35.9% agreed, 25.6% disagreed, and 48.2% provided no response. 54.1% believed schools should offer the chance to learn a classical language, showcasing insight into European cultural heritage. Regarding the impact of history and geography knowledge on language learning, responses are evenly distributed, reflecting varying perspectives and experiences. With the statement about childhood language learning affecting mother tongue proficiency, 26.0% agreed, 19.7% disagreed, and 26.8% were undecided. A majority (54.6%) believed mastering multiple languages simultaneously is challenging, while 25.7% were undecided, and 19.7% disagreed. These diverse responses indicate varying perspectives and experiences among pupils.

Conclusion

Our research focused on the plurilingual ability of Slovenian primary school pupils and aimed to explore both the theoretical background and practical aspects of this research topic. The survey involved assessing knowledge, attitudes, and skills through a questionnaire, with a focus on motivating factors, self-assessment of language competence, attitudes toward plurilingualism, language skills, and supportive/stimulating learning environments. The first research question focused on the motivating factors for language learning,

awareness of its importance, and interest in cultural differences. The results indicated a preference among pupils for learning foreign languages, driven by factors such as peer influence, a desire to know languages, awareness of career opportunities, interest in cultural differences, and quality teaching. The second research question explored motivation differences among many learners with varying starting points for language learning. Pre-primary school learners showed higher motivation compared to those starting in later grades. The third research question centred on learners' self-assessment of linguistic competence, revealing a combination of confidence and occasional discomfort, possibly linked to limited experience. The fourth research question examined gender differences in pupils' confidence, comfort, and fear when using foreign languages, revealing nuanced variations. The fifth research question identified positive attitudes towards plurilingualism, with pupils expressing a preference for language learning, making international friends, and respecting diverse languages and cultures. The sixth research question explored perceived language skills, revealing pupils' proficiency in using foreign languages for communication but less confidence in discussing languages and cultures. The seventh question identified factors contributing to a supportive and stimulating learning environment, with respondents highlighting the importance of a positive school climate, quality literature, ICT tools, adapted teaching, peer encouragement, and support from home. The eighth question assessed pupils' knowledge of plurilingualism, with varied responses possibly attributed to their limited experience with Latin learning in Slovenian primary schools.

As in similar studies, it is important to acknowledge certain limitations. The present study might be biased as it only included responses from primary school pupils, leaving out perspectives from parents and teachers, even though it is good to hear the voices of the pupils themselves. Also, focusing solely on Slovenian primary schools involved in the *Languages Matter* project, the findings might not apply to other age groups or educational settings. The statements in the questionnaire were not always neutral and might have been interpreted differently by various respondents. Frequently, we used similar types of statements, particularly those regarding competence, motivation, and attitude, which would need to be reassessed if used in future questionnaires. Additionally, since the study was conducted in 2019, it might not reflect recent changes in plurilingual education. However, the study emphasised the importance of nurturing plurilingualism among primary school pupils, suggesting tailored educational interventions to promote language learning and intercultural understanding. Including input from teachers and parents could offer a fuller understanding of factors influencing plurilingual education, informing

collaborative strategies between home and school environments. To support plurilingual learners, educators should use diverse resources like quality literature and technology. Further research could track plurilingual competence over time, comparing various age groups and cultural contexts to reveal differences in motivation and language skills development, focus more on the digital competence of the pupils and teachers, and investigate policy changes' impact on plurilingual education, thus informing strategies to enhance language learning outcomes and embrace cultural diversity in schools.

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'English is a Subject that You Should Teach Yourself': Power and Learner Identity in the Language Introduction Programme in Sweden

Jenny Bergström[1]

∼ This article explores students' perspectives on English language learning in relation to the Language Introduction Programme in Sweden, which is an individual transitional programme for newly arrived immigrants and seeks to quickly transition adolescents into further education or the job market. High proficiency in English is vital in Swedish society, and insufficient knowledge of English can lead to negative long-term consequences for both individuals and society regarding inequality. The methodology used is based on linguistic ethnography, and the data for this article consists of eight semi-structured interviews with students in the programme at one school. Foucauldian perspectives are used to analyse power and the construction of language ideologies relating to the multilingual English-language classroom and learner identity. The results show that the importance of proficiency in English for a successful educational transition from the Language Introduction Programme is rarely communicated to students. Furthermore, English is positioned as a subject of low importance within the organisation. The results also show that monolingual norms and language hierarchies limit the students' ability to use their first language when learning English.

Keywords: English language education, language ideology, learner identity, Language Introduction Programme, power

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»Angleščina je predmet, ki se ga moraš naučiti sam/-a«: moč in identiteta učenca v programu seznanjanja z jeziki na Švedskem

Jenny Bergström

∼ Članek raziskuje poglede učencev na učenje angleškega jezika v povezavi s programom seznanjanja z jeziki na Švedskem, ki je individualni prehodni program za na novo prispele priseljence; prizadeva si za hiter prehod mladostnikov v nadaljnje izobraževanje ali na trg dela. Visoko znanje angleščine je v švedski družbi ključnega pomena, nezadostno znanje angleščine pa lahko povzroči negativne dolgoročne posledice za posameznike in družbo, kar se tiče neenakosti. Uporabljena metodologija temelji na jezikovni etnografiji, podatki za ta članek pa so črpani iz osmih polstrukturiranih intervjujev z učenci, ki so vključeni v program na eni šoli. Za analizo moči in konstrukcije jezikovnih ideologij, povezanih z večjezičnim poukom angleščine v razredu in identiteto učenca, so uporabljeni foucaultovski vidiki. Izsledki kažejo, da se o pomenu znanja angleščine za uspešen prehod v izobraževanje iz programa seznanjanja z jeziki učence le redko obvešča. Poleg tega pomanjkanje informacij o pravici do izobraževalne podpore omejuje dostop študentov do enakih izobraževalnih možnosti, angleščino pa potisne v položaj predmeta z nižjo stopnjo pomembnosti znotraj organizacije. Izsledki kažejo tudi, da enojezične norme in jezikovne hierarhije omejujejo možnosti študentov za uporabo svojega prvega jezika pri učenju angleščine.

Ključne besede: učenje in poučevanje angleščine, jezikovna ideologija, identiteta učenca, program seznanjanja z jeziki, moč

Introduction

Since the late 1940s, English has become increasingly important in domains such as trade, politics, and economics in Sweden (Gheitasi et al., 2022; Peterson et al., 2023). Within education in Sweden, English is the only foreign language that is mandatory for all students throughout their education (Swedish National Agency of Education (SNAE), 2022a), and a passing grade in English is mandatory for further education (SNAE, 2021). Thus, English is an important component of educational success, and insufficient knowledge of English can lead to negative long-term consequences for both individuals and society regarding inequality and inequity.

The Nordic multilingual English classroom

Research regarding education and migration is conducted around the world, but since the Language Introduction Programme (LIP) is situated in a Nordic context, the background of this article is research into multilingual education performed in the Nordic countries. In the Finnish context, Kajala and Pitkänen-Huhta (2020) discuss multilingualism as a lived experience in the English-as-a-foreign-language classroom and how teachers can increase students' understanding of their own multilingualism and tolerance for diversity. Also, Pitkänen-Huhta (2019) argues that the linguistic and cultural backgrounds of learners affect how they relate to the teaching of foreign languages (p. 139). In addition, teachers must be aware of how their own perceptions of multilingualism affect their teaching practices and how they often turn to monolingual solutions when encountering problems in multilingual contexts (p. 140). In the Norwegian context, Iversen (2017) investigates students' use of their first language (L1) when learning English, a practice mostly invisible to their teachers. Iversen concludes that teachers seldom incorporate students' L1s in classroom practice and that many multilingual students are not given the educational support that would enable their L1 to be an asset in learning English (p. 45). Also, in a Norwegian context, Dahl and Krulatz (2016) and Surkalovic (2014) conclude that English teachers lack knowledge and/or in-service training in teaching English in multilingual contexts and teaching students with diverse educational backgrounds. Furthermore, these issues are seldom addressed within teacher education, meaning that future teachers are not prepared for increasingly diverse classrooms. In Sweden, Källkvist et al. (2022) show a need to expand how language resources can be used in classrooms and argue that clarification in Swedish may not always help multilingual students

in their learning. Moreover, Tholin (2014) shows how the Swedish language is regarded as a norm in the English-language classroom. Tholin states that this classroom practice benefits students who come from a Swedish background (p. 225). In the LIP context, Berggren et al. (2020) posit English as a bridge between students' L1 and Swedish since most students have some prior knowledge of English when arriving in Sweden. Furthermore, Bergström et al. (2024) show how English teachers and principals regard English as a difficult and complex subject for LIP students and how English-language education at LIP is often neglected within the organisation.

English in Sweden

English is described by the SNAE (2022a) as a vital factor in participation in fields such as politics, education, economics, and international studies, as well as working life in Sweden. Compulsory national tests are taken at ages 12 and 15 and at the upper-secondary level, and the organisation of English as a school subject in Sweden mirrors the CEFR levels of foreign language education.[2] (Council of Europe, 2020). The national syllabus for English in mandatory schooling in Sweden (SNAE, 2022a) states that the aim of English as a school subject in Sweden should be 'to develop all-round communicative skills' (p. 35). The syllabus also states that students should be given the opportunity to 'put course content in relation to their own experience, living conditions, and interests' (translation by author) (p. 35) and that English education should stimulate students' interest in language and 'convey the benefit of language knowledge' (p. 35).

The Language Introduction Programme

LIP is a nationwide individual transition programme for newly arrived migrant students in Sweden aged 16–19 (SNAE, 2013). It is organised within upper-secondary education, but the course content is that of compulsory schooling in Sweden. The main purposes of the programme are to ensure a fast transition to further studies or the job market (Swedish Education Act, 2010, p. 800, Chapter 17, §3) and to increase proficiency in Swedish as a second language (SSL). Because of global migration, the heterogeneity of students is high, and the education context is constantly changing. Also, the period of student enrolment at LIP differs greatly. A student with a long history of schooling in their home country is expected to spend a shorter time on LIP, while a student with

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2   Mandatory schooling is comparable to CEFR A.1.2– B1.1, and upper-secondary schooling to B1.2–B2.2. (SNAE 2022a, 2022b).

less schooling will likely spend longer.

Nuottaniemi (2023) explores student perspectives on LIP and living in a small rural town in Sweden. The study participants express feelings of being stuck between places and how a lack of language proficiency becomes a factor of immobility (p. 310). Nilsson Folke (2017) also explores student perspectives on LIP and, like Nuottaniemi, describes students expressing feelings of being in an educational waiting room and out of place both in space and time: 'a partly parallel, but disrupted, temporal trajectory that has lost contact with the progressive linear time of the mainstream system' (p. 98). Nilsson Folke also shows how collective and standardised solutions in separation from mainstream schools are recurrent and how this might lead to parallel systems that do not meet the individual needs of LIP students. (p. 90). Bomström Aho (2023) focuses on students' perspectives on LIP education, stating that teachers and faculty members often focus largely on what students lack instead of what they know (p. 77). This affects the expectations and progression of LIP students (see also Wedin 2021). Furthermore, Sharif (2017) argues that LIP students' proficiency in SLL leads to teachers undervaluing their knowledge in other subjects and that students' language repertoires are seldom regarded as resources in the educational context and are therefore not used in classroom practice (p. 168). Gynne (2019) explores LIP classroom practices and how monolingual norms penetrate education in terms of, for example, students being asked not to use their language resources during learning.

Cunningham (2023) focuses on English education at LIP and identifies several organisational challenges. One important aspect of the complexity of teaching English within LIP results from the core focus on SSL in every other LIP subject, meaning that English is set aside since it is the only subject that does not fit into this description (p. 175). Cunningham also emphasises the importance of a passing grade in English for LIP students, stating that without this, their futures are limited (p. 194). This is in line with Bergström (2024), who shows that English is an important component to making a successful transition from LIP. Lack of proficiency in English can become a gatekeeper to future plans for LIP students since a passing grade in English is needed in order to progress within the Swedish education system (p. 22).

Learner identity in a migrant context

Norton (2013) shows how identity is an important feature of learning a new language and how this is linked to students' future goals. The term *investment* links students' motivation to expectations and perceptions of education

(p. 6). The connection between language learning and learner identity is also investigated by Block (2009), who describes language learning as an ongoing process and how learners position themselves influences their learning outcomes. In the American context, Kanno and Kangas (2014) focus on students in English Language Learner (ELL) classes and how placement in the ELL can have a negative effect on both progression and how students position themselves as learners. Also, Kanno and Cromley (2013) show how ELL students' access to further education is linked to their parents' education levels, incomes, and engagement in their children's schooling (p. 110). In addition, Cummins (2000) investigates power structures in classroom settings and how transformative pedagogy can have a positive effect on learner identity and outcomes.

Theoretical perspectives - Language ideologies, learner identity, and power

The theoretical perspectives used in this article are language ideology, learner identity, and power. There are several definitions of *language ideology*, but in this article, the term relates to perceptions of language that are constructed within a group and social divisions such as class, gender, and generation (Kroskrity, 2000). Petersen (2020) defines language ideologies as 'perceived notions, beliefs and /or emotions that people hold about certain social styles, varieties, or features of a language' (p. 7). Gal and Irvine (2019) argue that statements about language involve ideological positions that are made possible through social life, often in contradictory ways, while Woolard and Schieffelin (1994) write that ideologies can be traced through language use and are often deeply rooted in social power (see also Barrett et al., 2023).

A definition of *learner identity* relevant to this research is Norton's (2013) term *investment*. Norton argues that students may be motivated to learn a new language, but if the teaching and classroom content do not align with expectations and ideas of what education is, students' investment in learning is negatively impacted (p. 6). Norton also argues that learning a new language is a renegotiation of identity and that this process is not without obstacles (p.45).

The definitions of *power* for this article rest on Foucault's (2002) perspective of power as socially constructed and renegotiated through social interaction among people. Within society's institutions (p. 338), power can be observed in the core elements of organisations. Schools, for example, use control of time (schedules), value and grant or decline access (grading), and punish (detention) to maintain control over students. Foucault (2017) describes the concept of the panopticon, wherein individuality is a controlling factor (p. 223).

Within a neoliberal society, the individual is expected to administrate his/her success and may also be held accountable for larger problems in society (see also Gershon, 2018). In a society in which everything can be measured, calculated, and evaluated, surveillance and increased individualisation lead to isolation and powerlessness. Foucault (2002) declares, however, that where there is power, there is also resistance (p. 340).

Research regarding LIP seldom focuses on English language education, but given the importance of English proficiency in Sweden, further research is needed. This article contributes to narrowing this research gap.

Aim and research questions

The aim of this article is to explore LIP students' perspectives on English language education at LIP and learner identity. Furthermore, the article investigates how English as a school subject is positioned in relation to power at LIP.

1. What language ideologies are constructed among LIP students within English-language education at LIP?
2. What views on learner identity are verbalised by students in English-language education at LIP?
3. How is English as a school subject at LIP positioned in relation to power?

Method

The methodology for this article is linguistic ethnography (Copland & Creese, 2015; Lillis, 2008) using ethnographic observation and interviews at two Swedish upper-secondary schools over the course of an academic year: Meadow Hill and Slope Hill (pseudonyms). Both schools are upper-secondary schools in a medium-sized town in Sweden, teaching both national programmes and LIP.[3] The data for this article consist of eight individual interviews with LIP students at Slope Hill. All interviewees were students enrolled in Levels 3 or 4 in English, the final two stages of English language education at the LIP. I chose to interview students from these levels as their English was advanced enough to discuss their education and future in relation to English proficiency.[4] Covid-19 restrictions limited my possibility of interviewing students at Meadow Hill. Furthermore, since all English-language education at Meadow Hill was organised in mixed levelled groups, it was not possible to ask questions regarding the

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3   During the study, the total number of students at Slope Hill was 759; 84 of these were enrolled in the LIP program.
4   Appendix 1: Interview questions.

specific classroom practices of Levels 3 and 4[5] to the participating students at Meadow Hill.

Participants

All participants were given pseudonyms (Table 1).

Table 1
Participants.

Name	Languages (bold: L1)[6]	English level	Years at LIP
Ali	**Urdu**, English, Punjabi, Swedish	4	1
Gabrielle	**Kirundi**, English, French, Kinyarwanda, Luganda, Swedish	4	>1
Guled	**Arabic**, Swedish, English	3	4
Juanes	**Spanish**, English, Swedish	3 (later 4)	4
Noor	**Arabic**, Swedish, French, English	3	2
Rahma	**Somali**, Swedish, Arabic, English	3	4
Reza	**Dari**, Pashto, Swedish, English	4	2
Selma	**Tigrinya**, Swedish, English	4	3

Ali wants to become a computer engineer and describes English as a valuable resource for him in Sweden. Gabrielle wants to become a bank clerk, and since she is more proficient in English than Swedish, her interview is conducted in English instead of Swedish. Guled does not have any set plans for his future and thinks that English is difficult in school but easy outside of school. Juanes wants to become a photographer and describes proficiency in English as important in his future working life. Noor wants to become an international entrepreneur and describes English as an important factor in attaining that dream. Rahma wants to become a nurse, and even if she finds English challenging, she says that she needs to learn it for her university studies. Reza wants to work in a store and says that he understands that proficiency in English is important in Swedish society since most Swedish people speak it fluently. Selma wants to become a psychologist but expresses feelings of lack of motivation in the English classroom at LIP.

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5   Level 3 is comparable to CEFR level A2.2 and level 4 is comparable to CEFR level B1.1 (SNAE, 2022a, 2022b).

6   Languages are presented in the order ranked by students regarding proficiency: L1 first and then decreasing proficiency, to the language they had mastered least. Some students have more than one L1 or fluid boundaries between L1 and L2 but chose one language for L1.

Interviews and transcription

All participants gave written consent and were informed about their right to withdraw their participation at any time. The interviews were conducted in Swedish or English in a private room. Some participants told me that they were afraid of their teacher knowing that they were part of the study and, therefore, wanted to be interviewed more privately. All participants were given the opportunity to read and correct the transcript. The transcripts were produced to represent the content of what the participants said and have been edited to include written conventions such as punctuation. The original Swedish[7] transcripts were translated by the author. Since the students at LIP are in the process of learning both Swedish and English, the quotations in this article might contain errors in for example word order or grammar compared to standard Swedish or English. The author has decided not to edit these so-called errors and to keep the quotations in their original form.

Transcript conventions:
Italics for emphasis.
[   ] for an explanation
[…] for ellipses.

Data analysis

The data was analysed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006; 2019) and Foucauldian (1997, 2002, 2017) perspectives on power. The analysis of the data was conducted using the original (Swedish) transcriptions, which were later translated into English. Firstly, the transcribed interviews were repeatedly read; thereafter, codes were generated, and each interview was coded. This led to identifying and understanding the themes while connecting them in a theme map. At this stage, definitions for each theme were created, and the connections, overlaps, and contradictions between them were analysed. The themes were *the future*, *information about English*, *language ideologies*, *use of L1*, *learner identity, the role of English, transition from LIP*, and *power*. The themes were then also analysed in relation to Foucault's perspective on power.

Research design

The data set for this article (marked in bold in Table 2) is part of a larger

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7   Except for the one interview when the participant wanted to be interviewed in English.

study involving ethnographic observation and interviews at Meadow Hill and Slope Hill.

Table 2

Data overview (larger study; data used in this study marked in bold).

Participants	Observations	Interviews	Field notes	Photographs
		22[8]		
		8 students[9]		
85	78	5 faculty members	50,000+ words	300+
		6 English teachers		
		2 principals		

The research was conducted in line with All European Academies' (2017) and The Swedish Research Council's code of ethics (2017), focusing on the concepts of *reliability*, *honesty*, *respect*, and *accountability* (p. 4). The study was approved by the Swedish Ethical Review Authority.[10]

Results

This section presents the results in relation to the three most dominant themes: *language ideologies*, *learner identity*, and *power*, and the connections, overlaps, and contradictions between them.

Language ideologies

In the analysis, the theme of *language ideologies* is linked to the theme of the *use of L1*. The students speak of the usage of L1 as being accepted but that it comes with stipulations, for example, that it is permissible to use Google Translate or ask a friend with the same L1. It becomes clear during the interviews that the unspoken rule of the classroom is that students' L1 is to be used in silence and alone. 'We know that we can't speak Dari in class' (Reza); 'We should not use our language' (Rahma); 'We use Swedish out of respect' (Guled). Learning English is done through the use of Swedish. Juanes, one of the participants, describes this as challenging. Juanes' first language is Spanish, and

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8   A total of 22 interviews were conducted with 21 interview participants, as one of the participants wanted to be interviewed twice.

9   All students interviewed were enrolled at Slope Hill.

10   Application approved by the Swedish Ethical Review Authority (application number: 2021-02629).

in his interview, he expresses a wish to learn English through his L1 (Spanish) instead of Swedish. 'But we are learning English with Swedish' (Juanes). This classroom practice is something that Juanes describes as very confusing and time-consuming.

Students' language repertoires include previous knowledge of English in various ways. Ali, who has been educated in English for several years in his home country, describes *his* variety of English as not being valued in the same way as the other English varieties, such as British English. 'I speak English like an Urdu person. […] I can speak like a Pakistani speaking English'. Ali regards English as a valuable language resource for his life in Sweden and speaks of the benefits of having a high proficiency in English. Several of the participants described how English plays a central role in their lives. They also speak of English as a resource during their migration or initial time in Sweden, when English functioned as a bridge between them and their new society. The participants describe English as a lingua franca and a way of communicating with others in different places in the world. English is 'The language of the world', says Guled. However, English is not considered a priority or resource for LIP students; instead, the national language of Swedish is seen as granting them access to the larger Swedish community and school system. When discussing the importance of English in Swedish society, Noor describes regret: 'Unfortunately, I have only studied Swedish. Swedish, Swedish, but that was wrong. I should have focused on English too.' Questions regarding participants' awareness of the importance of English in Swedish society, all the students said that English is an important language and that it functions almost as a second language in Sweden. However, none of the students say that this is something that is addressed in school. 'We only speak of Swedish', says Noor. The theme *language ideologies* includes both monolingual norms and the restricted use of students L1 in the classroom. Foucault (2002) states that language use is never neutral and can be connected to power structures. The monolingual habitus and focus on the national language in education risks the creation of an unjust language hierarchy (see also Gogolin, 2013; Bergström et al., 2024).

Learner identity

The theme of *learner identity* often connects to themes about *transition from LIP* and *future*. Several of the participants describe future plans that could easily be linked to learning English: becoming a computer engineer (Ali), international photographer (Juanes), or university student (Gabrielle). The syllabus for English in Sweden states that English education should be based on

student's interests, goals, and life experiences (SNAE, 2022a). Guled describes using English while engaging in online gaming and positioning himself as a valid English speaker in this context: '[English comes] automatic without me thinking.' He states that outside of school English comes naturally, that he learns English in his own way, and is a competent learner and user of English in terms of communication and interaction. However, while Guled describes English as something that comes naturally outside of school, he considers it to be very difficult in school. Guled describes the classroom as an environment disconnected from his English learning:

> But here in school, I sit in the classroom, I feel in this environment like I stop, [it] doesn't work, [I] don't want to continue because there is too much grammar, and it is the classroom environment

Guled speaks of wanting to learn English using his communication skills instead of grammar drills, which he describes as common classroom practice. The analysis shows that Guled is invested in learning English. However, his learning strategies and goals conflict with the English-language classroom practice. Rahma also describes the difference between the English taught in school, and the English used outside of school. She describes finding it difficult to speak English in school. However, during her summer job at a café, she had the opportunity to practice speaking English with a customer. Rahma says that this broadened her understanding of English as a resource to her. 'I think it [English] is needed a lot'. The importance of English became more visible to Rahma and affected her willingness to invest in learning English.

However, the participants also describe difficulties practising or being exposed to English outside of school. Rahma, Reza, and Noor state that they had difficulties finding places in which to speak English, and when they listen to songs or watch movies to expose themselves to English, the comprehension of the content is up to them alone. "Yes. I listen sometimes to English music with translation. It is rather hard to use to listen to music and stuff" (Guled). Several students speak of English as a subject that they practise alone and then show to their teachers to demonstrate mastery: 'English is a subject that you should teach yourself' (Noor). The focus on individual progression creates an isolating individualisation. This, in combination with the lack of information regarding the importance of English for the transition from LIP, means that everything and nothing at the same time are vital. Foucault (2017) describes how individuality ultimately leads to constant measurement, a never-ending dossier of examinations to be undertaken, and impossible norms that make education increasingly like a prison (p. 284).

Noor also speaks of wanting to talk to other girls that she knows in English but feels ashamed of her English: 'Those girls are so good at English. I do not dare to talk to them, they are so good.' Interaction in English can be difficult for a beginner, especially when you know that others are far more advanced than you are. Norton (2013) describes silence in classrooms as a way of protecting students from humiliation (p. 7). She asserts that learning a new language as an adult or adolescent is a redefining of identity and a process that is not always free of conflict and contradiction (p. 48).

Power

During the analysis, themes relating to *power* become visible and often in connection to *the role of English*, *information about English*, and the *future*. These themes connect in various ways, for example, regarding the participants receiving information about the importance of English in further education and the job market by the school. All students answered that they had received no such information. 'We never speak of that' (Guled). When English is addressed, it is in terms of how to study it at home or which assignments to hand in. Several students described finding information about English themselves outside of school: Selma and Rahma described being given this information by their guardian or parent. Rahma stated that her teacher had spoken about English being important in Sweden but not *why* or for *what*, making the importance of English distant from the reality of LIP.

The analysis shows that the theme of power can also be connected to how the students describe their access to support. According to the Swedish Education Act (2010, p. 800, Chapter 3, §5), students who are in danger of failing a course are entitled to additional support. Several of the interviewees describe difficulties with English as a subject: 'English is not good' (Rahma) and 'Very difficult' (Reza). During her interview, Noor describes struggling with English but not telling her teacher out of fear. When she is told that she is as entitled to support as any other student in the Swedish school system, she replies, 'I know, but I don't dare to [ask].' Noor states that she is afraid of being transferred to a lower level of English if she speaks up about her struggles, which would affect her chances of moving forward in the school system. Since school progress is a factor in the asylum process (Upper-Secondary School Act, 2017, p. 353, §3), failing school comes with high risks and severe consequences for LIP students. The lack of information and support creates a void where power structures silence students' resistance.

Power also became visible during Gabrielle's interview when asked

whether she has been offered a place on upper-secondary courses in English because of her high level of English. She replies that no one has spoken to her about her English skills or offered her any individual plan for progression in English. 'Maybe if I had asked, they would have told me'. In this situation, the students find themselves in a catch-22 situation: they are not given information because they do not ask for it, but do not ask for it because they are not aware of its existence. This lack of access to information can be linked to power. Kanno and Kangas (2014) argue that the social capital of both students and parents is vital to the provision of information regarding educational paths. Therefore, prior knowledge about the structure of the school system benefits those who possess it and are used to navigating institutional structures in society (p. 868-870).

Discussion

LIP students construct several different language ideologies, perhaps the most dominant of which is the monolingual normative focus on the national language of Swedish. This may be unsurprising since one of LIP's core goals is proficiency in SSL. However, another core goal of LIP is to transition the students to further education and the job market (SNAE, 2013), and herein lies a contradiction. Without a passing grade in English, LIP students face a limited future (Cunningham, 2023) and risk long-term inequality in fields such as politics, education, and economics, and losing "opportunities to participate in different social and cultural contexts, as well as in global studies and working life" (SNAE, 2022a). The analysis shows that the focus on SSL marginalises English as a school subject and creates a language hierarchy that disadvantages LIP students in terms of their learning of English. Several participants describe ambivalence regarding English as a school subject and the importance of English in Swedish society. They state that English is an important subject and a valuable resource for life in Sweden. However, at LIP, the national language of Swedish is prioritised.

Bias related to different student language resources, including English, is made visible through Ali's comments about his English being that of an 'Urdu person' or 'a Pakistani'. This comment also indicates that he is aware of prejudices that affect how his English skills are evaluated and valued. Norton (2103) argues that regardless of whether a student is invested in their learning, biased classroom practices have negative effects on student motivation and progression. Biases related to language and the construction of language ideologies are not always performed consciously (Kroskrity, 2000) but nevertheless affect LIP

students and their ability to use their language resources to learn English. Also, Wollard and Schieffelin (1994) argue that, when investigating language ideologies, we must also address power relations and investigate the social construction of language (p. 58)'. Language use is never neutral (Gal & Irvine, 2019) and how schools value and position students' L1s can be linked to power structures and injustice. The results make it clear that students' L1s are not regarded as a resource in the English-language classroom. Instead, it is the national language of Swedish that is used together with English. Tholin (2014) refers to this use of Swedish in the English-language classroom as *Swedishness* and states that the students who benefit from this practice are native Swedes and not minority students. Gynne (2019) shows that the language resources used in the classroom are often restricted to languages that the teacher has mastered.

Norton's (2013) term *investment* links students' motivation and dedication to learning the target language. However, this is a process of renegotiation of identity and often involves conflict: 'investment in the target language is also an investment in learner's own identity, an identity, which is constantly changing across time and space.' (p. 51). The participants in this study have various goals and dreams that could be linked to learning English: to be an entrepreneur, a university student, travel, etc. The syllabus for English (SNAE, 2022a) states that education should be implemented based on students' interests, living conditions, and previous experience. For Guled, investment in learning English takes place outside the classroom; the classroom practices that Guled describes are far from the domains where he finds English useful, and this affects Guled's engagement in learning English at school. Norton claims that students' interests are not distractions from learning and should instead be regarded as the core of a student's investment in learning the target language (p. 51). If Guled's interests could be more closely linked to classroom content, he might feel more invested in learning English in school. Another example is Rahma, whose investment in learning English was also connected to an experience outside of school. The importance of English to both Guled and Rahma can be traced to their lived experiences, interests, and future plans.

In relation to power, English is positioned as a subject of less importance than Swedish (see also Bergström, 2024). Also, a lack of information regarding the importance of English as a school subject to LIP students' futures is evident. Kanno and Kangas (2014) discuss how increased equity in education requires power structures to be challenged and information about rights and opportunities to be given to students. There is a risk of education injustice when students' backgrounds affect their ability to navigate the education system. Many LIP students arrive in Sweden without their families and must navigate the

institutional systems alone. When the students have parents with them, these parents are generally not able to provide assistance with navigating the institutional system in Sweden. There is thus a risk that such students do not receive relevant information regarding how to transition into Swedish society.

Furthermore, the results show the power differences between students and their teachers are linked to fear of reprisals and that speaking up might affect the individual asylum process. Foucault (1971) states that not everyone may speak of anything (p. 52) or have the power to resist power injustice. Foucault (1997, 2017) shows that when a person is individualised and set apart from others, resistance is difficult (2017, p. 223). Therefore, the structure of LIP, as an individual programme that links education with legislative structures (Upper-Secondary School Act, 2017, p. 353), makes it difficult for students to resist injustice.

Conclusions

In recent decades, Swedish classrooms have become increasingly linguistically diverse because of migration (SNAE, 2020). This has led to calls for changes to education practices to ensure equal education for all students (Swedish Education Act, 2010, p. 800, Chapter 1, 9§). In a multilingual and diverse classroom setting, teachers must use all the information they possess about their students to maintain not only motivation and investment but also comprehension. Here, students' L1s can be a powerful didactic tool. Iversen (2017) shows that students seldom inform their teachers of the importance of their L1 in their learning. Reza's statement, 'We know that we can't speak Dari in class', thus shows the language hierarchy and makes evident the neglect of students' language resources. How schools value students' language resources can open up classroom practices, enable students to comprehend course content, and invite students to position themselves as valid language learners. However, the very opposite is also possible when students' language resources are not valued or used in the learning process. Although the students stated that it was acceptable to use their L1 in English class, they *also* said that this was disrespectful. Other researchers have addressed the invisibility of students' L1s as resources and tools in their learning in relation to LIP (Gynne, 2019; Nuottaniemi, 2023; Sharif, 2020). This practice deprives students of valuable resources in their learning and creates a monolingual norm that penetrates all parts of education. During the interviews, the students were asked to imagine ways of using their L1 in ways that are not currently used in their English-language classrooms. Many students described a desire to be able to ask questions and clarify things

in their L1. The students also proposed more interactive approaches to language learning – working together with friends who shared the same language resources but also being able to speak less Swedish and more English in class.

It is important to acknowledge the limitations of this study. Firstly, because the data consists of only eight student interviews in a particular school context, the results could be restricted. Therefore, further research on English-language education at LIP is needed. Nevertheless, the study contributes to knowledge regarding learner identity and power structures associated with learning English at LIP. It is vital to bring forward an understanding of how proficiency in English can serve as an important component for a successful transition from LIP to other domains in Swedish society. Proficiency in Swedish is important for LIP students to integrate into Swedish society; it is, however, not the *only* proficiency they need for their future lives in Sweden. This article contributes to these discussions and narrows the research gap regarding English-language education at LIP.

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Appendix

Interview questions - student interview

Background and previous experience
1. Could you please tell me a little about yourself?
2. Please describe your time here at LIP.
    - What do you consider to be the greatest challenges in your daily studies?
    - What do you consider to be the greatest possibilities in your daily studies?
3. What are your future plans (after LIP)?

English
4. How do your regard English as a school subject? Is it a difficult or easy subject in school?
5. Do you need English in your life?
    - If yes, for what?
    - If no, why not?
6. To reach your future goal/plans (the answer for question 3) do you need English to do so?
7. Would you like more help in English?
    - If yes, with what?
8. What kind of support is there at school if you, as a student, are struggling with English?
9. Do you have access to a mother tongue study guide during English class?
    - Would you like to?
    - Pros and cons of having a mother tongue study guide available during English class?

Organization
10. If you are good at English, can you change levels in English at a faster pace?
    - Do you know how this process works?
11. Is the importance of English for future studies and working life discussed with you and your parents/caregivers together with a student counsellor or at the development meetings?
12. What information regarding the importance of English for future studies and professional life is given to you and your parents/caregivers?

13.   What languages do you speak?
14.   Are languages that you know used in the classroom practice?
- How are they used?
- Do you have any thoughts on how your languages could be used (in the classroom)?

Additional topics

15.   Is there anything else that you would like to address?

Biographical note

JENNY BERGSTRÖM is a PhD student in Educational Work at the Department of Language studies at Umeå University, Sweden. Her research interests include English-language didactics, migrant education, and multilingualism. She is also interested in the connection between language ideologies, power, and othering within education.

Survey on the Attitudes of School Community Members Regarding the Role of the Language(s) of Schooling in the Integration Process of Pupils with an Immigrant Background in Slovenia

Tina Čok[1]

∽ In terms of integration policy, Slovenia is considered a country that promotes the integration of children with an immigrant background into schools as quickly as possible. However fast the integration process may be, languages always play a key role in the education of pupils with an immigrant background and teachers need to adapt to their different language needs and literacy levels. Furthermore, it is important that teachers use teaching methods that promote pupils' linguistic development in their mother tongue as well. In this paper, we present the results of research on the role of languages of schooling in the success of all pupils in Slovenian primary education institutions, with a focus on those with an immigrant background. To achieve this goal, we conducted an anonymous survey (n = 78) among teachers and support staff and interviewed principals from nine Slovenian primary schools. The main aim of the survey and interviews was to investigate the status and understanding of the role of the languages of schooling in the context of the newly proposed cognitive-inclusive language didactics based on collaborative learning. The study found that while school staff recognise the importance of multilingual education and linguistic integration, there are significant gaps in training and support mechanisms for teachers. Although schools generally support the use of multiple languages, there is a lack of cross-language awareness and visible promotion of multilingualism in the school environment. The findings of the study suggest the need to introduce comprehensive, standardised training and support for teachers that focuses on improving cross-language awareness and inclusive educational practices, which can ultimately lead to better integration outcomes for immigrant pupils and enrichment of the educational environment for all members of the community.

Keywords: language(s) of schooling, linguistic integration, cognitive-inclusive didactics, collaborative learning

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Raziskava o stališčih članov šolske skupnosti do vloge učnega(ih) jezika(ov) v procesu vključevanja učencev s priseljenskim ozadjem v Sloveniji

Tina Čok

∽   Z vidika integracijske politike velja Slovenija za državo, ki spodbuja čim hitrejše vključevanje otrok s priseljenskim ozadjem v šole. Ne glede na to, kako hiter je proces vključevanja, je vloga jezikov pri izobraževanju učencev s priseljenskim ozadjem bistvena, učitelji pa se morajo prilagajati učenčevim različnim jezikovnim potrebam in ravnem pismenosti. Pri tem je prav tako pomembno, da učitelji uporabljajo učne metode, ki spodbujajo jezikovni razvoj učencev, tudi v njihovem maternem jeziku. V prispevku predstavljamo rezultate raziskave, izvedene v devetih slovenskih osnovnošolskih ustanovah, o vlogi učnih jezikov pri uspehu vseh učencev, s poudarkom na učencih s priseljenskim ozadjem. V ta namen smo izvedli (anonimno) anketo (n = 78) med učitelji in strokovnimi delavci ter intervjuvali ravnatelje devetih slovenskih osnovnih šol. Glavni namen ankete in intervjujev je bil raziskati stanje in razumevanje vloge učnih jezikov v kontekstu novopredlagane kognitivno-inkluzivne didaktike jezikov, ki temelji na sodelovalnem učenju. Raziskava je pokazala, da se učitelji ter vodstveni in strokovni delavci sicer zavedajo pomena večjezičnega izobraževanja in jezikovne integracije, vendar obstajajo precejšnje vrzeli pri usposabljanju in podpornih mehanizmih za učitelje. Čeprav šole na splošno podpirajo rabo več jezikov, v šolskem okolju primanjkuje medjezikovnega zavedanja in vidnega spodbujanja večjezičnosti. Ugotovitve študije kažejo, da je treba uvesti celostno standardizirano usposabljanje in podporo za učitelje, ki sta usmerjena v izboljšanje medjezikovnega zavedanja in povečanje inkluzivnih izobraževalnih praks, ki lahko izboljšajo proces vključevanja učencev priseljencev in obogatijo izobraževalno okolje za vse člane šolske skupnosti.

Ključne besede: učni jezik(i), jezikovna integracija, kognitivno-inkluzivna didaktika, sodelovalno učenje

Introduction

Bilingualism and multilingualism offer numerous cognitive, social and economic advantages. Research (Bialystok et al. 2012; Costa et al., 2008) has shown that people who speak several languages tend to have better executive functions, e.g., problem solving, task switching and attention control. Bilingual and multilingual people often exhibit greater cultural awareness and empathy, which enables better communication and understanding in different social settings. From an educational perspective, multilingualism can promote cognitive flexibility and creativity, as pupils who are proficient in multiple languages develop unique problem-solving skills and perspectives (Dewaele et al., 2012; Kharkhurin, 2010).

There are, however, also significant challenges associated with bilingual and multilingual education. As many scholars have pointed out, the main problem is the risk of language loss, i.e., mastery of the mother tongue can decrease if it is not adequately promoted and used. This can have a negative impact on pupils' cultural identity and family communication (Cummins, 2001; May, 2013; Montrul, 2008). Another challenge is the implementation of effective multilingual education programmes. Teachers often require specialised training to meet the linguistic needs of a diverse classroom, and opportunities for such training are often too few and far between. In addition, there may be resistance from educational institutions or communities that favour one dominant language over others, which can lead to assimilationist practices that undermine the value of pupils' native languages (García & Kleifgen, 2010).

Slovenia is historically a country that has a diverse linguistic landscape, with bilingual areas on the borders with Italy and Hungary. The topic of bilingual and multilingual education has therefore been present for a long time. It has, however, become increasingly pronounced as the number of immigrants in Slovenia, as in other European countries, has risen in recent years, leading to an increase in cultural and linguistic diversity in Slovenian educational institutions (Medvešek et al., 2022). Pupils with an immigrant background face various obstacles to integration into the school system, of which language barriers are often the biggest and most noticeable (OECD, 2018). Teachers and school management in educational institutions are therefore faced with the challenge of ensuring that pupils with an immigrant background have the same educational opportunities as their peers. This stance underlies the inclusive approach promoted in the Guidelines for the Integration of Migrant Children in Kindergartens and Schools (National Education Institute Slovenia, 2012).

As language can be the main means of both bridging and limiting the

process of integration and inclusion in the educational landscape, languages of schooling play a key role in this process for immigrant pupils, as teachers need to adapt to their different language needs and literacy levels (Thuermann, 2010). Furthermore, it is important that teachers use teaching methods that promote the language development of pupils with an immigrant background in the most holistic way. This can be achieved by incorporating various strategies, such as differentiated instruction, interactive and cooperative learning and linguistically responsive teaching, as well as intensive cross-language awareness training of all children and staff in the school community. To this end, a specific didactic approach and teaching techniques for cross-language awareness training should be introduced, taking into account the cognitive aspects of the conceptualisation of the pupils' first language. The value of this method also lies in the fact that it promotes inclusivity by equalising all pupils on the basis of their first language. Cognitive-inclusive approaches to cross-language awareness provide pupils with an opportunity to learn multiple languages, which promotes inclusivity and tolerance, and therefore facilitates more successful integration of pupils with an immigrant background. By addressing multiple aspects of the learning environment and pupils' needs, the teacher focuses not only on language development, but also on cognitive, social and emotional growth. The requirement for a holistic approach to linguistic integration is one of the reasons why the role of languages of schooling in the education of pupils with an immigrant background has become a central topic of educational research in Slovenia and abroad in recent years. This increased focus can be attributed to several other factors as well, including shifts in global migration patterns, changes in education policy and practices, and the growing recognition of the importance of linguistic and cultural diversity in education, which in turn has prompted educators and researchers to explore approaches to support the academic success and social inclusion of pupils from immigrant backgrounds (see Grosso, 2012; Knez, 2021; Lesar et al., 2020; Medarić, 2020; Pulko & Zemljak, 2021).

Past and recent research on languages of schooling and immigrant pupils' education has shown that linguistic diversity in classrooms is an opportunity to enrich learning and promote greater intercultural awareness (Ainscow, 2020; Cummins, 1997; Fuentes et al., 2020; Makarova et al., 2023). It is also very important to take into account the cultural background of immigrants, as this can help teachers to better understand the needs of pupils with an immigrant background and to improve their own teaching. In this context, it is important to introduce different teaching methods that promote language development and inclusion of immigrant pupils (Juvonen et al., 2019). Different teaching

methods such as games, songs, drama activities, interactive exercises, debating circles, etc. not only promote language learning, but also improve communication skills and boost learners' self-confidence (Learning Policy Institute & Turnaround for Children, 2021). Moreover, it is important to consider the individual needs of learners. Some learners whose first language is typologically related to the language of schooling learn the language faster than others (Ringbom, 2006). It is therefore crucial for teachers to adapt the pace and complexity of the learning process, which is not always possible in a classroom situation. Teachers are usually constrained by a curriculum that does not allow much deviation from the outlined learning path, which is the same for everyone, including pupils with a migrant background after the initial introductory phase. It is therefore all the more imperative that educational institutions are aware of the situation in the classroom and not only support teachers, but also encourage them to put new strategies into practice (García & Kleifgen, 2010; Genesee et al., 2006; Retelj & Svetina, 2022).

In Slovenia, the integration of immigrant children into the education system is carried out in accordance with laws and regulations that give kindergartens and schools a high degree of autonomy to decide how to organise and operate in order to better achieve the goals of integration. In addition to the principle of openness and autonomy of educational institutions, the Guidelines (National Education Institute Slovenia, 2012) also promote the principle of equal opportunities, which takes into account the diversity of children and develops multiculturalism and multilingualism. This principle also emphasises the promotion of the use of the immigrant child's mother tongue. As Lea (2018) asserts, equal opportunities for pupils with an immigrant background require a clear school policy, the means to implement that policy, and the competence of teachers. The Guidelines also underscore the principle of active learning and the provision of communication opportunities and other means of expression (National Education Institute Slovenia, 2012).

Like other European countries, Slovenia has enshrined in its regulations and recommendations the right for immigrants to learn their mother tongue at school. However, as stated in the Eurydice Brief (Eurydice, 2019), this right is most often conditional on a sufficient number of participants. According to the Slovenian Ministry of Education, 17,326 pupils with an immigrant background, i.e., 8.9% of all pupils, attended primary school in the 2023/24 school year, which corresponds to an increase of 3.7% compared to the 2018/19 school year (Delo, 2024). In Slovenia, the mother tongues of immigrants are not systematically used to support language learning through methods such as bilingual didactics, i.e., teaching and learning strategies, methods and approaches used in

educational settings where instruction is delivered in two languages. Although there is a formal (in documents) and informal (among teachers) awareness of the important role of mother tongues in the development of intercultural competences of immigrant children, the provision of mother tongues remains the domain of elective courses or extracurricular activities offered under the condition of sufficient interest (Straus, 2018).

When children with an immigrant background enrol in the Slovenian education system, schools place them in the same classes as all of the other pupils in all subjects. At the same time, those pupils who do not have sufficient knowledge of the language of schooling also attend supplementary classes in which the focus is on learning Slovenian (**Ministry of Education and Sport,** 2007). Supplementary classes can take place at the same time as regular classes. During this time, a child with an immigrant background is separated from the regular class for a few hours. The duration of participation in supplementary education is often determined individually for each pupil. In this respect, Slovenia belongs to the group of European countries that promote the early integration of children with an immigrant background into mainstream school in order to limit the potential negative effects of segregation of newly arrived pupils with an immigrant background, such as lower inclusion, marginalisation, the promotion of prejudice and, as a result, lower overall academic performance of immigrant children (Eurydice, 2019).

Research problem and research questions

The integration of children with an immigrant background into the Slovenian education system is supposed to be as a rapid as possible (Eurydice, 2019), but the linguistic aspects of this integration pose a major challenge. The rapid integration into schools makes it necessary to investigate the role of languages of schooling in the overall success of pupils, with a focus on pupils with an immigrant background. The research problem arises from the need to understand how language policies and teaching methods affect the linguistic development and academic performance of both native and immigrant pupils in Slovenian primary schools. Based on this research problem, five research questions were defined:

1.   How do teachers perceive the role of all languages in the school community in facilitating not only communication and learning, but also the socio-cultural integration of pupils, especially those with diverse linguistic backgrounds?

2.   To what extent do teachers in Slovenian primary schools adapt their

methods to meet the different language needs and competence levels of pupils with an immigrant background during the integration process?

3. What are the main difficulties that teachers and school staff face when working with children with an immigrant background in terms of language challenges?

4. How do principals perceive the impact of language policies and teaching methods on the overall success and integration of pupils, especially those from an immigrant background?

5. Based on the findings, what recommendations can be proposed to improve the use of languages of schooling, overcome challenges and promote overall integration in Slovenian primary schools?

Method

Instrument

The study comprised two forms of data collection: a survey hosted on the 1ka.si online platform, and on-site interviews with principals of the selected primary schools. The survey data were collected anonymously to ensure candid responses. The survey was available to respondents from 1 December 2022 to 13 September 2023. The first interview with a principal was conducted on 1 December 2022, and the last one took place on 24 January 2023.

Participants

The mixed-methods approach used in the study included a survey completed by 78 respondents, comprising 65 teachers, 6 administrative (support) staff and 8 principals, as well as interviews with 9 representative principals from the same schools. The schools selected for the interviews and survey were chosen according to their geographical location, i.e., primary schools in regions that statistically have a higher migration inflow (Coastal Karst Region and Central Slovenian Region), as well as their previous or current experience with integration procedures due to their particular location near asylum centres.

Of the 65 teachers who took part in the survey, 62 defined their teaching subjects as shown in the chart below (Figure 1). Most of them (61) do not work as coordinators or take care of the introduction of immigrant children at school in any way. Among the respondents who are considered as administrative staff, there are 8 principals, while the group of support staff consists of 1 escort for children with special needs, 1 laboratory technician, 2 school counsellors, 1 librarian and 1 school psychologist.

Figure 1

Number of teachers by field of expertise.
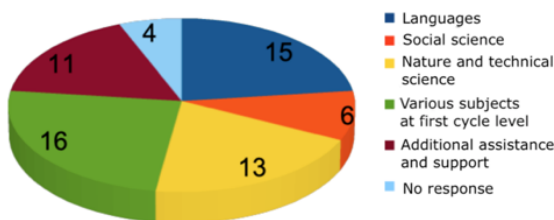
Research design

The survey consisted of structured questions, most of which used 5-point Likert scales to measure attitudes, agreement, likelihood and frequency regarding various questions related to awareness of the linguistic landscape, teaching methods and approaches in the multilingual classroom, support mechanisms for the multilingual school landscape, challenges of the multilingual school environment, familiarity of the teaching body with the benefits of cross-language awareness methods and overall school climate, and levels of inclusivity and sensitivity. The questions differed in part for each group of respondents, with teachers answering 35 questions, while principals and support staff[2] answered 23 questions. Once the survey responses were collected, the data were analysed using statistical methods. This included descriptive statistics such as standard deviation, mean and median values, and correlations to identify patterns, trends or relationships within the data.

The study also included interviews with nine principals from the same primary schools. The principals were selected as key informants because of their leadership role and their insight into the whole school environment, as well as their responsibility as decision-makers in relation to school policies and the implementation of protocols for the integration of pupils with an immigrant background.

The interviews were semi-structured and allowed for a balance between predetermined questions and open discussions. The questions covered topics such as school policies regarding the integration of immigrant pupils, implementation practices, challenges faced by staff and teachers, support mechanisms for teachers and the general school climate. All of the interviews were conducted on-site, recorded with consent and transcribed for detailed analysis.

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2   As considered in this paper, support staff include school counsellors, psychologists and social workers, special educators, speech and language therapists, teaching and classroom assistants, librarians, etc.

The interview data were analysed using thematic analysis and qualitative methods. Themes, patterns and recurring ideas from the interviews were identified to complement the quantitative survey data.

Finally, the results of both the survey and the interviews were integrated to provide a comprehensive understanding of the data collected. Comparisons were made within the survey data (responses from principals, administrative and teaching staff) and between the quantitative survey data and the findings from the qualitative interviews in order to provide a richer, more nuanced understanding of the challenges, perceptions and potential solutions within the school environment.

Results

Survey Trends and Patterns

The responses of the principals to the question of the extent to which the school is actively involved in providing training for teachers showed that, in their opinion, such training is very much available to the teaching staff. A more detailed comparison of the questions on the different forms of in-service training and mutual sharing of knowledge about the role of languages of schooling and cross-language awareness (Figure 2) shows that knowledge about the role of languages of schooling is usually shared between teachers and support staff in the same school, although they are less likely to collaborate and plan lessons that consider the role of language in different subject areas. It is also less common for schools to organise structured training to raise awareness of the language dimension in all school subjects.

Figure 2

Comparison of forms of training and knowledge sharing in relation to the role of language as perceived by principals (number of responses).
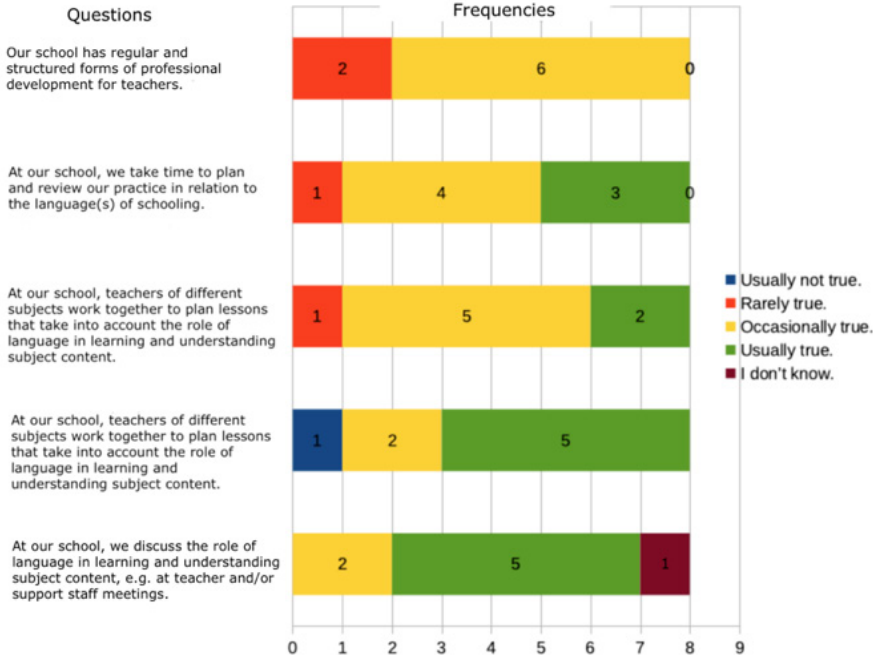
However, when teachers were asked about further training measures to raise awareness of the linguistic dimension, the result was somewhat different (Figure 3). The highest number of responses (22) from teachers indicated that this happens "occasionally", followed by 12 responses for "rarely" and 11 for "not at all". Only 13 teachers indicated that such training takes place "usually". Similar responses were obtained regarding integration training.

Figure 3

Teachers' responses to the statement Our school organises professional development activities to raise teachers' awareness of the language dimension in all school subjects.
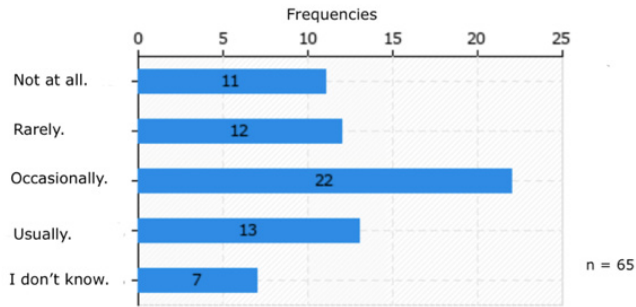
The data also show that the principals are aware of and interested in the linguistic landscape of the school, including the teachers and pupils. However, not all of the schools that participated in the survey keep records of this information about pupils. Most of the principals also responded that they support to some extent the use of all of the languages that pupils know for learning (Figure 4). Very similar data were obtained when the teachers were asked the same question.

Figure 4

Principals' responses to the statement At our school, we encourage pupils to use the languages they know for learning.
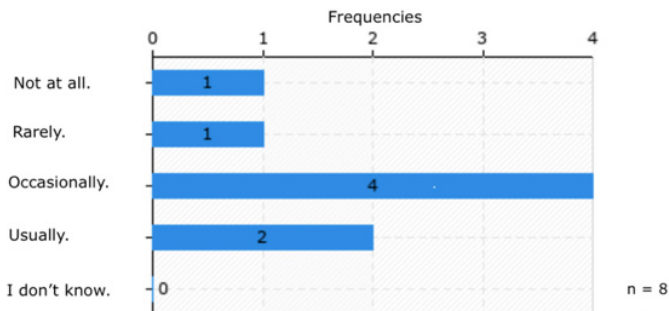
When the data from all three of the groups surveyed – principals, support staff and teachers – were converged, similarities in the responses regarding the promotion of multilingualism in classroom activities were observed. The majority of responses across all groups indicated endorsement "to some extent". When the respondents were asked to assess the extent to which the first language defines the world around us and is a prerequisite for developing linguistic competence in any other language, the majority chose "to a great extent" as their answer. Only in the support staff group was there one respondent who chose "I don't know". However, when asked whether they were familiar with concepts such as plurilingualism, cross-language awareness or inclusive language didactics,[3] none of the support staff group chose "No", while 14 of the teachers chose this option (Figure 5).

Figure 5
Responses of teachers and support staff to the statement I am familiar with the basic principles of plurilingualism, cross-language awareness or inclusive language didactics.
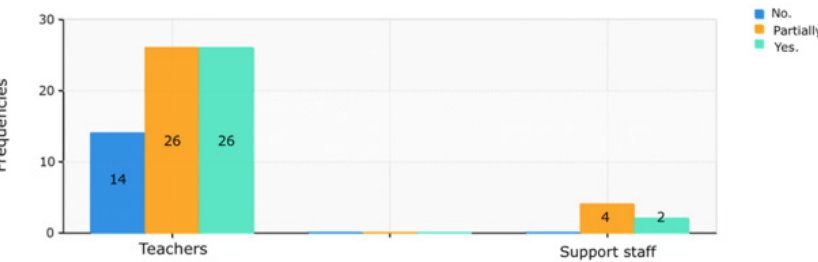
Some of the questions in the survey aimed to determine the tolerance of the school community towards the use of languages other than the languages of schooling during and after class. When asked whether the school allows communication in the first/native language of foreign pupils at school, all three groups seem to be more in favour of this possibility. The majority of the respondents stated that they favoured the option "to some extent", followed by those who favoured it "to a great extent". There were greater differences in the assessment of whether there is a common understanding of the situations in which languages other than the pupils' languages of schooling can be used

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3   Inclusive language didactics refers to a teaching approach that leverages the discrepancies between languages as an underpinning to enhance inclusivity and tolerance, specifically in multilingual classes.

in the classroom. Far fewer respondents in the group of teachers were of this opinion than in the group of principals (Figure 6).

Figure 6

Teachers' and principals' responses to the statement At our school, there is a common understanding of the situations in which pupils' languages other than the languages of schooling can be used in the classroom.
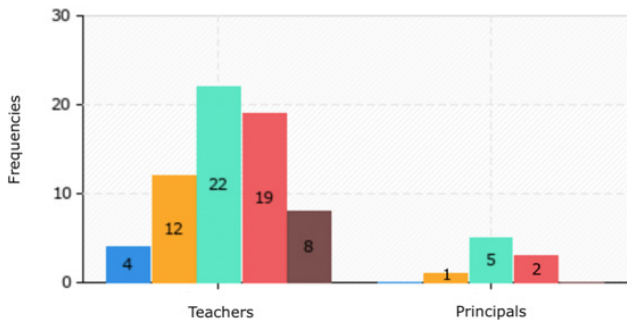
We also asked the teachers and support staff whether they often hear children speaking other languages outside the classroom (during break times or immediately after school). Their responses were very balanced, with more than half (43) of them stating "to a great extent" and 20 responding "to some extent". On the other hand, when we asked the principals whether the use of other languages outside the classroom is acceptable in their school, six responded that this is the case "to a great extent", one responded "to some extent" and one responded "rarely".

When the teachers were asked whether the first language of pupils with an immigrant background is used to support the acquisition of the language of schooling, most of the respondents (37) answered that this is the case "to some extent", while 11 stated that this is the case "to a great extent". When asked whether they use different languages spoken by members of the school community to support newly arrived pupils, 25 responded "to some extent" and 31 "to a great extent". A slightly higher proportion of positive responses emerged when the teachers were asked whether they encourage pupils to use the languages they know (and the teachers do not) to support their learning (32 responded "to some extent" and 22 "to a great extent").

We also asked the teachers and support staff whether they think there is no prejudice against native languages of immigrant children among the pupils at their school. To this, 42 teachers responded positively (16 chose "occasionally

true" and 26 "usually true"), and 4 support staff responded positively (2 chose "occasionally true" and 2 "usually true"). We also asked all three groups of respondents whether there were no prejudices against native languages of immigrant children among school staff. The group whose responses were most fragmented was the support staff, followed by the teachers, while the principals answered this question predominantly in the affirmative (Figure 7).

Figure 7
Responses of teachers, support staff and principals to the statement At our school, there are no prejudices on the part of staff towards the languages of immigrant children.
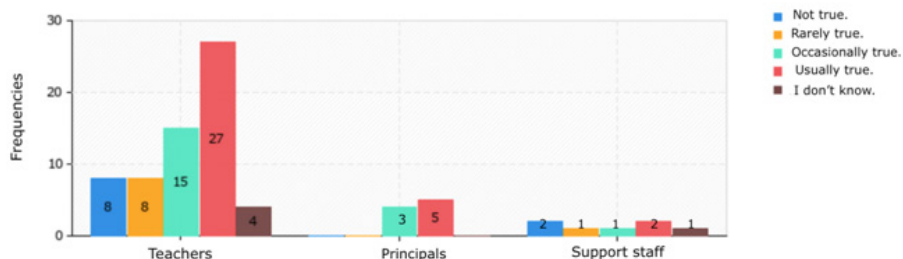
Some of the questions in the survey also aimed to determine the level of awareness of multilingualism among school staff. All three groups of respondents responded positively to the statement *Our school promotes multilingualism in the school curriculum* (36 responded "to some extent" and 30 "to a great extent"). However, responses to the statement *Teaching immigrants' first languages makes an important contribution to multilingualism for all pupils* showed that the teachers overwhelmingly agreed with this statement (31 chose "to some extent" and 22 chose "to a great extent"), while 4 of the support staff chose "rarely", 2 chose "to some extent" and 1 chose "to a great extent". We also asked the teachers whether, when teaching pupils from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds, they take into account the individual learning needs of pupils with an immigrant background and ensure the overall well-being of pupils, so that they feel that their individual, linguistic and cultural identity is accepted and valued in school. There was a very high proportion of positive responses to this question, with 23 teachers selecting "to some extent" and 41 "to a great extent".

The respondents were also asked about the presence of the languages of the school community in the school environment (e.g., posters, photos, signs, etc.). The answers varied somewhat (Figure 8), but it seems that Slovenian

schools do not particularly foster this kind of multilingual landscape. It is also revealing that when asked whether the school library is well stocked with books and other audiovisual material in the languages of immigrant children, there was a relatively high percentage of "I don't know" responses (24 of the teachers and 2 of the support staff). This is consistent with the teachers' responses to the statement *In my lessons I often use materials in the languages of immigrant children to provide activities for all pupils*: Of the teachers surveyed, 23 chose "not at all", 23 chose "rarely", 19 chose "to some extent" and 1 chose "to a great extent".

Figure 8

Responses to the statement The languages of the school community are present in our school environment (e.g., posters, photos, signs, etc.).
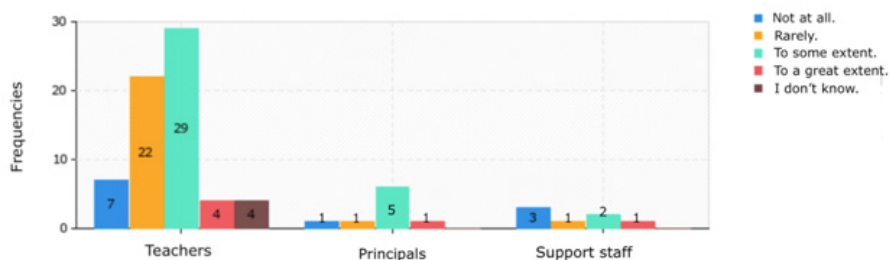
At the end of the survey, the respondents were invited to freely comment in writing on the role of languages of schooling in ensuring the success of all pupils. In their remarks, they most frequently emphasised the possibility of giving pupils with an immigrant background more time to learn Slovenian, which reflects the situation in some other European countries. They also point to the lack of staff for teaching Slovenian as a foreign language, the lack of support in the form of training for teachers dealing with pupils with an immigrant background, and the need to sensitise and activate the parents of pupils with an immigrant background more for learning Slovenian so that they can pass on the motivation to their children.

Insights from the Interviews

In the interviews with the nine principals involved in the study, we addressed issues related to the administrative challenges in the pupil integration process. These challenges can be categorised into five main topics: integration strategies and language support, language barrier mitigation, criteria for teacher selection, challenges for teachers, and evaluation of government support

with recommendations for improvement.

The responses of the principals during the interviews reflect a diverse range of immigrant backgrounds, primarily showcasing individuals from various regions. Albanian, Ukrainian and Russian pupils in particular are repeatedly represented in the interviews. Citizens of the former Yugoslav republics have contributed significantly to the immigrant population in Slovenia since the second half of the twentieth century, with immigrants coming from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Macedonia and Kosovo. Since the military conflict in Ukraine in 2022, the Ukrainian population group appears to be strongly represented in Slovenian schools. There is also evidence of Russian speakers from Ukraine, indicating a linguistic peculiarity within this group. In addition, the data also include a wider range of nationalities, including those from different parts of the world. Immigrants from countries such as the USA, Malaysia, China, Romania, Hungary, Lithuania, Estonia, Afghanistan, Cuba, Iraq, Syria and Ghana are mentioned, emphasising the multinational composition of the immigrant population in some schools.

Integration Strategies and Language Support

The data collected in the interviews provide a comprehensive overview of the multi-layered integration process implemented by the schools involved in the study. Overall, the schools have adopted varied approaches to integrating pupils with an immigrant background quickly and effectively. The focus on language acquisition, individualised support, summer orientation and integration activities for immigrant pupils and their families, and an introductory period contributes to a comprehensive integration strategy. However, all of the surveyed schools follow the educational trend in Slovenia to immediately include pupils with an immigrant background in regular classes, while at the same time offering intensive supplementary lessons in Slovenian. Compulsory supplementary classes, which can be more or less concise, are organised differently from school to school, depending primarily on the number of immigrant pupils enrolled and the time of enrolment. The law[4] prescribes 120 to 180 hours of Slovenian lessons for each school. However, schools distribute these hours differently, depending on the needs of the enrolled pupils with an immigrant background. If the group of immigrant pupils is large enough and coherently arranged by age, supplementary classes are offered to groups. Very often, however, pupils with an immigrant background start school during the school

4   Article 43c of the Rules on Norms and Standards for the Implementation of the Primary School Curriculum provides for additional hours of Slovenian language for foreigners, on the basis of which it is possible either to allocate additional hours of Slovenian or even to systematise a teaching position if there are more foreign pupils.

year and therefore miss part of the supplementary classes. In such cases, the schools and teachers work individually with the pupils to help them catch up. Some schools have also stated that they group pupils not only according to age, but also according to the linguistic and typological similarities of their mother tongues.

Some schools organise integration training prior to enrolment, which aims to teach immigrant pupils and their families more practical aspects of daily life in the school and the environment to which they have immigrated, and to help them acquire some basic communicative knowledge of the Slovenian language. These trainings take place in the last weeks of the summer, before the school year starts, and are therefore suitable for pupils who can enrol regularly at the beginning of the school year. In the first year after enrolment, pupils with an immigrant background are not assessed with grades like everyone else, but only in terms of progression. In the second year, adjustments are made to the normal assessment procedures, with reduced assessments (**Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, 2017**).

A special regime applies to schools in the bilingual coastal region[5], which implement compulsory Italian lessons for all pupils from the first year of primary school (Primary School Act, 2006). Pupils with an immigrant background who attend these schools must learn Italian, which is their third foreign language after Slovenian and English, which they have to learn from scratch. In these schools, Italian lessons are part of the allocated quota of supplementary lessons in Slovenian (Baloh, 2010).

Language Barrier Mitigation

When discussing the problem of the language barrier with the surveyed principals, most of them mentioned this issue in relation to communication with the parents of pupils with an immigrant background, which is sometimes the cause of misunderstandings if not properly addressed. When asked about linguistic misunderstandings that lead to more sensitive situations such as marginalisation, bullying or intolerance, only a few principals expressed concern, stating that such incidents are rare and are usually dealt with at the class level. Analysis of the qualitative data also suggests a pragmatic and diverse approach to overcoming language barriers, encompassing a range of strategies, from the use of technology to peer support, emphasising communication beyond spoken language. Initial contact is predominantly in English, which is considered

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5   Among the schools participating in the study, there are no schools from the bilingual area in Prekmurje, so we do not report on their practices in the integration of children with an immigrant background.

the primary bridging language. While English serves as the primary language of communication, other languages spoken by teachers and pupils with an immigrant background are welcome and utilised when helpful. Translators or language mediators are used as needed, indicating a selective and strategic approach to the use of translation services. This suggests a preference for fostering communication without relying heavily on translators unless it is essential. Technology used by both pupils and teachers, particularly web applications and machine translation tools, is utilised to facilitate communication and understanding. These tools are likely to help bridge language differences efficiently and complement oral communication. Some of the principals emphasised the benefits of using non-verbal communication, especially gestures, to improve understanding. Pupils who are already integrated play a crucial role in assisting newcomers, especially in terms of language. Involving pupils who are already proficient in the language or have a similar linguistic background helps to bridge language barriers through peer support, which is also a helpful way to socially integrate newcomers into the school environment.

Criteria for Teacher Selection

The principals believe that the approach to supplementary Slovenian language teaching for immigrant children is a collaborative, adaptive and multidisciplinary effort. Teachers, librarians, counsellors and other staff contribute their expertise and sensitivity to create an inclusive and effective learning environment. The teachers who provide supplemental Slovenian instruction vary widely in profile. Some schools employ younger teachers, student teachers in primary education who are about to graduate, or older teachers without a linguistic background, but who have a wealth of experience in teaching pupils with an immigrant background. In addition to the teachers, a multidisciplinary team is involved in teaching Slovenian to immigrants, including social pedagogues, counsellors and librarians, some of whom are qualified to teach Slovenian as a foreign language. The data show that librarians play a crucial role in most schools by organising multilingual reading lessons during early-morning care. This initiative fosters language exposure and engagement with diverse linguistic backgrounds, as well as encouraging the inclusion of younger pupils, as early-morning care is a service used by parents of pupils in the first cycle. Some school libraries endeavour to stock books in multiple mother tongues to facilitate familiarity with mother tongues and promote cultural connection.

The principals also emphasised that, in addition to linguistic competence, sensitivity and awareness of migrant issues are primary considerations when selecting teachers to provide supplementary lessons in Slovenian. This

indicates that the importance of cultural sensitivity and understanding in the teaching process is recognised. The selection of teacher profiles is also based on age levels to ensure that teachers can cater for the needs and learning styles of different age groups.

Challenges Faced by Teachers

During the interviews, we asked the principals about the challenges they see or know about regarding teachers in terms of their involvement in integration practices. The challenges expressed by the principals emphasise the complexity of integration practices, which span linguistic, administrative and pedagogical areas. There is, however, a disparity in the viewpoints of teachers. Some, especially Slovenian language teachers, argue for faster and more effective linguistic integration and recognise its significance, while teachers of other subjects may not see linguistic integration as a challenge. Teachers may even face dilemmas regarding balancing supplementary Slovenian lessons for immigrant children while ensuring that they do not miss out on core subjects. Those in favour of more effective linguistic integration suggest an intensive year of Slovenian language learning before integration into the classroom. They also argue in favour of learning the language outside of school as a precursor to entering the education system. Initial dissatisfaction regarding emotional and behavioural aspects, including school rules and cultural patterns, emerged among teachers. However, over time, many recognised the value of diversity, which has led to a shift in the collective mindset over the years. Frequently, teachers express frustration with bureaucracy, especially in the elaboration of individualised content and the operational management of the integration process, which is seen as an obstacle to effective teaching practice. In addition, the general inclusion policy in Slovenian primary schools contributes to teacher overload, especially when teachers have to teach a large number of immigrant children in one class. This overload affects the ability of teachers to cater to the needs of individual pupils, leading to a general sense of fear of compromising the quality of education for both immigrant and native pupils.

Principals also report cases where teachers have highlighted difficulties related to pupils' motivation to learn, particularly among with pupils who are war refugees, such as Ukrainian children, or who are under temporary protection awaiting repatriation or seeking asylum elsewhere. These challenges often affect their involvement in classroom activities.

Challenges also appear to arise when supplementary Slovenian language teaching clashes with other subjects, leading to a lack of subject-specific terminology and impacting on academic achievement, particularly in the higher

grades. Principals of schools more affected by the arrival of immigrants argue in favour of re-evaluating the criteria for placing immigrants in schools to prevent too many immigrant pupils being concentrated in one school, which can result in children from the same linguistic background lingering together. This concentration supposedly poses a challenge to integration efforts. When asked about the frequency of trainings organised for staff, such trainings seem to be diverse (covering various topics) and frequent. However, training that deals with the integration of pupils with an immigrant background tends to take the form of informal exchanges, collaborative efforts between teachers and experiential learning, suggesting that specific training in the area of working with children with an immigrant background is not always consistently prioritised or standardised across schools. Some principals consider approaches to raising cross-language awareness to promote integration, inclusivity and tolerance through the use of multiple languages (the languages of all pupils) as an effective way to further improve integration.

Evaluation of Government Support with Recommendations for Improvement

Some of the principals surveyed, particularly those with many years of experience in integrating immigrant pupils, expressed satisfaction with the prescribed procedures and the government's support for the integration of immigrant pupils. They also emphasised the high quality of the available textbooks developed specifically for teaching Slovenian as a foreign language, and highlighted the fact that the Slovenian education system is in favour of the immediate integration of pupils with an immigrant background into regular classes.

In the interviews, the principals were asked for their views on the biggest integration issues and their suggestions for improvements. Overall, the principals see a range of challenges, from bureaucratic hurdles to the need for improved teacher training on the impact of cultural differences. They emphasise that there is an urgent need to resolve documentation issues, ensure that language learning does not hinder overall academic progress, and create a more diverse class composition to allow for better integration of immigrant pupils. In addition, the principals noted that the pandemic exacerbated the challenges of linguistic integration of immigrant pupils and emphasised the crucial role of schools in this process. Another interesting topic that needs further consideration is the need to better prepare future teachers to deal with the challenges of integration during their studies. There is a recognised lack of knowledge and skills of preservice teachers in relation to integration.

Discussion and conclusions

The data presented suggest that comprehensive, standardised training and support mechanisms for teachers are needed, combined with a holistic approach that values and takes into account the diverse linguistic backgrounds in the school environment in order to enhance multilingual education and successful integration. The challenges that teachers face in providing multilingual education depend mainly on the different training opportunities and the consequent differing levels of acceptance and understanding of the use of various languages in schools. The need for additional training of teachers in new approaches to language teaching has already been recognised by Retelj and Svetina (2022), who put forward a possible proposal for a systemic solution and support the concretisation of the idea of multilingualism in the broader context of Slovenian education. While principals believe that there is a wide range of training available for teachers, teachers themselves believe that there is a lack of regular training on integration and teaching immigrant children. The survey data show that teachers largely recognise the role of languages in school, but lack structured training on the language dimension in all subjects and cross-language awareness. The results also suggest that schools are generally supportive of the use of multiple languages, but there is a discrepancy in perceptions between teachers and school leaders regarding the school's understanding of situations that allow the use of languages other than the languages of schooling in the classroom. Of particular relevance in this regard is the position of some principals that the grouping together of pupils with an immigrant background during breaks is undesirable and even discouraged, primarily in order to encourage pupils with an immigrant background to engage more with their Slovenian classmates and practise more Slovenian. Although well intentioned, this assimilationist stand is potentially harmful, as it represents the viewpoint as described by Cummins (2001): "If students retain their culture and language, then they are viewed as less capable of identifying with the mainstream culture and learning the mainstream language of the society" (p. 16). This is an old-fashioned attitude that is countered by the recognition that a well-developed mother tongue increases pupils' abilities in other languages as well. On the other hand, school staff are largely supportive of the use of languages that pupils know for learning, so in some cases they encourage multilingual education, preferably outside the classroom. This knowledge provides a good springboard for additional training to help teachers better understand the benefits of the translanguaging approach advocated by researchers such as García (2009) as a means of promoting academic success and linguistic empowerment of and

among multilingual pupils. In some respects, school staff do not appear to be sufficiently familiar with the benefits of multilingual education. In the interviews in which they explicitly pointed out many issues in the linguistic integration of pupils with an immigrant background, they referred to cultural differences as more problematic than language barriers in the integration process, suggesting greater cultural than linguistic sensitivity and awareness among educators and management. This is reflected in most projects in Slovenia aimed at improving the integration of children with a migrant background and developing a more tolerant multicultural and multilingual community. Since 2008, Slovenia has started to systematically implement projects for the integration of children with an immigrant background. Most of these projects focus primarily on intercultural aspects of integration, with languages serving as an important basis for communication. The exception is one of the most recent projects "Languages Matters" (2016–2022), which focused on identifying which factors support and which hinder the creation of a supportive learning environment for the development of multilingualism in the Slovenian school environment. This indicates a positive trend, suggesting that not only experts but also political decisionmakers are aware of the need for multilingual education in Slovenia in the future.

The survey data also suggest that school staff recognise the importance of linguistic identity and acceptance overall, but that there are differences, particularly among support staff, regarding the importance of teaching in immigrants' first languages for multilingualism. There is very little research on the role of support staff in the integration of migrant pupils. However, the findings of the TEAM project, which focuses on the work of teachers in different schools and on the different support systems available to pupils and teachers in Sweden, Finland and Scotland, suggest that policies and practices that support teacher autonomy and collaboration generally facilitate networks for the holistic support of pupils with an immigrant background as well as other pupils (Pantić et al., 2021). The present study confirms that not only teachers but also support staff are an important help in the integration process of immigrant children, even if the staff are not always sufficiently qualified. The development of a modern education policy must therefore go hand in hand with the introduction of new forms of teaching practices that take even greater account of the fundamental role of learning the languages of schooling and mother tongues in the success of all pupils in creating a tolerant and inclusive school environment.

The present study also showed that schools use various methods for linguistic integration, including initial contacts in English, intensive courses in Slovenian and integration training prior to enrolment. Some of these practices,

such as individualised support for pupils who enrol in the middle of the school year, sometimes place an additional burden on teachers. Furthermore, teachers are faced with the dilemma of linguistic integration, bureaucratic hurdles, and balancing language learning and core subjects, which has an impact on the overall quality of education. All of this has major implications for successful multilingual education. As Bešter and Medvešek (2015) note, despite these challenges and the lack of consensus on multilingual education, it is important to recognise the need for more thorough analysis. Given the apparent negative impact of current policies on equal opportunities for immigrant children, exploring policy changes such as the introduction of multilingual education is imperative. Addressing these issues directly not only promotes equality but also has a significant impact on the success of multilingual education initiatives.

Limitations of the research

Although the results of this study provide valuable insights, it is important to recognise the methodological limitations that may influence the interpretation of the results. One major limitation concerns the uneven distribution among respondent groups. Ideally, we aimed to engage a larger number of support staff to participate in the survey, which would have enabled a more comprehensive understanding of their role and involvement in promoting the integration of pupils with an immigrant background. The lower representation of this particular group limits the depth of insight into their perspectives and potentially limits the comprehensiveness of the analysis regarding their contribution to the integration process.

Guidelines and recommendations

Based on the data collected in the interviews and the survey, some important recommendations can be inferred. Schools that have little or no experience of integrating immigrant pupils should provide structured, regular and standardised training for all staff, focusing on different aspects of integration practices and multilingual education. Past research has already emphasised that dealing with diversity in schools should be part of teachers' continuous professional development (Knežević, 2024). In addition, all schools should consider proposing some novel topics in the field of the linguistic integration of pupils with an immigrant background and multilingual education, such as raising cross-language awareness through cognitive-inclusive language didactics. This aspect of linguistic integration is in fact based on collaborative multilingual education to promote inclusivity, tolerance and acceptance of diversity. It can address all of the issues highlighted by school staff and identified in the present

study, i.e., involving immigrant parents, promoting teachers' cultural sensitivity and supporting a diverse linguistic landscape.

This study confirms the need to improve multilingual education with the aim of ensuring the more successful linguistic integration of pupils with an immigrant background into the Slovenian school system. The results of the study will be taken into account in the implementation of intensive cross-language awareness training for all children and staff in selected school communities. This research project, which is financially supported by the Slovenian Research and Innovation Agency, introduces a specific didactic approach that considers the cognitive aspects of pupils' first languages and aims to raise cross-language awareness throughout the school. Both native and immigrant pupils are involved to ensure that everyone is engaged in the training, where learning multiple languages aims to promote inclusivity, tolerance and more successful integration.

Acknowledgments

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Biographical note

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Examining Indonesian English as a Foreign Language Lecturers' Attitudes Towards Translanguaging and Its Perceived Pedagogical Benefits: A Mixed-Methods Study

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∽   The present study examines Indonesian lecturers' attitudes towards translanguaging and its pedagogical benefits in their English as a foreign language classroom. It also explores the significant relationships between lecturers' attitudes and the variables of gender, age, experience, university and faculty. The study included English as a foreign language lecturers using surveys ($n = 50$) and in-depth interviews ($n = 5$). The collected data were analysed through mixed-methods analyses. The findings reveal that, in general, Indonesian lecturers hold optimal, virtual and maximal attitudes towards translanguaging. They perceive translanguaging as beneficial, as it facilitates student-student and student-teacher interactions, scaffolds students' understanding, and creates a familiar and secure classroom atmosphere. Integrating translanguaging supports the development of students' critical thinking skills and self-confidence. The lecturers' feel a sense of agency to reclaim their identity and question the perceived linguistic hierarchy that dominates their English as a foreign language landscape. Additionally, the findings revealed a disparity in the perceived benefits of translanguaging depending on the lecturers' age and experience, indicating a potential generational gap that might influence their adaptability to multilingual teaching methodologies.

Keywords: attitudes, English medium instruction, English as a foreign language classroom, multilingualism, translanguaging, translingual practices

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Preučevanje stališč indonezijskih visokošolskih učiteljev angleščine kot tujega jezika do čezjezičnosti in njenih zaznanih pedagoških prednosti: študija mešanih metod

MOHAMMED YASSIN MOHD ABA SHA'AR IN NUR LAILATUR ROFIAH

∾   Študija preučuje stališča indonezijskih visokošolskih učiteljev do čezje-
zičnosti in njenih pedagoških prednosti pri pouku angleščine kot tujega
jezika. Raziskuje tudi pomembne povezave med stališči profesorjev ter
spremenljivkami spol, starost, izkušnje, univerza in fakulteta. V študijo
so bili vključeni visokošolski učitelji angleščine kot tujega jezika z upo-
rabo anket ($n = 50$) in poglobljenih intervjujev ($n = 5$). Zbrani podatki so
bili obdelani s pomočjo analize mešanih metod. Ugotovitve na splošno
kažejo na optimalna, virtualna in na maksimalna stališča do čezjezično-
sti pri indonezijskih visokošolskih učiteljih. Čezjezičnost dojemajo kot
koristno, saj olajšuje interakcije med študenti samimi ter študenti in uči-
telji, spodbuja odranje razumevanja pri študentih ter ustvarja znano in
varno vzdušje v razredu. Vključevanje čezjezičnosti podpira razvoj zmo-
žnosti kritičnega mišljenja in samozavesti študentov. Profesorji čutijo,
da lahko ponovno pridobijo svojo identiteto in postavijo pod vprašaj za-
znano jezikovno hierarhijo, ki prevladuje v njihovem okolju angleščine
kot tujega jezika. Poleg tega so ugotovitve razkrile razlike v zaznavanju
prednosti čezjezičnosti glede na starost in izkušnje profesorjev, kar kaže
na morebitno generacijsko vrzel, ki bi lahko vplivala na njihovo prilago-
dljivost metodologijam večjezičnega poučevanja.

Ključne besede: stališča, poučevanje v angleščini, pouk angleščine kot
tujega jezika, večjezičnost, čezjezičnost, čezjezične prakse

Introduction

In recent years, the resurgence of the multilingual turn has challenged the prevailing monolingual paradigm in both English as second language (ESL) and English as a foreign language (EFL) contexts (Fang & Lui, 2020). As a pedagogy, new terminology has emerged to encapsulate the intricacy of the multilingual reality within various educational contexts, such as polylingualism (Pun & Tai, 2021), metrolingualism (Wang, 2019), plurilingualism (Wei, 2023), code-switching (Canagarajah, 2011) and translanguaging (García, 2009). This shift has exposed power imbalances, linguistic hierarchies and inequities among students with dissimilar linguistic backgrounds (Fang et al., 2023). Current scholarship questions the strict separation of languages and supports multilingual pedagogies to balance content understanding and language learning (Fang & Lui, 2020). It highlights how a translanguaging space encourages students' engagement, enhances their confidence to use the target language, and fosters student-student and student-teacher interactions (Yuvayapan, 2019). In the field of English Language Teaching (ELT), attention is shifting towards multilingualism, which describes the individual's ability to use, comprehend and communicate proficiently in two or more languages, reflecting a diverse linguistic repertoire (Fang & Lui, 2020).

As a pedagogical approach, translanguaging fosters an inclusive learning environment and advocates equity. The term 'translanguaging' refers to "the deployment of a speaker's full linguistic repertoire without regard to the socially and politically defined boundaries of named languages" (Otheguy et al., 2015, p. 283). It views languages not as isolated entities but as a unitary meaning-making system that bi/multilingual speakers utilise to make meaning of their worlds (García, 2009). Translanguaging is often used both spontaneously and pedagogically to facilitate learning, offering a comprehensive and versatile approach to instruction. In Indonesian classrooms, translanguaging is utilised to support teaching and learning processes despite the monolingual-oriented education policy, standardised testing requirements and societal perceptions that favour the monolingual approach (Halim et al., 2023). Little is known about how Indonesian stakeholders perceive pedagogical translanguaging and its impact on students' learning outcomes. Examining stakeholders' attitudes towards translanguaging would significantly contribute to filling this research gap. Furthermore, exploring the perceived benefits of integrating translanguaging in Indonesian higher education is still an emerging area that has not yet been extensively researched or widely discussed.

The present study will contribute to adding new knowledge to this research void and shed light on the practical implications and potential strategies

for effectively integrating translanguaging practices within Indonesian higher education. Raising lecturers' multilingual awareness is important, as it legitimises translingual practices in their EFL classrooms. The study will provide insights into lecturers' attitudes and their crucial role in facilitating the learning process and improving students' retention. Understanding the perceived benefits of translanguaging assists students' language acquisition and promotes inclusive learning environments. The study specifically seeks to answer the following research questions:

1.   What are Indonesian lecturers' attitudes towards translanguaging?
2.   What are the perceived benefits of translingual practices in their EFL classroom?
3.   Are there significant differences in lecturers' perceptions with respect to gender, age, experience, university and faculty?

The idea of translanguaging

The concept of translanguaging originated from Welsh revitalisation programmes (1994), where students received information in English and then reflected their understanding (e.g., speaking or writing) using their first language or the other way around (Williams, 1994; Wei, 2023). Since then, it has undergone significant development and gained more attention and recognition within academic circles, educational settings and linguistic research due to its inclusive pedagogies (Gorter & Arocena, 2020). Translanguaging challenges the monolingual ideology and approach that maintains distinct boundaries between the learned languages (Veliz, 2021). It has been defined in various ways within different ESL and EFL contexts due to the variations in teaching approaches, cultural contexts and languages spoken in each setting. Baker (2011) defined translanguaging as a "process of making meaning, shaping experiences, gaining understanding and knowledge through the use of two languages" (p. 288). However, this definition does not address the complex and multifaceted concept that goes beyond the named languages. García (2009) broadened the scope of the concept and defined translanguaging as "multiple discursive practices in which bilinguals engage in order to make sense of their bilingual worlds" (p. 45). She emphasised the aspect of practice, as the prefix 'trans' highlights fluid practices that go beyond socially constructed language systems and structures (Gorter & Arocena, 2020). Li (2018) further highlighted the complex nature of language, illustrating how individuals draw on their repertoires to convey ideas. He viewed language not as a single entity, but rather as a multilingual, multisemiotic, multisensory and multimodal resource utilised by individuals for both thinking and communicating thoughts.

This challenged the assumption that named languages reflect social or psychological realities. Code-mixing and code-switching are often mistakenly perceived as synonymous with translanguaging, as they describe the simultaneous use of two or more languages in one's speech (Li, 2018). However, translanguaging is a broader approach that emphasises a fluid and flexible use of language that incorporates diverse linguistic repertoires without strict boundaries or limitations (García, 2009). Code-switching refers to the alternation between two or more languages within a conversation, sentence or discourse, retaining L1 and L2 as separate linguistic systems. However, translanguaging transcends these learned boundaries between languages and bridges the worlds of multilingual learners within and outside the classroom by using their full linguistic and cognitive repertoires. This helps them to engage in heteroglossic practices that facilitate their academic learning (Fang & Liu, 2020; Yuvayapan, 2019).

Medium of instruction in the Indonesian EFL classroom

Indonesia's linguistic diversity and education policy reveal significant differences in dictating the medium of instruction (MOI) in education (Rusydiyah et al., 2023). Unlike other Southeast Asian countries, which have adopted policies that include students' L1s as a medium of instruction, Indonesian education policy excludes local languages due to the huge diversity of local languages, the complexity of language ecologies, and the variance of their applicability in literacy education. However, the teaching practice and MOI in actual classrooms are not in line with these policies, especially in the country's remote areas (Haryanto et al., 2016). Teachers often use Bahasa Indonesia to facilitate teaching and learning processes and serve classroom-oriented and student-oriented purposes (Raja et al., 2022). In their study, Halim et al. (2023) reported that most Indonesian teachers have heard of the term translanguaging, but need to familiarise themselves with its pedagogical implementation in the classroom. There is a lack of research examining Indonesian stakeholders' attitudes towards translanguaging amid the dismissal of the local language(s) as a viable medium of instruction by education policies.

Institutional and social pressure, particularly within English Programmes (EP) aimed at internationalising education and engaging in a globalised economy, have led schoolteachers and university lecturers to perceive translanguaging as a barrier (Fang & Liu, 2020). Findings reported by Ubaidillah (2018) concur with this argument, citing that overusing the students' L1 hinders language acquisition. Thus, the researcher suggests that teachers should maximise English use in order to compensate for students' lack of exposure.

Fernández (2015) found that the excessive use of the students' L1 limited progress in students' communicative skills, impairs their language accuracy and demotivates them to use the target language. In contrast, Raja et al. (2022), reported that Indonesian teachers have positive attitudes towards teacher-directed and student-directed translanguaging. Teacher-directed translanguaging refers to the teacher's intentional inclusion of the students' first language in order to achieve particular pedagogical goals. Student-directed translanguaging occurs when students themselves employ their first language to improve their understanding, communication and learning during classroom activities (Yuvayapan, 2019). Teachers acknowledge the value of L1s in enhancing students' understanding and encouraging them to participate in classroom activities and discussions. Translanguaging supports low-level students by leveraging their native language as a resource to build connections between languages and support their communicative skills. Teachers reject the monolingual approach, as it contradicts the nature of how bilinguals think, understand and interact in real-life contexts (Tabatadze, 2019). They anonymously endorse the judicial and pedagogical use of translanguaging to scaffold students' linguistic development, achieve learning goals and support students' learning experience. Extensive research is needed to explore the perceived advantages of translanguaging that can be achieved within this balanced approach in the Indonesian context.

Translanguaging for inclusion and equity

Prior studies by Fang and Liu (2020), Gorter and Arocena (2020), Halim et al. (2023), and Raja et al. (2022) have widely documented the role of translanguaging in achieving inclusion and equity in various ESL and EFL contexts. Veliz (2021) reported that integrating translanguaging creates a more inclusive learning environment and provides equitable opportunities for students, despite their English proficiency level. It gives students a sense of belonging to the classroom community, creating a space that enables opportunities to interact with peers and teachers (Yasar & Dikilitas, 2022). This facilitation makes students feel secure and motivates them to improve their English proficiency. Moody et al. (2019), indicated that the use of translanguaging creates a safe and familiar learning environment, especially for low-level students, as it removes the apprehension associated with speaking English in unfamiliar situations. It helps students with limited proficiency to enhance their understanding through interactive communication (Pun & Tai, 2021).

Additionally, translanguaging creates a space that bi/multilingual speakers utilise to communicate and make meaning of their learning. Pun and Tai

(2021) reported that students can interact with their peers and teachers in scientific enquiry, as they can mobilise their linguistic and semiotic repertoires. Translanguaging facilitates communication flow, as students are not restrained by a language with which they are unfamiliar. This process supports students' engagement and develops their identity, as they progress from novice to expert scientists who can effectively articulate arguments and counterarguments. In another context, Cenoz et al. (2022), found that integrating students' multilingual and multimodal resources reduces their anxiety and increases their confidence, although the researchers did not provide clear evidence for this connection. They attributed this relationship to students' engagement and comprehension, achieved through utilising their existing linguistic and semiotic resources.

Moreover, the existing body of literature documents the fact that translanguaging facilitates classroom management, as the teacher explains classroom instructions using the common language. Yuvayapan (2019) indicated that teachers use the Turkish language to give feedback, provide classroom guidance and enhance students' understanding of deadlines. According to Pun and Tai (2021), this disrupts linguistic hierarchies that delegitimise translanguaging practices used as a resource for learning in ESL and EFL classrooms. Additionally, embracing students' linguistic diversity promotes a student-centred approach, enhances classroom participation and empowers students' critical thinking skills (Pun & Tai, 2021; Yuvayapan, 2019). However, Rabbidge (2019) challenged this argument, indicating that the use of translanguaging does not provide space for critical thinking, as teacher-directed translanguaging limits the translanguaging space to freely initiate discussion, comment or debate arguments in the classroom. It is still teachers who initiate interaction, impart knowledge, ask for information and declare whether the given information is correct or not.

Method

The present study was framed by a mixed-methods design. The data were collected through a survey and in-depth interviews. This particular design was adopted because it leveraged the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative methods (Fetters et al., 2023). It provided a more comprehensive understanding of the lecturers' perceptions of translanguaging and produced robust and validated results (Doyle et al., 2016).

Context and Participants

The study was conducted in the 2023–2024 academic year. The data were collected from 10 public and 24 private universities across the Sumatra and Java Islands, Indonesia. Like other universities nationwide, these institutions grapple with implementing EMI to advocate internationalisation and translanguaging for inclusive teaching. This context was specifically selected because most Indonesian EFL lecturers are still unfamiliar with pedagogical translanguaging and often rely on unplanned, spontaneous translingual practices.

The sample of participants in the study comprised 50 Indonesian EFL lecturers (Table 1) who voluntarily participated in the data collection and completed the survey. In order to enhance the viability of the study's findings, two criteria were implemented: (1) the participants had experience in teaching English in language or content classrooms, and (2) they were affiliated with any of the public or private universities in the western part of Indonesia. Additionally, five lecturers (Table 2) were voluntarily recruited for in-depth interviews. The participants' profiles are presented below in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1

Demographic characteristics

		Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	female	36	28
	male	14	72
Age	20–30	3	6
	31–40	26	52
	41–50	12	24
	51–60	7	14
	61–70	2	4
Experience	1–10	19	38
	11–20	21	42
	21–30	7	14
	31–40	3	6
	41–50	0	0

		Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
	IKIP	7	14
	ULM	1	2
	UG	2	4
	IAI	1	2
	UMS	1	2
	PNP	1	2
	UIN	4	8
	UII	1	2
	UKM	1	2
	HU	1	2
	UNTAS	1	2
	BU	2	4
	UAI	1	2
	ULAM	1	2
	MP	1	2
	UJG	1	2
	UNUL	1	2
University	USAT	1	2
	HMU	1	2
	UINSU	1	2
	UJS	1	2
	USB	1	2
	UINRIL	2	4
	US	1	2
	TSM	1	2
	STIKH	1	2
	SIIM	2	4
	UPR	1	2
	IAIAS	1	2
	SGDSIUB	1	2
	UINPSZ	1	2
	SPJ	1	2
	IAIAI	3	6
	UMPSH	1	2

		Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Faculty	Faculty of Education	32	64
	Faculty of Humanities	6	12
	Faculty of Information Technology	1	2
	Faculty of Art	3	6
	Faculty of Language and Literature	3	6
	Faculty of Economics	2	4
	Faculty of Public Health	2	2
	Faculty of Engineering	1	2

Table 2

Interview participants

Interviewees	Pseudocode	Subject	Experience
Interviewee1	LC1	language	8
Interviewee2	LC2	language and content	7
Interviewee3	LC3	language	30
Interviewee4	LC4	language	8
Interviewee5	LC5	language and content	23

Instruments

Questionnaire

In order to examine the Indonesian lecturers' attitudes towards trans-languaging and its perceived pedagogical benefits, a questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale was adapted from Fang & Liu (2020), Gorter and Arocena (2020), Wang (2019) and Yuvayapan (2019), with some statements being adapted to address the objectives and context of the present study. The questionnaire consisted of three sections: the participants' profiles, the lecturers' attitudes towards translanguaging, and the perceived benefits of translanguaging. It was specifically used in this study because it helped to access and collect insights from the target participants across the Sumatra and Java Islands. Moreover, it ensured consistency in data collection, reduced bias and made it easier to capture diverse perspectives and analyse the results efficiently (Marshall, 2005). The questionnaire was piloted with non-target participants ($n = 10$) before data collection, and Cronbach's alpha was employed to check the statements' reliability and internal consistency. The Cronbach's alpha was .845 for section two

and .973 for section three, indicating a very high internal consistency among the survey items. All of the items were therefore considered for data collection and data analysis. The survey items were also adjusted in a Google Form and set to be shared with the participants.

In-depth interview

An individual in-depth interview (IDI) was employed to examine the Indonesian lecturers' attitudes towards translanguaging and its perceived pedagogical benefits in their EFL classrooms. The interview was specifically adopted in this study because it provided an opportunity to build a rapport with the participants, thus allowing for a more straightforward expression of non-conformity and improving the data quality (Stokes & Bergin, 2006). It also enabled the researchers to delve into the controversy of the monolingual approach, to uncover motives behind marginalising the student's L1, and to gain a comprehensive understanding of the participants' attitudes, experiences and viewpoints (Boyce & Neale, 2006). The interview was guided by an interview protocol that comprised (1) introduction, (2) consent and confidentiality, (3) background information, (4) interview questions, (5) follow-up questions, and (6) closing. Due to ethical considerations, the interviewees' names are replaced with codes LC1–LC5 in order to uphold ethical standards and protect the rights and wellbeing of the research participants.

Research design

The data were collected at the beginning of the first semester, from 10 July to 19 October 2023. The quantitative data were collected at the end of an online workshop about research methodology. Before data collection, the researchers followed the research protocol, explained the purpose of the study, and assured the participants about the anonymity and confidentiality of their responses. The questionnaire was then shared using a Quick Response code (QR code) and administered through Google Forms. Responding to the survey questions took the participants 15 to 20 minutes. The researchers obtained 50 responses from different private and public universities in Sumatra and Java.

The interview sessions were administered online through Zoom. The IDI session took 30 to 35 minutes. Five interviewees were conducted with lecturers from five different universities (Table 2). Invitations to the interviews were sent to the lecturers through email with the help of the workshop committee. Seven lecturers initially accepted the invitation to participate in an interview. However, two of them later excused themselves from taking part due to personal

reasons. The interviews were conducted between October and November 2023, with the time and date selected by the participants. For consistency and due to ethical concerns, the researchers followed the interview protocol and reassured the interviewees about the confidentiality of their responses. The interviews were conducted in English and Bahasa based on the interviewees' choice. The interview recordings were transcribed manually, translated into English and then prepared for data analysis.

The quantitative data were analysed using IBM SPSS 25. Once the data collection process was complete, data cleaning was implemented. This involved removing repeated responses and incomplete entries. The cleaned data was then imported into SPSS software and prepared for further analysis. A reliability analysis was also performed to determine the internal consistency of the questionnaire items. Statements with less than .70 were not considered for analysis. However, all of the items were included in the data analysis, as the Cronbach alpha displayed very high consistency in the lecturers' attitudes (α = .831) and perceived pedagogical benefits of translanguaging (α = .945). Subsequently, descriptive statistics, including means, standard deviation, frequency and percentage, were performed to answer the first and second research questions. Additionally, inferential statistics, including ANOVA and independent tests, were conducted to answer the third question.

The qualitative data from the in-depth interviews were analysed through thematic analysis. This type of analysis was specifically employed because it provides a rich, detailed, yet complex data account (Vaismoradi et al., 2013). By providing a systematic framework, it facilitates the identification of patterns, connections and nuanced themes within data, enabling researchers to derive thorough insights into the topic studied (Alhojailan, 2012). After the interviews, the recordings were transcribed and translated, and the data analysis steps proposed by Clarke and Braun (2017) were followed. First, the researchers familiarised themselves with the data by reading the transcripts thoroughly. Second, they generated initial codes, which involved highlighting the statements that captured key concepts. Third, they searched for themes by categorising the highlighted codes based on their relevance to the potential themes. To enhance the trustworthiness of the findings, the researchers shared themes and codes amongst themselves to verify their validity and relevance to the research questions. Fourth, the themes were refined and clear definitions of each theme were generated. At this stage, some sub-themes were merged and irrelevant sub-categories were dropped. Fifth, themes and codes that contributed to answering the research questions were selected and reported.

Results

Based on the survey data (Table 3), it was found that the Indonesian EFL lecturers surveyed held optimal, virtual and maximal positions about the use of translanguaging in their English classrooms.

Table 3
Lecturers' attitudes towards translanguaging

Survey Items	Mean	*SD*	Value
Translanguaging is a common practice in our EFL classroom.	4.32	0.55	High
Translanguaging maximises our teaching effectiveness.	4.16	0.68	High
Translanguaging promotes a student-centred approach.	3.94	0.62	High
Translanguaging should be implemented in teaching content and language courses.	4.14	0.63	High
Translanguaging is necessary, but it should be judiciously incorporated.	4.30	0.61	High
Translanguaging improves the student's English proficiency.	2.92	1.20	low
Translanguaging transcends the linguistic boundary caused by colonial ideology.	2.80	0.85	low
Translanguaging promotes metalinguistic awareness.	3.21	0.81	High

The data in Table 3 indicate that some of the participating Indonesian lecturers have an optimal position regarding translanguaging, as they believe that the use of translanguaging maximises their teaching effectiveness ($\bar{x}$ = 4.16, SD = 0.68), encourages students' involvement ($\bar{x}$ = 3.94, SD = 0.62), helps both teaching content and language subjects ($\bar{x}$ = 4.14, SD = 0.63), and promotes metalinguistic awareness ($\bar{x}$ = 3.98, SD = 0.71). In contrast, the lecturers who have a virtual position doubt the role of translanguaging to enhance students' English proficiency ($\bar{x}$ = 2.92, SD = 1.20) or help transcend the linguistic boundaries between L1 and L2 ($\bar{x}$ = 2.80, SD = 0.85). Meanwhile, the lecturers who have maximal attitudes acknowledge that the use of translanguaging is a common practice in the Indonesian EFL classroom ($\bar{x}$ = 4.32, SD = 0.55), but believe that it should be judiciously incorporated according to the students' proficiency level ($\bar{x}$ = 4.30, SD = 0.61).

Table 4

Perceived benefits of translanguaging

Survey Items	Mean	*SD*	Value
Translanguaging helps us to make meaning of our teaching processes.	4.22	0.54	High
Translanguaging scaffolds students' comprehension.	4.19	0.71	High
Translanguaging is used to explain content and new concepts, to obtain feedback and to initiate discussions.	4.26	0.56	High
Translanguaging is effective for classroom management.	4.20	0.70	High
Translanguaging improves students' weaker language.	4.24	0.59	High
Translanguaging promotes equity, especially for students with low English proficiency.	4.28	0.64	High
Translanguaging encourages reluctant students to engage in the classroom community.	4.14	0.70	High
Translanguaging creates space for meaningful communication with our students.	4.16	0.66	High
Translanguaging assists communication flow, as students can access and draw on their linguistic repertoire.	4.07	0.86	High
Translanguaging makes the classroom atmosphere familiar, secure and comfortable for students.	4.22	0.64	High
Translanguaging develops students' critical thinking skills.	4.04	0.66	High
Translanguaging increases students' self-confidence to speak English.	4.02	0.71	High
Using Bahasa Indonesia helps us to reclaim our identity with our English variety.	3.74	0.92	High
Translanguaging disrupts linguistic hierarchies and questions linguistic inequality.	3.96	0.60	High

The data in Table 4 indicate that the Indonesian lecturers surveyed perceive translanguaging as beneficial, as it pedagogically helps them to make meaning of their teaching process ($\bar{x}$ = 4.22, *SD* = 0.54), to scaffold students understanding ($\bar{x}$ = 4.19, *SD* = 0.71), to explain new content and concepts ($\bar{x}$ = 4.26, *SD* = 0.54) and to ensure classroom management ($\bar{x}$ = 4.20, *SD* = 0.70). They believe that utilising students' L1 can improve students' weaker language ($\bar{x}$ = 4.24, *SD* = 0.59) and assist reluctant and low-English proficiency students to be included in classroom community ($\bar{x}$ = 4.14, *SD* = 0.70). Additionally, translanguaging is perceived as helpful because it can facilitate establishing student-student and teacher-student communication ($\bar{x}$ = 4.16, *SD* = 0.66) and assist communication flow ($\bar{x}$ = 4.07, *SD* = 0.86). They acknowledge that translanguaging creates a familiar, friendly and secure classroom atmosphere for students ($\bar{x}$ = 4.22, *SD* = 0.64). Moreover, they believe that using translanguaging develops students' critical thinking skills ($\bar{x}$ = 4.04, *SD* = 0.66) and self-confidence ($\bar{x}$ = 4.02, *SD* = 0.71) to learn and use the target language. Incorporating

translanguaging supports reclaiming their identity ($\bar{x}$ = 3.74, *SD* = 0.92) and disrupts linguistic hierarchies ($\bar{x}$ = 3.96, *SD* = 0.60).

Table 5

Overview of the variables

Situations	Gender	Age	Experience	Faculty	University
	Independent *t*-test	One-way ANOVA	One-way ANOVA	One-way ANOVA	One-way ANOVA
	t(df = 48)	*F(df = 4)*	*F(df = 2)*	*F(df = 5)*	*F(df = 3)*
Attitudes towards translanguaging	0.162	.987	2.295	1.018	1.133
Perceived benefits	-0.300	2.592*	3.423*	0.413	0.781
Total score	**-0.063**	**1.837**	**3.413***	**0.535**	**0.807**

Note: *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001

Gender

Independent samples t-tests (Table 5) were conducted to identify significant differences in the lecturers' attitudes towards translanguaging and its pedagogical benefits. The results show no significant differences between females and males in all situations and in the total score.

Age

One-way ANOVA (Table 5) revealed that age did not significantly affect the lecturers' attitudes towards translanguaging. However, the results did indicate a significant difference regarding the perceived pedagogical benefits of translanguaging (F (4) = 2.592, *p* = .049).

Faculty

One-way ANOVA (Table 5) uncovered that the faculty had no significant impact on the lecturers' attitudes towards translanguaging and its pedagogical benefits in all situations and the total score (all ps = ns).

Experience

One-way ANOVA (Table 5) showed that experience had no significant effect on the lecturers' attitudes towards translanguaging. However, the findings highlighted a significant difference between the lecturers with early and advanced experience in the perceived pedagogical benefits of translanguaging (F (2) = 3.423, *p* = .025) and in the total score (F (2) = 3.413, *p* = .025).

University

One-way ANOVA (Table 5) revealed that the university had no significant impact on the lecturers' attitudes towards translanguaging, its pedagogical benefits in all situations, and the total score (all ps = ns).

Qualitative findings

Lecturers' attitudes

The lecturers' attitudes towards translanguaging reflected the optimal, maximal and virtual positions indicated by the quantitative findings. These three dimensions were organised based on their contribution to addressing the research question.

Optimal attitudes

The findings revealed that the majority of the Indonesian lecturers interviewed have optimal attitudes towards translanguaging. They believe it helps them to teach grammar and new concepts, and to improve the lecturer-student relationship (Excerpts 1 and 2). As presented in Excerpt 3, the findings interestingly indicate that university policy encourages lecturers to use L1 to improve the students' retention.

Excerpt 1   "It is challenging to teach grammar or concepts using English-only because students still do not understand. Using English-only, one or two students understand, and others may get confused, especially first-year students. Even after explaining two or three times, they still may not understand." (LC1)

Excerpt 2   "Using Bahasa enhances students' understanding of the material being taught and improves the teacher-student relationship." (LC2)

Excerpt 3   "We received guidance from the department that we should not use English-only with first-year students because the students will not gain knowledge. They may drop out or transfer to another major or campus, since they do not understand and are uncomfortable in class." (LC3)

Maximal attitudes

As presented in Excerpts 4 and 5, the Indonesian EFL lecturers acknowledged the need for a bilingual approach, but also expressed concern regarding improving the English proficiency of students.

Excerpt 4   "I use 50–50 percent Bahasa and English. However, the students'

English proficiency will develop more effectively when teaching in English. Using English makes students think about how to use English." (LC1)

Excerpt 5   "English should be used at least 70–80 percent because there is a fear that the students' English proficiency will not be improved if we use too much Bahasa." (LC4)

Virtual attitudes

However, some of the Indonesian lecturers strongly supported the exclusive use of L2, as it enhances students' language proficiency and maximises their exposure.

Excerpt 6   "Using Bahasa is not translanguaging. If either the teacher or students switch to another language due to a failure to communicate or understand, it is considered a language deficiency. The use of translanguaging does not guarantee an increase in students' proficiency." (LC5).

Perceived benefits of translanguaging

The surveyed Indonesian lecturers perceived translanguaging as beneficial, citing its role in enhancing students' confidence, scaffolding their understanding, facilitating classroom interactions, and helping lecturers reclaim their identity. Five themes were identified and categorised based on their frequency in the thematic analysis.

Translanguaging assists low-level students

The Indonesian lecturers perceived translanguaging as beneficial, as it created a more inclusive and supportive learning environment (Excerpts 7–8).

Excerpt 7   "It is difficult to use English-only. I always consider the students' proficiency level and the university's policy. An English-only approach cannot be implemented." (LC3)

Excerpt 8   "It helps low-level students and makes the classroom environment relaxed. If we use English without engagement, teaching becomes one-sided and less meaningful." (LC5)

Translanguaging enhances students' confidence

As presented in Excerpts 9 and 10, the findings indicate that translanguaging in English classes enhances the students' confidence to participate in classroom discussions. The Indonesian lecturers therefore incorporate bi/

multilingual strategies to cater to the students' diverse linguistic abilities and learning styles.

Excerpt 9   "Asking the students to respond in English is difficult, and their answers become very short. Conversely, when using Indonesian, they become more confident to ask and answer questions." (LC3)

Excerpt 10 "Using Bahasa especially for reflection makes students more confident. However, when I ask them to switch to English, they hesitate, smile and ask for more time to prepare. Using English-only reduces their involvement". (LC4)

Translanguaging helps scaffold students' understanding

The Indonesian lecturers believe that incorporating translanguaging enhances students' understanding. It helps break down language barriers and enables students to access and give information in a language they are most comfortable with. (Excerpts 11 and 12).

Excerpt 11   "I usually use Bahasa to check students' understanding. The department head often reminds us not to use English-only because students feel insecure and transfer to an Indonesian programme." (LC3)

Excerpt 12 "I use Bahasa Indonesia to help the students understand the lesson content and to give them a chance to ask if they don't understand." (LC4)

Translanguaging facilitates classroom interaction

As shown in Excerpts 13 and 14, the Indonesian EFL lecturers acknowledged the role of translanguaging in increasing lecturer-student and student-student interactions.

Excerpt 13 "When I encourage students to communicate in English, they often remain silent. However, when I use Bahasa, they participate, especially shy and first-year students." (LC3)

Excerpt 14   "Despite the students' fear of their classmates' reactions, the use of Bahasa supports active participation in my classrooms." (LC4)

Translanguaging helps students to reclaim their identity

Moreover, the Indonesian lecturers perceive the use of translanguaging as beneficial because it empowers them to express themselves in their native language(s), which might otherwise be marginalised or ignored (Excerpts 15 and 16).

Excerpt 15   "Translanguaging should be utilised as part of our repertoire. It leverages our teaching approaches, facilitates teacher-student

communication and enhances students' progression." (LC5)

Excerpt 16: "I always tell my students that we must be proud of our identity regardless of our non-English background. Allowing Bahasa to be used encourages students to speak in classroom activities." (LC1)

Discussion

The aim of this study was to offer insights into Indonesian lecturers' attitudes towards translanguaging and its perceived benefits in their EFL classrooms. The study also explored the relationship between lecturers' attitudes and the variables of gender, age, experience, university and faculty. In answer to RQ1, the findings show that Indonesian lecturers hold different positions towards translanguaging. Lecturers with optimal attitudes cited some pedagogical benefits of translingual practices, such as teaching complex concepts and structures, facilitating the teaching process, promoting equity and fostering student-teacher rapport (Fang & Liu, 2020). Interestingly, one of the interviewees asserted that the use of L1 was a means to improve students' retention. This finding corroborates Wang's (2019) results, which revealed that reinforcing the monolingual approach and ignoring students' diverse backgrounds leads to student dropout. To ensure the resilience of foreign language programmes within neoliberal higher education, the researcher suggested that the teachers should consider the students' profiles, learning needs and expectations. Our research findings also echo the results of Fang and Liu (2020), revealing that some Indonesian lecturers acknowledge the role of the judicious and pedagogical use of translanguaging to achieve different pedagogical purposes. Similarly, Fernández (2015) and Pappa and Moate (2021) reported that the overuse of the students' L1 slows their proficiency advancement, impacts their language accuracy and demotivates them to use the target language. Additionally, some other Indonesian lecturers with virtual attitudes supported the exclusion of translanguaging, as it was a sign of low English proficiency. In line with this finding, Nel and Muller (2010) attributed students' poor L2 acquisition to teachers' poor teaching styles and limited English proficiency. However, there a lack of evidence regarding the relationship between lecturers' attitudes and their English proficiency.

In response to RQ2, the findings reveal that Indonesian lecturers perceive translanguaging as beneficial because it facilitates classroom interactions. This finding aligns with Pun and Tai (2021), indicating that integrating translanguaging as a mechanism creates a space for student-student and teacher-student interactions. It facilitates communication flow, as students can access their

linguistic and multimodal repertoires and choose suitable signs that fit various situations. Yasar and Dikilitas (2022) add that this approach fosters equity and enhances students' sense of belonging, as they are able to contribute as valued classroom community members. Consistent with the findings of Moody (2019), the surveyed Indonesian lecturers attributed an inclusive, familiar, friendly and secure classroom environment to the use of translanguaging, as it helps alleviate students' fear associated with speaking English in unfamiliar situations. Concurring with the findings of Yuvayapan (2019), the Indonesian lecturers indicated that translingual pedagogies are essential, as they facilitate classroom management. In Turkey, teachers used L1 to give feedback, provide classroom guidance and explain the tasks' deadlines.

Additionally, most of the participating Indonesian lecturers perceived translanguaging as necessary in their EFL classroom in order to scaffold the students' understanding. Interestingly, the interviewees stated that they had received departmental guidelines emphasising the use of translanguaging to enhance and scaffold the students' understanding, especially for first-year students. Raja et al. (2022) confirm this necessity, while stipulating the judicious and pedagogical use of L1 to achieve students' learning goals. Moreover, opening a translanguaging space enhances students' confidence to participate in classroom discussions and use the target language. This corroborates the findings of Cenoz et al. (2022), which show that the integration of students' multilingual and multimodal resources reduces students' anxiety and increases their confidence. The researchers attribute students' confidence to their understanding, which they gain through utilising their existing linguistic and semiotic resources.

Moreover, the Indonesian lecturers surveyed perceived translanguaging as useful, as it empowers students' critical thinking skills and provides authentic opportunities to interact using languages other than English. Contrary to this finding, Rabbidge (2019) reported that the use of translanguaging cannot support critical thinking skills due to the dominance of teacher-directed translanguaging, which limits the space to initiate conversation, discuss or question an argument freely. The findings of the present study were consistent with those of Pun and Tai (2021), who highlighted the role of translanguaging in affirming their identity. The Indonesian lecturers felt empowered to reclaim their identity by expressing themselves in their native language(s) within their cultural context.

As for RQ3, the findings interestingly revealed a significant difference in the perceived benefits of translanguaging with regard to the age of the lecturers. The disparity in the lecturers' age groups regarding the perceived benefits of

translanguaging could indicate the influence of generational perspectives and the impact of their level of teaching experience on their acceptance and utilisation of translingual pedagogies. Moreover, the findings of the present study, in contrast to those of Alrayes (2023), reveal a significant difference between beginner and experienced lecturers regarding the perceived benefits of translanguaging. This discrepancy could be attributed to their exposure to other teaching methods and their flexibility with regard to incorporating multilingual strategies into their pedagogical approaches.

Conclusion and implications

This mixed-methods study examined Indonesian lecturers' attitudes towards translanguaging and its perceived benefits in their EFL classrooms. The study also explored the relationship between lecturers' attitudes and the variables of gender, age, experience, university and faculty. The findings reveal that lecturers have optimal, virtual and maximal attitudes towards translanguaging. They perceive translanguaging as beneficial as it helps to scaffold students' understanding in a familiar, secure and inclusive learning environment. They believe translanguaging is necessary to enhance students' understanding and facilitate student-student and student-teacher interactions. Translanguaging supports the development of students' critical thinking skills and self-confidence. Additionally, utilising their linguistic and multimodal repertoires empowers lecturers to reaffirm their identity and question the perceived hierarchy dominating their EFL classroom. There were significant differences in the perceived benefits of translanguaging among lecturers based on their age and experience, which could be attributed to their willingness and adaptability to bi/multilingual teaching methodologies. These findings have several universal implications that extend beyond the Indonesian context, as they reflect broader trends in multilingual education.

In order to implement these findings, lecturers and policymakers in the Indonesian context as well as in other EFL contexts should reconsider the multilingual turn, which empirically appears to contribute to lecturers' empowerment in reclaiming their identity, while also developing the student's confidence and critical thinking skills. Lecturers should accommodate the universal needs of a bi/multilingual approach, as translanguaging pedagogy is perceived as necessary in order to improve Indonesian students' retention and sense of belonging to the classroom community. The key strength of this study is that it provides evidence that integrating translanguaging in the Indonesian EFL classroom will foster inclusive learning environments, enhance

students' understanding, and encourage shy and low-level students to engage in classroom-based interactions. These benefits are not limited to the Indonesian EFL context, but are relevant to other EFL and ESL linguistic landscapes that are seeking effective strategies to enhance students' learning, encourage student-student and teacher-student interactions, and alleviate the difficulties that students encounter with the English-only approach. While providing insights into integrating translanguaging in the Indonesian classroom, it is imperative to acknowledge some limitations. Firstly, the use of voluntary sampling in this study may have influenced the diversity within the population being studied. It is therefore suggested to employ multiple sampling strategies that could enhance the study's robustness and improve the generalisability of the findings. Secondly, the stakeholders in the present study were teachers only; therefore, we call for more research that further explores the attitudes of Indonesian students and policymakers towards translanguaging and its pedagogical implications in their EFL classroom.

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Language-Related Expressions of Personality

Željko Rački*[1], Željka Flegar[2] and Mojca Juriševič[3]

∞   The present research aims to bridge the gap between prospective multi/plurilingual education and overarching personality psychology by examining how language constructs and basic personality traits are interrelated in pre-service teachers who are fundamental to language education. The first part of the study identifies items within the International Personality Item Pool that are indicative of language constructs, revealing intricate language-related expressions of personality involving listening, learning, speaking, reading and writing. The second part investigates the links between these language constructs and the Big Five personality traits based on a sample of 124 female pre-service primary school teachers aged 19 to 27. The results show significant multivariate relationships, indicating that individuals high in conscientiousness, openness and extraversion, and low in neuroticism, tend to exhibit preferences for listening, learning, speaking and reading. The findings suggest that there are personality-embedded nuanced language-related expressions of trait structures reflecting psychological needs for language competence, relatedness and autonomy in (co-)creation. The research underscores the importance of considering both language constructs and internationally validated personality traits in teachers and their students. It suggests that some teachers and students may naturally align with language-trait structures conducive to quality language teaching and, prospectively, to multi/plurilingual proficiency. Additionally, educational interventions can potentially influence the development of these identified conducive structures over time, offering insights into the stable psychological foundations for language development and consequent pluricultural competence.

Keywords: Big Five personality traits, language constructs, multi/plurilingual education, personality psychology, pre-service teachers

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Jezikovni izrazi osebnosti

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∿   Namen raziskave je ugotoviti medsebojno povezanost jezikovnih konstruktov in temeljnih osebnostnih lastnosti pri študentih – bodočih učiteljih – kot nosilcih jezikovnega izobraževanja ter tako premostiti vrzel med več-/raznojezičnim izobraževanjem in psihologijo osebnosti. V prvem delu študije gre za prepoznavanje tistih trditev v okviru Mednarodnega nabora osebnostnih lastnosti, ki kažejo na jezikovne konstrukte in razkrivajo zapletene osebnostne izraze, povezane z jezikom, ter vključujejo poslušanje, učenje, govorjenje, branje in pisanje. Drugi del raziskuje povezave med prepoznanimi jezikovnimi konstrukti in osebnostnimi lastnostmi po teoriji Velikih petih na vzorcu 124 študentk – bodočih učiteljic razrednega pouka, starih od 19 do 27 let. Rezultati kažejo značilne multivariatne povezave: respondentke z visoko stopnjo vestnosti, odprtosti in ekstravertnosti ter nizko stopnjo nevroticizma izražajo preference za poslušanje, učenje, govorjenje in branje. Ugotovitve kažejo, da obstajajo z osebnostjo povezani niansirani jezikovni izrazi struktur lastnosti, ki odražajo psihološke potrebe po jezikovni kompetenci, povezanosti in avtonomiji pri (so)ustvarjanju. Raziskava poudarja pomen upoštevanja jezikovnih konstruktov ter mednarodno potrjenih osebnostnih lastnosti pri učiteljih in njihovih učencih. Predvideva, da se nekateri učitelji in učenci lahko samodejno uskladijo s strukturami jezikovnih lastnosti, ki spodbujajo kakovostno poučevanje jezikov in perspektivno več-/raznojezično znanje. Poleg tega lahko vzgojno-izobraževalne intervencije potencialno vplivajo na razvoj teh ugotovljenih ugodnih struktur skozi čas, kar ponuja vpogled v stabilne psihološke temelje za jezikovni razvoj in posledično raznokulturno kompetenco.

Ključne besede: Velikih pet osebnostnih lastnosti, jezikovni konstrukti, več-/raznojezično izobraževanje, psihologija osebnosti, bodoči učitelji

Introduction

A bookworm, an erudite, a chatterbox, a keen listener, a storyteller, a wordsmith and a literary connoisseur, among others, illustrate how language constructs convey personality traits figuratively. When these language constructs describe individuals who consistently enjoy reading, are good listeners, speak fluently in public, enjoy learning languages and communicate effectively in writing, they collectively facilitate the identification, quantification and interpretation of enduring psychological structures supporting these behaviours, their expressions and their consequences across various situations and over time.

It is essential to understand how language constructs and the presence of stable personality traits intersect in pre-service teachers, as they play a culturally significant role in providing fundamental language development practices to young students. In psychology, language is used extensively as a method to study individuals when measuring abilities and the content of the human mind in general (McCrae & Costa, 1997; McCrae et al., 2005). As individual differences in cognitive functions, the verbal declarative and procedural knowledge acquired during formal schooling and general life, as well as other broad group ability factors such as reading and writing and general (domain-specific) knowledge, belong within the three-strata human ability hierarchy (Ackerman & Lohman, 2006). Individual differences in abilities are related to individual differences in trait structures, specifically the openness trait (Ackerman & Rolfhus, 1999; DeYoung et al., 2005) within the Big Five personality trait framework (Costa & McCrae, 1985, 2008; Goldberg, 1993, 1999, 2010; Goldberg et al., 2006; Jerneić et al., 2007; Mlačić & Goldberg, 2007). Prototypically open people may be imaginative and appreciative of art and beauty, have rich and deep emotional reactions, readily adopt new ways of doing things, have wide intellectual interests, and tend to be socially and politically liberal (McCrae & Greenberg, 2014). Teachers of basic literacy are expected to fulfil various roles, including being interpersonally and interculturally competent listeners, learners, readers, speakers and writers. Using their enabling language-related personality structures, they may incorporate information about individual needs and cultural identities into everyday teaching practices, fostering a greater appreciation and expression of diversity and a sense of belonging in multicultural societies (Brumen & Dagarin Fojkar, 2012; Iversen, 2022; Morea & Fisher, 2023; Schroedler & Grommes, 2019; Unruh & McCord, 2010).

The present study addresses two primary research questions. Firstly, it examines the conceptual breadth and structure of language-related personality

items from the International Personality Item Pool (IPIP; Goldberg, 1993, 1999; Goldberg et al., 2006) with the objective of developing new scales for language-related expressions of personality. Secondly, it investigates the relationships between the identified language-related structures and the empirically derived Big Five personality traits (i.e., openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness and neuroticism) and their facets in prospective teachers.

Method

Sample

The participants in the study were 131 female pre-service primary school teachers aged between 19 and 27 years ($M = 21.43$, $SD = 1.27$). Their academic performance in the upper secondary state examination in Croatian ($M = 3.34$, $SD = 0.62$) and English ($M = 3.45$, $SD = 0.75$), as well as their university grade point average (GPA; $M = 3.98$, $SD = 0.37$; all on the scale 1–5, poor to excellent), indicated good language proficiency and adherence to university educational standards. Seven participants had missing data, resulting in a final sample of 124 participants who completed all of the questionnaires, of whom 37 participated in item sorting.

Instruments

Measurement of language-related expressions of personality. In order to answer the first research question, the publicly available IPIP item assignment table, containing 3,805 items, was employed to obtain language-related personality items accessible online (Jerneić, n.d.). Following the framework of the Cattel-Horn-Carroll (CHC) cognitive ability definitions (Ackerman & Lohman, 2006), all of the personality items reflecting any verbal learning abilities and verbal declarative and procedural knowledge acquisition during formal schooling and general life, including foreign language aptitude and proficiency, as well as reading and writing usage in any form, were preserved, yielding an initial sample of 191 items. After the removal of duplicates, metaphors and extremes, a final set of 103 items, consensually agreed upon by two professional researchers, was chosen for further analyses. To ensure initial overinclusion and therefore construct breadth in the studied language-related personality item space, more than a hundred items were used, in line with the Act Frequency Approach to measuring traits (Buss & Craik, 1983). All of the items, which are listed in full in Table 1, were utilised in their original form.

Measurement of the Big Five personality traits and facets. Personality traits and facets were measured using the Croatian Translation of the IPIP

NEO PI Facets from Goldberg's IPIP-300 questionnaire (Jerneić et al., 2007). Based on the Big Five model, this tool consists of six facets per personality trait, making a total of 30 facets. The items are available online for reference. The participants rated the accuracy of each item on a seven-point scale. Internal reliability estimates (ω) for the traits ranged from acceptable to high: Openness (.78), Conscientiousness (.93), Extraversion (.90), Agreeableness (.79) and Neuroticism (.95).

Creative writing measure. The Linguistic Creativity Scale (LCS; Rački et al., 2015) gauges creative expression in language. Originally, it assessed creative behaviours across three language styles, portraying a versatile writer involved in literary, scientific and journalistic pursuits. In the present study, the LCS was used to confirm validity and differentiate between five language activities: listening, learning, speaking, reading and writing. The modified instructions prompted the participants to report the types and quantities of writing they had engaged in since they began their teacher studies. This approach quantified overall productivity in creative writing, with an omega (ω) coefficient of .87 (Table 3).

Procedures

In order to address the first research question, data collection comprised of (1) collecting items from the IPIP (Jerneić, n.d.) database, which was undertaken by two professional researchers, and (2) sorting the collected items by participants into meaningful groups for exploratory factor analysis. Serving as anonymous and voluntary item sorters, the 37 female participants, all in their third year of university teacher studies in Croatia, provided written consent and took part in a one-hour group study session during which they individually sorted 103 cut items based on similarity, unaware of their trait of origin. Q methodology, which examines human behaviour from an internal perspective, has been previously applied in language studies (e.g., Li, 2022). The approach used in the present study, which is akin to Q methodology, allowed the participants to subjectively categorise items based on their meaning. They worked at their own pace, creating between 2 and 20 item piles, with an average of 12 piles per participant. The sorted item piles were recorded, resulting in a new dataset of 444 separate item groups used for factor analyses. Following the session, the participants received a debriefing and course credit compensation.

In order to address the second research aim, a month apart, all 124 participants provided written consent and participated anonymously in a face-to-face study lasting two hours. This part of the study used items representing language-related expressions of personality, as well as the Big Five and the creative

writing measure. The participants rated how accurately each item described them on a seven-point scale, ranging from *very inaccurate* (1) to *very accurate* (7). After extensive exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses, the final items for each language scale, listed in Table 2, along with their assigned trait of origin as listed in IPIP (Jerneić, n.d.), descriptive statistics, reliabilities and correlations with other constructs, are presented in Table 3. Higher statistics for the five scales of Listening (i.e., negatively worded items; recoded), Learning, Speaking, Reading and Writing, listed in descending order of means in Table 3, indicate individuals who: a) attentively listen to and comprehend information, b) are active learners, c) speak masterfully in public, d) read extensively, and e) engage in creative writing. The ω coefficients for these scales are .70, .80, .77, .94 and .75, respectively.

Results

The results comprise sections on the factor structure of 103 items indicative of language-related expressions of personality (Table 1), the Confirmatory Factor Analyses (Table 2) of these identified structures in a sample of the participants, and the descriptive statistics, reliabilities (ω and α) and intercorrelations of all study variables (Table 3). A two-dimensional solution from Multidimensional Scaling (MDS) explores the dimensionality of all study variables (Figure 1), while a Canonical Correlation Analysis (CCA) solution examines the linear relationships between the Big Five personality traits and language-related expressions of personality (Table 4). These analyses collectively elucidate relationships within the conceptual space, latent structures and multivariate patterns between language-related constructs and the basic personality traits within the Big Five framework.

The Conceptual Space and Structure of Language-Related Expressions of Personality

The first research question on the structure of language-related expressions of personality was tested in (1) the Q-sort data set, and (2) the participant sample. In (1) the Q-sort item data set consisted of 103 items as columns and 444 rows representing item group memberships (0 denoting items not belonging and 1 indicating items belonging to specific item piles). The exploratory Principal Component Analysis (PCA; Varimax) was conducted to explore latent structures of the item groupings. The analysis yielded five interpretable and orthogonal factors with Eigenvalues ≥ 1 and roots at 15.67, 8.59, 7.97, 5.59 and

5.21, explaining 41.77% of the variance, as determined by a scree plot. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy was .81, indicating good sampling adequacy. An intricate and discernible structure, as illustrated in Table 1, revealed a consistent grouping of items into five factors, tentatively labelled: Reading, Learning, Writing, Not Listening and Speaking. The data-driven suggested factor names are given in bold. The "Not Listening" factor suggests that by not listening the adults may exhibit behaviours that oppose cultural participation, highlighting the need for further investigation of the willingness to take part as a possible prerequisite for language development and use. In (2) the Confirmatory Factor Analyses (CFA) of the same items but in the participant sample yielded unifactorial solutions for Listening, Learning, Speaking, Reading and Writing (Table 2), retaining 37 saturated items, although issues persisted, particularly with the Listening and Speaking scales. Despite limitations in the sample size, reliability coefficients ranged from acceptable to very high (ω from .70 to .94). Skewed distributions were (log-)transformed to enhance linearity. To illustrate relationships between variables (Table 3), Multidimensional Scaling (MDS) generated a two-dimensional conceptual space (Figure 1). Stress measures indicated a good fit. MDS suggested conceptual distinctions between Speaking, Learning and Listening, in comparison to Reading and Writing. The CFA (ML) of the five language scales supports the aforementioned correlated two factors, with a second-order solution reflective of a common language factor, $\chi^2(3) = 4.00$, $p = .26$; CFI = .99, TLI = .97, SRMR = .03, and RMSEA = .05 [90% CI .00–.17], $p = .39$. Distinguishing these two language factors within personality space is of relevance to further analyses and interpretations.

Table 1

Results of a Factor Analysis of the Sample of 103 Language Items

A sample of IPIP items	Factor loading				
	1	2	3	4	5
Factor 1: Reading / Reading enthusiasm					
Read in bed before going to sleep. (ORAIS: Love of Reading)	.79				
Read a car magazine or book. (ORAIS: Interest in Vehicles)	.79				
Read a book. (ORAIS: Love of Reading)	.78				
Read newspaper ads for non-grocery items. (ORAIS: Interest in Shopping)	.78				
Read a book about the things that I collect. (ORAIS: Interest in Collecting)	.78				
Read news on the Internet. (ORAIS: Interest in Computing)	.77				
Have read the great literary classics. (HEXACO_PI: Aesthetic Appreciation/Artistic Interests)	.76				
Read music-related news. (ORAIS: Interest in Music)	.75				
Read a fashion-related magazine. (ORAIS: Appearance-Consciousness)	.75				
Read a news magazine. (ORAIS: Love of Learning)	.75				
Read a book on a financial topic. (ORAIS: Interest in Money)	.74				
Read a self-help book. (ORAIS: Interest in Self-Improvement)	.74				
Read a book about religion or spirituality. (ORAIS: Spirituality/ Religiousness)	.72				
Read a large variety of books. (VIA: Love of Learning)	.71				
Read the Bible or other sacred text. (ORAIS: Spirituality/ Religiousness)	.71				
Read a story to a child. (ORAIS: Interest in Children)	.70				
Read poetry. (ORAIS: Love of Learning)	.69				
Read comics to a child. (ORAIS: Interest in Children)	.69				
Read a fashion-related book. (ORAIS: Appearance-Consciousness)	.68				
Read a lot. (16PF: Sensitivity)	.68				
Read the editorial page of a newspaper. (ORAIS: Love of Learning)	.68				
Read many books. (ORVIS: Language Mastery)	.68				
Spend a lot of time reading. (6FPQ: Comprehension / HPI-HIC: Love of Reading)	.66				
Read all the time. (VIA: Love of Learning)	.66				
Like to read. (16PF: Sensitivity/ 6FPQ: Comprehension / CPI: Comprehension/ HPI: Quickness/ HPI-HIC: Love of Reading)	.64				
Love to read challenging material. (6FPQ: Comprehension/AB5C: Quickness/BFAS-20: Intellect /BIG5: Intellect/Cacioppo1982: Need for Cognition /CPI: Comprehension/HEXACO_PI: Inquisitiveness/ HPI: Creativity/Originality /HPI-HIC: Curiosity /JPI: Intellectual-Breadth /NEO: Intellect)	.63				

A sample of IPIP items	Factor loading				
	1	2	3	4	5
Read quickly. (CPI: Comprehension /HPI: Quickness /HPI-HIC: Intellect /HPI-HIC: Love of Reading)	.59				
Have read a lot. (HPI-HIC: Love of Reading)	.58				
Read an entire book in one sitting. (ORAIS: Love of Reading)	.58				
Read slowly. (HPI: Quickness / HPI-HIC: Intellect / HPI-HIC: Love of Reading)	.43				
Sometimes laugh out loud when reading or watching TV. (Barchard2001: Positive Expressivity)					
Factor 2: Learning / Learning enthusiasm					
Look forward to the opportunity to learn and grow. (VIA: Love of Learning)		.83			
Am thrilled when I learn something new. (VIA: Love of Learning)		.83			
Learned a new skill. (ORAIS: Interest in Self-Improvement)		.81			
Am a true lifelong learner. (VIA: Love of Learning)		.81			
Go out of my way to attend educational events. (VIA: Love of Learning)		.78			
Love to learn new things. (6FPQ: Culture / JPI: Intellectual-Breadth)		.74			
Consult the library or the Internet immediately if I want to know something. (VIA: Love of Learning)		.73			
Looked something up in an encyclopaedia. (ORAIS: Love of Learning)		.72			
Want to increase my knowledge. (6FPQ: Intellectual Openness/ CPI: Depth)		.69			
Visited a public library. (ORAIS: Love of Reading)		.58			
Learn quickly. (16PF: Intellect /AB5C: Competence)		.49			
Looked up a word in a dictionary. (ORAIS: Love of Learning)		.48			
Watched an educational channel on TV. (ORAIS: Love of Learning)		.41			
Bought a book about the things that I collect. (ORAIS: Interest in Collecting)		.38			
Bought a book. (ORAIS: Love of Reading)		.37			
Read someone's personal web page. (ORAIS: Interest in Social Media)		.36			
Help others learn new ideas. (ORVIS: Altruism)					
Learn things slowly. (BFAS: Intellect)					
Bought a self-help book. (ORAIS: Interest in Self-Improvement)					
Factor 3: Writing / Creative writing (Writing proficiency)					
Wrote a postcard. (ORAIS: Interest in Journaling)			.92		
Wrote a handwritten letter. (ORAIS: Interest in Journaling)			.91		
Write short stories or novels. (ORVIS: Creativity/Originality)			.90		
Keep a diary or journal. (ORVIS: Language Mastery)			.90		

A sample of IPIP items	Factor loading				
	1	2	3	4	5
Wrote poetry. (ORAIS: Creativity/Originality, Interest in Journaling)			.90		
Wrote a thank you note. (ORAIS: Interest in Journaling)			.90		
Write songs. (ORVIS: Creativity/Originality)			.89		
Wrote a love letter. (ORAIS: Interest in Romance)			.88		
Worked on a scrap book. (ORAIS: Interest in Journaling)			.73		
Edit a newspaper. (ORVIS: Language Mastery)			.50		
Make up word puzzles. (ORVIS: Language Mastery)			.43		
Factor 4: Not listening / Cognitive and cultural disengagement					
Don't like to visit museums. (VIA: Love of Learning)				.76	
Dislike works of fiction. (16PF: Sensitivity)				.75	
Don't like poetry. (6FPQ: Culture)				.75	
Don't like to learn new things. (VIA: Love of Learning)				.74	
Dislike learning. (AB5C: Intellect /CPI: Comprehension /HPI-HIC: Curiosity /HPI-HIC: Problem-solving)				.71	
Don't read nonfiction books for fun. (VIA: Love of Learning)				.69	
Seldom read comics. (HPI-HIC: Interest in Game-Playing)				.56	
Don't like reading or hearing opinions that go against my way of thinking. (CAT-PD: Rigidity)				.49	
Avoid difficult reading material. (6FPQ: Comprehension /7FACTOR: Intellect /AB5C: Quickness /BFAS: Intellect /BFAS: Intellectual Openness /BFAS-20: Intellect /BIG5: Intellect /Cacioppo1982: Need for Cognition /CPI: Intellect /HEXACO_PI: Inquisitiveness /HPI: Creativity/Originality /HPI-HIC: Love of Reading /JPI: Intellectual-Breadth /NEO: Intellect)				.43	
Seldom feel weepy while reading the sad part of a story. (HEXACO_PI: Sentimentality)				.40	
Skip difficult words while reading. (16PF: Intellect /AB5C: Intellect /CPI: Comprehension /HPI: Quickness)				.39	
Would be afraid to give a speech in public. (HEXACO_PI: Social Boldness)				.39	
Be a foreign correspondent. (ORVIS: Language Mastery)				-.38	
Don't pay enough attention when others are speaking to me. (Span2002: ADHD)				.38	
Be a translator or interpreter. (ORVIS: Language Mastery)				-.38	
Have a poor vocabulary. (16PF: Intellect /6FPQ: Comprehension / AB5C: Intellect / CPI: Comprehension /HPI: Quickness /HPI-HIC: Language Mastery)				.37	
Be a professor of English. (ORVIS: Language Mastery)				-.37	
Have been told I'm not listening when others are speaking to me. (Span2002: ADHD)				.32	
Be a librarian. (ORVIS: Language Mastery)				-.30	

A sample of IPIP items	Factor loading				
	1	2	3	4	5
Speak ill of others. (HEXACO_PI: Gentleness /HPI: Calmness / HPI-HIC: Pleasantness)					
Use swear words. (16PF: Dutifulness /BIDR: Impression-Management /CPI: Self-control, Self-regulation /HPI: Dutifulness / TCI: Rebelliousness)					
Speak softly. (IPIP-IPC: Submissiveness /7FACTOR: Extraversion / AB5C: Talkativeness /HEXACO_PI: Expressiveness)					
Am sometimes so preoccupied with my own thoughts I don't realise others are trying to speak to me. (CAT-PD: Fantasy Proneness)					
Don't speak my mind freely when there might be negative results. (VIA: Bravery/Courage/Valor)					
Have been left speechless by the beauty depicted in a movie. (VIA: Aesthetic Appreciation/Artistic Interests)					
Factor 5: Speaking / (Public) Speaking proficiency					
Speak fluently on any subject. (ORVIS: Language Mastery)					.81
Never at a loss for words. (7FACTOR: Extraversion / AB5C: Leadership)					.75
Am never at a loss for words. (HEXACO_PI: Expressiveness)					.74
Speak loudly. (IPIP-IPC: Dominance /AB5C: Talkativeness)					.74
Use difficult words. (AB5C: Intellect /BFAS-20: Intellect /BIG5: Intellect /HPI-HIC: Language Mastery)					.71
Am good at making impromptu speeches. (6FPQ: Extraversion /HEXACO_PI: Social Boldness /JPI: Social-Confidence /MPQ: Assertiveness /Snyder1974: Self-monitoring)					.70
Have a rich vocabulary. (6FPQ: Comprehension /7FACTOR: Intellect /AB5C: Intellect /BFAS: Intellect /BFAS: Intellectual Openness /BFAS-20: Intellect /BIG5: Intellect /CPI: Comprehension /HEXACO_PI: Inquisitiveness /HPI: Quickness / HPI-HIC: Intellect /HPI-HIC: Language Mastery /JPI: Intellectual-Complexity /NEO: Intellect /NEO5-20: Openness to Experience)					.70
Show a mastery of language. (6FPQ: Comprehension /AB5C: Intellect /CPI: Comprehension/ HPI-HIC: Intellect /HPI-HIC: Language Mastery)					.65
Can handle a lot of information. (HPI-HIC: Language Mastery)					.55
Choose my words with care. (6FPQ: Deliberateness /CPI: Planfulness /NEO: Cautiousness)					.38
Know many languages. (ORVIS: Language Mastery)					.36
Am able to read the minds of others. (CAT-PD; Irrational Beliefs)					.34
Can't help noticing whether something I read is grammatically correct. (M23)					
Wrote a letter to a newspaper or politician. (ORAIS: Interest in Political Activism)					
Speak up in protest when I hear someone say mean things. (VIA: Bravery/Courage/Valor)					

A sample of IPIP items	Factor loading				
	1	2	3	4	5
Enjoy discussing movies and books with others. (6FPQ: Comprehension /AB5C: Reflection /JPI: Intellectual-Complexity)					
Think before I speak. (VIA: Prudence)					

Note. *N* = 444 item groups. Principal Component Analysis (PCA) with orthogonal (Varimax) rotation was employed for extraction. Factor loadings ≥ .30 are listed; the remaining items exhibited inconsistent grouping and low item-total correlations. Certain IPIP items may measure multiple constructs. For instance, an IPIP item like 'Like to read' may assess psychological constructs similar to those identified in commonly utilised psychological inventories (International Personality Item Pool, 2023).

Table 2

Results of Confirmatory Factor Analyses (CFA) for the Unifactorial Solution of Scales of Listening, Learning, Speaking, Reading and Writing in the Participant Sample

Scale labels, items, instruments of origin and item factor loadings	χ^2	*df*	CFI	TLI	RMSEA	RMSEA [90% CI]	SRMR
Listening (7 items[-]): *Have been told I'm not listening when others are speaking to me* (Span2002; ADHD; .65); *Have a poor vocabulary* (16PF; Intellect, etc.; .59); *Don't pay enough attention when others are speaking to me* (Span2002; ADHD; .53); *Dislike learning* (AB5C; Intellect, etc.; .48); *Avoid difficult reading material* (6FPQ; Comprehension, etc.; .44); *Skip difficult words while reading* (16PF; Intellect, etc.; .44); *Don't like to learn new things* (VIA; Love of Learning; .36).	34.83***	14	.83	.74	.11	[.06, .16]	.08
Learning (7 items[+]): *Love to learn new things* (6FPQ; Culture, etc.; .81); *Go out of my way to attend educational events* (VIA; Love of Learning; .64); *Look forward to the opportunity to learn and grow* (VIA; Love of Learning; .63); *Want to increase my knowledge* (6FPQ; Intellectual Openness; .59); *Learned a new skill* (ORAIS; Interest in Self-Improvement; .56); *Am thrilled when I learn something new* (VIA; Love of Learning; .53); *Am a true lifelong learner* (VIA; Love of Learning; .53).	23.62	14	.96	.93	.07	[.00, .12]	.05
Speaking (8 items[+]): *Have a rich vocabulary* (O5; 6FPQ; Comprehension, etc.; .75); *Show a mastery of language* (6FPQ; Comprehension, etc.; .63); *Speak fluently on any subject* (ORVIS; Language Mastery; .60); *Am good at making impromptu speeches* (6FPQ; Extraversion, etc.; .53); *Can handle a lot of information* (O5; HPI-HIC; Language Mastery; .53); *Am never at a loss for words* (HEXACO_PI; Expressiveness, .51); *Never at a loss for words* (7FACTOR; Extraversion, etc.; .47); *Use difficult words* (AB5C; Intellect, etc.; .44).	89.10***	20	.73	.62	.17	[.13, .20]	.10

Scale labels, items, instruments of origin and item factor loadings	χ^2	df	CFI	TLI	RMSEA	RMSEA [90% CI]	SRMR
Reading (8 items+): ***Read a lot*** (16PF; *Sensitivity*; .96); ***Spend a lot of time reading*** (6FPQ; *Comprehension, etc.*; .90); ***Have read a lot*** (HPI-HIC; *Love of Reading*; .86); ***Read many books*** (ORVIS; *Language mastery*; .84); ***Read a book*** (ORAIS; *Love of Reading*; .81); ***Read all the time*** (VIA; *Love of learning*; .79); ***Like to read*** (16PF; *Sensitivity, etc.*; .70); ***Read a large variety of books*** (VIA; *Love of learning*; .61).	64.98***	20	.95	.93	.13	[.10, .17]	.04
Writing (7 items+): ***Write songs*** (ORVIS; *Creativity/Originality*; .75); ***Wrote poetry*** (ORAIS; *Creativity/Originality*; .71); ***Wrote a love letter*** (ORAIS; *Interest in Romance*; .63); ***Write short stories or novels*** (ORVIS; *Creativity/Originality*; .60); ***Wrote a handwritten letter*** (ORAIS; *Interest in Journaling*; .48); ***Edit a newspaper*** (ORVIS; *Language Mastery*; .36); ***Keep a diary or journal*** (ORVIS; *Language Mastery*; .36).	27.58*	14	.92	.89	.09	[.04, .14]	.06

Note. N = 124. Items are listed in full in the descending order of factor loadings, followed by the factor loading size in the unifactorial CFA solution of that scale in the study sample. CFI = Comparative Fit Index. TLI = Tucker-Lewis Index. RMSEA = Root Mean Square Error of Approximation. The estimator is ML. The average variance extracted (AVE) for the factors, in the same order, is 27, 37, 30, 66 and 32%.
*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001.

Table 3

*Descriptive Statistics and Intercorrelations for Study Variables*

Study variables	Skew	*M*	*SD*	ω	α	1	2	3	4	5
Language constructs (LLSRW)										
1. Listening	-1.13	6.08	0.85	.70	.70	—				
2. Learning	-0.20	5.38	0.98	.80	.80	.44***	—			
3. Speaking	0.10	4.46	1.04	.77	.78	.49***	.60***	—		
4. Reading	0.09	4.08	1.57	.94	.94	.20*	.21*	.30**	—	
5. Writing	1.50	1.95	1.08	.75	.74	.02	.19*	.21*	.28**	—
The Big Five traits (OCEAN)										
Openness (O)	-0.80	5.13	0.47	.78	.81	.39***	.30**	.34***	.27**	.20*
O1_Imagination	-0.72	5.42	0.93	.77	.76	.13	.13	.16	.33***	.13
O2_Artistic_interests	-1.00	6.11	0.69	.69	.68	.30***	.29**	.14	.19*	.30**
O3_Emotionality	-0.33	5.42	0.78	.67	.65	.26**	.32***	.12	.10	.09
O4_Adventurousness	-0.55	4.87	0.79	.66	.64	.07	-.01	.06	-.03	-.05
O5_Intellect	-0.29	5.09	0.89	.71	.70	.56**	.45***	.61***	.34***	.19*
O6_Liberalism	0.28	3.89	0.76	.44	.46	-.03	-.14	.05	-.07	.06
Conscientiousness (C)	-0.19	5.15	0.69	.93	.92	.55***	.50***	.41***	.12	-.11
C1_Self_efficacy	-0.27	4.86	0.81	.70	.71	.54***	.40***	.54***	.04	-.09

Study variables	Skew	*M*	*SD*	ω	α	1	2	3	4	5
C2_Orderliness	-0.79	5.40	1.17	.85	.85	.39**	.32***	.21*	.16	-.15
C3_Dutifulness	-0.62	6.13	0.63	.72	.71	.40***	.37***	.27**	-.07	-.09
C4_Achievement_striving	-0.48	5.05	0.80	.68	.68	.49***	.54***	.43***	.15	.07
C5_Self_discipline	-0.14	4.89	1.17	.81	.86	.42***	.42***	.35**	.17	.00
C6_Cautiousness	-0.15	4.61	1.05	.79	.77	.25**	.19*	.12	-.02	-.15
Extraversion (E)	-0.55	4.92	0.64	.90	.90	.34***	.20*	.38***	.08	.01
E1_Friendliness	-0.66	5.47	1.04	.85	.85	.39***	.24**	.33***	.08	-.06
E2_Gregariousness	-0.56	4.79	1.09	.78	.79	.19*	.00	.07	.01	-.14
E3_Assertiveness	0.03	4.75	0.87	.66	.67	.33***	.23*	.56***	.16	.11
E4_Activity_level	-0.08	4.36	0.72	.42	.51	.35**	.31***	.43***	.22*	.15
E5_Excitement_seeking	-0.60	4.42	1.03	.79	.78	.00	-.08	.03	.04	.03
E6_Cheerfulness	-0.89	5.70	0.89	.80	.79	.28**	.30**	.32**	.12	.07
Agreeableness (A)	-0.15	5.23	0.45	.79	.82	.25**	.16	-.08	.08	-.06
A1_Trust	-0.68	4.46	0.92	.77	.76	.14	.15	.17	.14	.02
A2_Morality	-0.74	6.13	0.61	.63	.63	.33***	.28**	.12	.07	.00
A3_Altruism	-0.56	6.14	0.58	.67	.67	.37***	.33***	.19*	.03	-.00
A4_Cooperation	-0.50	5.38	0.78	.59	.60	.15	.17	-.12	-.07	-.14
A5_Modesty	-0.18	4.42	1.06	.81	.80	-.06	-.13	-.34***	.01	-.05
A6_Sympathy	-0.29	4.87	0.78	.54	.60	.18*	-.00	-.04	.09	.00
Neuroticism (N)	0.04	3.85	0.90	.95	.95	-.22*	-.09	.04	.04	.11
N1_Anxiety	-0.03	4.23	1.14	.84	.84	-.12	-.01	.00	.00	.05
N2_Anger	-0.06	4.03	1.46	.91	.92	-.12	.02	.01	.01	.06
N3_Depression	0.74	2.93	1.28	.90	.90	-.11	-.04	-.07	.20*	.19*
N4_Self_consciousness	0.14	3.80	1.06	.79	.79	-.28**	-.14	-.41***	-.05	.04
N5_Immoderation	-0.30	4.13	0.75	.52	.53	-.27**	-.30**	-.20*	.02	.11
N6_Vulnerability	-0.06	3.99	1.02	.75	.77	-.25**	-.11	-.30**	.01	.06
Linguistic creativity scale (LCS)	0.17	1.18	0.63	.87	.85	.14	.25**	.26**	.17	.27**
Grade point average (GPA)	0.05	3.98	0.38	—	—	.14	.18*	.16	-.09	.02

Note. N = 124. Pearson *r*. All skewed variables were (log-)transformed to ensure univariate normality. Mardia's Test detected no departure from multivariate normality of ten transformed variables used in CCA (i.e., LLSRW and OCEAN variables; with skewness at *p* = .39 and kurtosis at *p* = .06). This table has 40 variables with a section of correlations of relevance to the study presented here.
*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001.

Figure 1

Two-Dimensional Solution Derived From Multidimensional Scaling of Study Variables
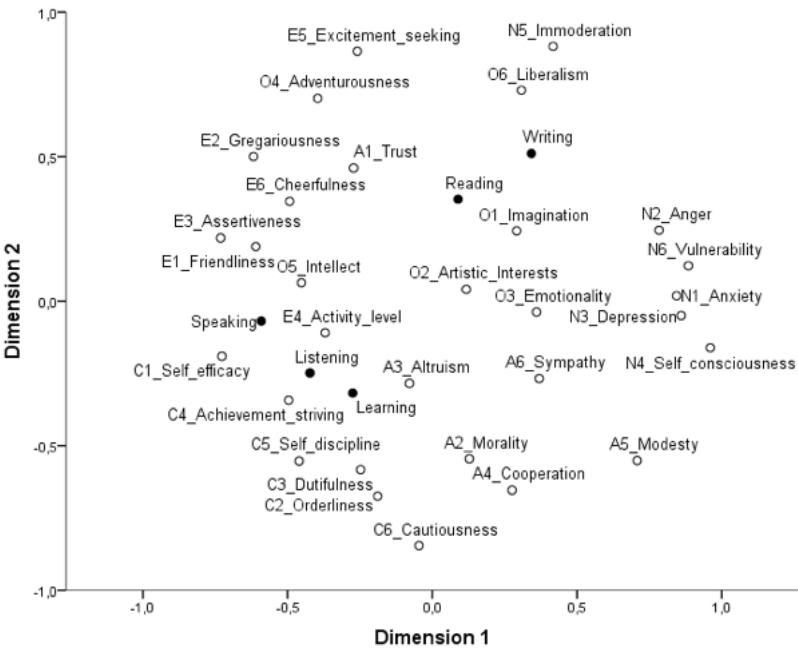
Note. N = 124. The 30 Big Five facets and the five scales of Language constructs were included in the analysis (PROXSCAL; Squared Euclidian distance; *z*-scores by transformed variables). Normalised Raw Stress = .05, Stress-I = .23, Stress-II = .56, Dispersion Accounted For (D.A.F.) = .95 and Tucker's coefficient of congruence at .97.

Table 4

Canonical Correlation Analysis (CCA) Solution for Multiple Personality Traits Predicting Multiple Language Constructs

Variable sets	First Canonical Variate		Second Canonical Variate		Third Canonical Variate	
	Correlation	*Coefficient*	*Correlation*	*Coefficient*	*Correlation*	*Coefficient*
Language set						
Listening	.88	.59	.13	.40	.00	.00
Learning	.76	.36	.13	.71	−.16	−.12
Speaking	.75	.25	−.63	−1.26	−.03	.36
Reading	.30	.07	−.04	.17	−.67	−.55
Writing	.02	−.13	−.30	−.22	−.84	−.74
Percent of variance	40%		10%		24%	
Redundancy	22%		2%		2%	

Variable sets	First Canonical Variate		Second Canonical Variate		Third Canonical Variate	
	Correlation	*Coefficient*	*Correlation*	*Coefficient*	*Correlation*	*Coefficient*
The Big Five traits set						
Openness	.56	.44	−.14	−.34	−.71	−.91
Conscientiousness	.85	.81	.25	.17	.37	.22
Extraversion	.50	.22	−.47	−.27	.22	.37
Agreeableness	.27	−.06	.83	.89	−.16	.09
Neuroticism	−.30	.08	.24	.18	−.57	−.36
Percent of variance	29%		21%		21%	
Redundancy	16%		4%		2%	
Canonical correlation (R_c)	.74		.42		.29	

Note. *N* = 124. *Correlation* = canonical loadings (structure correlations). *Coefficient* = canonical weights (standardised coefficients).

Multivariate Patterns of Language-Related Expressions of Personality

The second research question addressed the degree of relationships between multiple continuous variables, i.e., identified language constructs or the language-related expressions of personality, on the one hand, and the Big Five traits, on the other. Since language constructs are conceptually related but not the same (as previously listed in the CFAs), and personality traits are related but not the same, the Canonical Correlation Analysis (CCA) was used as the analytic technique to maximally correlate their possible linear combinations. The first two CCA canonical correlations (.74, .42, .29, .16 and .00) were significant. With all five canonical correlations included, $\chi^2(25) = 129.28$, $p < .001$, and with the first canonical correlation removed, $\chi^2(16) = 35.38$, $p = .004$. The first two root pairs therefore accounted for the significant relationships between the two sets of variables, Wilks $\lambda = .33$, $F(25, 424.99) = 5.86$, $p < .001$, and Wilks $\lambda = .74$, $F(16, 351.97) = 2.79$, $p = .004$. The first pair had a 55% overlapping variance. The second pair of canonical variates, as the proportion of variance extracted from the residual after the first pair has been extracted, explained an additional 17% of the overlapping variance between the second pair of variates. Subsequent χ^2 tests were not statistically significant, as the third pair was only minimally related (.29; 8% overlapping variance), Wilks $\lambda = .89$, $F(9, 282.46) = 1.47$, $p = .157$, and $\chi^2(9) = 13.12$, $p = .157$. The third pair was retained for its contribution to the understanding of the studied research problem. Based on the percentage of variance, redundancy analyses and the statistical significance tests, the first

function should be accepted and the interpretations of the remaining two are questionable. The variables within the sets with correlations of .30 and above will be interpreted.

The canonical solution is listed in full in Table 4.

Discussion

Structures and Patterns of Language-Related Expressions of Personality

The language-related personality items display an intricate internal structure (Tables 1 and 2) and demonstrate considerable diversity, embeddedness and breadth, reflecting psychologically ubiquitous measures that encompass diverse psychological constructs of intrapersonal and interpersonal importance. This underscores the need for further investigation, particularly in multilingual contexts, as these items serve as crucial indicators of complex language dynamics and their profound dependence on, influence upon and expression of individual personality. Table 3, Table 4 and Figure 1 investigate the detailed relationships between these language constructs and the Big Five traits/facets. On the trait level, listening, learning and speaking tell more about conscientiousness (i.e., the Learning scale correlates significantly and positively with the student GPA, $r(121) = .18$, $p = .040$), while the reading and writing scales tell more about the openness of the person, tapping onto different trait structures in their expression. The results of the study highlight the nuances in complex relationships between language constructs and the Big Five personality traits, challenging simplistic associations.

The multivariate patterns in the first significant pair of canonical variates indicate that participants who rate themselves as more conscientious (.85), more open (.56), more extraverted (.50) and with relatively lower scores on neuroticism (−.30) are more accurately described as listening more (.88), learning more (.76), speaking more (.76) and relatively reading more (.30). The first canonical variate strongly indicates competence, performance and achievement, aligning with previous research linking the Big Five personality traits, particularly conscientiousness, to academic and job performance (Ackerman et al., 2011; Andersen et al., 2020; Miyamoto et al., 2023; Poropat, 2009; Zell & Lesick, 2022; Zhang & Ziegler, 2016). These findings are consistent across longitudinal studies (Caspi, 2000; Chamorro-Premuzic & Furnham, 2003), with conscientiousness consistently showing the strongest effect, supported by meta-analytic research (Mammadov, 2022; Meyer et al., 2023), which also

emphasises the relevance of openness, particularly in the context of second language learning (Chen et al., 2022).

The second pair of canonical variates suggests that participants who describe themselves as more agreeable (.83) and more introverted (−.47) also describe themselves as people who speak less (−.63) and write less (−.30). The interpretation of canonical loadings may also be made consistently in the opposite direction, as they are not unidirectional. For example, more disagreeable and extraverted participants describe themselves as speaking more and relatively writing more. Careful interpretation is necessary within a broader dispositional framework, considering courage (see Peterson & Seligman, 2004, for more on virtues and strengths), especially in educational contexts where recognising character virtues can support valour and dispel fear in public speaking situations, as character strengths are predictors of job performance beyond the aforementioned cognitive ability and the Big Five traits (Harzer et al., 2021).

The third pair of canonical variates, although of limited use due to its marginal canonical correlation of .29, refers specifically to reading and writing, and was therefore retained, as it is of special interest to the present study. More open participants (.71), those with higher scores in neuroticism (.57) and relatively less conscientious participants (−.37) describe themselves as both writing (.84) and reading more (.67). This is in line with previous research linking openness to intelligence (e.g., Ackerman & Lohman, 2006; Chamorro-Premuzic & Furnham, 2006; DeYoung et al., 2005), and implicating openness as the core of the creative personality (e.g., Oleynick et al., 2017; Puryear et al., 2017, 2019; Silvia et al., 2009). The Writing scale correlates with the Linguistic creativity scale (LCS), a previously explored measure of creative writing across functional language styles, $r(124) = .26$, $p = .003$, and Croatian language state final exam grade, $r(122) = .21$, $p = .023$. This offers initial support to the validity of the Writing scale, suggesting that this scale addresses creative competence in writing. Creativity, as cultural participation (Glăveanu, 2011), also has previously well-studied affective underpinnings (Baas, 2019; Benedek et al., 2020; Ivcevic & Hoffmann, 2019; Silvia et al., 2021), and the personalities of creative writers (Piirto, 2009), including studies on mental illness and the art-therapeutic benefits of joy and a sense of well-being by expressing and processing emotions through writing (Shafir et al., 2020), corroborate these conclusions even more strongly (Kaufman & Baer, 2002; Lindauer, 2009; Silvia & Kaufman, 2010; Silvia et al., 2021). A multigroup randomised controlled study across five countries and four languages showed that working on creative tasks leads to an increase in positive emotions through an increase in feelings of *autonomy* (i.e., freedom to express ideas and opinions; Bujacz et al., 2016). What these findings

jointly imply about affect is that daily motivated active reading and honing of creative writing habits probably function as emotion up-regulation strategies that provide meaning and joy.

Language-Related Expressions of Personality: Implications and Strategies for Effective Language Teaching

The three pairs of canonical variates as multivariate synthetic variables with prominent combinations of (1) C/O/E, (2) A/E, and (3) O/N traits, in that order of pairs, seem to stand for mutual influences of language constructs and personality traits in (1) intellectual, (2) social and (3) affective processes, as evident in language usage, in that same order, and reflected in the orthogonal latent themes of (1) competence/achievement motivation, (2) relatedness/speaking out/rebellion, and (3) autonomous creation/cultural participation. Therefore, they are reminiscent of the underlying basic human psychological needs of competence, relatedness and autonomy (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Deci et al., 2001). The educational implications of understanding these relationships, as depicted in Figure 1, suggest that educators should be mindful of how personality traits influence language learning and expression, and how language use can, in turn, affect personality traits, emphasising the need for a nuanced approach to fostering communication and values in education. A general point of discussion that is of utmost importance to educators is the fact that some personality traits are comparatively more predictive of some language constructs than others, as our study shows. All of the language constructs (i.e., to listen, learn, speak, read and write) are also commonly demanded of students, communicated as expectations to be displayed, and evaluated as educational objectives. This suggests that some students may express personality traits and language domain-specific structures that are significantly more education-congruent, reaping the benefits of academic success. Nevertheless, the expected language competencies may be disentangled from the significant effects of the language users' naturally existing personality trait structures by intentionally deconstructing language into separate behavioural acts or easily attainable behavioural emulations of prototypical others, portrayed by the given individual items within the scales of language constructs as behaviour scripts. This may be done by focusing on using personas or roles or actively taking on different behaviourally prototypical personalities of a listener, learner, reader, speaker and/or writer to act out scripts (i.e., the language construct scale items, and similar prompts) and reap the rewards for that persona's individually discernible acts. The younger the intended audience is, the more playful the language prototype should be (see

Russ, 2003, 2013, and Vygotsky, 2004, for more on play and development). One should keep in mind that the younger the person the educator communicates with – and the participants in the present study will teach students as young as six years – the less stable and more malleable the personality traits are, as is evident in the level of trait stability coefficients across a lifetime (Bleidorn et al., 2022; Roberts & DelVecchio, 2000; Roberts et al., 2017). The study may suggest that when one is explicitly expected to listen, learn, speak, read or write as the contingently rewarded educational outcomes, one may over time be conditioned to display (if having) or emulate and develop (if not having) the necessary, sufficient or supportive personality traits and their effective multivariate combinations for that language construct. This, of course, succinctly summarises not just the expectations from multi/plurilingual education in particular, but from education in general. Some resistance and rebellion are inevitable, because psychological traits, although pliable, show remarkable stability over time. The educator needs to keep in mind that by shunning those who disagree or rebel, they are not actively partaking in eradicating those who are disagreeable and outspoken as currently undesirable, but possibly productive future authors. By recognising the nuanced correlations between personality traits and language constructs, educators can gain insight into how individual differences influence language learning. Understanding these complex relationships can inform teaching strategies tailored to students' diverse personalities, thus facilitating more effective language acquisition. Specifically, by identifying underlying student basic psychological needs related to competence, relatedness and autonomy, educators can design meaningful and challenging language learning activities that resonate with students on a psychologically deeper level, promoting engagement and proficiency. By being mindful of how needs and traits influence language use and expression, educators can create inclusive learning environments in which students feel empowered to compete, relate and express themselves authentically across various cultural boundaries. Additionally, by acknowledging resistance and rebellion in educational settings, educators can facilitate meaningful discussions on cultural differences and encourage students to embrace diversity in language and communication.

There is a tautology, of course, in educating for and then evaluating stable personality trait-dependent language constructs, and in education affecting the development of such personality traits in (predictable) ways. Acknowledging this tautology is an informed starting point for using (existing) traits as psychological substrates and using (expected and graded) language constructs as competence signatures to skilfully, authentically and creatively communicate and foster humanity's overarching universal values towards the common good.

Conclusions

The present study provides both theoretical and practical contributions to the fields of psychology, language studies, education and the arts. Theoretically, it deepens our comprehension of the relations between common language patterns and the stable personality traits outlined in the Big Five framework worldwide. On a practical level, the study sheds light on how various expressions of personality through language may reflect underlying basic psychological needs. The results of the study therefore suggest that paying attention to the patterns of language-related expressions of personality may serve to more effectively identify, prioritise and address these needs in personal, interpersonal and cross-cultural interactions.

Limits and Implications for Further Studies

This study is subject to certain limitations that warrant caution against overgeneralisation of the results. These include the relatively small sample size consisting of female students enrolled in university teacher studies, as well as the reliance on self-assessments for measuring personality constructs. Additionally, the reliability of the IPIP personality measures was deemed satisfactory but not optimal, hovering around approximately .70. This limitation affects the size of correlations and consequently diminishes their predictive accuracy. Despite these constraints, however, all of the materials and measurements used in the study are meticulously described and made available online, facilitating replication by other researchers. The primary value of the study lies in the extensive data it provides on thirty personality facets and five traits, along with their correlations with listening, learning, speaking, reading and writing. This wealth of information can serve as a foundation for posing new research questions and formulating hypotheses for future investigations.

Acknowledgments

Data availability statement

The data supporting the conclusions of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

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Biographical note

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Remote Learning and Stress in Mothers of Students with Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder during the Covid-19 Lockdown

Daniela Cvitković[*1], Ana Wagner Jakab[2] and Jasmina Stošić[2]

~ The Covid-19 lockdown and the implementation of remote learning brought challenges to children with ADHD and their parents. This research aimed to examine the spatial and technical preconditions and quality of support for children with ADHD during remote learning and to determine their mothers' burdens with the children's school tasks during the first lockdown. Another aim was to determine the degree of academic accommodation of teaching, the mother's burden with the school tasks, and the impact of the intensity of the children's difficulties on mothers' stress levels. The study had 61 mothers of children with ADHD, aged 30 to 53, as participants. Data were collected using an online questionnaire. The perspective of mothers showed that spatial conditions were not appropriate for holding online classes. Furthermore, teaching materials during online classes were not adapted to the child's needs, teachers did not send teaching materials through the available online services in a proper manner, and more than a third of the mothers stated that there was no interactive teaching at all and that there was no individual contact with teachers. Most mothers state that they are burdened with the child's school tasks more than compared to the period before the lockdown. It has also been shown that attention symptoms, lack of academic accommodations, and school workload have statistically significant effects on maternal stress.

Keywords: ADHD, remote learning, stress in mothers, Covid-19 lockdown

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Učenje na daljavo in stres pri materah učencev z motnjo pomanjkanja pozornosti s hiperaktivnostjo (ADHD) med zaprtjem zaradi covida-19

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∼   Zaprtje zaradi covida-19 in izvajanje učenja na daljavo sta prinesla izzive za otroke z motnjo ADHD in njihove starše. Namen te raziskave je bil preučiti prostorske in tehnične predpogoje ter kakovost podpore otrokom z motnjo ADHD med učenjem na daljavo in ugotoviti obremenjenost njihovih mater s šolskimi nalogami otrok med prvim zaprtjem. Drugi cilj je bil ugotoviti stopnjo akademske prilagoditve pouka, obremenjenost mater s šolskimi nalogami in vpliv intenzivnosti težav otrok na ravni stresa pri materah. V raziskavi je sodelovalo 61 mater otrok z motnjo ADHD, starih od 30 do 53 let. Podatki so bili zbrani s pomočjo spletnega vprašalnika. Vidik, ki so ga izrazile sodelujoče matere, je pokazal, da prostorski pogoji niso bili primerni za izvajanje pouka prek spleta. Poleg tega učna gradiva, rabljena med poukom prek spleta, niso bila prilagojena otrokovim potrebam, učitelji učnih gradiv niso pošiljali prek razpoložljivih spletnih storitev na ustrezen način, več kot tretjina mater pa je navedla, da interaktivnega pouka sploh ni bilo in da ni bilo individualnega stika z učitelji. Večina mater navaja, da so bolj obremenjene s šolskimi nalogami otrok v primerjavi z obdobjem pred zaprtjem. Pokazalo se je tudi, da simptomi pozornosti, pomanjkanje učnih prilagoditev in šolska obremenitev statistično pomembno vplivajo na stres mater učencev.

Ključne besede: motnja ADHD, učenje na daljavo, stres pri materah, zaprtje zaradi covida-19

Introduction

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic in March 2020, Croatia introduced a lockdown. Consequently, the schools were closed, and classes switched to remote learning; prior preparation for such a form of teaching had not occurred. For students from the first to the fourth grades of primary school, teachers organised classes through public television. The schools could hold classes remotely by implementing various modalities. For upper grades of primary and secondary school, classes were held remotely. Some teachers held real-time interactive classes via online platforms (e.g., Microsoft Teams), and some sent teaching materials and assignments to students electronically. In the context of the definition of remote learning as a learning experience in a synchronous or asynchronous environment using different devices with Internet access, whereby students can be located anywhere during learning and interaction with teachers and other students (Singh & Thurman, 2019), the teaching thus took place both synchronously and asynchronously.

Huang et al. (2020) identified the following factors for the effectiveness of online learning: 1) reliable communication infrastructure; 2) appropriate digital learning resources; 3) suitable learning tools; 4) effective learning methods; 5) organisation of learning in class; 6) effective teacher and student support services; 7) close cooperation between governments, businesses, and schools.

The pandemic brought a change in routines, limited ability to move, challenges of working and learning from home, which is affected by the confined spaces in which all household members reside, and the lack of digital equipment needed for all household members in some families. These circumstances pose an even greater challenge to children with disabilities. Children with developmental disabilities may be at increased risk of deteriorating learning and social skills when changing, reducing or eliminating typical services (Frederick et al., 2020).

In this situation, it can be expected that the symptoms of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), including inattention, hyperactivity, and impulsivity, intensified. Studies from other countries have shown that during the Covid-19 pandemic, children with ADHD had more intense and more frequent behavioural problems than before the pandemic (McGowan et al., 2020; Zhang et al., 2020).

Due to the very nature of difficulties (attention, executive functions, etc.), students with ADHD often need support in learning and doing homework. Problems in doing homework include low motivation and productivity, avoiding and delaying school responsibilities, off-task behaviour, poor time organisation and planning for learning (Habboushe et al., 2001). Experiencing the pandemic

showed that parents of students with ADHD had more challenges and less confidence in managing and supporting remote learning and rarer communication with school (Becker et al., 2020). Since this form of teaching came unplanned and without prior preparation, it is to be expected that students could not have received the necessary teacher support in proper measure. Most parents of children with disabilities, including ADHD, from several European countries report a partial or complete lack of additional support during lockdown homeschooling (Thorell et al., 2020).

Research evidence suggests that switching to remote learning greatly affected daily functioning (Thorell et al., 2021) and increased parental stress (American Psychological Association (APA), 2020) and depression (Lee et al., 2020) among all parents of children with disabilities are expected to be under even greater pressure.

Parents of children with disabilities describe the challenges and impacts of the pandemic on everyday life: closing schools, insufficient access to therapies, remote learning, staying at home, health care due to virus infection, loss of family members and friends due to Covid-19, working from home and simultaneously taking care of children, financial difficulties, mental problems in parents, increased level of unwanted behaviour in children, sleep problems, and other additional stressors (Latzer et al., 2021; Mann et al., 2021; Masi et al., 2020; Neece et al., 2020).

Parents or guardians of children with ADHD list stressors related to remote learning related to distractibility, lack of academic accommodations, and home isolation (Becker et al., 2020). Furthermore, mothers of students with ADHD report that remote learning has not sufficiently enabled their children to receive an adequate level of learning (Tessarollo et al., 2021).

Additional time and effort with mostly no formal education or training to ensure the involvement of children in remote learning and therapy may contribute to increased burdens and poorer quality of life (Pecor et al., 2021; Zhang et al., 2020). Stress is higher in parents of children with ADHD whose behavioural problems have intensified than those of neurotypical children (Iovino et al., 2021).

A Chinese qualitative study (Mo & Chan, 2021) dealing with the involvement of parents of children with ADHD in education in the traditional way of teaching identified five topics in this field, one of which is the father's lack of participation in the care and schooling of children with ADHD. It has been shown that mothers are the most engaged in their children's education (Mo & Chan, 2021). It is to be expected that the participation of mothers of children with ADHD in school matters was even more intense during the lockdown and remote learning, as confirmed by the studies of Tessarollo et al. (2021). Mothers of sons with ADHD report greater difficulties coordinating maternal and work

obligations and teaching children in relation to mothers of neurotypical students. This is contributed to by the fact that children with ADHD before and during lockdown are mostly cared for by their parents, while parents of neurotypical peers have greater support from grandparents and other relatives and friends (Tessarollo et al., 2021). Therefore, it is to be expected that the burden on parents of children with ADHD, especially mothers, was even greater during the time of pandemic and remote learning.

Researching studies that directly address the impact of certain variables related to ADHD students on their parents' stress during the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in only one work by Yousef et al. (2021). Using correlation analysis, they found, among other things, that greater challenges in structuring activities in managing the child's sleep than before COVID-19 and the gender of a child with ADHD are statistically and significantly related to stress in mothers. No research was found that identifies the specific contribution of gender, the intensity of ADHD symptoms, teaching accommodations, and stress burden in mothers of children with ADHD.

Because of the obvious challenges that lockdown and remote learning brought to children with ADHD and their parents, especially mothers, we were interested in researching the situation in Croatia.

The lockdown and the implementation of remote learning have brought some challenges for children with ADHD and their parents. This research aimed to examine the spatial and technical preconditions and academic accommodations and the methods and quantity of implementation of various forms of teaching for children with ADHD during remote learning. The second aim was to determine the mother's burden with the child's school tasks during the first lockdown. The third aim was to evaluate the degree of academic accommodation of teaching, the mother's burden with the school tasks, and the severity of ADHD symptoms as possible predictive factors of the mother's stress during the COVID-19 lockdown.

Therefore, the following research questions have been set:

RQ1: From the mothers' point of view, what were the spatial and technical preconditions, academic accommodations and the methods and quantity of implementation of various forms of teaching during remote learning for children with ADHD?

RQ2: To what extent were mothers of children with ADHD burdened with their child's schoolwork during the lockdown?

RQ3: Did the academic accommodations to the child's difficulties, the mother's burden regarding schoolwork, and the severity of ADHD symptoms during the lockdown affect the mother's stress?

Method

Participants

The participants were 61 mothers of children with ADHD aged 30 to 53 (M = 41.95, SD = 5.46). The characteristics of the participants are presented in Table 1.

The criteria for including the participants in the study were that their child had ADHD diagnosed by clinicians and was from 7 to 15 years old (primary school age in Croatia). All pupils with ADHD included in this study attended mainstream schools and had an individualised education plan (IEP) with accommodations.

The study was conducted at the beginning of the pandemic; at that time, two mothers and four of their household members had already contracted COVID-19.

Table 1

Sociodemographic Characteristics of Participants (N = 61)

Characteristics	N	%
Education Level		
Elementary	1	1.6
High School	29	47.5
College, University	25	41
MSc or PhD	6	9.8
Employment Status		
Employed	34	55.7
Employed Part-time	15	24.6
Unemployed	10	16.4
Maternity Leave	1	1.6
Caregiver Status	1	1.6
Place of Residence, Number of Citizens		
Rural	12	19.7
City < 100,000	19	31.1
City > 100,000	30	49.2
Number of Children		
1.00	17	27.9
2.00	27	44.3
3.00	14	23.0
4.00	2	3.3
5.00	1	1.6

Instruments

Socio-demographic data were gathered for all participants, including age, education level, employment status, place of residence, number of children in a family, and the age of a child with ADHD.

Spatial and technical preconditions were measured through dichotomous variables; participants were to indicate whether the space for work and electronic equipment they had was sufficient for conducting classes at home.

Academic accommodations, satisfaction with methods and quantity of implementation of various forms of teaching were measured using four variables on a three-point Likert scale.

Mothers answered a question to assess whether they were equally, more, or less burdened with their child's school assignments during online classes than before the pandemic.

The severity of ADHD symptoms was measured using the shorter version of the Pelham Rating Scale (i.e., the fourth version: SNAP-IV (Swanson et al., 2001)). The shorter form of the scale consists of 26 items that are rated on a four-point scale (not at all, just a little bit, pretty much, a lot). The items are divided into three subscales: inattention (nine items), hyperactivity/impulsivity (nine items), and oppositional/defiance disorder (eight items). The subscales for inattention and hyperactivity/impulsivity were used for this research. A higher score indicates a higher number and more pronounced symptoms of those difficulties. The scale has good metric characteristics that have been confirmed in several studies; it is used for both clinical and research purposes (Swanson et al., 2001).

Stress was measured using the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS-10), developed to determine the current levels of experienced stress and how unpredictable, uncontrollable, and overloaded respondents find their lives (Cohen et al., 1994). It is a ten-item scale on which respondents rate the items using a four-point Likert scale, with zero meaning 'never' and four meaning 'very often'. A higher score on the scale indicates a higher level of stress. The scale was adapted and applied to the Croatian sample (Hudek-Knežević et al., 1999). Cronbach's alpha on that sample was 0.88, and the Screen test revealed one factor that explains 44.1% of the pooled variance.

Research design

An online survey was created and sent to users of the leading centre for diagnosing ADHD in Croatia and shared on social networks among groups of

parents of children with ADHD. A cover letter identifying the purpose of the study was included in the questionnaire's introduction. Responding to the questionnaire was interpreted as giving consent. Data was collected from the end of May until the end of June 2020. A total of 67 respondents completed the questionnaires. When checking for inclusion criteria, some questionnaires had to be excluded, which resulted in 61 questionnaires that were ready for further analysis.

All the analyses were performed using SPSS 25 for Windows (IBM, Chicago, IL, USA). Descriptive analysis included means and standard deviation. The Pearson correlation coefficients determined the bivariate correlation. Linear multiple regression analyses enabled the estimation of the incremental variance explained by predictor variables on stress.

Results

To answer the research questions, a descriptive analysis was first conducted. Descriptive statistics are shown in Tables 2 to 4.

While most mothers (72.1%) stated that their households had satisfactory digital equipment for work and learning, almost a quarter (23%) did not have satisfactory space for work and learning for all household members (Table 2).

Table 2

Conditions of Remote learning – Descriptive Data (N = 61)

		N	%
Satisfactory Workspace for All Household Members	yes	44	72.1
	no	14	23
	missing data	3	4.9
Satisfactory Digital Equipment for All Household Members	yes	54	88.5
	no	6	9.8
	missing data	1	1.6

As shown (Table 3), more than three-quarters (77%) of mothers of children with ADHD said that remote learning materials were not at all adapted to the children's needs.

Likewise, most mothers of students with ADHD (85.2%) said that teachers were sending teaching materials through available online services in proper measure.

More than a third of mothers of children with ADHD (42.6%) said that there was no interactive teaching at all through the available online services, while roughly a third of mothers (34.4%) said that there was enough interactive teaching.

More than a third of mothers of children with ADHD (42.6%) responded that there was no individual contact with teachers.

Most mothers of children with ADHD (77%) responded that they were more burdened with their child's schoolwork than before the pandemic.

Table 3

Method of Remote Learning and the Burden on Mothers with Schoolwork During Lockdown (N = 61)

		F	%
Accommodations of Teaching Materials	not at all	47	77
	insufficient	7	11.5
	sufficient	7	11.5
Interactive Teaching in a Group through Certain Online Services	not at all	26	42.6
	insufficient	14	23
	sufficient	21	34.4
Teaching Materials Sent through Certain Online Services	not at all	1	1.6
	insufficient	8	13.1
	sufficient	52	85.2
Individual Online or Telephone Contact	not at all	26	42.6
	insufficient	15	24.6
	sufficient	20	32.8
The Burden on Mothers with Schoolwork Before Isolation	lower	1	1.6
	equal	13	21.3
	higher	47	77

Table 4

Descriptive Data of Predictor and Criteria Variables (N = 61)

	Mothers ADHD	
	M	SD
Stress	22.77	4.62
Academic accommodations	1.34	0.68
The mother's burden with the child's schoolwork before isolation	2.75	0.47
Attention Symptoms (ADHD Children)	30.66	5.67
Hyperactivity Symptoms (ADHD Children)	15.95	4.50
Impulsivity Symptoms (ADHD Children)	11.49	3.37

The bivariate correlation coefficients between the stress scale and symptoms of ADHD in their children, the degree of academic accommodations of online classes to the child's difficulties, and the burden on mothers with the child's schoolwork compared to the period before the lockdown are shown in Table 5.

Table 5

Correlation Coefficients among Predictors and Criteria Variable – Mothers of Children with ADHD (N = 67)

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Attention Symptoms		0.56**	0.51**	0.09	0.22	0.34**
2. Hyperactivity Symptoms			0.83**	0.04	0.08	0.23
3. Impulsivity Symptoms				0.00	0.07	0.18
4. Academic accommodations					-0.10	0.32**
5. The Burden on Mothers with Schoolwork Before Isolation						
6. Stress						

Table 6

Linear Regression Analysis on Stress in Mothers of a Child with ADHD (N = 61)

	Stress		Collinearity Statistics	
	B	T	tolerance	VIF
Variables	1	2		
Gender	0.17	1.43	0.950	1.053
Attention Symptoms	0.31	2.17*	0.638	1.567
Hyperactivity Symptoms	0.17	0.80	0.280	3.572
Impulsivity Symptoms	-0.17	-0.82	.295	3.572
Academic accommodations	-0.35	-3.09**	0.970	1.031
The Burden on Mothers with Schoolwork Before Isolation	0.23	1.96*	0.924	1.083
R	0.55			
R_2	0.30**			

The overall multiple regression (Table 6) was statistically significant ($R2 = 0.30$, $F(6.54) = 3.84$, $p < 0.01$), which means that the linear combination of predictor variables accounted for 32% of the variance in stress.

Attention symptoms, academic accommodations, and schoolwork burden have a statistically significant effect on mothers' stress levels.

Discussion

The beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic led to the first lockdown and major changes for the entire society. The way of teaching had to be changed overnight, for which neither teachers, children, nor parents were prepared. Necessary changes caused by movement restrictions affected everyone, and it was to be expected that those changes would affect particularly vulnerable groups, such as children with ADHD and their parents.

This research aimed to examine the spatial and technical preconditions and academic accommodations and the methods and quantity of implementation of various forms of teaching for children with ADHD during remote learning.

The results suggest that not all students with ADHD started remote learning with the same conditions and in the same way. One-fifth of the students did not have satisfactory space for learning. As for the digital equipment necessary for remote learning, most students had the necessary equipment, although almost 10% did not.

Those students are getting their education according to the Decision on the Regular Programme with Individualisation of Teaching Procedures. This means that they have the right to the accommodations of learning and teaching procedures, environments, and materials to suit their needs to achieve learning outcomes.

Despite these guaranteed rights, more than three-quarters of mothers of children with ADHD (77%) said that remote learning materials were not adapted to the children's needs.

More than 40% of mothers said there were no interactive classes and no individual contact with teachers. This means that in the first few months of remote learning, the teaching did not occur synchronously but asynchronously for most students, meaning that teachers mostly sent learning materials and assignments to students. In such conditions, communicating with teachers is even more important, especially for students with disabilities. From the perspective of parents from the USA and Australia (Roy et al., 2022), it was precisely the lack of direct contact with teachers that was one of the biggest challenges during remote learning. If we consider the factors affecting the efficiency of remote learning (Huang et al., 2020), it can be concluded that this research showed that at the beginning of remote learning during the pandemic was not effective, especially in relation to a reliable communication structure, the effectiveness of learning methods, appropriate learning tools for students with ADHD, and the organisation of learning in class.

The second aim was to determine the mother's burden with the child's school tasks during the first lockdown. Most mothers in the study reported

a greater burden with their child's schoolwork during the lockdown. We can assume that mothers' increased engagement in their child's school tasks was partly due to insufficient school support for their children.

The third aim was to evaluate the degree of academic accommodation of teaching, the mother's burden with the school tasks, and the severity of ADHD symptoms as possible predictive factors of the mother's stress during the Covid-19 lockdown.

The regression analysis showed that the symptoms of attention disorder, the mother's burden with school tasks, and the degree of academic accommodations were significant predictors of maternal stress during the first lockdown.

In other studies, parents of children with ADHD stated that there were not enough academic accommodations (Becker et al.; Ellala et al., 2021; Termine et al., 2021). They also reported stress associated with greater engagement during remote learning, insufficient teaching accommodations, and a lack of attention in children (Becker et al., 2021; Yousef et al., 2021).

In this study, the effect of impulsivity and hyperactivity symptoms was insignificant. The symptoms of attention disorders have been shown to intensify in situations of increased demands and stress, and the results of other research also indicate more intense symptoms of attention disorders in children with ADHD during the pandemic (Sasaki et al., 2020).

Since the symptoms of inattention are related to the difficulties of completing school tasks and learning (less so for impulsivity and hyperactivity), it is possible that in a situation of decreased levels of teacher support and adapted materials, most requests of mothers at that time were related to supporting the child in completing the school tasks, which resulted in additional stress. The results of this study indicate that the schoolwork burden on mothers increased significantly during the lockdown, and it is a significant predictor of stress in addition to the child's symptoms of inattention.

This study has limitations. The research was carried out on a pertinent sample of mothers, and it is possible that the results would be different on a larger, representative sample. There is also no data on the impact of the severity of inattention, impulsivity and hyperactivity symptoms on mothers' stress before the Covid-19 lockdown; therefore, comparing the results obtained with results before the pandemic is impossible. The focus of this study was the period of the first lockdown, and it is expected that the quality of support for students would increase during the following years. Limitations imposed by the lockdown were also not the focus of this study, and some research showed that they could impact stress (Becker et al., 2020).

Conclusion

Schools were closed during the lockdown in Croatia, and classes switched to remote learning. Schools and teachers were not prepared for this form of teaching, and this situation caused many challenges for children with ADHD and their parents. This research aimed to examine the spatial and technical preconditions, academic accommodations, and the methods and quantity of implementation of various forms of teaching for children with ADHD during remote learning. The second aim was to determine the mother's burden with the child's school tasks during the first lockdown. The third aim was to evaluate the degree of academic accommodation of teaching, the mother's burden with the school tasks, and the severity of ADHD symptoms as possible predictive factors for mothers' stress during the Covid-19 lockdown.

This research showed that although most children had the spatial and technical preconditions for remote learning, there are still some children for whom this was not the case, which could make it difficult for them to cope with the new situation of remote learning. Support for children with ADHD in school is important in normal conditions but even more so during the stressful time of the first lockdown when no one was prepared for remote learning.

Most mothers reported that their children did not receive enough support during remote learning in the form of academic accommodations or individual contact with teachers. The results also showed that mothers were more burdened with their children's schoolwork than before the pandemic. Those academic accommodations, symptoms of inattention in children and the mother's burden with the child's schoolwork were significant predictors of mothers' stress during lockdown.

This research suggests that more individual contact, academic accommodations of resources, and more synchronous and less asynchronous teaching should be provided when implementing online classes. In addition, this research showed that the level of support during remote learning directly impacted mothers' mental health, which should be considered when supporting children with ADHD and their families.

Despite its limitations, this study could be a starting point for research on the long-term effects of education in Covid-19 conditions for both children with ADHD and their parents.

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The Impact of the 5E Learning Model Improved with Concept Maps on Motivation

Lütfiye Varoğlu*[1], Ayhan Yilmaz[2] and Şenol Şen[2]

∽   The examination of students' motivation towards lessons is an important aspect of educational studies. The constructivist approach significantly impacts the improvement of students' motivation. The present study aims to examine the use of the 5E learning model with concept maps to support students' motivation and compare the 5E approach and the classical approach to teaching chemistry in terms of motivational dimensions. The main subject of this study is an assessment of students' motivation using the 5E learning model, which promotes student-centred teaching. The study was conducted with 100 8th-grade lower secondary school students who attended a school in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) during the spring semester of the 2018/19 school year. The study was conducted with two randomly selected groups: experimental (EG) and control (CG). The lessons of the EG were taught using the 5E Learning Model Improved with Concept Maps, while lessons of the CG were conducted using the current, conventional teaching method. The Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ) was applied as a data collection tool in the study. Descriptive statistics and Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) were used in data analysis. As a result, it was determined that the EG students' motivation scores showed a significant difference from the CG students' motivation scores. Furthermore, a significant difference was established between the EG and CG students' intrinsic goal orientation and test anxiety post-test scores. Although the EG students' averages for other sub-dimensions were higher than the CG students' averages, no significant difference was found between the groups.

    Keywords: concept maps, motivation, lower secondary school students, 5E learning model

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Vpliv učnega modela 5 E, izboljšanega s konceptualnimi modeli, na motivacijo

Lütfiye Varoğlu, Ayhan Yilmaz in Şenol Şen

∽   Preučevanje motivacije učencev za pouk je pomemben vidik pedago-
ških študij. Konstruktivistični pristop pomembno vpliva na izboljšanje
motivacije pri učencih. Namen te študije je preučiti uporabo učnega
modela 5 E s konceptualnimi modeli za podporo motivacije pri učen-
cih ter primerjati pristop 5 E in klasični pristop k poučevanju kemije
z vidika motivacijskih razsežnosti. Glavni predmet te študije je ocena
motivacije pri učencih z uporabo učnega modela 5 E, ki spodbuja po-
učevanje, osredinjeno na učence. Študija je bila izvedena s 100 učenci
zadnjega triletja osnovne šole (8. in 9. razreda), ki so obiskovali šolo v
turški republiki Severni Ciper v spomladanskem semestru šolskega leta
2018/19. Študija je bila izvedena z dvema naključno izbranima skupina-
ma: eksperimentalno (ES) in kontrolno (KS). Pouk ES je potekal po uč-
nem modelu 5 E, izboljšanem s konceptualnimi modeli, pouk KS pa po
zdajšnji, tj. običajni metodi poučevanja. Kot orodje za zbiranje podatkov
je bil v študiji uporabljen vprašalnik motivacijskih prepričanj in učnih
strategij (MSLQ). Pri analizi podatkov sta bili uporabljeni opisna stati-
stika in multivariatna analiza variance (MANOVA). Na podlagi analize
je bilo ugotovljeno, da se rezultati motivacije učencev ES pomembno
razlikujejo od rezultatov motivacije učencev KS. Poleg tega je bila ugoto-
vljena pomembna razlika med rezultatom notranje ciljne usmerjenosti
in testne anksioznosti učencev ES in KS po opravljenem testu. Čeprav
so bila povprečja učencev ES za druge poddimenzije višja od povprečij
učencev KS, med skupinami ni bila ugotovljena pomembna razlika.

Ključne besede: konceptualni modeli, motivacija, učenci zadnjega
triletja osnovne šole, učni model 5 E

Introduction

Motivation is one of the main factors influencing whether students are willing to learn about a subject or solve a problem (Akbaba, 2006). Motivation affects an individual's performance (Kian et al., 2014). Motivation is a complex process in which purposive action is initiated and continued (Schunk et al., 2008; Sharaabi-Naor et al., 2014). Akbaba (2006) states that motivation is one of the sources that determine student behaviours at school and, accordingly, affects the speed of reaching goals in educational environments.

The literature suggests that various teaching methods, models, and strategies employed in chemistry lessons can enhance student motivation (Demircioğlu et al., 2019; Kutu & Sözbilir, 2011; Tosun & Taşkesenligil, 2012). Demircioğlu et al. (2019) reported that teaching based on the REACT strategy (which has five steps: relating, experiencing, applying, cooperating, and transferring), which is based on a context-based learning approach, positively affects the motivation of 10th-grade students regarding chemistry lessons.

Many studies have investigated the motivation of students at various educational levels, including secondary school and university, towards chemistry courses (Austin et al., 2018; Cetin-Dindar & Geban, 2015; Gunes et al., 2020; Şen & Yılmaz, 2014; Tosun, 2013). Tosun et al. (2013) noted that the Problem-Based Learning (PBL) approach was found to increase the motivation of undergraduate students in chemistry lessons. Similarly, Korkut and Oren (2018) found that the use of science stories supported by concept cartoons increased 7th-grade students' motivation. Moreover, the motivation of secondary school students has been discussed in various studies conducted on other branches of science education, such as physics and biology (Aydin, 2016; Snetinová et al., 2018).

Concept maps are graphical tools used to organise and reflect information. They consist of boxes representing concepts and lines connecting these concepts to illustrate their relationships (Novak, 1990). Studies on chemistry education have highlighted the use of concept maps in classrooms (Aguiar & Correia, 2016; Singh & Moono, 2015; Talbert et al., 2020). Kilic and Cakmak (2013) stated that concept maps were one of the most effective tools to support meaningful learning. Additionally, concept maps have been used as evaluation tools to identify misconceptions and as teaching materials in science education studies (Austin & Shore, 1995; Bulut et al., 2021; Ries et al., 2022; Sari & Bayram, 2018). According to the studies in the literature, the concept maps have positive effects on students' academic achievement, motivation, logical thinking, and problem-solving skills (Abd El-Hay et al., 2018; Bektuzun & Yel; 2019; Kara & Kefeli, 2018; Ozgun & Yalcin, 2019). Moreover, studies revealed that the

use of concept maps with various strategies, methods, and techniques increases students' motivation throughout the course (Chen et al., 2016; Kostova & Radoynovska, 2010; Keraro et al., 2007).

Atkin and Karplus (1962) introduced the learning cycle model with three phases (i.e., exploration, invention, and discovery). In contrast, the 5E learning model proposed by Bybee et al. (2006) comprises five steps: 1) engagement, 2) exploration, 3) explanation, 4) elaboration, and 5) evaluation. The 5E learning model, based on the constructivist approach, enables students to use their knowledge and skills actively and improves students' motivation (Pirci & Torun, 2020). Furthermore, several studies in the literature stated that the 5E learning model enhanced learning motivation in science classes (Guven et al., 2022; Putra et al., 2018; Rizki et al., 2023). Studies have also demonstrated that the 5E learning model, as an application of constructivist learning theory, positively affects students' motivation, attitude, and success (Demir & Emre, 2020; Putra et al., 2018; Yalcin Altun et al., 2010). In this context, recent studies have also explored the use of the 5E learning model in conjunction with different techniques, methods, and strategies (Bagci & Yalin, 2018; Koc & Sarikaya, 2020; Utami & Subali, 2020). Additionally, the incorporation of concept maps has been shown to contribute positively to students' achievement, attitude, logical thinking, and motivation (Akgunduz & Bal, 2013; Chawla & Singh, 2015; Chiou, 2015; Çömek et al., 2016; Kara & Kefeli, 2018).

This study builds on these findings to investigate the utilisation of the 5E learning model with concept maps to support students' motivation and compare the 5E approach with the classical approach to teaching chemistry in terms of motivational dimensions.

Pintrich et al. (1991) developed the Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ) to assess students' motivation with six sub-dimension: 1) intrinsic goal orientation, 2) extrinsic goal orientation, 3) task value, 4) control of learning beliefs, 5) self-efficacy for learning and performance, and 6) test anxiety. Effective self-regulative learning characteristics, such as intrinsic goal orientation and self-efficacy, positively affect success (Chyung et al., 2010). Intrinsic motivation provides satisfaction derived from the task itself, whereas extrinsic motivation is driven by external factors, such as rewards or punishments based on task performance (Lin et al., 2003). The task value relates to the beliefs about the importance of the task (Pintrich, 1999). The control of beliefs reflects students' ideas regarding their level of control over their own learning (Pintrich & Garcia, 1993). Test anxiety encompasses worry and emotional distress related to exams and negatively affects the students (Pintrich & Garcia, 1993). Therefore, when examining motivation in the context of chemistry education,

it is important to consider components such as task value, self-efficacy, and test anxiety, as they have been studied extensively (Karpudewan et al., 2015; Lynch & Trujillo, 2011; Zusho et al., 2003).

Güngör Seyhan (2020) found that high school students' motivation in chemistry lessons predicted their attitudes towards the subject, as well as their self-efficacy and self-regulatory learning strategies. Studies consistently show a significant relationship between students' motivation, achievement, and performance in chemistry courses (Eskicioglu & Alpat, 2017; Ferrell et al., 2016). Accordingly, Zusho et al. (2003) emphasised that self-efficacy and task value, as the components of motivation, were the best predictors of students' success in chemistry courses. Concordantly, in studies on mathematics and science education, a positive and significant relationship between students' motivation and their achievement, attitude, metacognitive awareness, and scientific creativity levels has been observed (Atay, 2014; Azizoğlu & Çetin, 2009; Çeliker et al., 2015; Yıldırım & Kansız, 2018). Moreover, the meta-analysis study conducted by Alkan and Bayri (2017) revealed a statistically significant and positive relationship between motivation and achievement towards science. Thus, it is crucial to investigate the impact of the 5E Learning Model Improved with Concept Maps on motivation within the context of the chemistry courses.

This study aims to examine the influence of the 5E Learning Model Improved with Concept Maps on the motivation of secondary school students. In accordance with this purpose, we aimed to investigate the use of the 5E learning model with concept maps that support students' motivation and to compare the 5E approach with the classical approach to teaching chemistry in terms of motivational dimensions. The findings from this study will provide important evidence regarding the effect of learning environments on students' motivation. In line with this purpose of the study, the answer to the following question was investigated.

1.   'Is there a significant difference between experimental (EG) and control groups (CG) students' motivation (intrinsic goal orientation (IGO1), extrinsic goal orientation (EGO2), task value (TV3), control of learning beliefs (CLB4), self-efficacy for learning and performance (SELP5), test anxiety (TA6)) according to the teaching method?'

Method

This section describes the study participants, data collection tool, research design, the application process, the implementation of concept maps to steps of the 5E learning model and the data analysis employed.

Participants

The purposive sampling method was used for sample selection. In this direction, a secondary school that admitted students through an examination and provided a similar educational background was selected. The research was carried out with 100 students in the 8th grade and aged 13 and 14 during the second semester of the 2018/19 academic year. The study was performed with two experimental groups (EG (female: 22, male: 28)) and two control groups (CG (female: 21, male: 29)), which were selected randomly. All participants voluntarily took part in the research.

The study was approved by the Ethical Committee of Hacettepe University. Additionally, the presented study was verified by the TRNC National Education Ministry.

Instrument

The Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ) was used as the data collection tool for the study.

Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ): The MSLQ is an assessment tool developed by Pintrich et al. (1991) to investigate students' motivational orientation and use of various learning strategies. The questionnaire was adapted to Turkish by different researchers (Altun & Erden, 2006; Büyüköztürk et al., 2004; Karadeniz et al., 2008; Sungur, 2004). The seven-point Likert scale comprises two basic components as motivation and learning strategies. The sub-dimensions of the scale are modular that can be used individually or together in accordance with the purpose of the study (Büyüköztürk et al., 2004). The motivation dimension of the scale consists of 31 items that evaluate students' beliefs about the purpose and value, beliefs about their ability to succeed and concerns about the tests within the course (Pintrich et al., 1991). For the evaluation of the scale, it is stated that the score obtained by the student from each factor indicates the characteristic of the relevant factor at such a high or low level (Büyüköztürk et al., 2004; Pintrich et al., 1991). In this study, the motivation dimension utilised the IGO1, EGO2, TA3, TV4, CLB5, and SELP6

sub-dimensions. The scale was adapted for the chemistry course by Şen (2015). The scale adapted by Şen (2015) was used in the study. For validity and reliability analysis, the scale was administered to 334 secondary school students. Confirmatory Factor Analysis was performed to examine the scale's construct validity, and Cronbach's alpha internal consistency coefficients were calculated for each sub-dimension to determine reliability. Karadeniz et al. (2008) reported that the corrected total item correlation values for the motivation dimension of the scale include 6 factors, ranging between *.15* and *.58*. Table 1 presents the Cronbach's alpha coefficients calculated within the context of this study regarding the motivation dimension of the scale, along with the values calculated for the original scale (Pintrich et al., 1991), and the adapted scale (Büyüköztürk et al., 2004).

Table 1

Cronbach's Alpha Coefficients for Motivation Dimension

Sub-dimension	Current Scale	Original Scale	Adapted Scale
IGO1	.61	.74	.59
EGO2	.75	.62	.63
TV3	.88	.90	.80
CLB4	.65	.68	.52
SELP5	.93	.93	.86
TA6	.66	.80	.69

O'Rourke et al. (2005) stated that Cronbach's Alpha values below 0.70 may be sufficient and that social scientists sometimes report values below 0.60. Therefore, it was decided that Cronbach's Alpha values were sufficient for reliability.

In this study, "fit statistics were calculated for the six factors specified in the motivation dimension. As a consequence of the analysis, it was found that the fit indices (*NNFI = .95, NFI = .92, CFI = .96, RMSEA = .075*), especially *chi-square/df = (947/422) = 2.24*" (Varoglu, 2021; pp. 44). Garver and Mentzer (1999) suggested using NNFI, CFI and RMSEA values to determine model-data fit. Considering the results of the analysis, it is revealed that the RMSEA value is less than .08, the CFI value is greater than .90, the NFI and NNFI values are also greater than .90., and the model is fitted with the data (Schermelleh-Engel et al., 2003).

Research design

This present study examined the impact of the 5E Learning Model Improved with Concept Maps on motivation among 8th-grade students. In this context, the study was performed with two experimental (EG) and two control groups (CG) with a non-equivalent control group design, a quantitative research method. The EG consisted of 50 students, with 26 students in one group and 24 in the other. Similarly, the CG comprised 50 students, with 25 students in each group.

Application process

This study aimed to examine the impact of the 5E Learning Model Improved with Concept Maps on the motivation of 8th-grade students within the context of the periodic table, which is an essential topic in a chemistry course. In the study, we worked with two experimental and two control groups. In the teaching method applied to the experimental group, concept maps were systematically used in the exploration (2nd step), explanation (3rd step) and evaluation (5th step) steps of the 5E model; therefore, the 5E Learning Model was improved. Simultaneously, the control group received lessons with the existing teaching method. MSLQ was applied as a pre-test to both EG and CG students in the first week of the application. Then, the EG students were provided information about the concept maps to ensure they could prepare them. Considering that each student would have an idea about 'water', the concept map application was made and ensured that the students could easily create concept maps and establish crosslinks. In contrast, none of the constructivist activity was done with CG, which only received information about water. The lessons of the EG students were conducted with the 5E Learning Model Improved with Concept Maps, while CG students continued with the current teaching method, which did not include constructivist activities. The current teaching model for CG followed a conventional teacher-centred approach in which the teacher used a textbook with direct instruction methods. The same subjects were taught with EG. In this context, the formation of ions is based on the concepts of anion and cation and chemical bonding in relation to the subject of the periodic table presented by the teacher. The study was completed by applying the MSLQ as a post-test to both the EG and CG students.

Implementation of concept maps to 2nd, 3rd, and 5th steps of 5e learning model

This section explains the activities prepared regarding the periodic table by the 5E Learning Model Improved with Concept Maps with examples. First, we state that the students were informed about the 5E Learning Model and concept maps prior to the application. Doing so ensured that the students were ready to use the concept maps by making applications related to them.

Engagement Step: To engage the attention of the students to the periodic table, an activity of preparing identity cards for the elements was carried out. The students were prompted with the question, 'What kind of information should be included if an identity card were to be prepared for an element?'. This activity aimed to shift the students' focus towards the elements in the periodic table and encourage them to think about the essential information related to each element that should be included on the identity cards.

Exploration Step: In this step, students were encouraged to work together while the teacher took on a passive role. The students were divided into two groups (with 13 students in each group in EG1 and 12 students in each group in EG2) to support working together. The groups were provided with fill-in-the-blank type questions related to the periodic table. These questions required the students to make comments by using the periodic table. For example, it asked the groups to indicate the elements arranged by their atomic number using the periodic table. The students were asked to write down these answers, which were the concepts involved in the periodic table. In favour of these fill-in-the-blank-type questions, the students noted down the concepts related to the periodic table, such as group, period, atomic number, and metal or non-metal. Next, the students create a concept map by establishing a relationship between these concepts.

Explanation Step: In this step, the teacher took an active role and used a concept map to provide explanations. Figure 1 shows a concept map prepared and used by the teacher.

Figure 1

An example of a concept map is prepared for the explanation step (Varoglu, 2021).
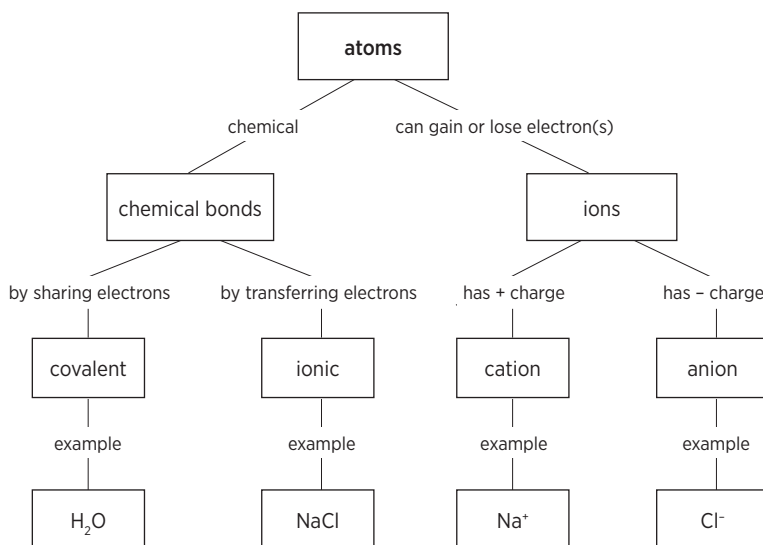
Elaboration Step: An activity is prepared so that what the students have learned is taken one step further and applied. The students were divided into groups of three or four, and a team tournament was held. The students answered the questions by using the periodic table, which was on the board. In this way, students were asked to apply and interpret what they had learned on the periodic table for other elements. For example, the groups were asked to classify the element boron as a metal, non-metal, or semi-metal, write two metals and two non-metals in the second period, and indicate whether hydrogen is a metal or a non-metal.

Evaluation Step: Concept maps were used to evaluate students' learning in this step. In this context, the students created a concept map from scratch related to the concepts they had learned. Additionally, to support this step, a puzzle and a structured grid were prepared about the concepts applied.

The application began with the used of the pre-tests and was completed in about one month with the use of the post-tests, focusing on the topic of the periodic table. Throughout this period, it was thought that the teaching model applied to the experimental group, which is an application of the constructivist approach, would affect the students' motivation components towards the chemistry lesson.

Data analysis

The quantitative data acquired from the study were analysed with statistical analysis by using the IBM SPSS Statistics 20 software. The descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, minimum, maximum, skewness and kurtosis) were examined. Inferential statistics were used after the necessary assumptions were provided. Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) analysis was used to determine the scores of students that acquired the Motivational Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ).

Results

Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics of the pre-test scores for motivation sub-dimensions of both the EG and CG students. The fact that the kurtosis and skewness values of the students' pre-test scores are between +2 and -2 indicates that the scores comply with the normal distribution (George & Mallery, 2003). Table 2 revealed that the scores of the students in the EG and CG were close to each other. Before the analysis, the assumptions of the MANOVA analysis were verified as having been met.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics for Pre-Test Scores (Mean (M), standard deviation (SD), sample size (N), skewness, kurtosis, minimum and maximum values)

Sub-dimension	Group	Mean	df	N	Skewness	Kurtosis	Min.	Max.
IGO1	EG	19.48	4.32	50	-.717	-.011	8	27
	CG	18.86	4.15	50	-.312	.004	8	28
	Total	19.17	4.22	100	-.506	-.129	8	28
EGO2	EG	18.62	5.80	50	-.939	.472	4	28
	CG	20.50	4.92	50	-.377	-.312	9	28
	Total	19.56	5.44	100	-.772	.506	4	28
TV3	EG	28.76	9.16	50	-.696	-.510	10	42
	CG	30.88	8.18	50	-1.148	.953	7	42
	Total	29.82	8.70	100	-.896	-.001	7	42
CLB4	EG	21.78	4.16	50	-.709	.204	10	28
	CG	20.96	4.29	50	-.615	-.252	11	28
	Total	21.37	4.22	100	-.649	-.099	10	28
SELP5	EG	35.74	12.71	50	-.595	.337	8	54
	CG	38.52	10.04	50	-.741	.503	10	55
	Total	37.13	11.48	100	-.717	.029	8	55
TA6	EG	18.58	7.42	50	.329	-.626	6	35
	CG	19.40	5.93	50	-.086	-.838	7	30
	Total	18.99	6.69	100	.147	-.657	6	35

Note: EG=experimental group, CG=control group

The findings of the MANOVA analysis performed on the scores for the sub-dimensions indicated in Table 3 reveal that there is a significant difference in the pre-test scores between the EG and CG students $((\Lambda) = .849, F (6, 93) = 2.748, p < .05)$ (Varoglu, 2021; p.81). According to this result, the scores to be obtained from the linear component consisting of the pre-test scores of the students indicate a difference when compared to the experimental and control groups. However, when the sub-dimensions were examined one by one, it was seen that the pre-test results were very close to each other. *The Table of Tests of Between Subjects Effects* shows that the sub-dimensions did not make a significant difference (Varoglu, 2021). Table 3 reflects the results of the analysis.

Table 3

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects for Motivation Pre-Test Scores by Sub-Dimensions

Source	Dependent Variable	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Group	IGO1	9.610	1	9.610	.536	.466	.005
	EGO2	88.360	1	88.360	3.053	.084	.030
	TV3	112.360	1	112.360	1.491	.225	.015
	CLB4	16.810	1	16.810	.942	.334	.010
	SELP5	193.210	1	193.210	1.472	.228	.015
	TA6	16.810	1	16.810	.373	.543	.004

The results obtained as an outcome of the descriptive statistics of the post-test scores are given in Table 4. To test the properties of the data for the normal distribution, skewness and kurtosis values were inspected. The fact that the skewness and kurtosis coefficients, which provide information about the symmetry and peak of the distribution, are between +2 and -2 is a sufficient parameter for the normal distribution (George & Mallery, 2003; Perry et al., 2017). Recent studies have pointed out that larger kurtosis and skewness values can be accepted for the normal distribution (Iyer et al., 2017; Orcan, 2020). Kallner (2018) reported that the kurtosis value is an expression of the sharpness of the distribution, and the kurtosis can take up to three values as a normal distribution.

Table 4

Descriptive Statistics for Post-Test Scores (Mean (M), standard deviation (SD), sample size (N), skewness, kurtosis, minimum and maximum values)

Sub-dimension	Group	Mean	SD	N	Skewness	Kurtosis	Min.	Max.
IGO1	EG	23.20	2.92	50	-.421	-.631	17	28
	CG	20.96	2.99	50	-.366	.027	14	27
	Total	22.08	3.15	100	-.337	-.288	14	28
EGO2	EG	19.20	4.16	50	.052	-.417	9	27
	CG	21.08	3.86	50	-.350	-.740	13	28
	Total	20.14	4.10	100	-.165	-.673	9	28
TV3	EG	33.70	5.44	50	-.845	.367	20	42
	CG	31.70	5.92	50	-1.344	2.264	12	41
	Total	32.70	5.75	100	-1.105	1.555	12	42
CLB4	EG	18.60	3.81	50	-.499	-.029	9	25
	CG	19.12	3.63	50	-.401	.022	9	26
	Total	18.86	3.71	100	-.453	-.037	9	26
SELP5	EG	42.10	8.95	50	-.826	.030	21	54
	CG	38.76	8.93	50	-.620	.480	15	53
	Total	40.43	9.05	100	.241	.094	15	54
TA6	EG	15.90	5.72	50	.450	-.697	7	28
	CG	20.34	5.28	50	-.054	-.402	9	31
	Total	18.12	5.91	100	.101	-.797	7	31

Note: EG=experimental group, CG=control group

In the comparison of post-test scores, MANOVA analysis was performed based on the fact that there was no significant difference between the pre-test scores. The results of the MANOVA analysis performed on the scores for the sub-dimensions are given in Table 5. The results of the MANOVA analysis on the scores for the sub-dimensions reveal that there is a significant difference between the post-test scores of the EG and CG students ((Λ) = .700, F (6, 93) = 6.629, p < .05) (Varoglu, 2021; pp. 83).

Bonferroni adjustment is required to determine a more reliable significance level to reduce the probability of a Type 1 error rate (Tabachnick et al., 2007). Since the number of dependent variables in the study was 6, the value of .05 was divided by 6, and the value of .0083 was obtained; this value was accepted as the new significance level. Table 5 shows the Analysis of Variance Table.

Table 5

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects for Motivation Post-Test Scores by Sub-Dimensions

Source	Dependent Variable	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Group	IGO1	125.440	1	125.440	14.362	.000	.128
	EGO2	88.360	1	88.360	5.482	.021	.053
	TV3	100.000	1	100.000	3.092	.082	.031
	CLB4	6.760	1	6.760	.488	.486	.005
	SELP5	278.890	1	278.890	3.489	.065	.034
	TA6	492.840	1	492.840	16.264	.000	.142

Table 5 shows that the students' intrinsic goal orientation (IGO1) and test anxiety (TA6) post-test scores show a significant difference ($p < .008$) between the EG and CG groups.

As a result, when the pre-test scores of experimental and control group students were examined, it was concluded that there was no significant difference between the scores. In addition, the post-test scores show that the internal goal regulation scores showed a significant difference in favour of the experimental group, and the test anxiety scores showed a significant difference in favour of the control group.

Discussion and Conclusion

The question 'Is there a significant difference between EG and CG students' motivation (IGO1, EGO2, TV3, CLB4, SELP5, TA6) according to the teaching method?' takes place in the scope of the research problem; the motivations of the students of the experimental and control groups were examined using statistical methods. MANOVA analysis was used to determine whether there was a significant difference between the motivation pre-test scores of the experimental and control group students.

The results of the MANOVA analysis performed on the scores for the IGO1, EGO2, TV3, CLB4, SELP5 and TA6 sub-dimensions revealed that there was a significant difference between the post-test scores of the experimental and control group students ((Λ) = .700, $F(6, 93) = 6.629$, $p < .05$) (Varoglu, 2021).

In the present study, the 5E Learning Model was implemented with the support of concept maps. It was concluded that the motivation of the experimental group students for the chemistry lesson was higher in the IGO1

sub-dimension. The TA6 sub-dimension was lower than the control group students. The literature revealed that learning activities prepared with the 5E Learning Model (Aktaş, 2013; Cetin-Dindar & Geban, 2017; Cheng et al., 2015; İlter & Ünal, 2014) and concept maps (Kara & Kefeli, 2018; Keraro et al., 2007) increase the motivation of the students towards the lesson in different courses, such as social studies, science, biology, and chemistry. Moreover, it has been determined that the context-based teaching method supported by the 5E learning model increased student motivation and conceptual understanding in science lessons (Derman & Badeli, 2017). Similarly, it is stated in the literature that the simulation and animation-supported 5E model increases the success and motivation of students in science lessons (Derman & Badeli, 2017; Öner & Yaman, 2020).

Based on the results, although the mean scores of EGO2, TV3, CLB4 and SELP5 were higher for the experimental group students than the control group students, there was no significant difference between the two groups. In addition, there were significant differences in the IGO1 and TA6 scores between the experimental and control group students. Pintrich et al. (1991) state that there is a negative relationship between test anxiety and academic performance. According to the results, the experimental group students had higher IGO1 mean scores, and the control group had higher TA6 scores. Studies show that intrinsic goal orientation is associated with success as one of the academic outcomes (Pintrich & Schrauben, 1992; Sungur & Gungoren, 2009). Otherwise, the intrinsic goal orientation encourages students to have a more advanced cognitive structure by focusing on learning (Pintrich & Schrauben, 1992).

Considering the results obtained from this study and the findings from the studies conducted in the literature in general, it can be stated that the 5E Learning Model, which is supported by using different techniques, positively affects the success, attitude, and motivation of the students in the course. Furthermore, it is thought that using the constructivist learning models will positively affect students' motivation and attitudes towards lessons by helping them learn information more easily in lessons containing abstract concepts, such as those related to chemistry. Motivation is a variable that explains an individual's behaviour but cannot be directly observed (Korkut & Oren, 2018). Motivation will also improve students' effective learning by supporting their active participation (Korkut & Oren, 2018). The findings determined that, except for the IGO1 and TA6 components, the motivation dimensions did not show a significant difference between the experimental and control groups. It is thought that this result may be due to reasons such as the 8th-grade students' difficulties in understanding the chemistry lesson because it contains abstract concepts, the

insufficient duration of the application, and their prejudices against different learning methods, techniques, and strategies. In this context, applying the 5E Learning Model Improved with Concept Maps in different topics of chemistry is recommended; different variables, such as prejudices and attitudes towards the lesson, as well as students' motivations, should be examined in future studies. From this point of view, considering the results of this study, all dimensions of motivation should be developed while preparing the activities in practice.

It is thought that the findings of this study are significant in terms of the classroom environment. The study concluded that the 5E learning model improved with concept maps is an effective method for increasing student motivation. The concept maps improved students' motivation towards learning chemistry by helping them visualise and organise their knowledge. Additionally, the inclusion of games, puzzles, and other interesting activities within the scope of this study made learning enjoyable and heightened the interest of students in the learning environment. However, it was also observed that the students with an intrinsic goal orientation were more motivated to learn chemistry. These students were motivated by the learning process rather than external rewards such as grades. In this context, teachers must provide students opportunities to explore new concepts and offer focused feedback on their progress and understanding.

Another finding of the study is that the 5E learning model improved with concept maps reduces students' test anxiety. This model enables students to develop their knowledge and skills gradually while practising in a supportive environment. To address this anxiety, teachers should establish a supportive and encouraging environment and provide opportunities for students to practice their skills in preparation for exams.

The main limitation of the presented study is that the students could not be selected randomly: the existing classes were used. To minimise this limitation, the existing classes were chosen randomly. Additionally, the study was conducted within the framework of the subject of the periodic table. It is believed that the long-term application of this model to other chemistry subjects will further impact students' motivation.

Research ethics

All procedures performed in studies involving human participants were in accordance with the ethical standards of Hacettepe University's ethical committee, and the committee approved the data collection procedures. The study was also conducted under the following ethical standards: Ethics

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Primary School Teachers' Personal and Professional Beliefs on Diversity

Željka Knežević[1]

∼   The paper presents research conducted among Croatian primary school classroom teachers and subject teachers regarding their personal and professional beliefs about diversity. The notion of diversity in the context of education was presented as individual differences between students based on race, ethnicity, religious beliefs, gender, abilities, sexual orientation and social class. The results indicate that teachers show different levels of openness towards certain aspects of diversity in the domains of both personal and professional beliefs, but that their personal beliefs are statistically more positive than their professional beliefs. Differences in teachers' beliefs with respect to years of work experience, previous education and professional position were also examined. Statistically significant differences were established only regarding professional position and only in the segment of professional beliefs. The results indicate that there is a need for further research in this area, that is, research that primarily investigates the factors that influence teachers' professional beliefs.

Keywords: diversity, inclusive education, multicultural education, primary school, teachers' beliefs

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Osebna in poklicna prepričanja osnovnošolskih učiteljev glede raznolikosti

Željka Knežević

∿   V prispevku je predstavljena raziskava, opravljena med hrvaškimi osnovnošolskimi učitelji razrednega in predmetnega pouka, o njihovih osebnih in poklicnih prepričanjih glede raznolikosti. Pojem raznolikosti v kontekstu izobraževanja je bil predstavljen kot individualne razlike med učenci na podlagi rase, etnične pripadnosti, verskih prepričanj, spola, zmožnosti, spolne usmerjenosti in družbenega razreda. Izsledki kažejo, da učitelji na področju osebnih in poklicnih prepričanj kažejo različne stopnje odprtosti do nekaterih vidikov raznolikosti, vendar so njihova osebna prepričanja – statistično gledano – bolj pozitivna kot poklicna prepričanja. Preučene so bile tudi razlike v prepričanjih učiteljev glede na leta delovnih izkušenj, predhodno izobrazbo in poklicni položaj. Statistično značilne razlike so bile ugotovljene le glede poklicnega položaja in le v segmentu poklicnih prepričanj. Rezultati kažejo, da so na tem področju potrebne nadaljnje raziskave, z drugimi besedami raziskave, ki bi preučevale predvsem dejavnike, ki vplivajo na poklicna prepričanja učiteljev.

Ključne besede: raznolikost, inkluzivno izobraževanje, multikulturno izobraževanje, osnovna šola, prepričanja učiteljev

Introduction

Processes such as globalisation, migration and increased individual mobility make nations around the world culturally more diverse. In this respect, numerous countries have been recording larger shares of immigrants. The result of this global trend is increased diversity in society, which is directly reflected in education and creates, above all, a challenge for teachers to successfully respond to the needs of their students.

Diversity is a very complex and layered notion. In the scientific literature, it is viewed from various perspectives and defined in various ways (Puttick et. al., 2021). Regardless of the various perspectives, diversity, at its core, implies the understanding that individuals can differ from others they live with based on their characteristics (e.g., Arnesen et al., 2010; Mazziotta et al., 2016). In the field of education, diversity is defined as a wide range of differences in students' characteristics and needs (OECD, 2019), which can "affect the specific ways in which developmental potential and learning are realised" (Burns & Shadoian-Gersing, 2010, p. 21). In addition to students' interests and learning styles, these differences include abilities, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, and immigrant and/or minority background, with the latter encompassing ethnic and cultural heritage, religion and language (OECD, 2019). All of these variables of diversity are considered dynamic and intertwined, so a comprehensive insight into the educational needs of students can only be achieved if they are researched as a whole and not separately (Banks, 2012).

Such a broad notion of diversity presents both challenges and opportunities for the stakeholders involved in education (Banks, 2014). If not addressed adequately, pluralism in schools can lead to marginalisation and exclusion of students or groups of students. This was often the case in the past, when, under the influence of social circumstances, racial, ethnic, language, religious, gender and sexual minority groups, as well as people with disabilities, were discriminated against or experienced inequality in educational contexts (Banks, 2012). In order to prevent discrimination and to make use of the added value diversity has for education systems and societies, scholars (e.g., Ameny-Dixon, 2004; Gay & Howard, 2000) advocate multicultural education. Multicultural education promotes equality and cultural pluralism, as it is founded on the assumption that "all students – regardless of their gender, sexual orientation, social class, and ethnic, racial or cultural characteristics – should have an equal opportunity to learn in school" (Banks, 2014, p. 1). Moreover, contrary to conceptions of diversity as a disadvantage that can be solved through assimilation of members of minority groups, as occurred in the past (Cochran-Smith, 2003),

multicultural education perceives diversity as a value that enriches society by offering all citizens the possibility to experience other cultures, thus contributing to the development and growth of each individual's own personality (Banks, 2014; OECD, 2019). The notion that multicultural education is necessary only in settings with a large number of people of different ethnic backgrounds and cultures is therefore wrong. The aim of multicultural education is to prepare all students for life in a multicultural world marked by diversity by providing them with the "skills, attitudes, and knowledge needed to function within their community cultures, the mainstream culture and within and across other ethnic cultures" (Banks, 2014, p. 4).

The value of diversity, with its broad spectrum of components, is also recognised in inclusive education policies whose focus is not solely the integration of children with physical challenges into regular education, but an appropriate reaction to the educational needs of all students regardless of their differences (Booth, 1996; Bouillet, 2019; Žero & Pižorn, 2022). The aim of the inclusive approach is the transformation of education systems so that they can appropriately respond to the diversity of learners (UNESCO, 2003), meaning that "schools should accommodate all children regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other conditions. This should include disabled and gifted children, street and working children, children from remote or nomadic populations, children from linguistic, ethnic or cultural minorities and children from other disadvantaged or marginalized areas or groups" (UNESCO, 1994, p. 6).

Respect of diversity in the broader sense, and the promotion of the described multicultural and inclusive educational practices, is advocated through education policies by an increasing number of European countries (European Commission, 2017). However, attainment of these educational aims depends primarily on the teachers' readiness for their implementation. Here we refer to the readiness of all teachers regardless of the subject they are teaching, as each student is different and each subject taught has an obligation to respect diversity and offer all students equal learning opportunities (Gay, 2002; Guðjónsdóttir & Óskarsdóttir, 2019; OECD, 2010).

According to international documents on education policies (Arnesen et al., 2010; European Commission, 2017; OECD, 2019), the competences teachers should possess in order to adequately address diversity in their teaching are, inter alia, knowledge of diversity and respect for other cultures, skills for offering appropriate answers to diversified teaching, the ability to create inclusive and safe learning environments, and the ability to establish appropriate communication and relationships with students, parents and colleagues of diverse

social and cultural characteristics.

The foundation for the development of these competences are teachers' values, attitudes and beliefs (European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education, 2012; European Commission, 2017), which, along with knowledge and skills, make up one of the indispensable competency components dealing with diversity in teaching. Beliefs represent a particular filter to knowledge and directly affect the teacher's actions (Bandura, 1982, in Pohan & Aguilar, 2001; see also Sakarneh, 2023; Žero & Pižorn, 2022). This is confirmed by research in the area of diversity showing that teachers' beliefs about students based on some of their characteristics – whether the beliefs concern ethnicity, gender, religion or any other difference – have an effect on the ways in which teachers treat the students, as well as on the expectations teachers have of them (Cardona, 2005; Coronel & Gomez-Hurtado, 2015; Gay, 2010). The task of initial teacher education is therefore to encourage teachers to critically examine their beliefs on diversity, develop positive attitudes towards all students, and develop beliefs that all students are capable of learning (OECD, 2019; Skepple, 2015).

Due to the importance of future teachers' attitudes and beliefs and the role of initial teacher education in their formation, a great deal of research on diversity has focused on examining pre-service teachers' attitudes and beliefs regarding diversity or their sense of readiness for working in multicultural classrooms (Altinsoy et al., 2018; Giambo & Szecsi, 2007; Puttick et al., 2021; Taylor et al., 2016). In order to better understand teacher behaviour related to diversity, however, it is also necessary to include working teachers in research. Teachers' beliefs can be shaped by their practices (Liu et al., 2021), which develop and change under the influence of experience in teaching and the school environment (Agirdag et al., 2016; Aragona-Young & Sawyer, 2018). Furthermore, teachers' perspectives on diversity should be examined two-dimensionally, from the personal and professional perspective. Research in the domain of teachers' professional identity shows that the development of teachers' identity is influenced by both their personal and professional beliefs and values (Vermunt, 2016; Vizek Vidović & Domović, 2019), which is why Pohan and Aguilar (2001) argue that teachers' professional and personal beliefs about the same diversity phenomenon need not always complement each other. This argument is confirmed by research on the personal and professional beliefs of teachers on diversity conducted by Cardona (2005) in the Alicante province in Spain, which showed that the participants had more positive professional than personal beliefs. However, after ten years of research in the same province, Chiner et al. (2015) obtained the opposite results. Both studies nonetheless confirmed

that teachers' beliefs are influenced by their teaching experience. The results revealed that teachers with little or no work experience were more open to diversity from the professional point of view.

Research of teachers' beliefs or attitudes on diversity conducted in the Republic of Croatia has mostly focused on individual components of diversity, such as students' gender (cf. Baranović et al., 2008), abilities (cf. Skočić Mihić et al., 2016), ethnicity (cf. Nuhanović, 2021) and cultural and linguistic diversity (cf. Cvikić & Novak Milić, 2015). Alternatively, it has examined the degree of respect of several aspects of diversity only among one group of teachers (Filipović, 2015). However, more comprehensive research on issues of diversity in the context of education has not been undertaken to date. Moreover, until now, teachers' attitudes and beliefs have not been examined from a two-dimensional – personal and professional – perspective.

In order to gain a broader picture regarding teachers' perspectives on diversity, the aim of the present paper was to establish the personal and professional beliefs of primary school classroom teachers and subject teachers working in the Republic of Croatia about diversity. Accordingly, the following research questions were posed:

1.   What are the personal and professional beliefs of teachers about diversity?
2.   What is the degree of teachers' personal and professional sensitivity towards particular aspects of diversity?
3.   Are there differences in the personal and professional beliefs of teachers with respect to the presence of content related to issues of diversity in their initial education and with respect to their years of work experience and their professional position (classroom teacher/subject teacher)?

Method

Participants

The sample of participants included 264 primary school classroom teachers and subject teachers. As can be seen in Table 1, most of the participants in the research were women, with subject teachers dominating the sample. Most of the participants were between 31 and 40 years of age and had 7–18 years of work experience. Almost half of the participants indicated the City of Zagreb as their place of work, while the proportion of those working in other counties is significantly smaller.

Table 1

Socio-demographic characteristics of the participants in %

Socio-demographic characteristic	Category	%
Gender	woman	90.5
	man	8
	non-binary person	0.8
	transgender person	0.4
	did not state	0.4
Position	classroom teacher	35.6
	subject teacher	64.4
Age	20–30	17.4
	31–40	30.3
	41–50	28
	51–60	18.9
	60+	5.3
Work experience	1–3	14
	4–6	14.8
	7–18	33
	19–30	24.2
	31–40	12.5
	40+	1.5
Place of work	City of Zagreb	40.4
	Krapina – Zagorje County	8.5
	Zagreb County	7.7
	Primorje – Gorski Kotar County	5.4
	Osijek – Baranja County	5
	Other counties	less than 4%

Instruments

Data collection was undertaken using a questionnaire including a section with questions regarding the socio-demographic data of the participants and the number of courses in their initial education that dealt with diversity issues. To examine the participants' personal and professional beliefs about diversity, adapted scales developed by Pohan and Aguilar (2001) were used. Since the scales developed by Pohan and Aguilar (2001) proved to be reliable and valid, the number and the nature of statements in each scale was not been changed in the present research. The scale examining personal beliefs comprised a total of

15 statements referring to various aspects of race/ethnicity, gender, social class, sexual orientation, abilities, and linguistic and cultural differences. The scale for investigating professional beliefs encompassed 25 statements related to the same components of diversity as the scale for examining personal beliefs, but with added statements referring to issues of religion. The number of statements related to particular aspects of diversity varied in both scales, from three statements referring to gender issues in the personal beliefs scale to one statement referring to matters on sexual orientation in the professional beliefs scale. The level of agreement with a particular statement was expressed on a 5-point Likert Scale (1 = I don't agree at all, 5 = I entirely agree). For both scales investigating teachers' beliefs on diversity, a satisfactory reliability of internal consistency was established. The Cronbach alpha for the scale teachers' personal beliefs on diversity was .699, while for the scale professional beliefs it was .704.

As indicated by Pohan and Aguilar (2001), in both scales lower values indicate a smaller level of acceptance of diversity, while higher values indicate a higher acceptance. Mid-range scores denote openness towards some aspects of diversity, and possible insecurity or uncertainty towards other components. Such scores can also point to a high level of acceptance of particular aspects and low tolerance of some other aspects. Chiner et al. (2015), who also used the scale developed by Pohan and Aguilar (2001), take the value 3.5 as the mean value according to which they determine lower and higher values of participants' sensitivity. This approach has been applied in the research presented in this paper as well.

Data analysis

The collected data were analysed using the statistical program SPSS (version 2.0). Descriptive parameters were calculated for all of the variables. The reliability of internal consistency was determined by calculating the Cronbach alpha coefficient for the scales that measured the personal and professional beliefs of the participants. The correlation between the scales was calculated using Pearson's correlation coefficient (significance level 0.01). The t-test (significance level 0.05) was applied to establish differences in personal and professional beliefs, while the analysis of variance and the Kruskall-Wallis test (significance level 0.05) were applied to establish differences with respect to the independent variables.

Research design

Since online surveys represent a method by which potential respondents can be more easily approached (Van Selm & Jankowski, 2006), the research

presented in this paper was conducted online in order to reach primary school teachers from all parts of Croatia. The questionnaire was distributed to various closed professional teacher association groups on social networks and was available for participants to fill in throughout the month of June 2022. The respondents were sent an invitation letter with a hyperlink to the web-based survey. The letter clearly stated that only teachers working in primary schools were invited to participate in the survey. In order to ensure privacy and informed consent (Buchanan & Hvizdak, 2009), the introduction to the survey informed participants about the aim of the research and the fact that participation in the research is completely voluntary and anonymous. It was also stated that the participants could withdraw from the research at any time. No personal data or email addresses of the participants were collected.

Results

Teachers' personal and professional beliefs about diversity

Histogram 1 shows the distribution of the participants with respect to their personal beliefs about diversity. It is evident that most of the participants (41.9%) obtained results in the range from M = 4.07 to M = 4.73, which indicates a higher level of sensitivity towards diversity. Of the participants in the sample, 36.4% are found mid-scale, (from M = 3.60 to M = 4.00), while lower personal sensitivity towards diversity (from M = 2.53 to M = 3.53) is indicated by 18.4% of participants in the sample.

Histogram 1
Distribution of the participants with respect to their personal beliefs on diversity

N	2.3
Min.	2.53
Max.	4.73
M	3.91
C	4.00
D	4.20
SD	0.44
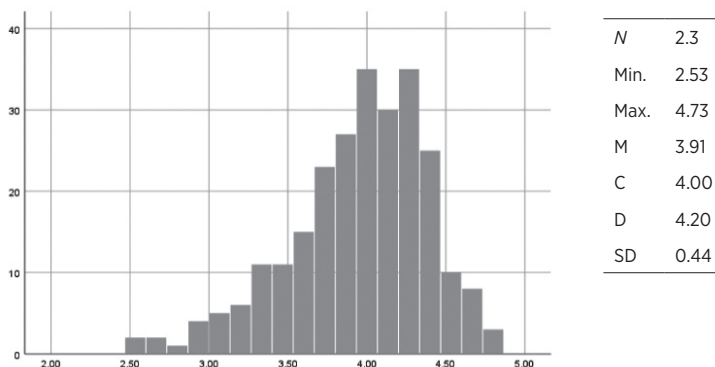
An entirely different situation is observed with respect to the professional beliefs of the participants in the sample. As presented in Histogram 2, the distribution according to the participants' professional beliefs indicates that almost half of the participants (52.22%) tend to have a lower sensitivity towards diversity (from M = 2.28 to M = 3.52), 41.30% are mid-scale (from M = 3.56 to M = 4.00), while only 6.48% show a higher degree of openness towards diversity (from M = 4.04 to M = 4.68).

Histogram 2

Distribution of the participants with respect to their professional beliefs on diversity

N	247
Min.	2.28
Max.	4.68
M	3.50
C	3.52
D	3.40
SD	0.41
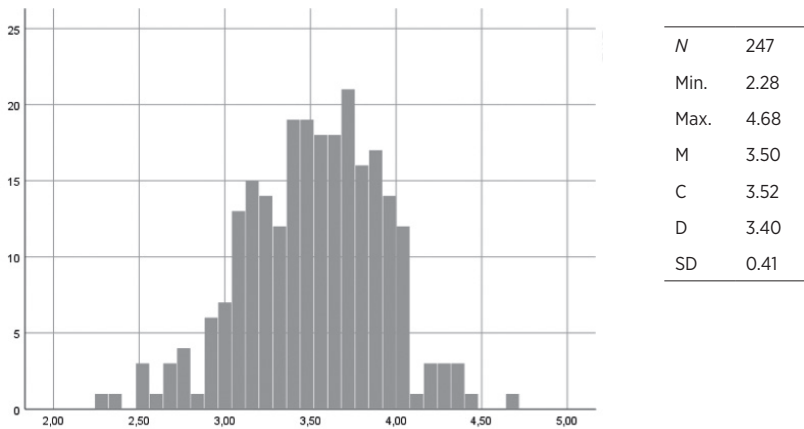
The observed differences between the personal and professional beliefs of the participants are also statistically significant ($t = 16.407$, $p = .00$).

Degree of sensitivity towards various aspects of diversity

Modelled on Chiner et al. (2015), for a more transparent presentation of the teachers' personal and professional beliefs, items from both scales were grouped according to the components of diversity that were examined. In this way, the categories obtained for the scale of both the teachers' personal and professional beliefs were: *linguistic, cultural and ethnic diversity*, *social status*, *abilities*, *gender* and *sexual orientation*. For the professional beliefs scale, the category *religion* was also determined, considering that it examined the professional beliefs of teachers according to that aspect of diversity. To determine the aspects of diversity for which the teachers' personal and professional beliefs are statistically significantly higher or lower from the mean value of 3.5, the one-sample *t*-test was applied. The degrees of personal sensitivity of teachers

towards particular aspects of diversity are shown in Table 2, while levels of professional sensitivity are shown in Table 3.

Table 2

Results of the one-sample t-test – levels of the teachers' personal sensitivity towards particular aspects of diversity

Aspects of diversity	Beliefs	N	M	t	df	p
Linguistic, cultural and ethnic diversity	personal	260	3.54	1.523	259	.129
Social status	personal	264	3.49	-.150	263	.881
Abilities	personal	262	4.32	16.702	261	.000
Gender	personal	262	4.28	19.474	261	.000
Sexual orientation	personal	261	4.12	13.223	260	.000

N – number of participants, *M* – arithmetic mean, *t* – *t*-test value, *df* – degrees of freedom, *p* – statistical significance

The values of the arithmetic means in Table 2 show that in the domain of personal beliefs, teachers have a statistically significantly high level of sensitivity towards differences between individuals based on abilities, gender and sexual orientation. In this regard, the participants entirely disagree with the statement *enabling access to all public institutions for people with physical disabilities is financially very costly* (M = 1.3), and they do not agree with the statement that *people with physical disabilities are less efficient at work than people without physical disabilities* (M = 2.0). As for gender sensitivity, the participants do not think that *men are better leaders than women* (M = 1.6). In the area of sexual orientation, they disagree with the statement that *it is not right that same-sex couples raise children* (M = 2.1), and they are of the opinion that *people should develop friendships with persons of different sexual orientations* (M = 4.2). When referring to linguistic, cultural and ethnic diversity and social status, from the personal perspective teachers take a neutral or undecided position. In the area of linguistic, cultural and ethnic diversity, teachers express complete agreement with the statement *members of national minorities in Croatia should have equal opportunities for education and employment as the majority population* (M = 4.9); however, they are uncertain regarding the statement that *it is more important for migrants in Croatia to learn the Croatian language than to nurture their mother tongue* (M = 2.9). Such contradictory viewpoints are also noticed in the domain of social status, where teachers take an indecisive position regarding the statement *the cause of an individual's poverty is their lack of motivation for finding a job* (M = 2.7), while agreeing with the statement *compared*

to men, women in Croatia are in an economically more disadvantaged position (M = 3.7). From their personal point of view, low levels of sensitivity were not expressed by the teachers towards any of the aspects of diversity. From the teachers' professional point of view, however, there is an observed statistically significantly lower level of sensitivity towards differences based on social status and gender. (cf. Table 3).

Table 3

Results of the one-sample t-test – levels of the teachers' professional sensitivity towards particular aspects of diversity

Aspects of diversity	Beliefs	*N*	*M*	*t*	*df*	*p*
Linguistic, cultural and ethnic diversity	Professional	258	3.59	2.762	257	.006
Social status	Professional	260	3.08	-7.842	259	.000
Abilities	Professional	262	3.42	-1.867	261	.063
Gender	Professional	259	2.90	-13.586	258	.000
Sexual orientation	Professional	263	4.55	18.165	262	.000
Religion	Professional	261	4.16	12.050	260	.000

N – number of participants, *M* – arithmetic mean, *t* – value of the *t*-test, *df* – degrees of freedom, *p* – statistical significance

For the part of the questionnaire that examined the professional beliefs of the teachers based on social status, the participants express disagreement with the statement that *teachers frequently have lower expectations from students of a lower socio-economic status* (M = 2.6). As for the area of gender diversity, they disagree with the statement that *men have more opportunities for success in natural sciences than women* (M = 2.6). The teachers are indecisive in the domain of professional beliefs regarding linguistic, cultural and ethnic diversity, and towards abilities. With respect to linguistic, cultural and ethnic diversity, the teachers' uncertainty is reflected in the obtained mean value for the statement *education in Croatia is not adjusted to the needs of minority/migration groups* (M = 3.2), while in the area of abilities, the mean value obtained for the statement *teachers should group students according to their abilities* was M = 2.9.

In the professional domain, teachers show a high level of sensitivity towards differences between individuals based on sexual orientation and religious affiliation. The participants entirely disagree with the statement *homosexuals should not work in schools* (M = 1.5), but with respect to religious affiliation, they agree with the statement that *it would be good if teachers and students were familiar with characteristics of different religions* (M = 4.4).

Differences in the personal and professional beliefs of teachers

Differences with respect to initial education

In order to examine differences in the personal and professional beliefs of teachers with respect to their initial education, the participants were asked, inter alia, to mark the degree to which particular topics related to diversity had been present in their programme of study. As can be seen from the data in Graph 1, the highest number of participants stated that they had encountered issues of inclusion during their initial education, with 42.2% reporting that the topic had been represented in at least one course and 28.9% stating that they had encountered this issue in several courses during their programme of study. According to their estimates, an almost equal number of participants encountered the issue of multilingualism within one course (40.2%) or several courses (26.5%) during their study. The topics that more than 40% of participants did not encounter at all during their initial education were democratic citizenship (43.2%) and development of intercultural competence (44.9%)

Graph 1

Estimate of the representation of particular topics in the teachers' initial education expressed in percentages
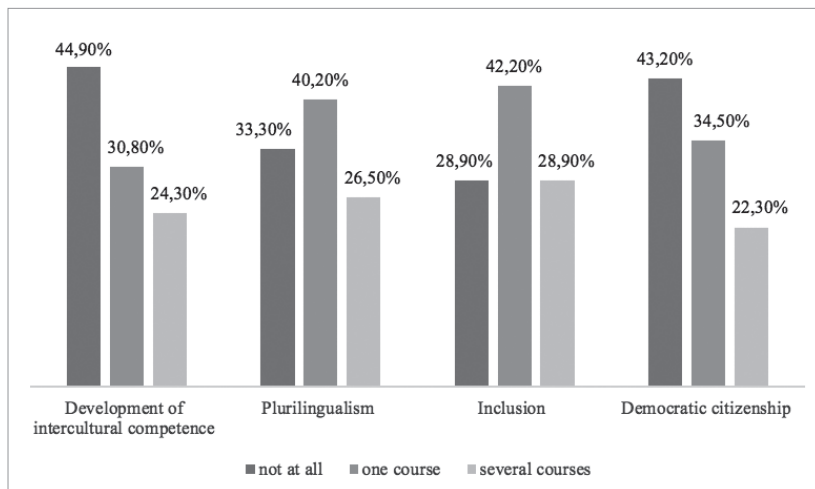
Although the values shown in Graph 1 indicate differences in the participants' familiarity with particular aspects of diversity, a correlation between initial education and the personal and professional beliefs of teachers was not established. In order to examine differences between the teachers according to

their personal and professional beliefs and with respect to their previous education, a one-way analysis of variance was conducted. The results of the analysis did not show statistically significant differences in personal beliefs (Development of intercultural competence: F = 2.075, *p* = .128; Plurilingualism: F = .495, *p* = .610; Inclusion: F = .276, *p* = .759; Democratic citizenship: F = .863, *p* = .423), nor in the professional beliefs of the participants (Development of intercultural competence: F = .498, *p* = .608; Plurilingualism: F = 1.039, *p* = .356; Inclusion: F = .463, *p* = .630; Democratic citizenship: F = .700, *p* = .497) with respect to their estimate of the representation of particular content related to diversity during their course of study.

Differences with respect to work experience

As in the case of previous education, statistically significant differences in the teachers' beliefs were not encountered with respect to years of work experience. Considering that for professional beliefs, the assumption of the homogeneity of variance was not satisfactory, the Kruskall-Wallis test was applied (Personal beliefs: F = .639, *p* = .635; Professional beliefs: H = 9.200, *p* = .056).

According to the mean values shown in Table 4, greater deviations in the personal beliefs of the participants with respect to years of work experience are not observed (from *M* = 3.86 to *M* = 3.97). As for the professional beliefs of the teachers, those with 4 to 6 years of work experience (*M* = 3.36) and those with 19 to 30 years of work experience (*M* = 3.41) have a somewhat lower level of sensitivity towards diversity than their older and younger colleagues. The highest level of professional sensitivity towards diversity (*M* = 3.61) was detected among teachers who have just entered the profession.

Table 4

Personal and professional beliefs of the teachers regarding diversity with respect to years of work experience

Years of work experience	N	Personal beliefs		Professional beliefs	
		M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
1–3	37	3.97	.42515	3.61	.44952
4–6	39	3.89	.45323	3.36	.53573
7–18	87	3.96	.40418	3.55	.33386
19–30	64	3.86	.44725	3.41	.36396
31–40 and more	37	3.92	.50366	3.57	.37133
Total	264	3.91	.43865	3.50	.40568

N – number of participants, *M* – arithmetic mean, *SD* – standard deviation

Differences with respect to professional position

Statistically significant differences in the participants' beliefs were established only for their professional position and only with respect to the teachers' professional beliefs. The results of the t-test for independent samples with respect to professional position are shown in Table 5.

Table 5

Results of the t-test for independent samples – comparison of participants' professional beliefs with respect to their professional position (classroom teacher or subject teacher)

Aspects of diversity	Professional position	N	M	t	df	p
Linguistic, cultural and ethnic diversity	Classroom teacher	94	3.59	.122	253	.903
	Subject teacher	161	3.58			
Social status	Classroom teacher	95	2.87	-2.810	255	.005
	Subject teacher	162	3.18			
Abilities	Classroom teacher	96	3.54	2.114	257	.035
	Subject teacher	163	3.35			
Gender	Classroom teacher	95	2.79	-1.885	254	.061
	Subject teacher	161	2.96			
Sexual orientation	Classroom teacher	97	4.50	-.491	258	.624
	Subject teacher	163	4.56			
Religion	Classroom teacher	95	4.07	-1.224	256	.222
	Subject teacher	163	4.21			

N – number of participants, *M* – arithmetic mean, *t* – value of the t-test, *df* – degrees of freedom, *p* – statistical significance

The values shown in Table 5 indicate statistically significant differences in the professional beliefs of the classroom teachers and subject teachers related to social status (p = .005) and ability (p = .035). Although the range of arithmetic means for both groups of participants and for both aspects of diversity show that the classroom teachers and subject teachers are generally undetermined, the results of the t-test show that the subject teachers have a somewhat higher level of sensitivity towards diversity based on social status, while the classroom teachers have a somewhat higher sensitivity towards differences based on abilities.

Discussion

The research presented provides an insight into the personal and professional beliefs of primary school teachers on diversity. The results show that teachers' personal beliefs on diversity are statistically more positive than their professional beliefs, which is in agreement with some previous research findings of Chiner et al. (2015). The total mean value on the scale of personal beliefs ($M = 3.91$) indicates a high level of the participants' sensitivity towards diversity. In the area of professional beliefs, the participants are at the middle part of the scale ($M = 3.50$), which means that their professional beliefs are undetermined.

With respect to particular components of diversity, correspondences between the personal and professional beliefs of the teachers are noticeable with regard to sexual orientation, towards which the participants show a high level of sensitivity in both domains. Professionally, the level of the teachers' sensitivity towards sexual orientation in comparison to other diversity variables is the highest, followed by a high level of openness towards religious diversity. A possible explanation for the sensitivity towards sexual orientation can be found in the structure of the participants, the vast majority of whom were female (90.5%). In addition to having more positive attitudes towards homosexuals (Longin, 2014; Parmač, 2005), research shows that women demonstrate a greater readiness for inclusion in activities directed towards improving their social status (Huić et al., 2016). Besides their beliefs regarding sexual orientation, teachers' personal and professional beliefs are also identical with respect to linguistic, cultural and ethnic diversity. In this respect, teachers' personal and professional beliefs are undetermined, i.e., it is possible that the personal beliefs of teachers influence their professional beliefs in this aspect of diversity. These results complement the results of a national survey of Croatian citizens' attitudes towards cultural diversity, which showed that almost every third citizen does not have a firm attitude regarding the role of minorities in Croatian society. This "points to significant confusion and indetermination regarding majority-minority relationships and perhaps even social conformism" (Mesić & Bagić, 2011, p. 17).

Teachers show differences in personal and professional beliefs with respect to diversity based on gender, social status and abilities. In the domain of personal beliefs, the participants have a highly developed sensitivity towards gender diversity, while in the domain of professional beliefs this sensitivity is low. Such discrepancies between personal and professional aspects of life have been shown by other research conducted among high school teachers (c.f. Baranović et al., 2008) according to which teachers in Croatia have a developed

awareness of gender equality, but nonetheless readily discriminate against students based on gender. It seems that in education, gender awareness has not been sufficiently developed, and that the traditional view of gender inequality still prevails (Baranović & Jugović, 2011). A similar conclusion can be drawn with respect to differences in teachers' personal and professional beliefs related to issues of social status. Teachers' personal beliefs towards differences based on social status are undetermined, while professionally they show a low degree of sensitivity. Although numerous international studies (e.g., Mostafa, 2020; Mullis, 2023) indicate that students' social status affects their educational achievement, it seems that teachers do not have a sufficiently developed awareness of this issue. The divergence between personal and professional beliefs of teachers becomes distinct with respect to differences based on abilities. In the domain of personal beliefs, teachers show a high degree of sensitivity, but they are undetermined from their professional viewpoint. The findings in the area of personal beliefs are comparable with the results of research conducted on the general population indicating positive attitudes among the majority of citizens of the Republic of Croatia towards persons and children with disabilities (e.g., Najman Hižman et al., 2008; Vidaković et al., 2022). From the professional point of view, the indetermination of teachers towards issues of ability could be a result of their experiences in teaching practice, which, as indicated in the introduction of this paper, could also shape their beliefs.

Although previous research has indicated that differences in the professional beliefs of teachers with respect to years of work experience are statistically significant (Cardona, 2005; Chiner et al., 2015), the present research did not establish such differences. However, the mean values obtained for professional beliefs show that teachers with fewer years of work experience have a higher level of sensitivity towards differences than their more experienced colleagues, which is consistent with previous research. Considering the fact that teachers' beliefs change and form depending on their experiences in teaching (Giambo & Szecsi, 2007), it seems that teachers professionally become less sensitive towards differences with more work experience. This opens the question regarding the cause of this change in the professional beliefs of teachers, particularly if we consider the fact that their personal beliefs on differences remain mostly positive regardless of work experience.

In addition to the influence of work experience on teachers' beliefs, previous research also shows a correlation between initial education and the degree of openness of teachers towards particular components of diversity (Cvikić & Novak Milić, 2015; Skočić Mihić et al., 2016) or diversity in general (Giambo & Szecsi, 2007). The present research established that the teachers had courses

in their initial teacher education in which issues of diversity were discussed, but the correlation between the representation of particular courses in the programme of study and the participants' beliefs did not emerge as statistically significant. If we take into account research results that have established the influence of initial teacher education on the formation of the positive beliefs of teachers towards diversity (Puttick et. al., 2021) and results of the international TALIS 2018 research (Markočić Dekanić et al., 2019b), according to which teachers in the Republic of Croatia feel the least prepared for teaching students of various abilities and for teaching in a multicultural and plurilingual environment, the issue of initial teacher education in the Republic of Croatia regarding diversity should definitely be explored in more detail. According to the results obtained, possible changes in programmes of study should take place.

Statistically significant differences in the participants' beliefs were established only with respect to professional position, and only for two components of diversity in the domain of professional beliefs. Compared to classroom teachers, subject teachers show a somewhat higher level of sensitivity towards differences based on social status. On the other hand, classroom teachers show a higher level of sensitivity towards abilities than subject teachers. The reason for the higher sensitivity of subject teachers towards differences based on social status could be found in the greater likelihood of differences between students coming to the fore in the higher grades of primary school (Markočić Dekanić et. al., 2019a). Classroom teachers' greater sensitivity towards students' abilities could be explained from the point of view of their initial teacher education. Courses related to issues of inclusion have been present for around 35 years in the initial teacher education of classroom teachers, and the correlation between teachers' beliefs on inclusion and the representation of such content in their programme of study has been demonstrated empirically (Skočić Mihić & Gabrić, 2016). Nonetheless, considering that statistically significant differences between classroom teachers and subject teachers have not been established, except for in the areas of ability and social status, it is not possible to make general conclusions on the differences between the professional beliefs of teachers with respect to their professional position.

Conclusion

The research conducted has certain limitations that should be taken into account in the interpretation of the results obtained. Considering the characteristics of the instrument applied in the research and the sample size, the results described provide only an initial depiction of the personal and professional

beliefs of primary school teachers on diversity in the broader sense, and therefore primarily present a foundation for further research in this area. As the results show that teachers' personal beliefs regarding diversity are more positive than their professional beliefs, it is particularly important that future research include issues related to factors that influence teachers' professional beliefs in order to better understand this finding. Likewise, the finding that teachers with more work experience become less sensitive professionally towards differences requires comprehensive research on the possible causes of this development in their professional work. Moreover, it suggests that all issues dealing with diversity in teaching should be part of teachers' professional development on an ongoing basis, as diversity is not a static but a dynamic construct that changes over the years. Differences in the degree of professional openness of teachers towards particular components of diversity indicate that initial teacher education should include issues of diversity more comprehensively. In particular, the topic of diversity should be coherently integrated within the programme of study and not introduced through several unrelated courses, as is currently the case. This conclusion is supported by the finding that there are no statistically significant differences between the surveyed teachers with respect to the presence of content related to diversity in their initial education, and that there are no statistically significant differences in the beliefs of classroom teachers and subject teachers whose initial teacher education differs considerably.

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Biographical note

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Wendy Ayres-Bennet and Linda Fisher (Eds.), *Multilingualism and Identity: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, Cambridge University Press, 2022; 426 pp.: ISBN 978-1-108-49020-7

Reviewed by Andreja Retelj[1]

Edited by Wendy Ayres-Bennet and Linda Fisher, *Multilingualism and Identity: Interdisciplinary Perspectives* consists of 18 contributions by eminent researchers in the field of multilingualism and is characterised by its interdisciplinary insight into the various aspects of multilingualism in our society. The authors' contributions cover fields such as applied linguistics, sociolinguistics and education, among others, illustrating the book's commitment to exploring the complex and multifaceted nature of multilingualism.

Multilingualism cannot be seen as a rare phenomenon, but rather as a common social phenomenon with many benefits and challenges. These challenges have given rise to much of the research in the field of multilingualism and identity that is reflected in this volume. The contributors see more potential than problems in multilingualism, and their studies present findings relevant to both the immediate and broader social contexts.

The monograph is structured into three broad thematic chapters: Situated Multilingualism and Identity, Multilingual Identity Practices, and Multilingual Identity and Investment. Each theme organises the book's content and guides the reader through different dimensions of multilingualism and identity. The first chapter focuses on how multilingualism and identity are linked to specific spatial and social contexts, the second chapter explores multilingual identities in social interactions and highlights the role of participation and
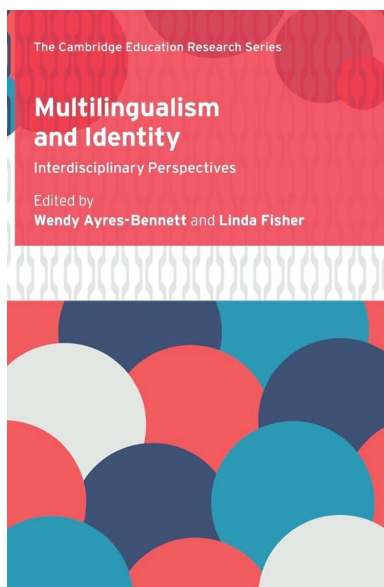
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legitimacy in the formation of identities, and the third chapter presents the impact of individual identity on language learning and use, and the investment that individuals make in learning languages.

Written by the two editors, the introductory article briefly outlines the main developments in multilingualism and identity research over the last 15 years. The authors highlight three waves of sociolinguistics that have influenced the understanding of language and identity, and stress the multilingual turn, which emphasises the role of the individual's multimodal repertoire. They then turn to terminological issues, distinguishing between multilingualism, pluri-lingualism, bilingualism, translanguaging, diglossia and metrolingualism, and discuss what it actually means to be a multilingual speaker. Ayres-Bennet and Fisher also highlight the three areas covered in the three chapters of the mono-graph from a theoretical perspective, demonstrating the complexity of multilin-gual identity research, the construction of identity and how this complexity is expressed in terminology. The introductory article, which clarifies terminology and opens the field of discussion for the other articles, concludes by stressing that despite the many conundrums, interdisciplinarity is the only way forward in multilingualism research, as it is essential for understanding this complex topic comprehensively.

The first chapter of the monograph comprises six articles that situate multilingualism in different geographical areas around the world, covering China, Ukraine, France, etc.

John E. Joseph's paper focuses on the complexity and problems of geo-graphical and cognitive mapping of multilingualism. The author is critical of both geographical mapping of multilingualism and neurological research that attempts to locate languages in the brain, as he considers it a gross oversimpli-fication of the complexity of multilingualism. Although such representations are important for understanding, it is crucial to be aware of their limitations. Joseph also draws attention to the ineffective communication between the dif-ferent disciplines that study multilingualism and calls for an interdisciplinary and integrated dialogue that would contribute methodologically and conceptu-ally to more integrated research.

Rory Finn and Ivan Kozachenko's paper examines the role of cultural production in the formation of multilingual identities in Ukraine, focusing on the use of language as a tool for expressing personal and national identities in wartime. Drawing on sociological and literary analysis, the authors conclude that various cultural productions (e.g., films, literary works) play a key role in how Ukrainians identify themselves, and point out that in the context of multilingual societies, extreme care needs to be taken in understanding how

language functions in identity formation. The article offers a fresh perspective on the interconnectedness of multilingualism, identity and nationality.

Pennycook and Otsuji introduce the concept of metrolingualism, which is based on the interplay of languages in urban environments. They argue that identities are not something static, tied to the individual and discourse, but are distributed across the people, objects, spaces and social interactions that characterise the urban environment.

In the fifth contribution of Chapter 1, Bullock reflects on how multilingualism can be a social asset that enables individuals, especially migrants, to integrate into new communities. However, while plurilingualism can be an asset, migrants face many challenges, such as linguistic discrimination.

Drawing on indexicality theory, Carruthers and McAuley examine how the specific pronunciation, vocabulary and syntax of a speaker of contemporary urban vernacular French are perceived by listeners and how these perceptions contribute to the construction of identities. The authors highlight the importance of awareness and the perception of urban speech within a broader social context.

Hui Zhao presents a case study of the city of Ningbo in China, where several languages coexist. The author considers how interactions between the Ningbo dialect, Mandarin and English shape the social hierarchy and how this relates to identity. She argues that individuals change their identity according to the context in which they are currently situated, and that perceptions of the value or status of a language significantly shape social dynamics.

The second thematic chapter of the monograph, entitled Multilingual Identity Practices, contains six articles.

Alison Phipps advocates for the recognition and valuing of linguistic practices of indigenous communities as they are adapted to the real needs of rural communities. In the article, she outlines how "equatorial epistemologies" – knowledge systems rooted in the cultures and practices of the Global South – have been integrated into education systems in rural Africa and advocates for these epistemologies as alternatives to the dominant Western paradigms.

Block's paper discusses methodological problems in research on multilingualism and identities. The author introduces and critically examines positioning theory in language and identity research.

The paper by Doherty, Norton and Stranger-Johannessen explores the role of translation in forming multilingual identities and promoting literacy in different linguistic communities. The authors present the Global Storybooks project, which involves translating African fairy tales into multiple languages.

Sarah Mercer and Kyle Read Talbot reflect on the dynamic and constantly evolving nature of identities, exploring how personal and professional

identities are reconciled by educators working in multilingual settings. Using complex dynamical systems theory, the authors find that educators are constantly negotiating their identities and that professional identities are subject to cognitions of legitimacy and ambivalence, particularly concerning non-native language use.

In the twelfth paper, Perrino and Wortham explore the role of narratives in constructing and expressing identities within multilingual communities. The paper deals with the dynamics of code-switching during storytelling and joke-telling, which can be inclusive for the members of the same language group or can exclude those members of the community who do not share the same linguistic repertoire.

The third part of the monograph, entitled Multilingual Identity and Investment, brings together six articles focusing on different educational contexts.

Patricia A. Duff's article highlights the challenges of learning Chinese as an additional language. The author is interested in how personal experiences, ideologies and socio-cultural factors influence the identity formation of Chinese learners.

Åsta Haukås presents different definitions of multilingualism and their understanding in the Norwegian context. Drawing on the results of the Ungspråk project, which investigated how learners define multilingualism and whether they perceive themselves as multilingual, the author points out that the discourse on multilingualism in Norway is often linked to the migrant issue, which excludes Norwegians who speak multiple languages. She emphasises the need for more inclusive definitions and the implementation of multilingual practices in the classroom to encourage the development of multilingual identities in all students, regardless of their background.

Angela Gayton and Linda Fisher demonstrate in their paper that the classroom is an important space where learners can be encouraged to reflect on their linguistic backgrounds and their interconnectedness with the languages they are learning. The authors argue that participatory reflective practice is key element in the development of multilingual identity, and that teachers play an essential role in creating a supportive and reflective environment.

Bailey's article shows the links between the language attitudes and identity formation of students in a Dual-Language Immersion programme. The author concludes that teachers significantly influence the formation of positive and negative attitudes by creating more or less supportive learning environments.

The penultimate article of the monograph takes the reader into the context of endangered languages, namely Māori (an indigenous language of New

Zealand) and Guernesiais (an indigenous language of the Channel Islands). Sallabank and King note that the motivation for learning such languages differs from the motivation for learning other languages, as it is primarily about personal enrichment, cultural empowerment, reconnecting with lost identities and sometimes also rebelling against linguistic marginalisation. The paper also addresses practical challenges in teaching endangered languages, such as lack of materials, teaching approaches, informal learning or lack of contact with speakers.

The last contribution by John E. Joseph concludes the monograph by reflecting on the themes addressed throughout the volume. The author emphasises the fluidity of linguistic identities and the acceptance of multilingual identities. He critiques traditional research approaches that emphasise the divisions between languages and the categorisation of linguistic practices and identities, advocating instead for the integration of multilingual approaches and the 4T approach (translanguaging, transmodal, transindividual, transspecies). Joseph argues that these approaches can complement each other, contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of the issue. The need for interdisciplinary networking and research is reiterated, as this is the only way to understand and embrace the fluidity and dynamics of multilingualism.

The monograph represents an important contribution to the field of multilingualism and identities, covering various aspects of multilingualism and diverse research contexts. The research presented here not only provides background knowledge on understanding the concept of multilingualism and identity, innovative models in different educational contexts, pedagogical implications, and theoretical, methodological and pedagogical considerations, but also raises broader societal issues, making the book relevant not only to linguists, but also to a broader audience with a professional interest in multilingualism and identity. By highlighting the challenges and potential of interdisciplinary research, the contributors have provided a model for future studies in this field. This monograph is essential reading for anyone seeking to understand the intricate relationship between language, identity and society in a globalised world.

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