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Unveiling Pre-Service Teachers' Cognitions of Multilingualism and Multilingual Identities Using a Multi-Method Approach

Abstract

Teacher cognitions of multilingualism influence classroom behaviour and are partly formed during pre-service teacher (PST) education (Borg 2003). In Fryslân, a linguistically diverse region of the Netherlands, Frisian is a compulsory subject, yet teachers feel underprepared to teach it, leading to negative attitudes towards the minority language and multilingualism in general. A survey, dominant language constellation (DLC) artefacts (Ibrahim 2022), and focus groups with vignettes (Barter & Renold 1999) were used to explore 72 PSTs' cognitions of multilingualism in education and multilingual identities. Our triangulation of methods shows how cognitions of multilingualism can be mapped in various ways. PSTs held slightly positive cognitions of multilingualism in education in the survey and identified as multilingual in the DLCs and focus groups. However, PSTs' cognitions of minority languages should be improved. This study contributes to the understanding of PSTs' multilingual identities and cognitions and offers guidance on how the concept of teacher cognition can be applied to multilingualism to improve training on multilingual pedagogies for PSTs.

Keywords

Teacher cognition, multilingual teacher education, pre-service teachers, multilingual identity, dominant language constellations, minority languages

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1. Introduction

The Netherlands is a multicultural and multilingual country, with 27% of inhabitants having an immigrant background, 25% speaking a language other than Dutch at home, and 16% speaking a regional minority language (CBS 2022; 2023; Schmeets & Cornips 2021). This study was conducted in Fryslân, an officially bilingual region in the north of the Netherlands, where almost 60% of the population speaks Frisian as a home language (Provinsje Fryslân 2020). Fryslân is a superdiverse region (Vertovec 2007) where many languages are spoken in various contexts, and its linguistic diversity is reflected in the education system. Dutch and Frisian are spoken and taught in the education system, including in trilingual primary schools where Frisian, Dutch, and English are used as languages of instruction (Duarte & Günther-van der Meij 2018a). Frisian is also offered as a compulsory subject in primary and lower secondary education (Mercator 2007). However, teachers claim to feel underprepared to address this linguistic diversity in the classroom, which often results in the adoption of monolingual language policies and the persistence of achievement gaps between majority and minority language students (Robinson-Jones et al. 2022; Schleicher 2019; Van Praag et al. 2017). Pre-service teachers (hereafter PSTs) are not always (explicitly) exposed to multilingual students during their training, which leads to a lack of knowledge about multilingualism and feelings of unpreparedness, often resulting in negative attitudes and monolingual language policies (Dooley 2007; Robinson-Jones et al. 2022). However, PSTs in Fryslân must be able to address issues related to Frisian language education, while also engaging with the multilingual identities of their students and experimenting with other forms of multilingual education. PSTs in Fryslân thus follow a semester-long course on language and identity, which serves as the setting for this study. During that course, PSTs engage with their own multilingual identities and cognitions of multilingualism in education (NHL Stenden, n. d.).

Teacher cognition influences classroom behaviour and is partly formed during PST education (Borg 2003). We suggest the term teacher cognition of multilingualism as an umbrella term including attitudes, knowledge, and experiences of multilingualism in education. Personal background, early school experiences, professional training, personal multilingual identities, and teaching practice all influence teachers' cognitions of multilingualism in education, ultimately shaping their behaviour in relation to multilingualism (Borg 2003). Teacher identity is

reflected in cognition, as PSTs' multilingualism and multilingual identities can be useful teaching skills, yet many PSTs may view their multilingualism as irrelevant to teaching due to early school experiences and a monolingual mindset in education (Ibrahim 2022; Safford & Kelly 2010). Since teacher cognition and identity are complex, interwoven concepts, a multi-faceted approach is needed to explore how they relate to teacher behaviour.

Various approaches have been used to investigate (pre-service) teacher cognitions of multilingualism (Dekker et al. 2023; Duarte & Günter-van der Meij 2022; Moenandar et al. 2023). However, few studies have examined PSTs' cognitions of multilingualism in education using a mixed methods approach, particularly one incorporating visual methodologies (Ibrahim 2022), an emerging field in multilingualism studies, which will be used in this study to engage with PSTs' cognitions and multilingual identities.

This article will address the following research questions:

RQ1: What are PSTs' cognitions of multilingualism in education in Fryslân according to the following three methods:

- a) Survey,
- b) Dominant language constellation (DLC) artefacts,
- c) Focus group interviews and a vignette study.

RQ2: How effective are each of the aforementioned methods for examining PSTs' cognitions of multilingualism?

2. Literature Review

García (2009) argues that monolingualism is perceived as the norm, rather than the exception, in education systems around the world, and that multilingualism is seen as a problem to be managed. Bilingual education programmes designed for multilingual children to perform as monolinguals in the language of instruction are weak and have been found to be less effective for language learning and education than stronger forms (Baker 2011). Strong forms of bilingual education aim for bilingualism and biliteracy and are used for language learning, heritage language maintenance, and cultural and linguistic enrichment. Although education systems remain largely monolingual and focused on weak forms of bilingual education, multilingual education has garnered more attention in recent years and is increasingly being researched and implemented (Conteh & Meier 2014; Kirsch & Duarte 2020). Teacher cognition of multilingualism is an important component in understanding multilingual education.

2.1 Pre-Service Teachers' Cognitions of Multilingualism

The term teacher cognition describes “what teachers know, believe and think” (Borg 2003, 81) and affects how teachers act (DeLamater et al. 2018). Traditionally, the term has been researched in relation to teachers’ overall knowledge, beliefs, and attitudes. In this paper, we wish to propose a further development of the term, focusing on teachers’ cognitions of multilingualism, which we use as an umbrella term covering teachers’ knowledge, beliefs, and attitudes towards multilingualism in education. Positive cognitions of multilingualism may result in the implementation of stronger forms of multilingual education and are beneficial for language learning (Lasagabaster & Huguet 2007). However, negative cognitions of multilingualism often prevail among teachers, resulting in monolingual language policies, often due to misconceptions surrounding multilingualism and a monolingual bias (Arocena Egaña et al. 2015; Dooley 2007; Haukås 2016; Holdway & Hitchcock 2018; Portolés & Martí 2018; Young 2014).

PST education is a formative experience, where cognitions about teaching and education are formed (Portolés & Martí 2018). Positive and neutral cognitions of both Frisian and Dutch have been found among PSTs in Fryslân, with Frisian predominantly used in informal contexts and Dutch in formal contexts (Lasagabaster & Huguet 2007; Ytsma 2007). Despite explicitly positive or neutral cognitions of Frisian, PSTs perceived Frisian as exclusionary in a series of narrative interviews (Moenandar et al. 2023). A broader, national survey found slightly positive cognitions of multilingualism among PSTs, although they generally felt underprepared for linguistic diversity (Robinson-Jones et al. 2022).

PST training has a significant impact on teachers’ cognitions, such as reshaping elements of a monolingual bias (Portolés & Martí 2018). Similarly, university courses can improve PSTs’ skills in teaching multilingual students (Fischer & Lahmann 2020; Hammer & Berkel-Otto 2019). In Catalonia, although some negative cognitions of linguistic diversity were found, PSTs generally viewed linguistic diversity as a resource (Dooley 2007). In Germany, PSTs held positive cognitions of multilingualism, with multilingual PSTs holding more positive beliefs, suggesting a link between attitudes and identity (Schroedler & Fischer 2020; Schroedler et al. 2022). PSTs’ multilingualism and multilingual identities are useful skills which they can bring into their teaching practices, yet many PSTs may view their multilingualism as irrelevant for teaching (Ibrahim 2022; Safford & Kelly 2010). Therefore, it is recommended to enhance language awareness and make PSTs aware of their own skills and multilingual identities (Ibrahim 2022; Safford & Kelly 2010).

2.2 Pre-Service Teachers' Multilingual Identity

A significant part of teachers' cognitions of multilingualism is their own multilingual identity. This study uses the framework of participative multilingual identity, which entails the process of consciously developing one's multilingual identity both individually and socially, such as in a language classroom (Fisher et al. 2020). Language and education are significant factors in identity formation, as both are social processes situated in specific contexts and developed over time (Forbes et al. 2021). Making the process of identity formation in relation to languages and multilingualism visible and clear, and reflecting on this process during language learning, may lead to the explicit development of a multilingual identity (Fisher et al. 2020; Forbes et al. 2021). Engaging PSTs with their own identities places their experiences at the centre of their teacher education (Melo-Pfeifer 2019). While PSTs may not realise how multilingual they are due to the monolingual bias in society, actively and explicitly engaging with their own multilingual identities can help enhance positive cognitions of multilingualism and encourage the integration of multilingual practices into their teaching (Ibrahim 2022). While surveys and focus groups or interviews are traditional methods of investigating teachers' cognitions of multilingualism, recent attention has been given to visual methodologies, such as visual artefacts, including dominant language constellations (DLCs) (Lo Bianco & Aronin 2020).

2.3 Visual Methodologies

Material culture, defined as "the realm of physical items, produced by humans as well as events and spaces interconnected by and with local and global mentality, culture, tradition and social life", is an important aspect of multilingualism (Aronin & Ó Laoire 2013, 3). Visual artefacts can be useful tools for engaging with cognitions of language and multilingualism in education. As material culture is an emerging methodology in the study of multilingualism and teacher education, few studies have explored the intersection between PST creativity, identity formation, and multilingualism, particularly in relation to visual artefacts. Arts-based practices can be used to study teacher education and multilingualism, offering "a safe, creative space for engaging with linguistic repertoires and exploring teachers' and students' identity connections with their linguistic histories and biographies" (Ibrahim 2022, 152). In Norway, PSTs created their own DLCs, allowing them to engage inclusively with their own multilingual identities. This led them

to understand their own multilingualism and encouraged them to use multilingual practices in the classroom (Ibrahim 2022). This study will further explore PSTs' multilingual identities as they create their own visual artefacts.

The concept of dominant language constellations (DLCs) was introduced by Aronin (2006; 2016) to describe the most salient languages used by an individual or a society. This calls for a multilingual approach to language study, where the principal languages in use are considered as a whole unit, rather than rigidly separated languages (Aronin 2019). The concepts of DLCs and linguistic repertoire are closely linked, and DLC maps can represent a speaker's entire linguistic repertoire (LR), with the DLC at the centre, comprising all the linguistic resources available to a speaker (Aronin 2019; Coetzee-van Rooy 2020; Lo Bianco & Aronin 2020). By treating DLCs as the multilingual unit of language use within a community, they replace the monolingual role of a single dominant language and can therefore be used to create language policies based on a holistic and sustainable model of multilingualism that better fit the multilingual reality of many communities, institutions, and societies (Agnihotri 2014; Aronin 2019; Coetzee-van Rooy 2020).

The concept of DLCs has been used in education to create clear language policies that support the multilingual nature of many societies and institutions (Lo Bianco 2020). DLCs can be used to create multilingual curricula tailored to the main languages spoken within a society (Björklund et al. 2020). DLCs are also a valuable tool for describing language use and shaping policies in curricula and education systems. Dekker et al. (2023) mapped the DLCs and linguistic repertoires of individual teachers and their broader school context, illustrating the inclusivity of linguistic diversity in Frisian primary schools. Teachers who participated in an intervention project implementing multilingual education for a longer period demonstrated greater skills in multilingualism and encouraged multilingual practices more actively than teachers who had recently joined the project. Teachers' identities also played a significant role, as Frisian speakers could relate to their students' use of their home languages and emphasised the emotional significance of linguistic diversity for minority language speakers (Dekker et al. 2023).

DLC mapping can further be applied within teacher education to engage PSTs with their multilingual identities through visual artefacts (Aronin 2019; Aronin & Ó Laoire 2013; Björklund et al. 2020). PSTs can also produce their own DLCs as visual artefacts, mapping their language use in creative and individual ways (Ibrahim 2022). By focusing on language use rather than proficiency, PSTs become more aware of their own

multilingual identities. These DLCs are dynamic and complex, shifting over time and constantly developing. As DLCs were constructed within a broader linguistic repertoire, PSTs could note both their most salient languages and those they had little knowledge of or contact with, but which still contributed to their multilingual identities (Ibrahim 2022).

This study aims to further define the concept of teachers' cognitions of multilingualism and will attempt to fill a gap in the literature by examining PSTs' cognitions of multilingualism in education in relation to their multilingual identities. Given the multi-faceted nature of this concept, we will use a multi-method approach to examine PSTs' cognitions of multilingualism in education, including their explicit attitudes, identities, and experiences, using a survey, DLC artefacts, and focus groups (RQ1), and to examine how these methods unveil PSTs' cognitions in different ways (RQ2).

3. Methodology

A mixed methods design was implemented with both quantitative and qualitative data, providing a deeper and broader understanding of PSTs' cognitions of multilingual education than separate qualitative or quantitative data collection (Creswell 2016). The quantitative data consists of a survey, while the qualitative data consists of the DLCs that the PSTs created in conjunction with the survey and a set of focus group interviews. The focus groups involved a semi-structured interview (Galletta 2013) and a vignette study (Barter & Renold 1999; Seguin & Ambrosio 2002).

The survey was conducted in class, allowing all participants to provide their data simultaneously and under comparable conditions, thus enhancing content validity (Zohrabi 2013). After completing the survey, the participants were given instructions on how to create their DLCs, which were collected within two weeks. Three groups of students ($n=14$) agreed to participate in focus groups, which were conducted in the middle of semester. All students signed a consent form, and the data was anonymised and stored in accordance with the university's privacy guidelines.

3.1 Participants

The participants of this study were second-year students ($n=72$) from the teacher training course at NHL Stenden. Their second semester focused on the theme of language and identity. As a within-subjects de-

sign was used and the group remained the same throughout the study, the 72 participants of the survey represent the general sample of the study. Table 1 outlines the details of the participants involved in this part of the study.

Table 1: Survey participants

Age	18	19	20	21	22+
Number	21	19	15	21	5
%	29.2	26.4	20.8	16.7	7
Descriptive statistics	Mean	Median	Mode	Standard deviation	
	19.6	19	18	1.827	
Gender	Male	Female			
Number	25	47			
%	34.7	65.3			
L1	Dutch	Frisian	Dutch & Frisian		Other
Number	40	16	15		1 (Turkish)
%	55.6	22.2	20.8		1.4

Source: Own data.

Forty-seven PSTs created DLCs, 42 of whom also completed the survey. In addition, 36 participants answered the questions provided (Ibrahim 2022). Three focus groups were conducted with a total of 14 PSTs, including 13 who also participated in the survey and DLC creation. The first focus group involved six participants, the second group three, and the third group five. Each focus group comprised members of a project group who work closely together. An overview of the participants of the focus groups and their participation in the survey and DLC can be found in Table 2.

Table 2: Focus group participants

Focus group	1	2	3	Total
Completed survey	6	3	4	13
Completed DLC	4	3	3	10
Total	6	3	5	14
Age	18	19	20	21
Number (13)	2	6	3	3
Gender	M	F		
Number (13)	4	10		
L1	Dutch	Dutch & Frisian		
Number	12	2		

Source: Own data.

3.2 Materials

3.2.1 Surveys

A survey was conducted to measure PSTs’ cognitions of multilingualism in education at the beginning of their course on language and identity (Creswell 2016). The survey was created using Qualtrics and divided into two parts, with eight sections in total. The first part was created for Taalplan Frysk 2030 (Provinsje Fryslân 2021) as a replication of a study measuring attitudes towards Frisian in Fryslân (Ytsma 2007). The questions were taken from Ytsma’s (2007) study and were formulated in Dutch. The questions for the second part were adapted from a questionnaire by Robinson-Jones (2020; Robinson-Jones et al. 2022). Table 3 provides a breakdown of the survey parts.

Table 3: Survey materials

Part	Section	No. questions	Type of question	Cronbach’s α
1	Language use	6	4-point Likert scale	0.71
	Attitudes towards Frisian, Dutch and English	5	5-point Likert scale	
	Language habits	3	Multiple choice	
	General information	5	Open	
	Conclusion	5	Open	
2	Attitudes towards multilingualism in education	1	5-point Likert scale	0.68
	Knowledge of multilingualism in education	1	5-point Likert scale	0.59
	Experiences with multilingualism in education	1	5-point Likert scale	0.53

Source: Own data.

The questions were written in English and then translated into Dutch using the translation software DeepL. The questionnaire was provided in Dutch to reduce potential feelings of intimidation among participants, most of whom have Dutch as their first language (see Table 1; Wray & Bloomer 2012). A Chronbach’s α reliability analysis was conducted on four sections of the survey that will be analysed for the current study, and these were found to be acceptable.

3.2.2 DLCs

The PSTs were provided with instructions on how to create a DLC following Ibrahim (2022) and were encouraged to be creative in their designs. The participants had one week to create their own DLCs and include a

written answer to the following questions regarding their DLCs, adapted from Ibrahim (2022, 6):

1. How did you organise your art object, and why did you choose this specific shape, material, colour, etc., to represent your languages?
2. How did creating a visual and manual (craft) representation of all your languages in this specific shape help you visualise your multilingualism and see yourself as a multilingual individual and multilingual teacher?
3. How do you think this will change the way you approach your students' other languages in your lessons?
4. How does this manual, visual, multimodal activity support and enhance creative teaching and ensure deep learning in the language classroom?

The total corpus of DLC materials consists of 42 artefacts and 36 written explanations.

3.2.3 Focus Groups

The three focus groups ($n=14$) were conducted to qualitatively measure PSTs' attitudes, experiences and knowledge of multilingualism in education, using a semi-structured interview and a vignette study. The focus groups were conducted in English and lasted an average of 60 minutes each, with 36 minutes dedicated to the interview and 24 minutes to the vignette study. An interview guideline was used to ensure the same questions were asked in each focus group, thus ensuring content validity (Zohrabi 2013). The interview guideline included five sections: comments on their practical assignment on multilingualism and identity, language use, experiences at their internship schools, the semester, and their perspectives on being a good teacher in multilingual settings. The focus groups were recorded and automatically transcribed verbatim using Otter, and the transcripts were manually edited (Bailey 2008; Stuckey 2014). Due to their shared experiences in project groups, the PSTs in this study were expected to be comfortable with each other and the research process, enhancing active participation (Haukås 2016).

The second component of the focus groups was the vignette, a short case study used to elicit cognitions and apply hypothetical situations to their real-life experiences as teachers (Barter & Renold 1999; Seguin & Ambrosio 2002). The vignette study took place in the second half of the focus group interview. An imaginary situation, designed to describe a potential classroom scenario with multilingualism, was read aloud to the participants. The vignette was written by the researcher based

on Barter and Renold's (1999) advice and using Seguin and Ambrosio's (2002) template for prompts. The total corpus of the focus groups consisted of 27,600 words.

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3.3 Data Analysis

To answer RQ1a, the results of the survey were analysed using SPSS version 29. The data extracted from Qualtrics was cleaned and sorted. Each question was marked as either positive or negative, and a score was then assigned. Descriptive statistics, an independent *t*-test, and one-way ANOVAs were performed on the survey, measuring the effect of variables such as gender, age and L1 on PSTs' attitudes, knowledge, and experiences of multilingualism in education.

To answer RQ1b, the DLCs were collected, photographed and catalogued using a schema from Ibrahim (2022), including information on the participants' language repertoires and DLCs, and artefacts. The DLCs were analysed descriptively and thematically using ATLAS.ti (Version 23.1.1) (Braun & Clarke 2006). Thematic analysis was selected as it can be used to find patterns within and across data regarding participants' lived experiences, opinions, perspectives, behaviour, and practices (Clarke & Braun 2016).

To answer RQ1c, the transcripts of the focus group interviews and vignettes were analysed thematically and semantically using ATLAS.ti (Version 23.1.1), following the same process as for the DLCs (Braun & Clarke 2006). The transcripts were sorted for themes and codes, which were found inductively to allow for the codes and themes to be gathered from the data itself (Braun & Clarke 2006). Theoretical analysis was used for the second round of coding to apply the inductively found codes and themes to the research questions (Braun & Clarke 2006).

To answer RQ2, the results of each of the aforementioned methods were compared using Borg's (2003) model of teacher cognition to determine how they each examine PSTs' cognitions of multilingualism in education and their multilingual identities.

4. Results: PSTs' Cognitions of Multilingualism in Education

4.1 Survey

The survey results were used to answer RQ1a on PSTs' cognitions of multilingualism in education. Descriptive statistics show that PSTs gen-

erally held neutral to slightly positive cognitions of multilingualism, with the most positive cognitions related to attitudes towards multilingualism and the most negative cognitions related to attitudes towards Dutch, Frisian, and English combined. This particular question measured PSTs' attitudes in relation to a combination of these three languages, rather than each individual language, acting as a measure of their attitudes towards multilingualism specifically regarding Dutch, Frisian, and English. Experiences with multilingualism exhibited the greatest variation, with the lowest minimum and a very high maximum score, while attitudes towards multilingualism had the highest maximum scores. Table 4 shows a detailed breakdown of the descriptive statistics for the four measurements.

Table 4: Descriptive statistics on PSTs' cognitions of multilingualism as measured by the survey

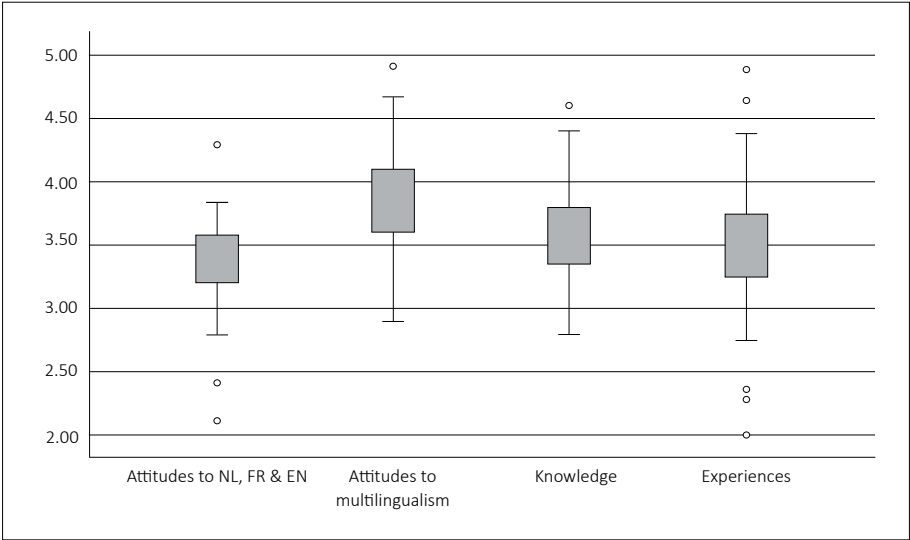
	Attitudes – Dutch, Frisian & English	Attitudes – multilingualism	Knowledge	Experiences
Mean	3.37	3.84	3.59	3.55
Std. deviation	.32	.41	.39	.52
Std. error mean	.04	.05	.05	.06
Range	2.17	2.00	1.80	2.88
Minimum	2.13	2.90	2.80	2.00
Maximum	4.29	4.90	4.60	4.88
Number	72	72	72	72

Source: Own data.

Chart 1 presents the data in a boxplot, showing the highest median and interquartile range for attitudes to multilingualism, with much lower ratings for attitudes to Dutch, Frisian, and English. The boxplot also shows a variation of data, particularly for experiences.

A one-way ANOVA was conducted on 16 background factors potentially influencing PSTs' cognitions of multilingualism in education, including their first language (L1), proficiency levels in Dutch, Frisian, and English, age, and gender. Two factors had a significant effect: age on attitudes towards Frisian, Dutch, and English ($p < .001$; $\eta^2 = .68$); and the use of Frisian in middle school on attitudes towards multilingualism in education ($.007$; $\eta^2 = .43$). However, the small effect sizes suggest that these background factors do not largely explain participants' overall cognitions of multilingualism in education.

Chart 1: Boxplot showing PSTs’ cognitions of multilingualism in education



Source: Own data.

4.2 DLCs

Based on Ibrahim’s schema (2022), the languages in the PSTs’ DLCs and language repertoires (LRs) were identified to provide an answer to RQ1b. The DLCs included between one and four languages, with most participants including two. The LRs ranged between three and ten languages, with five being the most common. Six languages were frequently mentioned in PSTs’ DLCs: Dutch, English, Frisian, German, and local varieties such as Gronings and Bildts. Table 5 lists the 20 languages in their LRs alongside the frequency of their appearance.

Table 5: Frequency of each language in the DLC and LRs

Language	DLC frequency	LR frequency
Dutch	45	46
English	31	46
Frisian	23	46
German	3	35
French	-	26
Spanish	-	7
Arabic	-	4
Russian	-	3

Language	DLC frequency	LR frequency
Chinese	-	2
Gronings	1	2
Norwegian	-	2
Swedish	-	2
Bildts	1	1
Finnish	-	1
Flemish	-	1
Indonesian	-	1
Italian	-	1
Japanese	-	1
Papiamentu	-	1
Polish	-	1
Students' home languages	-	1
Total	104	230

Source: Own data.

Dutch, English, and Frisian were the most common languages in both DLCs and LRs. Additionally, German, French, and Spanish were common in LRs. Apart from Frisian, two other regional minority languages were present in DLCs and LRs: Gronings (a variety of Low Saxon) and Bildts (a contact variety between Frisian and Dutch). Thirteen languages appeared only once or twice, including students' home languages, suggesting that PSTs may acknowledge and learn a few words from their students' home languages in their teaching. The prevalence of English and Frisian alongside Dutch in the DLCs suggests that the policy of teaching (in) all three languages is suitable, as these three languages are generally shared among the PST population.

The thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke 2006) identified six key themes in the DLCs: language use (in DLCs and LRs), language attitudes, language representation, theme, and format. Most DLCs were 2D, the remainder being 3D or virtual. The most commonly used materials were paper or coloured cards and pencils, pens, and markers. Languages were represented by flags, names, and colours. Twenty-five participants labelled their languages using flags, 23 wrote the name of the language, and three used colours, though many other PSTs also used colour as a means of language representation. The Frisian flag was a popular symbol in the province of Fryslân, connecting Frisian speakers to their identity. The British flag was commonly used to depict the English language.

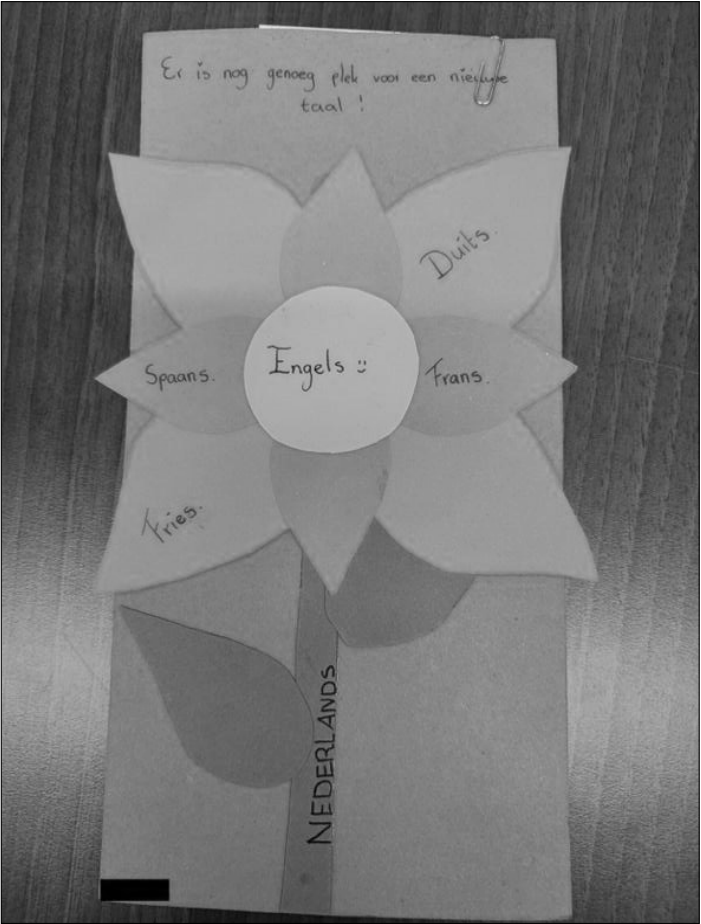
The themes of the DLCs included nature, hobbies and interests, the self, and the environment. Flowers and trees were two of the most frequent nature sub-themes, found 12 and 8 times, respectively. Trees were used to depict PSTs' identities, with their home languages acting as the roots, such as PST18, for whom Dutch was the roots and trunk of a tree where other languages grew as leaves, while Papiamentu was the trunk of another tree which was cut off at its base (Figure 1). Flowers represented growth for PST36, who left some petals free to demonstrate that "there is still room for another language" (Figure 2). PSTs used nature to describe languages as beautiful, natural, and developing.

Figure 1: DLC of trees (PST18)



Source: Own data, @ Alison Henahan.

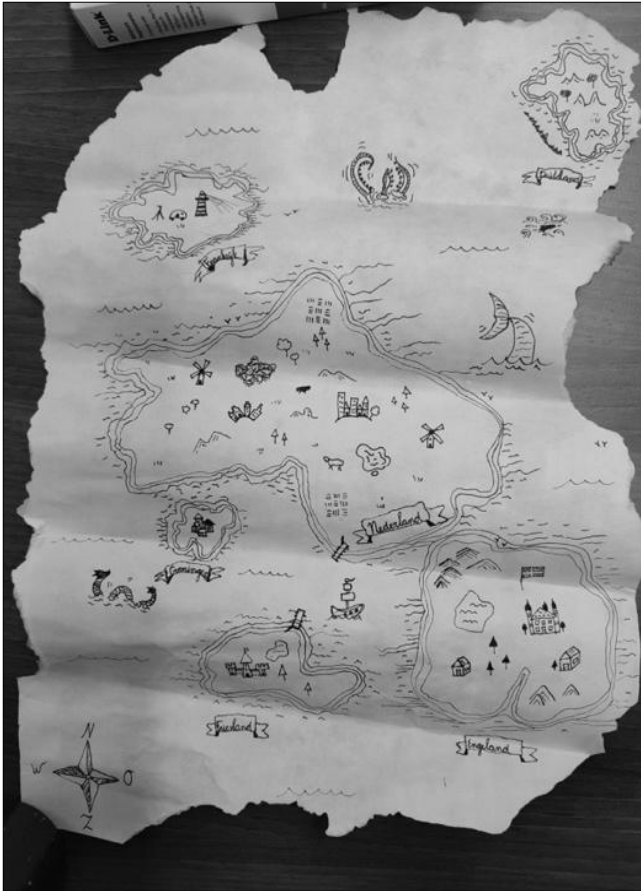
Figure 2: DLC of flowers (PST36)



Source: Own data, @ Alison Henehan.

PSTs used ideas of the self and the environment to describe language in and around themselves, including language portraits, homes, and other buildings and spaces. PST8 represented their language use as a map of a chain of islands, each representing a language, its size reflecting proficiency and comfort using the language, and the distance between islands representing their proximity (Figure 3).

PSTs also made connections between their language use and their hobbies and interests, including football, weightlifting, reading, and jigsaw puzzles. For example, PST27 depicted their languages as footballs on a soccer pitch: “The balls lie in places that correspond to how easy you can score. So how easily I can use a language. Dutch and Bildts is easy”.

Figure 3: DLC of the environment (PST8)

Source: Own data, @ Alison Henehan.

The questions which the participants were asked revealed their cognitions of multilingualism. The 36 PSTs who answered the questions generally displayed positive cognitions of multilingualism, with 94 codes for positive attitudes to languages and 79 for positive attitudes to multilingualism. The participants did not always describe languages as easy or comfortable. For example, PST35 placed French in the left hand of their language portrait, showing the difficulty it posed for them: “I can speak a bit French, but it’s hard, just like writing with my left hand”.

Nevertheless, the participants generally displayed positive attitudes to languages and multilingualism. All DLC participants identified as multilingual, speaking between three and ten languages. The majority of participants included two or three languages in their DLCs, suggesting proficiency and comfort using at least two languages.

PSTs not only identified as multilingual but also extended their multilingual identities to their students, making connections between their multilingual identities and those of their students: “I also am aware now that all my students have a rainbow with all sorts of languages they know/use, just like me” (PST74).

They also associated the integration of multilingualism and the creation of DLCs in class with respect for languages: “I think I would respect all the languages more and will also focus on the languages you have in class” (PST53).

The creation of DLCs inspired the participants to further engage with their students’ multilingualism and home languages. They described the DLCs as a creative process which can be used in the classroom: “I want to try and engage students in their own language so that they get the experience to use that language in a school setting. And make them realise how cool it is” (PST18).

4.3 Focus Groups

The findings from the focus groups were used to answer RQ1c. The findings from the focus groups are presented in two sections: 4.3.1 interviews and 4.3.2 vignette study.

4.3.1 Focus Group Interviews

This section presents the results from the focus group interviews, divided by theme: language use and attitudes, internship experiences, and university semester.

- **Language Use and Attitudes**

The focus group participants all spoke Dutch and expressed various levels of comfort with Frisian and English. While some participants spoke Frisian as a home language or were familiar with it, others only began learning it at university and were not comfortable speaking it. The participants did not express specific cognitions of Dutch or English, rather treating these as standard languages. Frisian speakers did not object to the use of Dutch under any circumstances but emphasised its usefulness and importance. As such, positive cognitions were reported for English and Dutch. Negative cognitions were only found for Frisian, as several participants expressed discomfort with speaking Frisian and regarded it as less important than other languages. For example, a native-Frisian speaker with an overall positive cognition of Frisian rated it as

least important because “only a few people speak Frisian in the world” (fg2, PST78, 10:05).

While the participants generally identified as bi- or multilingual, they did not always do so immediately, and their definitions of multilingualism varied. One participant, for instance, originally identified as bilingual but switched to multilingual after some discussion: “Yeah, then multilingual, like three a day. I think it’s right” (fg2, PST35, 9:19).

The multilingual identities of PSTs appeared to be fluid and evolving over time and with reflection. Although PSTs faced certain difficulties with languages and did not necessarily hold positive cognitions of all languages all the time, they generally portrayed positive cognitions of languages and multilingualism. Dutch and English were generally described positively, while cognitions of Frisian were mixed, displaying both positive and negative attitudes.

- **Internship Experiences**

The participants reported positive cognitions of multilingualism in their internships and generally expressed the wish to include multilingualism in their teaching: “They also do teach a lot with multilingualism, so I learned a lot from my internship [...]. And I do try to use it a lot in my teaching” (fg2, PST78, 41:12).

The context of the school was significant, with some participants teaching in internship schools with high levels of multilingualism and linguistic diversity: “Why would I give Frisian when the most spoken language after Dutch is like Arabic?” (fg3, PST18, 5:72).

Despite their generally positive attitudes, the participants expressed mixed feelings about the inclusion of Frisian in their internship schools and did not all feel comfortable speaking or teaching Frisian to children, although they would need to be qualified in Frisian in order to teach in Fryslân.

Although the participants held positive cognitions of multilingualism in their internships and recounted positive experiences of multilingualism, their engagement with multilingualism was described as surface-level language awareness and acknowledgement, aimed at improving student wellbeing rather than a deeper form of multilingualism: “They know that their culture or their language is appreciated in the classroom” (fg1, PST34 18:01).

PSTs primarily experienced multilingualism in their internship schools through the use of Frisian and English in teaching alongside Dutch, and, in some cases, the inclusion of students’ home languages. While the participants held more positive cognitions of the surface-level

acknowledgement of students' home languages and wished to include them further, they often struggled with implementing Frisian. Generally, only those who felt very comfortable speaking Frisian themselves held positive cognitions of teaching Frisian.

- **University Semester**

The focus group interviews revealed mixed attitudes towards the participants' experiences of multilingualism during the university semester. Some participants showed more positive attitudes: "They try to have more classes in other languages. And they pay more attention to diversity and language" (fg1, PST68, 22:41).

Others felt that their expectations regarding languages and diversity were not quite met: "I expected that we would learn some more language" (fg2, PST35, 31:24).

In particular, the participants struggled with the high expectations for Frisian: "The expectations are really high because some of us are from North Holland. And they haven't heard any Frisian. So, for them to reach that level is very hard" (fg3, PST54, 6:29).

Furthermore, while the participants generally spoke positively about their internship experiences, some felt that their university classes did not prepare them for their teaching careers; "We get pedagogiek [pedagogy] once every two weeks" (fg3, PST54, 23:02).

The participants noted the importance of students' home languages for them to feel accepted in school. Integrating some degree of multilingualism and language awareness was seen as a priority, as reflected in their generally positive cognitions of multilingualism, particularly regarding students' home languages.

4.3.2 Vignette Study

The participants responded to the vignette with highly positive cognitions regarding multilingualism and language use. They presented various solutions to the case study, including whether they would allow the students to share a home language, or to translate for one another, and how to include them in the group: "When she's like, completely new, she will first have to be taught the basics of Dutch" (v2, PST74, 8:42).

However, they did not place all the responsibility on the new student to learn Dutch; instead, they suggested integrating Polish, the student's home language, into the classroom:

"It's good for her that other children in her classroom learn Polish words" (v1, PST32, 18:56).

Thus, while not fully integrating Polish, the participants saw students' home languages as tools which can help integrate them into the classroom. Finally, the PSTs demonstrated awareness of the various forms of support available to them, from translation tools to parents and school support: "There are always more people in the school that are more useful. So, you never have to make the decisions on your own" (v3, PST56, 16:15).

The participants discussed the vignette study very positively, drawing from their internship experiences, theoretical knowledge, and group discussion to plan how to best manage the integration of a new student into their class. Therefore, it can be suggested that the participants held positive cognitions and demonstrated their knowledge of multilingualism through the vignette study.

5. Discussion

This study aimed to examine PSTs' cognitions of multilingualism in education using a survey, DLC artefacts, and focus groups (RQ1), and to explore how each of these methods expressed PSTs' cognitions (RQ2).

5.1 Survey

The PSTs in this study displayed positive cognitions of multilingualism in education. This finding is in line with previous studies, which also found positive attitudes (Lasagabaster & Huguet 2007; Robinson-Jones et al. 2022). The findings were generally neutral to positive, contrasting with other studies that found negative attitudes (Dooley 2007; Holdway & Hitchcock 2018), misconceptions about multilingualism (De Angelis 2011; Haukås 2016), and a monolingual bias (Portolés & Martí 2018). In a series of discussions on linguistic diversity, Dooley (2007), for instance, found that pre-service teachers reacted more positively to diversity than in-service teachers, who tended to view diversity as a problem. Similarly, in-service teachers held negative attitudes and a monolingual bias in an action research case study, including holding English-only policies (Holdway & Hitchcock 2018). In a survey of teachers' attitudes across three European contexts, teachers displayed a monolingual bias and a lack of understanding of multilingualism (De Angelis 2011). PSTs' multilingual identities may also have contributed to their results, as the survey participants had at least some proficiency in Dutch, English, and Frisian, and all participants in the DLCs identified as multilingual. The PSTs' fairly positive cognitions of multilingualism in education found in

the survey may be linked to their multilingual identities identified in the DLCs (Schroedler & Fischer 2020; Schroedler et al. 2022).

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5.2 DLCs

The PSTs who created DLCs identified as multilingual and engaged positively and creatively in the process, personalising their DLCs to reflect their cognitions of multilingualism (Ibrahim 2022). The creation of DLCs allowed the PSTs to explore their multilingual identities by focusing on comfort with languages and language use, rather than solely on proficiency (Ibrahim 2022). Furthermore, the creation of DLCs contributed to PSTs' identity formation as multilingual teachers and to their positive cognitions of multilingualism in education (Ibrahim 2022; Melo-Pfeifer 2019).

The connection between DLCs and language repertoires (LRs) is also important (Coetzee-van Rooy 2020). Some PSTs included their students' home languages in their LRs, although not in their DLCs, as also reported in Björklund et al. (2020). In a similar study of in-service teachers in Fryslân, some teachers included their students' home languages in their LRs (Dekker et al. 2023). After creating their DLCs, PSTs were motivated to engage more deeply with their students' multilingual identities (Ibrahim 2022). By becoming aware of their own multilingual identities, they also became more aware of their students' multilingualism and expressed a desire to engage in multilingual practices in the classroom.

The PSTs in this study presented their DLCs using a variety of personal and creative themes, reflecting their cognitions of language and multilingual identities. They connected growth to nature, their hobbies to the process of language use, and their environment to contextualised language practices. The creation of DLCs helped them recognise the multilingual identities of their students and motivated them to use DLCs as a pedagogical tool to engage their students with multilingualism in the future, as in Ibrahim (2022).

5.3 Focus Groups

The findings from the focus groups report positive attitudes towards multilingualism in education, particularly regarding language awareness and students' home languages. The participants' positive attitudes towards multilingualism are in line with previous studies, such as PSTs viewing diversity as a resource (Dooley 2007).

However, while the participants held positive cognitions of multilingualism in education, particularly in the context of the vignette

study, they did not necessarily implement strong forms of multilingual education, as suggested by prior research (Holdway & Hitchcock 2018; Robinson-Jones et al. 2022). While Holdway and Hitchcock (2018) recommend including multilingualism in PST education, Robinson Jones et al. (2022) further suggest that PST education centres ensure PSTs work with linguistically diverse internship schools. However, despite their experiences with multilingual education in their internships, the PSTs in this study focused more on language awareness than language use in instruction (Duarte & Günther-van der Meij, 2018b). While the participants expressed comfort with students' home languages, their engagement with these languages was surface-level and they prioritised multilingual educational practices to help children feel accepted in class. This finding contrasts with that of Robinson-Jones et al. (2022), where PSTs reported feeling uncomfortable and underprepared to implement multilingualism in Dutch schools.

Finally, PSTs reported mixed attitudes towards the use of Frisian in education, a finding echoed in Moenandar et al. (2023). Negative cognitions of Frisian were attributed to differing proficiency levels among PSTs, contrary to the expectations that they be able to teach Frisian. Unlike Ytsma (2007), where PSTs expressed a desire to be instructed in Frisian, the PSTs in this study rejected Frisian as a language of instruction as not everyone can understand it (Moenandar et al. 2023). Furthermore, they generally expressed negative cognitions of teaching Frisian, except among the participants who spoke Frisian as a home language themselves and identified as native Frisian speakers.

5.4 Triangulation of Methods

Each of the three methods used in this study provided a different insight into PSTs' cognitions of multilingualism (RQ2). The study explored why such differences exist and how effective the methods are at exploring PSTs' cognitions of multilingualism in education. While the survey provided a shallow and static insight into a larger number of PSTs' cognitions, such as attitudes towards languages and multilingualism, the DLCs and focus groups revealed deeper, more dynamic cognitions of a smaller group of participants, as is typical with qualitative data.

Building on Borg's (2003) conceptualisation of teacher cognition, this paper proposes a concept of PST cognitions of multilingualism based on three main aspects of teacher cognition: attitudes, knowledge and skills, and experience. These three categories include the various factors that influence teacher cognition according to Borg's schema (2003). However, rather than separating periods of learning, such as

schooling and professional coursework, these aspects fit together better as experiences, distinct from knowledge and skills, and attitudes. PSTs' attitudes towards multilingualism are defined as whether they respond positively or negatively to multilingualism in education, influencing their behaviour in the classroom (DeLamater et al. 2018). Knowledge and skills are composed of many types of knowledge, including but not limited to knowledge of multilingualism, learners, and self-knowledge (Meijer et al. 1999; 2001). Experiences refer to occurrences in PSTs' pasts that affect their cognitions of multilingualism, ranging from their own schooling to experiences in their internships.

Table 6 summarises how different aspects of teacher cognitions of multilingualism can be conceptualised and researched with the methods used in this study, based on a version of Borg's (2003) model of teacher cognition adapted for multilingualism. The numbers in each column refer to the number of times each aspect of PST cognitions of multilingualism was found in the data. The numbers for the survey column refer to the number of questions, whereas the numbers for the DLCs, focus group and vignette columns refer to the number of codes found in the data.

Table 6: Researching teacher cognitions of multilingualism

Aspect of teacher cognition		Survey	DLCs	Focus group	Vignette
Attitudes	Language attitudes	6	9	3	
	Attitudes towards internship			3	
	Language use	9	4	5	4
	Personal multilingual identity		6	3	
	Students' multilingual identities		2	4	5
Knowledge & skills	About multilingual teaching	1		4	13
	Professional coursework	1		4	
Experience	Classroom practice	1		7	
	Personal school experience	1	3		
	Personal experience with multilingualism	1	14	3	
	Internship experiences	1	1	7	
	Contextual factors			4	9

Source: Own data.

While the survey revealed slightly positive cognitions of multilingualism in education, PSTs' responses in the DLCs and focus groups were more positive, yet also more complex. The survey found slightly positive attitudes towards Dutch, English and Frisian combined, whereas the focus groups found positive attitudes towards Dutch and English and mixed attitudes towards Frisian, which was generally considered less important than Dutch and English. The DLCs, in turn, concentrated on participants' identities and the creative visualisation of language. Each of the methods found information that could not be elicited with other methods of data collection. As such, they complement each other in offering an overview of PSTs' cognitions, covering a broad range of participants and providing in-depth accounts of participants' identities and experiences.

Given that cognition is a broad term for various factors influencing PSTs' classroom behaviour as future teachers, it requires a variety of data collection methods to fully explore what PSTs know, believe, and think about multilingualism in education (Borg 2003). As DLCs are an emerging method for exploring cognitions of multilingualism (Lo Bianco & Aronin 2020), their combination with other methods of data collection provides information on PSTs' cognitions of multilingualism which could not otherwise be found, such as the visualisation of language use and language identity. The survey, DLCs, and focus groups are effective and complementary methods that reveal the complexity of PSTs' cognitions of multilingualism. Through the use of these methods, this study proposes an initial conceptualisation of PSTs' cognitions of multilingualism, incorporating attitudes, knowledge, and experiences of multilingualism in education.

6. Conclusion

Although Fryslân is a linguistically diverse region (Provinsje Fryslân 2021), teachers feel underprepared to manage multilingualism in the classroom (Robinson-Jones et al. 2022; Schleicher 2019; Van Praag et al. 2017). Including multilingual pedagogies in PST education has been recommended as a way to prepare teachers for linguistically diverse student populations (De Angelis 2011; Dooley 2007; Haukås 2016), although fewer studies have examined PSTs' cognitions of multilingualism in education (Schroedler & Fischer 2020; Schroedler et al. 2022).

In this study, we explored the concept of teachers' cognitions of multilingualism using a multi-method approach. The survey found slightly positive cognitions of multilingualism in education, focusing on atti-

tudes, knowledge, and experiences. In the DLCs, all participants identified as multilingual and were motivated to further engage with their students' multilingual identities. The focus groups showed positive attitudes towards linguistic diversity but more negative attitudes towards Frisian. This study is relevant for the exploration of PSTs' cognitions of multilingualism using a mixed methods approach. To our knowledge, no previous study has combined the quantitative element of explicit attitude measurement with a qualitative design, such as DLCs and focus groups. The PSTs' cognitions of multilingualism were more positive, personal, and exploratory in the DLC artefacts and focus groups than in the survey, suggesting that the artistic and individual creation of DLC artefacts may provide a more thorough investigation of PSTs' identities and cognitions than an isolated survey.

Limitations of this study include its cross-sectional sample of 72 PSTs from a single cohort, and the fact that DLCs were not explored in the context of PSTs' practice. In future, a longitudinal intervention could follow PSTs throughout the semester.

This study contributes to multilingual education as it provides new insights into the various components of teachers' cognitions of multilingualism in relation to multilingual identities. Its innovative design, which combines qualitative methodologies with visual artefacts, and its findings reveal that while PSTs hold positive cognitions of linguistic diversity, training can be improved for multilingualism in general and minority languages in particular.

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Ugotavljanje stališč bodočih učiteljev do večjezičnosti in večjezičnih identitet s pomočjo večmetodnega pristopa

Povzetek

Stališča učiteljev do večjezičnosti vplivajo na njihovo ravnanje v razredu in se deloma oblikujejo že med samim študijem (Borg 2003). V Friziji, jezikovno raznoliki pokrajini na Nizozemskem, je frizijščina obvezen šolski predmet, vendar se učitelji pogosto ne čutijo dovolj pripravljene za poučevanje tega jezika. To vodi v negativen odnos do manjšinskega jezika in večjezičnosti nasploh. S pomočjo različnih metod – anketa, artefakti dominantne jezikovne konstelacije (DJK) (Ibrahim 2022) in fokusne skupine z vinjetami (Barter & Renold 1999) – smo raziskovali stališča 72 študentov pedagogike do večjezičnosti v izobraževanju in večjezičnih identitet. Bodoči učitelji so v anketi izkazali precej pozitiven odnos do večjezičnosti v izobraževanju ter se v okviru DJK in fokusnih skupin opredeljevali za večjezične, njihov odnos do manjšinskih jezikov pa bi bilo treba izboljšati. Raziskava prispeva k boljšemu razumevanju večjezičnih identitet in stališč bodočih učiteljev ter ponuja usmeritve, kako koncept stališč uporabiti na področju večjezičnosti, s čimer lahko izboljšamo usposabljanje za večjezično pedagogiko.

Ključne besede

Stališča učiteljev, večjezično izobraževanje učiteljev, študenti pedagogike, večjezična identiteta, dominantne jezikovne konstelacije, manjšinski jeziki