Teacher education for working in linguistically diverse classrooms

Nordic perspectives

Edited by

Anne Reath Warren

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Current Issues in Bilingualism 5

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ISSN (print): 2747-9919
ISSN (electronic): 2747-9927

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Anne Reath Warren, Jonas Yassin Iversen & Boglárka Straszer (eds.). 2025. *Teacher education for working in linguistically diverse classrooms: Nordic perspectives* (Current Issues in Bilingualism 5). Berlin: Language Science Press.

This title can be downloaded at:
http://langsci-press.org/catalog/book/482

ISBN: 978-3-96110-507-6 (Digital)
978-3-98554-136-2 (Hardcover)

ISSN (print): 2747-9919
ISSN (electronic): 2747-9927
DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.15147416
Source code available from www.github.com/langsci/482
Errata: paperhive.org/documents/remote?type=langsci&id=482

Cover and concept of design: Ulrike Harbort
Typesetting: Ivo Boers, Sebastian Nordhoff
Proofreading: Amir Ghorbanpour, Brett Reynolds, David Carrasco Coquillat, Eliane Lorenz, Elliott Pearl, Ikmi Nur Oktavianti, Jeroen van de Weijer, Leonie Twente, Mary Ann Walter, Nicoletta Romeo, Rainer Schulze, Thera Crane, Viola Wiegand
Fonts: Libertinus, Arimo, DejaVu Sans Mono, Scheherazade New
Typesetting software: XeLaTeX

Language Science Press
Scharnweberstraße 10
10247 Berlin, Germany
http://langsci-press.org
support@langsci-press.org

Storage and cataloguing done by FU Berlin

FREIE UNIVERSITÄT BERLIN

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Chapter 1

Setting the scene: Teacher education for linguistically diverse classrooms in the Nordic region

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This introductory chapter provides a contextual background to the topic addressed in the volume's chapters and discusses common themes across the contributions. After introducing the volume and its Nordic context, we give a brief description of the Nordic educational and migration context from a multilingual perspective. The terminology used in this volume to describe categories of students, teachers and forms of education is then introduced. An overview of the literature on teacher education and linguistic diversity is presented, followed by a summary of the ways that teacher education is organised in the five Nordic countries represented in the volume. Each of the chapters is then introduced. Issues common across contexts include tensions regarding how multilingual perspectives can be included in teacher education programmes, which pre-service teachers benefit from knowledge about multilingualism and how to incorporate both theoretical and practical knowledge into teacher education. The volume points to an ongoing need for researchers to engage with teacher educators in questions relating to linguistic diversity.

1 Introduction

In the twenty-first century, countries in the Nordic region, along with many other countries, have experienced increasing levels of migration. While neither multilingualism nor transnational migration are new phenomena in the region,

Anne Reath Warren, Jonas Yassin Iversen & Boglárka Straszer. 2025. Setting the scene: Teacher education for linguistically diverse classrooms in the Nordic region. In Anne Reath Warren, Jonas Yassin Iversen & Boglárka Straszer (eds.), *Teacher education for working in linguistically diverse classrooms: Nordic perspectives*, 1–30. Berlin: Language Science Press. DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.15280893

geographical and social factors, as well as the ways humans communicate, have helped make multilingualism more visible (Aronin & Singleton 2008). One implication of increased migration is an increase in the number of school students who speak languages in addition to or other than the languages in which education is conducted. Some of these students may have recently migrated, and are therefore often referred to as *newcomers*, while others were born in the region and raised in families where languages in addition to the official majority languages are used. A complex range of factors (individual, family language policy, educational policy, sociolinguistic and language ideological) influence multilingual development, and the learning experiences that multilingual students meet at school (Hornberger & Skilton-Sylvester 2000, The Douglas Fir Group 2016). In contexts where factors that are conducive for language learning and development compound, there is potential for these students to become multilingual, maintaining and developing all the languages in their repertoire. However, if factors that work against language learning and development are dominant, there is a risk that multilingual students lose the language(s) they speak in contexts outside of school and/or face challenges at schools where instruction is in a less familiar language. As language and learning are intrinsically connected, the language development outcomes for multilingual students impact the extent to which they achieve their full potential at school. In this volume, we turn our attention to a significant factor in language development and educational outcomes, namely, teacher education and the ways it prepares teachers for working in linguistically diverse classrooms in five Nordic countries: Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden.

The Nordic countries are often lauded as societies based on values of equal opportunity, social justice and modernity (Blossing et al. 2014). In education, these values have in part been translated into policies, which are intended to be operationalised through the development of different forms of support and subjects for newcomers and multilingual students, including the right to second language education, bilingual tutoring and mother tongue education. These policies have existed in different forms and to different extents in the Nordic region since the 1960s. Schools and classrooms in the Nordic region have become increasingly multilingual in the twenty-first century and are thus well-served by such policies and rights. However, the sociopolitical setting has also changed in the Nordic region, and debate about the raison d'être for the above-mentioned policies and rights has become louder, in some regions resulting in more restrictive policies regarding mother tongue education for example (Alisaari et al. 2023). Neither is the region immune from "the monolingual mindset" (e.g., Hermansson et al. 2022) or other forms of inequality (e.g., Peterson 2022). Indeed, Habel (2011:

100) argues that in the Swedish context, there is a need for critical reflection on the country's "lingering attachment to collectively held conceptions of political, historic and cultural innocence vis-à-vis racial issues". This complex mixture of historical, ideological and political factors makes teacher education for linguistically diverse classrooms in the Nordic region an interesting case, in a context ripe for critical analysis.

This volume comprises empirical studies from five Nordic countries which describe and analyse how different aspects of teacher education prepare and support teachers for working with multilingual students in different classroom contexts. The volume includes contributions exploring aspects of teacher education policies, teacher education pedagogy as well as pre- and in-service teacher perspectives on teacher education. Moreover, the volume presents research on a relatively unique educational provision for multilingual students that has been developed in the Nordic countries (study guidance in the mother tongue) to an international audience.

The editors of this volume all work in teacher education programmes, often teaching courses with a focus on the preparation of pre- and in-service teachers for work in linguistically diverse contexts. In our work and in our research, we have seen a need for a volume that presents research on the opportunities and challenges pre- and in-service teachers and teacher educators in the Nordic region face as they prepare for work in linguistically diverse contexts. We also have seen a need for analysis and critical discussion of practices in teacher education and in linguistically diverse classrooms. Bringing together these perspectives and practical examples from different Nordic contexts, this volume contributes to international discussions on these topics.

In this introductory chapter, we present the Nordic context. In Section 2, a basic description of the demographics of each of the countries represented in the volume is presented. As the terms used for categories of students, teachers and forms of education are different in each national context, we also introduce the terminology used in this volume, in Section 3. This is followed in Section 4 by a brief review of the literature on teacher education internationally and in the Nordic context. In Section 5 the ways that teacher education is organised in Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden are presented, followed in Section 6, by a brief introduction to each of the chapters in the volume. In the final Section 7, common themes emerging from the chapters are discussed.

2 The Nordic context: Demographics of migration and education

The Nordic region has traditionally been associated with progressive, centralised approaches to education, based on principles of inclusion, social justice and equal opportunity, to compensate for the disadvantages that students from diverse social and cultural backgrounds, abilities, genders or geographical locations face at school (Blossing et al. 2014, Elstad 2020, Frønes et al. 2020). Students who speak languages other than or in addition to the language of schooling at home are in some cases included in this group, and are offered forms of support (for example, second language instruction, multilingual tutoring and/or mother tongue education). However, teachers do not always recognise or understand how to support students who have a mother tongue other than the majority language, which increases the risk that the education system will not fulfil its duty to provide compensatory approaches.

While the advantages of multilingualism and well-designed long-term bilingual education (e.g., Thomas & Collier 2002) are frequently quoted in research on the Nordic educational contexts, education is still overwhelmingly conducted in Nordic languages only. Some multilingual students, newcomers in particular, face challenges in schools where achievement is most commonly measured monolingually (e.g. Cummins 2000). Some years ago, in an international comparison of social justice measures in education, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden were ranked highly on the Justice Index, particularly in terms of access to education, social cohesion and intergenerational justice (Schraad-Tischler 2011). This ranking has changed in Sweden, where the impact of socio-economic background on students' performance in science at age 15 was more recently ranked as "around average" (OECD 2017). While Denmark, Finland, Iceland and Norway are still ranked highly in terms of socio-economic equity, a need to better support learners of migrant backgrounds has been identified in all these countries (OECD 2016, 2020a,b,c). These reports indicate that teacher education in the Nordic countries would benefit from critical analysis, to identify ways in which it can better prepare teachers for meeting the needs of their increasingly linguistically and culturally heterogeneous student bodies. According to Lundahl (2016: 10), the ability of the Nordic countries to provide all students, including newcomers and other multilinguals, with "inclusive, equal education and a fair chance to start a new life" constitutes a significant test for the "Nordic model" of education. Critical examination of teacher education plays a crucial role in rising to this challenge. This volume contributes to this critical examination.

In the next section, Nordic demographics are described, with a specific focus on the growing proportion of the population who have multilingual backgrounds. The countries are presented in alphabetical order and sometimes different kinds of data are provided, because the Nordic countries do not always collect statistics on the linguistic backgrounds of their citizens or students; and when these are collected, they are described in different ways in each of the five countries. For example, in schools in Denmark and Norway, the country where a student was born in is recorded, but not the language(s) that the student speaks. Different terms are used in the different Nordic countries to describe and categorise students and the forms of education that they participate in. In the following presentation of each respective country's demographics, these country-specific terms are used. The terminology used in this volume (presented in Section 3) has been standardised, to facilitate understanding and improve readability.

Denmark has a population of 5,873,420 inhabitants (Statistics Denmark 2023). No official information is available on the number of languages other than Danish spoken by inhabitants in Denmark since official national statistics focus on national origin rather than language. In national statistics, the categories "immigrants" and "descendants of immigrants" are used. Immigrants and descendants currently constitute 14% of the total Danish population, and they originate from more than 200 countries across the world. Among immigrants, those from Poland currently constitute the largest subgroup regarding country of origin, followed by those from Syria, Turkey and Germany. Among descendants of immigrants, the largest group is those whose national origin lies in Turkey, followed by Lebanon, Iraq, Pakistan and Somalia. In 2019/20, immigrants and descendants defined as "non-Western" constituted 10% of all students in primary and lower secondary school. Mother tongue education was introduced in Denmark in the National Curriculum of 1975, but since 2002 municipalities have only been mandated to offer mother tongue education in languages with official recognition within the EU or the European Economic Area, as well as in Faroese and Greenlandic (Alisaari et al. 2023).

Finland has a population of 5,550,066 inhabitants (Statistics Finland 2023). Of these, 442,399 speak languages other than Finnish, Sámi and Swedish. Finland is constitutionally a bilingual country (Swedish and Finnish), and Sámi languages have official status in northern Finland (Alisaari et al. 2023: 55). 21,215 students participated in mother tongue education in a total of 57 languages other than the official languages in Finland in 2019 (Finnish National Agency for Education 2022). These numbers do not represent all the students with migrant backgrounds in Finland, but they give an indication of the growing linguistic diversity of Finnish schools.

Iceland's population was registered at 368,792 in January 2021 (Statistics Iceland 2022). Icelandic is the only official language recognised in Iceland. Over the past 20 years, Iceland has experienced increased levels of immigration transforming what was once a largely monolingual and monocultural school population, to one characterised by ethnic, linguistic and religious diversity. In 1997, 0.8% of primary school students were registered as speaking a mother tongue other than Icelandic, and by the latter half of 2017, this percentage had increased to 9.9% or 4,470 primary school students (Statistics Iceland 2018). In the autumn of 2020, the percentage increased again, to 12%, or 5,611 students (Statistics Iceland 2020). The increase in the number of children speaking languages other than Icelandic as a mother tongue in Icelandic schools has resulted in heightened awareness of the importance of learning Icelandic and gaining skills and confidence in using Icelandic in these children's education. In Iceland, mother tongue education is only offered in Norwegian, Polish and Swedish, although community-based mother tongue education is widespread (Pesková et al. 2023).

Norway's population in 2023 was 5,488,984 (Statistics Norway 2023). Norwegian is the official language of Norway, with the indigenous Sámi languages as co-official within certain jurisdictions. People who were born in countries outside of Norway to two foreign-born parents are defined as immigrants in Norway. This group constitutes 14.8% of the Norwegian population, while children born in Norway to immigrant parents (as per previous definition) represent 3.7% of the total population. As in Denmark, statistics on languages spoken by individuals are not collected in Norway. Instead, only the countries of origin are recorded. The five countries from which the majority of immigrants originate are Poland, Lithuania, Sweden, Syria and Somalia. For children born in Norway to immigrant parents, the five largest countries of origin are Poland, Lithuania, Somalia, Pakistan and Sweden. There are no official statistics regarding the number of multilingual children in schools. However, it is estimated that one in five students speaks a language other than Norwegian at home (Kulbrandstad 2020). Although mother tongue education was officially introduced in Norway in 1987, it has become a transitional provision for students with limited knowledge of Norwegian, and very few students are currently enrolled in mother tongue education in public schools in Norway.

In 2023, Sweden had 10,521,556 inhabitants (Statistics Sweden 2023). The official national language is Swedish and the five official national minority languages are Finnish, Meänkieli (Tornedal Finnish), Yiddish, Romany Chib (all varieties) and Sámi (all varieties). In the academic year 2023/24, 28.9% of students in the compulsory schools used languages other than Swedish at home on a regular basis with at least one caregiver (Swedish National Agency of Education

2024). These students are thus eligible to study that language through the elective subject of mother tongue education. 187 languages were taught through mother tongue education in 2023/24 (Swedish National Agency of Education 2024). Although these figures apply to the compulsory school only (grades 1–9), they reflect to some extent the linguistic diversity in broader social contexts in Sweden.

This brief demographic overview reveals that in all the Nordic countries investigated in this volume, there are significant numbers of school-age children who, in addition to the national majority languages, speak other languages. Sweden has the highest proportion, while Iceland has the lowest. In Norway and Finland, indigenous languages have official status in particular regions, while in Sweden they have official status in the whole country. Finland is the only officially bilingual country, with Swedish and Finnish both accorded the status of national official languages.

3 Terminology in this volume

As Skutnabb-Kangas & McCarty (2008: 3) have pointed out, the concepts researchers use are never neutral:

> In contested arenas such as bilingual education, words and concepts frame and construct the phenomena under discussion, making some persons and groups invisible; some the unmarked norm, others marked and negative.

Across the Nordic countries, in different fields of studies and theoretical traditions, the terminology used to describe linguistic diversity in schools varies significantly. To improve coherence in this volume, the editors and contributing authors have discussed and agreed to use specific terms to describe similar educational phenomena that are investigated in this volume. In some cases, it was not obvious which terms were the most suitable and negotiations were needed. We therefore provide the reasoning behind our choices below.

We have chosen to use the phrase *linguistically diverse classrooms* to describe how classrooms, including teachers and students, are made up of individuals with different linguistic backgrounds. In linguistically diverse classrooms, students speaking national, national minority, indigenous and other minority languages can study alongside newcomers and other students with histories of migration. All of these individuals have different relationships to their languages. The term *multilingualism* is used to describe any individual's regular use of more than one language. From this perspective, multilingualism also encompasses other concepts, such as bilingualism and plurilingualism. In line with this definition, we

describe students as *multilingual* when they speak more than one language in their daily life. Hence, the term *multilingual student* encompasses terminology found in Nordic policy documents, when they, for instance, refer to "other multilingual students" (Finnish: "muut monikieliset oppilaat") and "linguistic minority students" (Norwegian: "minoritetsspråklege elevar"). The concept *multilingual student* also includes students who have recently moved to and begun school in a Nordic country, who are, when referred to, described more specifically as *newcomers*. The term *newcomer* is found in policy documents in different Nordic countries (Swedish: "nyanlända", Norwegian: "nykomne"). This is a term that also covers asylum seekers who are enrolled in schools.

In this volume, a *teacher education programme* refers to the particular programme in focus in the study, for example the Finnish class-teacher education programme for grades 1 through 6 or the Norwegian teacher education programme for grades 5 through 10. A *teacher education subject* refers to the different subjects that pre-service teachers study during their teacher education programme, for example Danish, Pedagogy, and Science. Subjects are often divided into and taught through several *courses*. Throughout this volume, the authors will use *programme*, *subject*, and *course* to describe the specific context under study. These terms correspond respectively to the Nordic equivalents "program"/"fag"/"ämne", and "emne"/"kurs"/"modul". Prospective teachers enrolled in a teacher education programme in order to become teachers are described as *pre-service teachers* in this volume, while practising teachers participating in *in-service education* or courses after graduation are called *in-service teachers*. When referring to the period of practice teaching that pre-service teachers do in schools, the term *practicum* is used.

The word "didaktik" or "didaktiikka" (in Finnish) refers to methods and approaches used in learning and teaching contexts. It is often translated directly as *didactics* in English-medium texts, including the chapters in this volume. As this term is not used widely outside the Northern European context, we have included this brief explanation here to improve comprehension of the chapters and also to add some contextual information on Nordic education.

While the authors have mostly used this terminology consistently throughout the volume, other terms are also sometimes used, to reflect a particular theoretical framework. For example, both Iversen et al. (2025 [this volume]) and Heikkola et al. (2025 [this volume]) draw on García (2009) when they use the term *emergent multilingual*.

4 Teacher education and linguistic diversity: Earlier studies in the field

Nordic classrooms are populated by students who use a variety of languages and have varying levels of competency in them. These linguistically diverse classrooms reflect the regions' multilingual population as well as the fact that newcomers are increasingly often directly placed in mainstream classrooms, rather than being educated in separate introductory programmes. When newcomers are placed directly in mainstream classrooms, they spend most of their school time with other students with different backgrounds and mainstream teachers, which, some argue, can support integration (Korp et al. 2019). However, it has been pointed out in Anglophone contexts, that while EAL (English as an additional language) students are being mainstreamed, EAL pedagogy and practice is not. In other words, few accommodations have been made in teacher education for the presence of linguistic, cultural and other forms of diversity in classrooms (Liddicoat 2022: 3). Teacher education in the Nordic region has long been in a similar situation: being largely unprepared for the relatively sudden expansion of linguistic diversity in mainstream classrooms (Iversen 2020, Norberg Brorsson & Lainio 2015), but this seems to be slowly changing.

The ways in which teacher education prepares educators for working with multilingual students has attracted considerable attention in recent years in countries outside of the Nordic region, see for example Benholz et al. (2017), Cochran-Smith et al. (2015), Freeman & Freeman (2014), Karam & Kibler (2024), Lucas (2011), Wernicke et al. (2021) and Foley et al. (2022). This reflects the linguistically diverse nature of classrooms that teachers around the world meet in the twenty-first century. Research on teacher education for working in linguistically diverse classrooms and schools builds on the research on learning for multilingual students. In this section, a range of the principal findings in this field is presented and connected to the field of teacher education. This is followed by a brief overview of recent research on teacher education in contexts of linguistic diversity.

Learning among multilinguals and newcomers is supported when all teachers are able to integrate content and language teaching (Nusche 2009), incorporate interaction into classroom activities and scaffold the use of languages that multilingual students already know as resources for learning (Axelsson & Magnusson 2012). It thus follows that pre-service teachers need knowledge about these aspects, and classroom strategies for implementation. Equally important, however, is the extent to which pre-service and in-service teachers are willing to engage with, reflect on, and challenge their own conceptualisations of key concepts in

the field of diversity (Scarino 2022). This could include critical discussions on concepts such as *additional languages*, *language and culture in learning and knowing*, *competence*, *diversity* and *difference* (Scarino 2022). Education policies play a key role in the provision of knowledge about and opportunities for implementing such critical discussions (Burton et al. 2024, Ojha et al. 2024).

Pre- and in-service teachers also benefit from being made aware of the importance of collaborations between different kinds of teachers (Creese 2005, Ganuza & Hedman 2015) and teachers and administrative instances (Wedin & Wessman 2017) to provide the best support for multilinguals in schools. Communication between and mutual understanding of the roles of all language teachers (second language, majority language, foreign/modern language, mother tongue), special education teachers, principals and municipal leaders responsible for education and caregivers is crucial for successful implementation of policies and organisation of educational provisions that promote learning among multilingual students (Dewilde 2013, Reath Warren 2017). Teacher knowledge, gained partly through teacher education, plays a central role in establishing and facilitating these collaborations and in creating educational environments where all multilingual students, including newcomers, can thrive.

Teachers, their students and their schools are embedded in complex sociopolitical contexts (Cochran-Smith & Lytle 1999: 289). Understanding the dynamic and dialogical interplay between this context and the teaching situation, as well as having the ability to act agentively, is increasingly important for teachers. This can be addressed in teacher education by placing emphasis on teaching as an ongoing process of enquiry rather than attaining mastery (Toohey & Smythe 2022). Teachers need to be educated as professionals who not only understand teaching techniques and how to apply them, but who can also take action informed by theory and understanding of the sociocultural context, in their classrooms and schools (Leung 2022, Villegas et al. 2018). In other words, if teacher education aims to prepare teachers for work in linguistically and culturally diverse classrooms, it needs to emphasise and critically examine the situatedness of learning (Liddicoat 2022, Ojha et al. 2024).

There is increasing awareness among teacher educators across contexts that teacher education needs to prepare pre-service teachers to engage with the linguistic diversity present in the classroom in ways that go beyond "best practices" for teaching the language of instruction (Ojha et al. 2024). One aspect of this is nurturing interest in and a positive attitude towards linguistic diversity among pre-service teachers. Some recent studies have found that short courses spanning only a semester or two can contribute to changing negative beliefs about multilingualism (Aleksić & Bebić-Crestany 2023, Mahalingappa 2024, Schroedler et al.

2023). However, other researchers stress that bringing sustained change, including changes in beliefs and teaching practices, requires time and effort (Duarte & Günther-van der Meij 2022, Kirsch et al. 2020). Furthermore, when teacher education prepares teachers to work in linguistically diverse classrooms, the content of the coursework matters. Döll & Guldenschuh (2022) first found that a teacher education course on multilingualism in education did not significantly alter the participants' negative perspectives on multilingualism. However, after the course content had been revised to focus more on pedagogies of migration and different models of multilingual education, rather than second language acquisition and educational disadvantages, the course was successful in changing the participants' negative perspectives. As well as the importance of content, this also indicates that critical evaluation and revision of teacher education courses that include students' perspectives can make a difference to the impact the courses have.

Wernicke et al. (2021) present findings from an international research project, MultiTEd, describing and comparing different approaches to preparing pre-service teachers for linguistically diverse contexts. The volume includes contributions from several countries in North America and Europe describing current approaches regarding linguistic diversity in teacher education, as well as promising initiatives to better prepare pre-service teachers to work in linguistically diverse classrooms. The contributions also highlight how sociopolitical circumstances, language policies and institutional and programme preferences in a range of contexts play an important role and make the development of teacher education complex. There are two contributions from the Nordic context in that volume. Paulsrud & Lundberg (2021) analysed a selection of primary school teacher education programmes in Sweden and found that there is no standardised or national requirement to provide courses on multilingualism in teacher education at this level. They argue that there are only "vague spaces for multilingualism" (Paulsrud & Lundberg 2021: 55) in the programmes, the responsibility being implicitly passed on to pre- and in-service teachers. Szabó et al. (2021) examined teacher education at two universities in Finland and found that teacher education was slow to respond to societal changes, including the growing proportion of multilingual students in schools.

Another study examining attitudes and beliefs about multilingualism in Swedish educational contexts shows that teacher educators and in-service teachers alike regard Swedish as the only legitimate language for learning in teacher education programmes and at school, indicating a monolingual mindset (Paulsrud et al. 2023). Both pre- and in-service teachers in this study expressed concern that they were unprepared for work in linguistically diverse classrooms, leading

the authors to conclude that teacher education in Sweden has not caught up with the multilingual reality of the Swedish school today.

The extent to which pre-service teachers are given the opportunity to reflect on and develop a teacher identity that is consonant with the linguistically diverse classrooms and schools in which they will be working is another salient factor for teacher education. A recent survey and interview study in England investigated pre-service teachers' perceptions of their teacher education programme, their own experiences of teaching students from a range of linguistic backgrounds, and the challenges faced by all students in developing language and literacy skills (Foley et al. 2022). The pre-service teachers' responses indicated both commitment and a will to take responsibility for the learning needs of students with English as an additional language. In spite of this, pre-service teachers nearing the end of their teacher education programme also reported that they had acquired few strategies for working with such students. Moreover, approximately 20% had "little confidence" in their ability to support students with diverse linguistic backgrounds (Foley et al. 2022: 117). The authors recommend both "core sessions" (Foley et al. 2022: 120) on linguistic diversity in teacher education programmes, as well as input on linguistic diversity infused in all other subject areas. The latter is a measure to place emphasis on supporting pre-service teachers "to make all lessons more accessible to, and inclusive of, the multilingual and multicultural pupils whom they will encounter" (Foley et al. 2022: 120).

Teachers are often expected and accustomed to calibrating their approaches to teaching, to meet the needs of academically diverse learners (Cochran-Smith et al. 2015). However, adapting their teaching repertoire in order to nurture the development of subject and language knowledge among newcomers and other multilingual students who study in the same classroom as students who have spent their entire school career in the same country, accumulating everyday language and scientific language and knowledge in the majority language of that country, presents different and specific challenges (Wernicke et al. 2021). For newcomers in secondary schools especially, the pressure of learning the meaning of complex subject-specific words and concepts and how to embed them in longer texts to produce knowledge that meets the requirements of the national curricula, can be a stressful and exhausting challenge (Sharif 2017).

This brief overview of the international and Nordic research reveals that a wide range of factors are important to consider when preparing pre-service teachers for working in linguistically diverse classrooms. These include incorporating knowledge about multilingual development and how to integrate content and language learning, particularly for newcomers, in all teacher education programmes. In addition, critical reflection on the terms that are used to describe and

discuss linguistic diversity should be encouraged among pre-service teachers, and the importance of collaborating within school ecologies emphasised. Nurturing awareness of the sociocultural context in which classrooms are situated and a positive attitude towards linguistic diversity are important. Finally, supporting pre-service teachers as they gain a deeper understanding of the nature of teacher identity, and learn that teaching knowledge evolves over time, through experience rather than through the use of a specific set of tools "delivered" by teacher educators, can prepare them for their future work in linguistically diverse contexts. The research indicates that such knowledge is present in different forms of teacher education, but is organised differently. Core courses in addition to strands addressing multilingualism across teacher education as well as evaluation and revision of the content addressing linguistic diversity are all beneficial for meeting the needs that pre-service teachers themselves identify as important.

In this volume, we focus specifically on research on teacher education in the Nordic region, which has traditionally been associated with progressive, centralised approaches to education, based on principles of inclusion, social justice and equal opportunity (Blossing et al. 2014, Elstad 2020, Frønes et al. 2020). We see a need to examine if these progressive approaches include preparing teachers for working with multilingual students, given that Nordic school populations have become increasingly multilingual. To our knowledge, research on teacher education in a Nordic context has not yet been collated in a single volume, although there are a number of researchers working in this field. This volume therefore is the first to present research on teacher education for linguistic diversity in a Nordic context to an international audience. Gathering critical studies of teacher education programmes from one region in a single volume also facilitates broader patterns to be observed. This can provide researchers and teacher educators in the Nordic region with knowledge that helps them to analyse and improve teacher education in local contexts. Teacher educators in countries outside the Nordic region may also benefit from reading about broader tendencies in a particular geographical region, to identify and address research gaps and work with development in their own region.

5 Organisation of teacher education in the Nordic countries

While there is a long-standing tradition of collaboration and mutual inspiration between teacher educators and researchers in teacher education in the Nordic countries (Elstad 2020, Hadzialic et al. 2017), there is considerable variation in

how teacher education is organised (Elstad 2020). Historically, teacher education was not conducted within universities. Rather, pre-service teachers for primary and lower secondary schools were educated in separate teacher colleges. The exception is Finland, where teacher colleges were integrated into the universities in 1979. Since then, teacher education has been organised as an integrated five-year master's degree (Sahlberg 2015). For the past two decades, the now internationally acclaimed Finnish teacher education system (e.g., Darling-Hammond et al. 2017, Tatto 2015) has served as an inspiration for teacher education in the other Nordic countries. Finland's results on international standardised tests, such as PISA, TIMS, and PIRLS (Ahonen 2021), have motivated politicians across the Nordic countries to model their respective teacher education systems on the Finnish model (Elstad 2020). Iceland integrated teacher education into their university system in 2008 (Sigurðsson et al. 2020), and Norway and Sweden started similar processes in 2005 and 2011, respectively (Åstrand 2020, Skagen & Elstad 2020). Consequently, Denmark is the only Nordic country where the traditional teacher colleges still dominate and where pre-service teachers are not expected to complete a master's degree (Madsen & Jensen 2020). Rather, Danish teacher education comprises a four-year programme at a teacher's college. In addition to the initial pre-service teacher education programmes, all Nordic countries provide comprehensive in-service education for in-service teachers.

Teacher education is organised differently across the Nordic region. Some countries have programmes aimed at educating teachers for specific levels of the education system (primary or secondary), while other countries have opted for more general teacher education programmes (Elstad 2020). Danish pre-service teachers, for example, specialise in particular school subjects, but have differentiated courses depending on the level at which the subject (e.g., Danish, Mathematics, Physical Education and English) will be taught (Madsen & Jensen 2020). A mandatory course called "Teaching bilingual students" in such a general teacher education programme in Denmark is in focus in Chapter 5. In Finland, on the other hand, so-called class teachers are educated to teach all subjects from grade 1 through grade 6, while subject teachers, who teach grade 7 through grade 12, specialise in particular school subjects (Hansén et al. 2020). Teacher education for subject teachers in Finland comprises a one-year programme, which is studied after subject-specific studies at Master's level have been completed. The first kind of programme (for pre-service teachers, grades 1 through 6) is reported on in Chapter 7 and the second kind of programme (for pre-service subject teachers, grades 7 through 12) in Finland is in focus in Chapter 8. As in Denmark, Icelandic teacher education is not specialised according to the age group the pre-service teachers are expected to teach, but they have the opportunity to specialise in par-

ticular school subjects (Sigurðsson et al. 2020). Studies investigating two general teacher education programmes in Iceland are presented in Chapters 2 and 4. In Norwegian teacher education for compulsory school, pre-service teachers follow either a programme preparing them for grades 1 through 7 or for grades 5 through 10. These two different programmes have nonetheless much in common, and in Chapter 7, researchers from the Norwegian educational context present findings derived from data collected from both. Swedish teacher education institutions are largely free to select and organise the content of their respective teacher education programmes independently. Hence, Swedish teacher education is characterised by a diversity of approaches (Åstrand 2020). In-service education for teachers is widespread throughout the Nordic countries and often delegated to teacher educators, through centrally funded initiatives or centres for in-service education. Policies and practices in study guidance in the mother tongue in the Swedish context are analysed in Chapter 3. There is no compulsory educational programme for the tutors who conduct study guidance, rather they usually learn about their profession through in-service education or on the job.

In some of the Nordic countries, education policies have resulted in subjects and forms of support available in schools for multilinguals that are relatively unique internationally. These include the elective subject of mother tongue education, for students who speak languages in addition to the majority language at home, and the right to temporary support in the form of tutoring in their mother tongue or strongest school language, for students whose knowledge of the majority language is deemed insufficient for them to pass core subjects. These subjects and forms of support are organised differently in each of the Nordic countries. Not all pre-service and in-service teachers have relevant knowledge about the subjects and forms of multilingual support (Norberg Brorsson & Lainio 2015). Without a deep understanding of not only the needs but also the strengths of their multilingual students, teachers are less prepared to help them reach their full learning potential. Teacher education is thus crucial for successful implementation of educational provisions for multilingual students.

6 The contributions

This volume significantly contributes to our understanding of teacher education in different Nordic contexts, presenting a wide range of cases, all of which in some way address how teacher education prepares pre- and in-service teachers for working in linguistically diverse schools and classrooms. Following this introductory chapter, the subsequent two chapters of this volume focus on policies

regulating teacher education, the syllabi defining what pre-service teachers are expected to learn, and in-service teachers' perspectives on teacher education's effort to prepare teachers for working in linguistically diverse schools.

In Chapter 2, Edda Óskarsdóttir and Hermína Gunnþórsdóttir present their analysis of course descriptions from the two main teacher education institutions in Iceland, based on focus group interviews with in-service teachers who have recently graduated from each respective teacher education programme. Their objective is to investigate how Icelandic teacher education prepares pre-service teachers for working in linguistically diverse classrooms. The study highlights the in-service teachers' concern with the lack of practical pedagogy to support multilingual students in Icelandic teacher education, reflecting perspectives expressed by pre-service teachers in other chapters of this volume (e.g., Iversen et al. 2025 [this volume], Østergaard et al. 2025 [this volume]).

In Chapter 3, Jenny Rosén and Åsa Wedin apply nexus analysis to explore how national policies on tutoring in the mother tongue (in Swedish, called "study guidance in the mother tongue", hereafter SGMT) are translated into course syllabi at a Swedish university and how these are interpreted by one in-service SGMT assistant. Rosén and Wedin also recorded classroom interactions to investigate how national policies are enacted in particular classroom settings. They find that the SGMT assistant does, in fact, fulfil the various roles expected of him, according to key policy documents. In spite of this, his extensive competence is not recognised by the school.

The only contribution that presents the experiences, beliefs and knowledge of teacher educators is from Iceland again. Chapter 4 acts as a bridge between the previous two chapters (principally addressing policy, syllabi and in-service teacher perspectives) and the final three (principally addressing pre-service teachers' beliefs and knowledge). In Chapter 4, Hafdís Guðjónsdóttir, Jónína Vala Kristinsdóttir, Gunnhildur Óskarsdóttir and Samúel Lefever analyse the experiences of Icelandic teacher educators as they prepare pre-service teachers for working in linguistically diverse classrooms. They present findings from focus group interviews with teacher educators at the largest teacher education institution in Iceland. Guðjónsdóttir et al. find that although teacher educators do not always emphasise multicultural education in their teaching, they nonetheless attempt to model effective teaching practices that are learner-centred and inclusive.

Pre-service teachers' beliefs and knowledge about, as well as skills for, teaching in linguistically diverse classrooms are investigated in Chapters 5–8. In Chapter 5, Winnie Østergaard, Anna-Vera Meidell Sigsgaard, Christine Worm, Lone

Wulff, Thomas Roed Heiden and Anne-Louise Markussen analyse Danish pre-service teachers' examination papers from a mandatory course on teaching bilingual students. Østergaard et al. explore how pre-service teachers conceptualise multilingualism after completing the mandatory course. Although there are obvious advantages associated with a mandatory course on teaching bilingual students, Østergaard et al. conclude that as long as this is the only course in teacher education where multilingualism is positioned as a resource, it will be ineffective in altering pre-service teachers' preconceptions of multilingual students. In addition, the study identifies limited ability among the pre-service teachers to connect theoretical knowledge to pedagogical practice.

In Chapter 6, Jonas Yassin Iversen, Wenche Elisabeth Thomassen and Sandra Fylkesnes analyse interviews with 106 Norwegian pre-service teachers from three different studies to explore their orientations, knowledge and skills for teaching multilingual and emergent multilingual students. Iversen et al. introduce Lucas and Villegas' framework for linguistically responsive teaching, and use this as a theoretical framework for their own analyses. They find that although the pre-service teachers articulate adequate orientations towards multilingualism, they are nevertheless unable to demonstrate the necessary knowledge and skills to enact linguistically responsive teaching. Based on their findings, the authors identify key areas where Norwegian teacher education needs to improve in order to prepare pre-service teachers to enact linguistically responsive teaching.

Chapters 7 and 8 shift the focus to Finnish teacher education in primary schools and upper secondary schools respectively. In Chapter 7, Jenni Alisaari, Leena Maria Heikkola and Raisa Harju-Autti investigate Finnish third-year, pre-service primary school teachers' preparedness to teach linguistically diverse students, at the beginning of a course on multilingual pedagogies. The Finnish teacher education programme for primary school teachers prepares pre-service teachers to teach in grades 1 through 6. Alisaari et al. find that the pre-service teachers demonstrate an adequate understanding of language learning, and reports skills to support academic language development. However, they have limited awareness of how to provide linguistic support for multilingual students. The authors argue that all teachers need to be able to identify language demands involved in different learning tasks. Moreover, they advocate for a focus both on pre-service teachers' ability to support the acquisition of the language of instruction, as well as subject-specific content.

In Chapter 8, Leena Maria Heikkola, Elisa Repo and Niina Kekki analyse Finnish pre-service subject teachers' preparedness to support multilingual students' language learning in Finnish schools. The Finnish teacher education for subject

teachers prepares pre-service teachers for teaching grade 7 to grade 12. In line with Alisaari et al., this chapter also explores pre-service teachers' knowledge about academic language development. Heikkola et al. follow the pre-service teachers' development through a one-year teacher education course. They find that the pre-service teachers were able to identify the language demands of academic tasks, although their awareness of language-related practices was limited. Based on their analyses, Heikkola et al. discuss the opportunities and limitations of this one-year course, and highlight that the pre-service teachers' previous educational background influences how they develop their preparedness to support multilingual learners.

In the Epilogue, Ingrid Piller offers critical and thought-provoking observations on the many contradictions found in Nordic education. She notes that the Nordic countries are often seen as global beacons of modernity, social inclusion, and equal opportunities. At the same time, students with a migrant background in the Nordic countries underachieve in schools – even after controlling for socioeconomic and language status. Piller agrees with the authors in this volume that the gap between inclusive policies and their operationalisation in teacher education documented in this volume may be part of the explanation for why Nordic countries continue to struggle to support students with a migrant background. What readers beyond the Nordic countries can learn from the chapters in this volume, Piller argues, is that changes at the policy level are insufficient to challenge the monolingual habitus of multilingual schools. Consequently, it is necessary to disentangle migration and linguistic diversity. Linguistic diversity is, indeed, a fact of life and should be treated accordingly in schools. Finally, Pillers provides three challenges for future language education.

7 Common themes and future directions

While compiling the volume it became clear that although the aspects of teacher education programmes addressing linguistic heterogeneity in the five Nordic countries represented in this volume differ, there are several common threads connecting the contributions. The editors have grouped together these threads under three themes.

The first of these themes regards the integration of multilingual perspectives in teacher education, specifically, whether to incorporate one core subject focusing on theories and approaches to teaching in linguistically diverse classrooms, such as the Danish model (see Østergaard et al. 2025 [this volume]), or include a strand that addresses these issues across all subjects. While a core course ensures

that all pre-service teachers have the opportunity to learn about linguistic diversity and education, the results reported by Østergaard et al. (2025 [this volume]) imply that it cannot be taken for granted that this results in the acquisition of in-depth theoretical or pedagogical knowledge. None of the chapters in this volume present an alternative model. However, the potential advantages of a "multilingual strand" running through all courses include that pre-service teachers could learn subject-specific multilingual approaches, and also that they would be regularly reminded about the importance of applying multilingual perspectives in teaching. Another alternative is to have both a core course on linguistic diversity and input on linguistic diversity being infused in all other subject areas, as recommended by Foley et al. (2022). As the results of the chapters in this volume indicate that many pre-service teachers (Alisaari et al. 2025 [this volume], Heikkola et al. 2025 [this volume], Iversen et al. 2025 [this volume]) and some in-service teachers (Gunnþórsdóttir & Óskarsdóttir 2025 [this volume]) feel unprepared to work practically with multilingual students, an approach combining theoretical knowledge in a core subject with practical application in all subjects may also have potential in a Nordic context. Regardless of model, it is necessary to bridge the existing disciplinary divides within teacher education to prepare teachers for linguistically diverse classrooms (Bale 2024, Burton et al. 2024).

The second theme concerns which groups of pre- and in-service teachers should be educated about working with linguistically heterogeneous groups. There are tensions in schools concerning which teachers should be responsible for multilingual students' language development and thus their learning and success in different school subjects, and a clear tendency to delegate this responsibility to language teachers (Hermansson et al. 2022). Moreover, the findings presented by Heikkola et al. (2025 [this volume]) suggest that language teachers are those whose knowledge about multilingualism appeared to increase the most after teacher education on that topic. Previous studies, however, show that language is an intrinsic aspect of learning and producing knowledge in *every* subject (Cummins 2000, Gibbons 2014). This indicates the importance of *all* pre-service teachers being educated about linguistic diversity and approaches for teaching that promote the development of both subject knowledge and the language used to express that knowledge. Implementation of this kind of approach in teacher education could be facilitated by communication and collaboration between teacher educators in all subjects and disciplines. In schools, collaboration between different categories of educational workers could support ongoing language and knowledge development for multilingual students, as has been pointed out in earlier research (Creese 2005, Dewilde 2013, Reath Warren 2017, Wedin & Wessman 2017).

The third theme concerns the divide between theory and practice, which is salient on different scales. In the presented cases, see Heikkola et al. (2025 [this volume]), Iversen et al. (2025 [this volume]), Gunnþórsdóttir & Óskarsdóttir (2025 [this volume]), Rosén & Wedin (2025 [this volume]), many pre-service teachers report having acquired theoretical knowledge about multilingual development but lack preparation for applying this to classroom practice. It is positive that many pre-service teachers report having theoretical knowledge about multilingualism, and moreover, often frame multilingualism as something beneficial, as theoretical knowledge is necessary for developing classroom practice. However, the results in these collected studies also indicate that the capacity of teachers to take action informed by theory and understanding of the sociocultural context, in their classrooms and schools (Leung 2022), is still limited in the Nordic context. With the exception of Denmark, teacher education in all the Nordic countries has moved from colleges to universities, to ensure that pre-service teacher knowledge is theoretically as well as practically grounded. As teacher education evolves along with the societies in which it operates, it is important that theoretical knowledge about relevant developments in social and educational theory is not only presented and discussed, but also translated by teacher educators, into practical educational approaches and activities. Presentation and discussion of, as well as practice with approaches and activities that aim to explicitly scaffold the development of language and content knowledge among multilingual students can provide pre-service and in-service teachers with the tools they need to operationalise theoretical knowledge into their teaching practice in linguistically diverse classrooms (Gibbons 2014, Iversen 2020). On another scale, Rosén & Wedin (2025 [this volume]) illustrate that there is a gap, if not a gulf, between how forms of educational support for multilingual students are described in steering documents and how they are enacted in school contexts. The findings in this chapter echo previous research in the Swedish context (Reath Warren 2017) and illustrate that knowledge about the different forms of support that are available for multilingual students are unlikely to support learning until teachers have knowledge about them, and actively collaborate. Rosén & Wedin's (2025) findings provide a compelling argument for the inclusion of knowledge about all forms of education and support for multilingual students in teacher education programmes.

By learning from the experiences from colleagues and researchers in a range of settings in the Nordic region, local policies and pedagogies that meet the needs of both teacher educators and pre-service teachers in other contexts can be discussed and developed. In future research, we see a need for more fine-grained analyses of the content of teacher education programmes, with a focus on the

aspects that help teachers promote learning and inclusion in linguistically diverse classrooms. There is also a need to investigate how these aspects are best incorporated into teacher education programmes. The research presented in this volume indicates that teacher educators and researchers need to engage in questions about how to prepare pre-service teachers to *enact* a multilingual pedagogy once they transition into teaching.

Finally, the contributions indicate an ongoing and pressing need for teacher educators to be vigilant and engaged in their local and national social and educational contexts in order to be able to respond flexibly to the changing nature of schools in their region. Teacher educators in the Nordic region cannot rely on past political and educational achievements, nor delegate responsibility for multilingual learners' needs to language teachers alone. Critical self-reflection on teacher education that also encourages dynamic, contextually-based approaches to policy enactment is crucial for ensuring that Nordic teachers are prepared to work with linguistically heterogeneous groups of students and help them thrive at school and in the region. This contribution is significant for other national contexts as well; politicians and policy-makers come and go, adjusting approaches to education, and social attitudes shift and sway, so teacher educators must remain alert, responsive and prepared to meet the needs that teachers face in changing social contexts.

Acknowledgments

The contributions in this volume have been peer-reviewed (double-blind). We are very grateful to all the authors, the participants in each of the studies, and the reviewers in both Nordic and international contexts who raised questions and suggested clarifications that have made each chapter and the volume as a whole more coherent and accessible to a wider audience. We hope that the contributions in this volume contribute to a broader and deeper understanding of teacher education in this context, and to preparing pre-service teachers for their future work in linguistically diverse classrooms.

The editors would like to dedicate this volume to the memory of our Icelandic colleague, Gunnhildur Óskarsdóttir,[1] who sadly passed away before this volume was published.

[1]https://www.mbl.is/frettir/innlent/2023/03/18/andlat_gunnhildur_oskarsdottir/

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Chapter 2

Working with multilingual students in Iceland: Exploring educational experiences of newly graduated teachers

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The number of multilingual students has increased rapidly in Iceland over the past two decades. Recent research in Iceland indicates that the school system has been challenged in meeting the needs of this group of students. The aim of this chapter is to shed light on how the teacher education programmes at the Universities of Iceland (UI) and Akureyri (UNAK) prepare and support pre-service teachers in their initial education to work with learners for whom Icelandic is an additional language. Analysis of documents (current teacher education course syllabi) and three focus group interviews with newly graduated students at both universities was conducted. Findings revealed a lack of relevant courses in the study programme and all teachers discussed a lack of practical pedagogical strategies to support multilingual students. In sum, the findings indicate that teacher education in Iceland does not sufficiently prepare pre-service teachers for teaching multilingual students.

1 Introduction

Over the past two decades, the number of students with a migrant background has been growing in the Icelandic education system. This increase is in line with changes in the society regarding the percentage of the country's inhabitants defined as immigrants. In 2000, 2.6% of the population were defined as immigrants, but twenty years later the percentage was 15% (Statistics Iceland 2020a). These changing demographics are reflected in student populations at all school levels,

Hermína Gunnþórsdóttir & Edda Óskarsdóttir. 2025. Working with multilingual students in Iceland: Exploring educational experiences of newly graduated teachers. In Anne Reath Warren, Jonas Yassin Iversen & Boglárka Straszer (eds.), *Teacher education for working in linguistically diverse classrooms: Nordic perspectives*, 31–53. Berlin: Language Science Press. DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.15280895

as in 2019, 14.5% of all preschool children (Statistics Iceland 2020b) and 11.5% of all compulsory school students had a mother tongue other than Icelandic (Statistics Iceland 2020a). This situation has called for the school system to respond to the unique situation these students are in; learning Icelandic and gaining skills and confidence in using the language in their education.

Recent research in Iceland indicates that the school system faces challenges in meeting the educational and social needs of this group of students. In sum, findings have shown that multilingual students are often socially isolated, many are at a greater risk of developing mental health conditions than their peers, and they seem less inclined to participate in leisure and sports activities (Guðmundsdóttir & Ragnarsdóttir 2013, Ministry of Education 2020, Rúnarsdóttir & Vilhjalmsson 2015, Þórisdóttir 2018). In addition, their educational attainment is below that of their Icelandic peers, according to PISA findings (OECD 2019), and they are less likely to graduate from upper secondary school (Ragnarsdóttir & Lefever 2018). The situation in the other Nordic countries is somewhat similar. When looking at educational outcomes in mathematics, reading and science for immigrant students in Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden, their outcomes are worse than those of students with non-immigrant background (Tørslev & Børsch 2017).

Studies of teachers of Icelandic (Gunnþórsdóttir & Ragnarsdóttir 2020, Óskarsdóttir 2017) report that teachers seem to lack the professional knowledge and skills to meet the educational needs of diverse and multilingual students. Furthermore, school principals and school authorities have called for measures to support, encourage and stimulate teachers' interest in and ambition for including multilingual students in their classrooms (Gunnþórsdóttir et al. 2017). However, other studies have found examples of successful inclusive practices in schools, most often at the initiative of individual teachers rather than a whole school sustainable practice (Guðjónsdóttir et al. 2016). Similar challenges to those mentioned above have been identified in other Nordic countries as well, such as difficulties for students in introductory classes in relating to and making friendships with other children in the regular class (Norway); good practices being more commonly the work of individual teachers rather than a common school culture (Finland); and teachers arguing that they do not have time to give the newly arrived students the extra support they needed which resulted in stress and frustration among the teachers (Sweden) (Ragnarsdóttir & Kulbrandstad 2018). In the UK context, Flockton & Cunningham (2021) argue that there has been a continuous and distinct lack of external guidance and support for teachers teaching learners who speak English as an additional language. Furthermore, no real consensus has yet been achieved as to what constitutes an appropriate pedagogical framework for this group. In Germany, the DaZ module (German as a second

language) has been incorporated into teacher education at a national level since 2009. Research shows that the module has potential to support teachers to work with multilingual students; however, it does not utilise this potential fully as its realisation in teacher training mainly depends on the perspectives that educators individually bring from their own experiences (Goltsev et al. 2022). This turns the focus on teacher education and how pre-service teachers are prepared to work in multilingual classrooms. Although there have been some positive changes in recent years, teacher education programmes in the Nordic countries have not emphasised multilingual pedagogy (Calafato 2020, Iversen 2021, Kieran & Anderson 2019, Raud & Orehhova 2020). The above-mentioned lack of support and guidance for teachers and of consensus on the pedagogy employed is reflected in the research field. Compounding these challenges, there is a lack of research – actually no research at all – that addresses this issue from the perspective of teacher education in Iceland. This study is therefore an important and valuable contribution to this research field.

This chapter will concentrate on the situation in Iceland based on interviews with recently graduated teachers and by analysing the existing teacher education course syllabi. The aim of this chapter is to cast a light on how the teacher education programmes at the Universities of Iceland (UI) and Akureyri (UNAK), prepare and support pre-service teachers in their initial education to work with learners for whom Icelandic is an additional language. The research questions addressed are:

- How do the teacher education programmes at UI and UNAK prepare pre-service teachers to work with multilingual students?
- How do recently graduated teachers feel they are prepared for teaching multilingual students?

2 Background

In this section we first introduce the main policy documents that have a direct bearing on the situation, that is the *Current Act on Education in Iceland, The National Curriculum Guide for Compulsory Schools, The Action Plan for immigrants 2016–2019* and *Draft policy: Education of children and youth with diverse language and cultural background from 2020.* Secondly, we describe the organisation of teacher education in Iceland.

2.1 Policy background

The Current Act on Education[1] in Iceland strongly emphasises equality at the preschool, compulsory, and upper secondary school levels. Schools are expected to adapt their operations as closely as possible to the situation and needs of the students; thus, in a broad sense, supporting every student's development, welfare and education (Ministry of Education, Science and Culture 2011). The education policy is based on ideas of inclusive education, focusing on meeting students' diverse needs, whether those be academic or social; thus, schools should ensure that students are given equitable educational opportunities. According to the laws governing different educational levels, all students are entitled to an equitable education at the preschool, compulsory, and upper secondary school levels (Ministry of Education, Science and Culture 2011).

Thus, teachers are expected to respond to the educational needs of all students, including those with different language backgrounds. This calls for an inclusive pedagogy where teachers organise teaching, apply teaching methods and evaluate students' learning according to their needs. However, research on the Icelandic school system has shown that the implementation of inclusive approaches has lacked guidance, support and a structured approach (European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education 2011). The cause might be a lack of focus on both initial teacher education and teachers' professional development.

The National Curriculum Guide for Compulsory Schools (Ministry of Education, Science and Culture 2011) emphasises improving the Icelandic language skills of students with a foreign language background. Proficiency in Icelandic is considered a key prerequisite for becoming active participants in society, based on democratic principles of equal opportunity. However, schools should also encourage parents to support their children's Icelandic learning and at the same time cultivate and develop their own languages, to promote active bilingualism. The only guidance provided states that when the teaching of Icelandic as a second language in compulsory education is organised, the age, maturity and needs of students should be considered. Furthermore, students' experiences, cultural backgrounds and academic status should be taken into account The criteria or learning outcomes in Icelandic as a second language are set out in four categories: spoken language and listening, reading, literature and writing (Ministry of Education 2013). The chapter on Icelandic as a second language in the National Curriculum Guide for Compulsory Schools is currently being revised.

[1]https://www.government.is/media/menntamalaraduneyti-media/media/frettatengt2016/91_2008-Compulsory-School-Act-ENGLISH-Uppfaert-Jan-2017.pdf

The *Parliamentary resolution on an action plan on immigrants for the years 2016–2019* recommends action within five main categories: society, family, education, the labour market and refugee issues (Alþingi 2016). A total of 30 measures were introduced and they aimed at ensuring equal opportunities for everyone living in Iceland, regardless of individual factors and circumstances. Six measures focus on educational support, and all of those are aimed at harnessing the education and human resources of immigrants, both for their own benefit and for society. Measure C.1. focuses on equal opportunities for learning, measure C.2. on active bilingualism/multilingualism to enhance the importance of mother tongue teaching in pre-schools, compulsory and secondary schools. Finally, measure C.3. aims at developing steps to respond to student school dropout rates and to increase the number of students with immigrant backgrounds who graduate from upper secondary schools.

A draft policy issued by the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture (Ministry of Education 2020) on the education of children and youths with diverse language and cultural backgrounds summarises the situation in detail, based on Icelandic and international research, Icelandic laws and regulations, curricula and school levels. The document highlights the urgency of responding to the current situation at various levels and presents proposals for action in seven sections. Section six refers to the education of teachers and after-school staff, emphasising that the teaching of children and young people with immigrant backgrounds should be an indispensable part of the basic education of all teachers and after-school staff. At the same time, they should receive on-going professional development on multiculturalism and plurilingualism. Furthermore, the draft policy emphasises that multicultural education, which celebrates diversity and is based on the resources and strengths of children and young people, should be the hallmark of the school system in future education policy (Ministry of Education 2020). The draft policy both responds to and confirms recent research findings which state that the Icelandic school system seems to have difficulty educating children and youths with a foreign linguistic and cultural background (Ministry of Education 2020).

These policy documents recommend that teachers of groups of linguistically diverse students need to meet the needs of all their students, through a focus on equity and by employing diverse teaching and evaluation methods to accommodate students. Teachers have, however, found it challenging to translate these policies into pedagogical praxis to fulfil curricular demands (Óskarsdóttir 2017). The cause might be a lack of focus on such approaches in both initial teacher education and continuing professional development.

2.2 Teacher education in Iceland

Currently, comprehensive teacher education in Iceland is provided at two universities: the University of Iceland (UI) and the University of Akureyri (UNAK). Since 2008, a 180 ECTS bachelor's degree and a 120 ECTS master's degree is required by law to gain a license to teach in pre-schools, compulsory schools and upper-secondary schools. The teacher education programme has no centrally defined compulsory core subjects and the teacher education institutions set their own curriculum protocols for study programmes in initial teacher education and determine content areas, competences and learning outcomes.

The University of Akureyri, UNAK, is a small university, located in Akureyri, a town in the north of Iceland. UNAK has 2540 students (2020) of whom 395 were enrolled in educational programmes at both undergraduate and graduate level (UNAK 2020). Approximately 100 students enrol in educational studies every year (MEd or MT) leading to teacher certification, and 30 students register for educational science (MA) programmes; that is, theoretical studies which do not lead to certification, although a few courses are compulsory for MEd and MT students.

The School of Education at the University of Iceland, based in Reykjavík, had 2466 enrolled undergraduate and graduate students in 2020. There are two faculties that teachers graduate from with a certification: the Faculty of Education and Pedagogy (E&P) and the Faculty of Subject Teacher Education (STE). The E&P faculty graduates are general pre- and compulsory school teachers and those who focus on educational leadership. The STE faculty graduates have a focus on teaching a specific subject (such as Icelandic, foreign languages, mathematics, natural sciences, art and design) and aim to teach at the compulsory or upper secondary school level. The faculties have several programmes of study and preservice teachers can select elective courses from across different faculties.

A recent legislative act on the education, competences and employment of teachers and school administrators includes a specification of the general and specialised knowledge, skills and competences that teachers and school administrators must possess (Lög Um Menntun, Hæfni Og Ráðningu Kennara Og Skólastjóra í Leik-, Grunn- Og Framhaldsskólum [Act on the education, competency and recruitment of teachers][2]). A framework of competences for teachers that builds on the act was developed by the Ministry in collaboration with the teacher education institutions, the teachers' union, and other stakeholders in 2022 (Reglugerð Um Hæfniramma Með Viðmiðum Fyrir Almenna Og Sérhæfða

[2]https://www.althingi.is/lagas/nuna/2019095.html

Hæfni Kennara Og Skólastjórnenda Við Leik-, Grunn- Og Framhaldsskóla [Regulation on a competence framework with criteria for the general and specialised qualifications of teachers and school administrators at preschool, compulsory and secondary schools][3]). This means that the teacher education universities are currently in the process of reviewing their programmes in accordance with the requirements laid out in the act.

3 Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework on which this chapter draws comprises aspects of inclusive education, culturally responsive pedagogy and teacher knowledge. They form the ideological foundations on which the research is built. The conceptual framework is thus the compass to navigate the topic on multilingualism in teacher education as presented in the research questions.

Inclusive education implies that all students take part in and receive a quality education. It places a particular focus on reaching students who are at risk of being excluded or marginalised in schools (Black-Hawkins 2017, Florian 2009). As a social justice issue, inclusive education focuses on the intersection of diversities such as ability, gender, and sexuality, as well as culture, language, and socio-economic background. It builds on the premise that, without exception, quality education is a democratic right for all (Pantić & Florian 2015, Reay 2012). Organising instruction in a way that truly includes all learners calls for educators to consider how student differences affect learning, and to choose pedagogical strategies that effectively address those differences (Kieran & Anderson 2019).

Through a focus on culture, language and experiences, culturally responsive pedagogy is viewed as an approach to achieve inclusion and student engagement. Other approaches grounded in empowering pedagogies and focusing on teachers' roles in the plurilingual classrooms are outlined in, for example, *Linguistically Appropriate Practice* (Chumak-Horbatsch 2012) and *Linguistically Responsive Teaching* (Lucas et al. 2008, Lucas & Villegas 2013), which both challenge the monocultural knowledge that has dominated teaching in schools for decades. In these publications, plurilingualism is instead framed as the norm, directing attention towards an understanding that language, culture, and identity are deeply interconnected, and teachers need to be aware of the sociolinguistic dimension of language education (Lucas & Villegas 2013). The strategies that build on this approach include teachers using students' cultural and linguistic resources as

[3]https://island.is/reglugerdir/nr/1355-2022

enabling resources rather than as a barrier to learning (Lefever et al. 2018). Individual experiences and interests are incorporated to facilitate learning and build on students' cultural, linguistic, and ethnic experiences as a basis for interactive and collaborative teaching methods (Chumak-Horbatsch 2012).

An oft-cited literature review by Rychly & Graves (2012) outlines four characteristics of culturally responsive teachers. These characteristics can be employed to frame what is needed in preparing pre-service teachers for teaching diverse students. The first characteristic emphasises that teachers are caring and empathetic, and persistent in their efforts to ensure the success of culturally diverse students. The second states that teachers reflect on their attitudes and beliefs about other cultures and languages. Thus, teachers acknowledge their biases and beliefs about students from diverse backgrounds. Third, teachers are also reflective about their own cultural frames of reference. This characteristic refers to teachers' worldviews and their influence on instructional practices. The fourth and final characteristic is teachers' progressive knowledge about other cultures and languages, that they actively seek out information about the cultures and languages represented in their classrooms, extending it beyond foods, flags, and holiday celebrations, and using it for adapting classroom curriculum and instruction to be more inclusive.

When the above characteristics are viewed in the framework of teacher knowledge (Shulman 1986), they can, in combination, provide a three-dimensional picture of teacher education. In Shulman's framework, specific teacher knowledge can be viewed as residing in propositional knowledge, case knowledge and strategic knowledge. These knowledge forms apply to the domains of content, pedagogy, and curriculum as well as those of management, organisation, and individual differences among students. Propositional knowledge is, according to Shulman (1986), normative and reflects on the norms, values, ideological or philosophical commitments of justice, fairness, equity, and such concepts that construct teacher knowledge. Case knowledge has to do with how teachers learn about principles of practice through narratives and parables and the experience of others, whereas strategic knowledge is the learning that takes place when case knowledge collides with experience in practice, thereby forming new knowledge (Shulman 1986).

Later, Shulman expanded his theory and referred to "three apprenticeships" (Shulman 2007 in Florian & Rouse 2010: 192). The first apprenticeship is of the head, which refers to the knowledge and theoretical foundations of the profession. The second is the apprenticeship of the hand, which represents the technical and practical skills teachers employ and the third apprenticeship is of the heart, which, like propositional knowledge, refers to the attitudes, values and moral

dimensions essential for the profession (Shulman 2007 in Florian & Rouse 2010: 192).

Recent emphasis in multilingual pedagogy has focused on the importance of supporting students in maintaining their mother tongue as they learn the new language (Bailey & Marsden 2017) and building on their strengths and prior knowledge to help compensate for what they are lacking regarding the new language and culture (Cummins 2014). According to Cummins (2017), educators who work in linguistically diverse contexts must teach through a multilingual lens in order to teach the whole child. Such an instructional approach has been shown to have a positive effect on students' cognitive and metalinguistic development as well as on the cross-lingual relationship between students' first and second languages.

4 Methods and data

The aim of this chapter is to shed light on how the teacher education programmes at UNAK and UI prepare and support pre-service teachers to work with multilingual learners, through analysis of documents (current teacher education course syllabi) and three focus group interviews with newly graduated teachers who had studied at the Universities of Akureyri (UNAK) and Iceland (UI).

4.1 Data collection

Data collection involved two data sources. Firstly, the current teacher education course syllabi (from online course catalogues) in the two teacher education institutions in Iceland (UNAK and UI). The focus was on the Master of Education (MEd) and Master of Teaching (MT) degree programmes, as they lead to licenced teaching certification. We read through the syllabi and selected courses relevant for our topic.

The criteria for choosing which course syllabi to analyse were that their description had to include the words 'multicultural' (Icelandic: *fjölmenning*), 'language' (I: *tungumál*), and/or 'diversity'/'inclusion' (I: *fjölbreytileiki/menntun fyrir alla/menntun án aðgreiningar/skóli án aðgreiningar*). Secondly, three focus group interviews with newly graduated teachers were conducted, with two to three participants in each focus group (see Table 1). The aim of the focus group interviews was to explore whether, how and in what way the newly graduated teachers feel prepared to teach multilingual students.

The method of finding participants was by sending out emails to newly graduated teachers and following up on these emails multiple times. It turned out

to be a challenge to recruit participants for the interviews due to Covid-19 and the difficult work situation teachers consequently found themselves in. Thus, the number of participants was lower than we had planned for.

The interviews were conducted in autumn 2021, recorded via TEAMS or Zoom and lasted approximately one hour. The focus groups were conducted in Icelandic, recorded and transcribed verbatim. Translation of data extracts was done by the authors. The two participants from UI were interviewed together and the ones from UNAK were interviewed in two groups.

Table 1: Focus group participants

Name		Graduation year	Specialisation
Eva	UNAK	2021	Biology lower and upper secondary school
María	UNAK	2021	Preschool
Harpa	UNAK	2021	Math and Natural science lower secondary
Karen	UNAK	2020	Primary education
Erna	UNAK	2019	Primary education
Alma	UI	2020	Subject teaching
Ester	UI	2020	Preschool

The guiding questions were related to how the teacher education programme had prepared them as teachers to work with multilingual students, if they recalled courses with this emphasis, their experience from the practicum related to multilingual students and suggestions for improvement. Collecting data from both the course syllabi in the teacher education programmes and the focus groups provided information from different perspectives, as they have different origins and roles and also serve as a type of triangulation method, drawing on multiple sources (Stake 2000). Document analysis is a systematic procedure employed to review diverse forms of printed or electronic documents. This research method can provide a way of tracing developments and change (Bowen 2009) and it is suited to deducing meaning, developing a deeper understanding, and uncovering new perspectives on a research problem or question (Merriam 2009). Focus group interviews are useful for capturing a variety of viewpoints on a topic where the aim is to reveal multiple perspectives, trends or patterns regarding an issue (Brinkmann & Kvale 2015).

4.2 Data analysis

The data were analysed through two methods. Document analysis was used on the course syllabi in the teacher education programmes at UNAK and UI. The purpose of the analysis was to highlight the kind of courses offered for pre-service teachers regarding multilingual students. Thematic analysis was employed on the focus group data (Braun & Clarke 2006).

The analytical process involved three steps. First, we, both separately and together, analysed the course syllabi documents. This involved identifying, selecting and making sense of the data from each document. The data was then categorised based on content.

Secondly, we, also both individually and together, used thematic analysis on the interview data. The third step was to create data tables in Excel and search for common themes and contradictions across the documents and the interviews to look for answers to the research questions. We read through the data multiple times and used different colours to find themes and in collaboration we systematically compared the themes from the interviews to findings from the document analysis. The dominant categories were then identified, summarised and are presented in Section 5 "Findings".

4.3 Ethical considerations

Informed consent was obtained from the participants as they accepted the invitation to the focus group interviews. The names of participants are all pseudonyms, and the study was conducted in accordance with the Act on personal data protection and processing of personal data (Lög Um Persónuvernd Og Vinnslu Persónuupplýsinga[4]).

5 Findings

The findings are presented in two main sections: first course syllabi in the teacher education programme (Section 5.1) and then findings from the focus groups with newly graduated teachers (Section 5.2). In Section 6, Discussions and implications, we bring the findings together and summarise the main implications.

[4]https://www.personuvernd.is/media/uncategorized/Act_No_90_2018_on_Data_Protection_and_the_Processing_of_Personal_Data.pdf

5.1 Course syllabi in the teacher education programmes

We analysed the course syllabi at both universities that provide teacher education in the country. Seven course syllabi from UNAK and nine from UI were analysed. The findings are presented in Sections 5.1.1 and 5.1.2, respectively.

5.1.1 Courses offered at UNAK

When looking at the courses for pre-service teachers offered by UNAK that met the criteria of including a focus on multicultural or multilingual students, only one is mandatory for pre-service teachers at all levels (pre-, primary and secondary level), and one is mandatory for the preschool level only. The course *The Student in a Diverse and Inclusive School* (10 ECTS) is aimed at all school levels. It focuses on changes in Icelandic society, globalisation and migration and their effects on educational work and students' learning. Theoretical concepts of multiculturalism, democracy and inclusive education are discussed and related to policy and everyday work in school. Particular emphasis is placed on how teachers can meet the needs of a diverse student group with flexible organisation and a variety of teaching methods.

Those who are registered in preschool teacher education study a mandatory course: *Language Stimulation and Literacy* (10 ECTS). Here, the focus is on language stimulation for younger children, including second language learners through books, poems and rhymes. Pre-service teachers learn how to organise an environment which contributes to language stimulation and lays the foundation for literacy and writing.

Two of the five elective courses have some focus on language but are based in the MA programme which is more theoretically oriented than the MEd and MT programmes. The first course is *Language and Literacy – the first steps* (10 ECTS) and focuses on language, language acquisition and literacy of students in preschool and the first years of primary school. The social and cultural aspect of language and literacy in society is discussed as well. During the course, pre-service teachers write a reflective paper, where multilingualism is one of the topics. They prepare a lesson plan for a diverse group in which they need to include multilingual students. The second course is *Language and Reading Difficulties* (10 ECTS) which covers language and reading problems, their causes and manifestations, assessment, and follow-up. Pre-service teachers learn how to support students with purposeful learning and teaching methods, create an encouraging learning environment and provide positive reinforcement. They can choose to focus on multilingualism in assignments regarding language and reading difficulties.

The three remaining courses are all part of the MA programme but are electives for MEd and MT students: *Democracy, Human Rights and Multiculturalism* (10 ECTS), *Ideology and Policy in Inclusive Education* (10 ECTS) and *School Counselling and Interviewing* (10 ECTS). The content of these courses is on global issues such as changes in Icelandic society regarding globalisation and migration and the impact of such changes on education and schools. There is a discussion of concepts and ideas on human rights, social justice, democracy, inclusive school and minority groups, refugees and families. Issues such as multilingualism, translanguaging and mother tongue represent only a small part of this broad content. One of these courses focuses on the different learning needs of individuals and diverse teaching methods, emphasising how the teacher meets the needs of all students.

Taken together, the analysis shows that only one course is mandatory at all levels and to some extent focuses on multilingual students as part of meeting students' diverse needs, multiculturalism, democracy and inclusive school. The two courses that are about language and reading are offered as an elective option, but the focus is mainly on general aspects of language and reading and less on how this relates to multilingual students.

5.1.2 Courses offered at UI

Ten courses for pre-service teachers at the UI met the criteria of including a focus on multicultural or multilingual students. The courses are mandatory for pre-service teachers, depending on the programme or specialisation, but none of the courses are mandatory for all. There is a difference of approach apparent within the courses.

Three courses have a specific focus on working with multilingual students: *Bilingualism and Literacy, Icelandic as a Second Language* and *Teaching Language in the Multicultural Classroom.* These courses are mandatory for the pre-service teachers in the faculty of Subject Teacher Education (STE) who are focusing on teaching Icelandic as a subject or on working with multilingual students. For other pre-service teachers these courses are elective.

Three courses have a specific focus on multiculturalism: *Multicultural Society and Schools – Ideology and Research, Leadership in Inclusive Schools in a Multicultural Society,* and *Religion in a Multicultural Society.* In these, the focus is on culture rather than language and on building knowledge and understanding of the multicultural society from various perspectives, such as that they should "have knowledge, overview and understanding of the ideology and research in the field

of multicultural studies" (from the syllabus *Multicultural Society and Schools – Ideology and Research*). These courses are mostly taught as electives for pre-service teachers; a few study programmes have them as mandatory in the STE faculty.

The remaining four courses have a focus on inclusion, pedagogy and/or special needs. In the course *Learning and Teaching: Supporting Children with Special Needs*, an emphasis is placed on addressing the "most common students' special needs" and this includes the "students learning Icelandic as a second language". This course is mandatory for pre-service teachers in the STE faculty and elective for others. The course *Pedagogy, Diversity and Inclusion* has a focus on participants becoming familiar with main concepts and ideas regarding inclusion and diversity. Another course, *Working in Inclusive Practices*, has a similar focus; however, the aim is to enable participants to strengthen their pedagogical competences in working with diverse groups of students. These two courses are mandatory in a few study programmes but elective in others. The last course is a pedagogy course with a focus on mathematics: *Mathematics for All*. Here the focus is on how teachers can design and adapt a curriculum and teach mathematics to diverse groups of students. Furthermore, the study of teaching and learning in multicultural settings is discussed. This course is elective for pre-service teachers in both the STE and E&P faculties.

The above analysis shows that pre-service teachers can choose from a range of courses. However, very few of them are focused on language learning or how to teach multilingual students. The courses that concentrate on pedagogy and diversity, in some instances, have a special needs focus that links multilingualism/multiculturalism to being a problem rather than a resource to build on.

5.2 Pre-service teachers' experiences

Findings from the focus group interviews with newly graduated teachers revealed their experiences of teacher education and their ideas for improvement. The following sections indicate the themes generated from the data.

5.2.1 Lack of focus on teaching multilingual students

In general, the teachers reported that the courses they took opened their eyes towards diverse cultures and supported them in gaining an understanding of the complexities relating to "all kinds of diversity and cultures". However, most stated that they had no recollection of taking a course that emphasised teaching multilingual learners or offered a focus on pedagogy or teaching methods for working with these students. As Karen (UNAK) said "I can't remember any

course, reading material or assignment where this was the focus". Ester, a pre-school teacher (UI), remembered that in one of the courses she took, "one lecture mentioned this, I looked it up in my course notes".

The teachers stated that they knew about courses on offer that had a focus on multiculturalism, but all mentioned that they had little flexibility of choice. Ester felt that "there is a lack of motivation for students to focus on multiculturalism". Her view was that pre-service teachers need to be encouraged to focus on how to teach this group of students as this is the reality they will face in schools.

5.2.2 The value of practicum in schools

The teachers mentioned that while there was not much emphasis on practical teaching in courses, more knowledge was gained through their practicum in schools. María (UNAK) said: "I took my practicum in a very multicultural school, so really I learned much there; it was a really valuable experience". The same experience was echoed by the other participants. Alma (UI) stated that her knowledge about how to teach multilingual students came from her practicum. She also said that "it was because I was interested in the matter", not that this was required in her studies. In one of the interviews Ester (UI) mentioned the importance of having a choice of diverse types of schools for practicum placement, including schools with high numbers of multicultural and multilingual students. In her case (pre-primary level), she had to obtain special permission to take her practicum in a school located in a neighbourhood with a high immigrant population. In general, the schools in this area were not listed as available choices.

5.2.3 Assignments and optional course choice

In general, the participants reported that their assignments had little emphasis on multilingual students and their needs. UNAK graduates, however, mentioned that when writing lesson plans in some courses, they had to account for students who needed additional support or did not have Icelandic as their mother tongue and explain how they would include support for them in their planning. Alma, a participant from UI, mentioned she thought it important to include awareness of this group of students in all assignments and also during the practicum. However, reflecting on her studies, she did not recall being required to pay special attention to multicultural or multilingual students in her assignments. Ester agreed and said:

> All these years in my pre-primary study there were no assignments on multiculturalism, and that surprised me a lot.

According to the participants, course assignments do not place emphasis on multilingual students or multiculturalism.

5.2.4 Ideas for improvement

When asked what might have been addressed better or was lacking in their studies, Harpa (UNAK), a teacher at the lower secondary level, mentioned that her focus was on natural science and maths. She would have liked to have had more information incorporated in the courses on how she could teach math and natural science to students who are learning Icelandic, in conjunction with the language content. The focus in her study was mostly on learning the subjects per se.

The UNAK students believed that slightly more courses including a focus on multicultural or multilingual students were offered for those preparing to work in pre-school than for those at the compulsory level, as the courses at that level focused on subjects such as math, natural science, etc. Alma, a UI student, mentioned that she would like to have had more room for elective credits in her studies. Teaching multilingual students is of great interest to her, but she had very little flexibility to choose courses relevant to the topic. She and Eva (UNAK) enrolled in teacher education with a BS degree (Bachelor of Science) from another department and thus studied for two years to get a teacher certification (MEd). Both of them emphasised how important it is for pre-service teachers with that background to have access to courses that focus on pedagogy and practical teaching. All of the participants, from both universities, stated that they would have liked to take practical courses focusing on pedagogy and teaching strategies that benefit multilingual students and to receive more information on the kind of materials available to teachers.

6 Discussions and implications

The findings were structured around two focus points: teacher education course syllabi and teachers' experiences. We will now discuss the findings and summarise the main implications.

All the policy documents clearly state that schools in Iceland should emphasise equality and adapt their operation as closely as possible to the situation and needs of the students (Ministry of Education, Science and Culture 2011). The recent draft policy by the Ministry of Education (2020), on the education of children and youths with diverse language and cultural backgrounds takes a very clear stance and emphasises the urgency of responding to the current situation at all levels of the education system, including teacher education.

Both universities offer courses that contribute to pre-service teachers' general knowledge on student diversity in schools and stress the importance of looking at students' education in a globalised, multicultural and plurilingual world (Gay 2002). The courses also offer a solid theoretical base on relevant topics. There is, however, some divergence between the universities as to the number of courses offered; for example, fewer courses are offered at UNAK than UI, which is not unexpected, given the difference in size between the two universities. Another contrast is that the courses at UNAK mostly offer students a theoretical background on concepts such as multiculturalism, multilingualism, democracy, and inclusive schools and how these relate to policies, laws and curricula. There are no separate courses focusing on pedagogy and how to manage everyday work in schools with students with a multilingual background, although there seems to be a certain awareness in some courses.

The general and broad emphasis in the policy documents is thus reflected in the courses offered to students at both universities. In the interviews with the teachers, the same priority is expressed; that is, the courses have opened their eyes towards diverse cultures and helped them gain an understanding of a complex situation relating to multicultural/multilingual education. However, little attention was given to pedagogy or practical teaching methods, most of which they obtained through their practicum in schools. In an interview study with pre-and in-service teachers in Iceland presented in this volume (Guðjónsdóttir et al. 2025 [this volume]), similar findings were identified, that is that a focus on multicultural education in the teacher education programme is lacking, although teacher educators are aware of the necessity of preparing pre- and in-service teachers to teach students with diverse linguistic backgrounds. The changes that need to take place pertaining to strengthening the focus on multicultural and multilingual education in teacher education, depend on the teacher educators' perspectives and the spaces they create in their teaching for multilingualism (Goltsev et al. 2022).

Several courses at the University of Iceland emphasise the pedagogy of how to teach diverse learners; it is interesting to note, however, that the pre-service teachers who are studying subject teaching (other than teaching Icelandic) have fewer courses to choose from. The mandatory course for this group of students is *Learning and Teaching: Supporting Children with Special Needs.* The name of this course indicates that diversity is linked to disability. This seems to go against the ideas of culturally responsive pedagogy requiring educators to design instruction from the perspective that student diversity is a strength rather than a deficit (Kieran & Anderson 2019).

Interpreting the above findings from the perspective of Shulman (1986): propositional knowledge, case knowledge and strategic knowledge, it is apparent that students are mostly offered propositional knowledge. This knowledge is normative and reflects on the norms, values, ideological or philosophical commitments of justice, fairness, equity, and such. There is less focus on Shulman's second and third type of knowledge, that is, case knowledge – how teachers learn about principles of practice through cases and parables – and strategic knowledge, which is the learning that takes place when case knowledge collides with experience in practice (Shulman 2007 in Florian & Rouse 2010: 192). Flockton & Cunningham (2021) have pointed out the need to establish and identify what constitutes good practice when teaching multilingual students and also to establish how preservice (and in-service) teacher training can be developed and improved in relation to developing teachers' teaching skills relating to teaching this group of students.

As summarised above, recent research in Iceland indicates that the school system has not quite managed to meet the educational or social needs of students with diverse language backgrounds (Guðmundsdóttir & Ragnarsdóttir 2013, Rúnarsdóttir & Vilhjalmsson 2015, Þórisdóttir 2018), and teachers lack the professional knowledge and skills to meet the educational needs of this group of students (Gunnþórsdóttir & Ragnarsdóttir 2020). The analysis of the teacher education course syllabi and the interviews with teachers show that there is an opportunity to increase emphasis on culturally and linguistically responsive pedagogy in teacher education, as this approach includes using students' cultural and linguistic resources in their schooling (e.g. Bailey & Marsden 2017).

Our findings indicate that in part we see the same pattern in teacher education as other researchers in the field: teachers are aware of the situation (the challenges) of their students, everyone is "willing to do their best" but teachers lack the practical pedagogy to support multilingual students (Flockton & Cunningham 2021, Gunnþórsdóttir & Ragnarsdóttir 2020, Iversen et al. 2025 [this volume], Óskarsdóttir 2017). This is not solely an Icelandic phenomenon, as research findings from the UK indicate that new teachers there do not feel confident or prepared to work effectively with multilingual students either, and that it is naïve to assume that teachers will be able to "learn on the job" how to successfully support this group of students (Flockton & Cunningham 2021). The lack of relevant courses is more visible in the study programme at the University of Akureyri, as was confirmed in interviews with the teachers. It is thus vital that teacher education institutions design their study programmes and courses with a focus on these needs, and offer courses on how to adapt the curriculum to teaching diverse groups of students in general, not least in individual subjects such as

mathematics, natural and social sciences, that will lay the foundation for their future study.

Although our sample size was limited, our findings indicate that teacher education in Iceland does not sufficiently prepare future teachers to teach multilingual students. This is in line with recent research findings in Iceland (see Guðjónsdóttir et al. (2025 [this volume]), Ministry of Education (2020)). There is room to improve the course catalogue and include mandatory courses on multilingual pedagogy for all pre-service teachers as well as enable pre-service students to choose more courses and thus specialise in multilingual teaching. Adding a focus on this issue in the practicum in the pre-service teacher education would also be valuable. In past decades, there has been a call for emphasis on this specialisation by teachers in Iceland and elsewhere. Due to increased re-location of people in the world, teachers find themselves teaching classrooms where an increasingly larger number of students do not speak the majority language. If teachers worldwide are not supported to work with multilingual students, they and their communities will be deprived of the experience, knowledge and skills of immigrant populations.

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Chapter 3

Study guidance in the mother tongue: Legitimate knowledge and the emergence of a profession in Swedish schools

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In this chapter we problematise the role and the training for assistants in Study Guidance in the Mother Tongue (SGMT) in Swedish schools, through the case of one SGMT assistant. The chapter addresses questions of competence and legitimacy on different scales using the framework of nexus analysis, basing its analysis on national policy documents, syllabi from university courses for SGMT assistants, interviews with the assistant, teachers and principals and observations of classroom and school practices. The findings show that the specific competences mentioned in official documents become visible in the different roles the assistant performs, both in classroom practices and in negotiation with other school staff. However, lack of recognition of his competence leaves him frustrated in the school practice, and creates a position of in-betweenness for the assistant. The contrast between the knowledge the SGMT assistants gained through academic courses, and the attitudes of teachers and principals reveals the need to include knowledge about SGMT in teacher education, to create equitable education and understanding of SGMT across school contexts.

1 Introduction

The focus of this chapter is the role of and training for assistants in Study Guidance in the Mother Tongue (SGMT, *studiehandledning på modersmålet*) in Swedish schools, and the education these assistants are offered in relation to teacher

Jenny Rosén & Åsa Wedin. 2025. Study guidance in the mother tongue: Legitimate knowledge and the emergence of a profession in Swedish schools. In Anne Reath Warren, Jonas Yassin Iversen & Boglárka Straszer (eds.), *Teacher education for working in linguistically diverse classrooms: Nordic perspectives*, 55–76. Berlin: Language Science Press. DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.15280897


education in general. Sweden has provided support for multilingual students since the 1970s, mainly through mother tongue education (Ganuza & Hyltenstam 2020). Besides mother tongue education, students that need support in a language other than Swedish to achieve the goals of various school subjects should be offered such support by an assistant, through study guidance in their so-called "mother tongue" or their strongest language (Swedish Ministry of Education 2010 chapter 3, 12i§). Newcomers in lower-secondary school should be provided with SGMT unless it is clearly unnecessary (Swedish Ministry of Education 2010 chapter 3 12i§, Swedish Ministry of Education 2011 chapter 5 4§). According to the Swedish National Agency of Education, SGMT includes not only subject teaching through the mother tongue but also support regarding language awareness, contrastive aspects between Swedish and the mother tongue as well as intercultural perspectives on school subjects (SNAE, Swedish National Agency of Education 2015).

The importance of SGMT for the success of newcomers in school has been emphasised by the School Inspectorate (Swedish School Inspectorate 2017) and a governmental inquiry (Swedish Ministry of Education 2019). Previous studies (Rosén et al. 2019, 2020, St John 2021) have illustrated the complex role of SGMT assistants in relation to teachers, as well as the multilingual and multimodal character of the tuition. In a study of SGMT in compulsory schools, Reath Warren (2017) characterises SGMT as a multilingual practice, functioning to raise awareness of lexical, conceptual, metalinguistic, task-oriented and sociocultural issues. In an action research project, St John (2021) studied the collaboration between teachers and SGMT assistants in municipal adult education in Swedish Tuition for Immigrants (SFI). The study showed that the SGMT assistants supported communication between the students and the teachers, making it possible for the teachers to see if their students had understood the lesson content. This in turn allowed teachers to adjust their feedback and teaching to the needs of the students. Moreover, the SGMT assistants could present the content and relate it to contexts that were familiar to students, making it more relevant and comprehensible. Thus, the assistants could be described as intermediaries that move between teachers and students and provide "strategic multilingual, adaptive, inclusive and pedagogical assistance" (St John 2021: 230).

The role of SGMT assistants is unique to the Swedish school system, even though there are similarities to the role of "bilingual assistants" in Norway. In a study in the Norwegian context, Eek (2021) has explored the use of bilingual assistants in second language tuition for adult migrants. Through observations and interviews, Eek (2021) investigated the significance of these assistants for adult students' investment in second language learning. Her study shows how

the bilingual assistants enable the students to participate more actively in the classroom, and how important they are for students' confidence, understanding and recognition. The degree to which SGMT assistants themselves actively participate during lessons varies. In a study of the Language Introduction Programme in Upper Secondary School, for multilingual students aged 16–19 who have not yet reached a sufficient level of Swedish for mainstream programmes, Wedin (2022) showed that SGMT assistants played a less passive role in classrooms than assistants examined in other studies (e.g. Rosén et al. 2019, 2020). In Wedin's study, SGMT assistants interacted actively with students in subjects such as Natural Sciences, Social Sciences and Mathematics.

Even though SGMT has been offered in Swedish schools for more than forty years, education for these assistants has not been incorporated into teacher education. Although there are SGMT assistants that have teaching qualifications, often from countries other than Sweden, there is no formal requirement for teacher education to be an SGMT assistant. Since the qualifications to work as an SGMT assistant are not officially outlined, there is considerable variation in terms of subject knowledge and language skills among them, and SGMT assistants need to collaborate with subject teachers in order to support the students. The vagueness of the description and understanding of the skills and professional role of SGMT assistants underpins the aim of this chapter, which is to examine and problematise SGMT in Swedish schools with a focus on how legitimate knowledge for assistants is constructed in the school context, in policy documents and in courses offered at universities. Through a study of SGMT at one upper secondary school, we address questions of competence and legitimacy on different scales using the framework of nexus analysis (Scollon & Scollon 2004, 2007). The following research questions have guided the study:

- How is the role and competence of one SGMT assistant negotiated in relation to teachers and students in the classrooms?
- What knowledge is highlighted as central for the profession of SGMT assistant in policy documents, including course syllabi?

Thus, from the nexus analysis perspective, the first research question examines the historical body of the SGMT assistant and the interaction order in the classroom, while the second research question focuses on the discourses in place. The framework of nexus analysis is presented in Section 2.

2 Nexus analysis

Nexus analysis has developed from ethnography and discourse analysis, and includes both historical and ethnographic dimensions (Hult 2010, Pietikäinen et al. 2011). The main concern in the analysis is the complex relationship between discourse and action, including both macro and micro perspectives (Lane 2014), which is relevant for this study. In their pioneering work, Scollon & Scollon (2004) emphasise how social action, as the unit of analysis, occurs in the intersection between the discourses in place, the participants' historical bodies, and the interaction order produced (see below for a description of the terms). Nexus analysis

> entails not only a close, empirical examination of the moment under analysis but also a historical analysis of […] trajectories or discourse cycles that intersect [at a given] moment as well as an analysis of the anticipations that are opened up by the social actions taken in that moment. (Scollon & Scollon 2004: 8)

Thus, the analysis includes the intersection of wider socio-historical discourses and a specific social action. A social action that is repeated is understood as a social practice. Social actions occur at the intersection between what in nexus analysis is framed as i) the discourses in place which enable that action or are used by the participants as meditational means in their action, ii) the historical bodies of the participants in action and the institutional settings focused on, and iii) the interaction order which they mutually produce (Scollon & Scollon 2004).

The concept of historical bodies comes from the work of Nishida (1998) and is understood as the collectively constituted experiences of individuals as well as institutions across time that become a "natural" part of them. The concept has similarities to Bourdieu's concept of habitus (Bourdieu 1984). Interaction order can be described as ways in which individuals behave and use language as they form relationships with others in social interaction. Thus, nexus analysis does not focus on language per se but on how languages and other semiotic and material resources are used to mediate action (Lane 2014).

3 Material and method

To include both micro and macro perspectives in the analysis, the empirical material used consists of i) national policy documents about SGMT produced by the Swedish National Agency of Education, ii) syllabi from university courses for

SGMT assistants from three universities (University A, B and C), iii) one interview with an SGMT assistant and extracts from interviews with 13 teachers and four principals at the same school, and iv) video-recorded observations from 23 lessons in various school subjects during which the SGMT assistant participated. We particularly draw on transcripts from a video recording and field notes taken during one of these lessons, in an upper secondary school.

The university courses for the SGMT assistants were offered as independent courses, not included in regular teacher education. Courses for SGMT assistants have been provided by a number of universities as part of an initiative by the Swedish government to increase competence in schools regarding the education of newcomers (Swedish Ministry of Education 2019). Courses for SGMT assistants are also provided by other educational institutions. However, since this chapter focuses on SGMT in relation to teacher education, which in Sweden is conducted in universities, those courses have not been included. Since there are no general guidelines for who can be employed as an SGMT assistant, they are, on a group level, extremely heterogeneous. The specific case examined in this chapter cannot thus be understood as representative.

As nexus analysis brings into focus relations between discourse and action as well as macro and micro perspectives, the analysis in this study started from ethnographic field work in one school and the work of one SGMT assistant, given the pseudonym Barzan. He was selected by the second author as a participant in a two-year ethnographic study, as he was the only SGMT assistant who was employed full-time at the Language Introduction Programme (LIP) at the upper secondary school under investigation. Students who arrive in Sweden at age 16–19 are placed in the LIP to learn Swedish and to complement earlier studies in various subjects. One semi-structured interview (35 minutes long) was conducted with Barzan at the end of the study, and several informal occasions of small talk between him and the second author took place earlier, during the observations at the school. Barzan mastered languages that many of the students understood and thus he worked with multiple students in various subjects during the two-year ethnographic study. Although the interview with Barzan is the main interview used in the analysis in this study, extracts from other interviews with 17 teachers and four principals (conducted during the ethnographic study) have also informed the analysis. The lesson observed was in social sciences. It was one hour long and students were preparing for an upcoming test by reading the textbook and answering questions in an exercise book. Video recordings were made of individuals and pairs of students working on this task and fieldnotes were written. The transcript of the classroom video recording was conducted in collaboration with a colleague who is a researcher in Arabic. The translations (from Arabic

and Swedish, the only languages used in this lesson, to English) were done by the authors.

In line with nexus analysis, the first step in the analysis was inductive and focused on the research questions. We identified central practices in SGMT that showed how competence and legitimacy were negotiated in the classroom (RQ 1) by listening to the recordings of the lesson observations and reading and categorising the fieldnotes and the transcripts of the interviews. After the central practices were identified, the analysis then focused on the interaction order, bringing into focus relations between Barzan, students and teachers. The analysis of the interaction order was based on an earlier analysis of the observed lessons where Barzan had been a participant (see Wedin & Aho 2022).

Secondly, we focused the analysis on how Barzan positioned himself as an SGMT assistant in the school, including his historical body. In the analysis we looked at how he talked about his experiences of language and education. We particularly focused on his talk about his role as an SGMT assistant and then we compared it to teachers' and principals' talk.

In the third step of the analysis, we looked into the discourses made relevant in those actions. Thus, national policy documents and courses for SGMT assistants were included in the analysis. The analysis of the policy documents focused on the content, and was thus guided by content analysis (Swedish Ministry of Education 1992, 1993), identifying which competences and what knowledge SGMT assistants were expected to develop through the courses, or were expected to perform, as expressed in policy documents.

Ethical issues were considered throughout the study and data are presented in ways that avoid recognition of the participants and the specific school. Persons involved were informed about the aims of the project and gave their consent to participate. All data have been stored in accordance with the project's data management plan.

4 Findings

Through the framework of nexus analysis, we examined the professional role and work of one SGMT assistant, Barzan, in order to critically discuss the role of SGMT in Swedish schools. We analysed the action by focusing on the interaction order, historical body and discourses in place. This section presents our results, and begins by zooming in on the interaction order in the classrooms where Barzan was working as an SGMT assistant. Following this, we address questions of position and the historical body of the SGMT assistant. We then address discourses in place by focusing on national policy for SGMT and university courses

targeting SGMT assistants. Finally, we problematise the skills and professional role of SMGT assistants in relation to the Swedish school and teacher education.

4.1 Interaction order

Starting from the social actions of SGMT assistants, students and teachers, we focus on the interaction order by examining how the role of the SGMT assistant was negotiated in the classrooms at the school and how Barzan was positioned and positioned himself as he formed relationships in social interactions in classrooms.

Two interactional patterns dominated in the observed classrooms where Barzan was present (see Wedin & Aho 2022); teachers led the whole-class instruction, what is commonly called "chalk and talk", and students worked with exercises. Barzan was only included in the second type of lessons and spent his time in class walking around helping students who asked for help, mainly those who were newcomers to Swedish schools, and with whom he shared languages other than Swedish. In lessons in Natural Sciences and Mathematics, students were sometimes divided up, so that Barzan could teach those who spoke Arabic, Kurdish and Dari in a separate classroom, while the others stayed with the teacher. During other lessons, students worked on their own or in groups, and Barzan interacted with more students, not only those he shared a language with. Barzan's role was to support students who asked for help, and he was never observed interrupting the teacher or taking initiative for the teaching of the class.

Several examples of how Barzan supported students were during the observed lesson in Social Sciences when he spent most of the time with Maryam, who had recently migrated to Sweden and knew Arabic. Their interaction, during which Maryam worked with exercises on a text in the textbook, was video-recorded. She first read the text aloud to Barzan, then the questions one at a time, looked for the answer in the text, discussed it with him and then wrote the answers.

In the interaction, Barzan and Maryam negotiated roles and positioned themselves. In the following, it will be shown how Barzan positioned himself and was positioned as 1. the one who knows Swedish, who translates and explains, taking on a role that may be denoted as an extended interpreter role (Tables 1 and 2); 2. the "Master" who supports learning by encouraging, instructing, giving advice, and who shows and is shown respect (Tables 3 and 4); and 3. the one who is included in "we second language learners of Swedish" who sometimes make mistakes and who may be nervous before a test (Table 5).

The first position as an extended interpreter, who supports the students by translating and explaining, is illustrated in the following excerpt. (All transcripts

are adapted to Standard Arabic. The original transcript is to the left and the translation to the right. In the translation, **bold** is used for words said in Swedish and *italics* for what is said in English.)

Table 1: Excerpt 1

M: (läser) hyreshus?	M: (reads) **apartment block?**
B: بَيت ايجار hyreshus	B: Apartment block **apartment block**
(…)	(…)
M (läser) hittills?	M: (reads) t**o date?**
B: يعني لحد الآن	B: It means to date
M: Jaha, ok, كلمة جديدة	M: **Oh**, **I see**, a new word.

The excerpt in Table 1 shows how Maryam turns to Barzan, asking for his explanation of the words *hyreshus* 'apartment block' and *hittills* 'to date' and Barzan translates. In the first case he also repeats the Swedish word to support the student. Support with pronunciation becomes even more explicit in the excerpt in Table 2.

Table 2: Excerpt 2

M: (läser) hjälpa (skrattar lite)	M: (reads) **help** (laughs a little)
B: أي صح	B: Correct

In Table 2, Maryam indicates that she feels insecure about the pronunciation of *hjälpa* 'help', (pronounced initially with [j]) by laughing a little and Barzan confirms that her pronunciation is correct.

The second role, as the Master, أستاذ (*Ustaaz*) or teacher, who supports in various ways, appears in the excerpts in Tables 3 and 4. *Ustaaz* is a title used in apprenticeship contexts, when learners address their instructor (Master), and is also used by Maryam when addressing Barzan.

Maryam excuses herself for making a mistake in her writing and Barzan takes the opportunity to point out the importance of starting with a capital letter, something that is not used in Arabic script. In this classroom the teacher was never observed being addressed by a title such as "Teacher" or "Sir". Thus, the way Maryam addresses Barzan by أستاذ, *Ustaaz*, is notable, positioning him as the

Table 3: Excerpt 3

M: لي زمان ما كتبت	M: I haven't written for a long time
B: أول شي، بأي شي تبدينه	B: First of all, when you begin
M: أي بلحرف الكبير بس أنا خربتت أستاذ	M: Yes, with capital letter, but I got confused, *Ustaaz*
B: هونة هم، حرف كبير، تصير لك تعويض بلامتحان	B: Also here, capital letter, so that you won't have to repeat the test
M: لا. بلامتحان أنا بدقدق	M: No, in the test then I'm meticulous
B: تمام	B: Good

Master who knows and who has a specific role of supporting learning. Barzan, as the Master, supports Maryam by encouraging her and giving her advice before a test. Maryam continues to excuse herself for the mistakes, addressing him by أستا, *Ustaaz*, and when he points out another instance of this in the text, she stresses that she will be more careful in the test situation, to which Barzan responds:

تمام, Good.

In apprenticeship relations, the role of the Master and the learner is characterised by mutual respectful behavior, something that is apparent in Extract 4,

Table 4: Excerpt 4

M: Det är jag	M: **That's me**
B: ودي قلك، انتي هوية شايفة نفسك لا شي بالعكس انتي كلش	B: I'll tell you, you see yourselves as worthless but on the contrary so
M: أنا؟	M: Me?
B: كلش	B: Contrary …
M: Aha, jag fattar	M: **Oh, I got it**
B: أكتر من اللازم ذكية ، انا تعجبت لما قالت لي أنك ماخذة betyg C ما كنت بتوقع	B: so you are really clever, I was surprised when I heard that you got **grade C** I didn't expect that.
M: قصدك…	M: You mean …
B: Betyg C wow	B: **Grade C** *wow*

where Maryam is reading about a student who does not do very well in school, and comments.

Barzan responds to Maryam's devaluing of herself by encouraging her and saying that her performance is better than what he had expected. He ends the interaction with the comment "wow". In Barzan's role of *Ustaaz*, the Master, in Table 4 he shows respect for his apprentice, Maryam.

In the third role, Maryam and Barzan construct a "we", learners of Swedish, who sometimes make mistakes and who may be nervous before a test. In Tables 5 and 6, Barzan positions himself as a learner of Swedish, taking on the role of a student, who struggles and sometimes makes mistakes.

Table 5: Excerpt 5

M: أستاذ أنا بتكون عم بقرأ هيك لحالي بقرأ كثير منيح بس بلامتحان بلسويدي بلامتحان كان (skakar händerna)	M: Ustaaz, when I read like this on my own I read very well but in the test, in the Swedish test, it was (shakes both her hands)
B: أي أنا كان عندي هَيّ المشكلة من أقرأ من أقرأ ما بقدر أركز بس إذا أقرأ بقلبي هون لا أفتهم	B: Yes, I had the same problem, when I read, when I read out loud I can't concentrate but when I read silently to myself I understand
M: لا أنا بقدر أركز men om jag har prov, katastrof	M: No, I can concentrate **but when I have a test**, **catastrophe**.

When Maryam refers to problems in a test situation, Barzan responds by saying that he had similar problems. The use of the past tense ("had" "read") implies that this was earlier, positioning him as a former student. Here, however, Maryam addresses the problem of being nervous, pointing out that she can concentrate but is nervous during tests, while Barzan described a lack of concentration when reading out loud. Thus, this is an example of how Barzan positions himself as one among Swedish learners. He sits down next to Maryam and describes that he also experienced the hardship of learning in a second language. In Table 6, they both admit having made the same mistake when reading in the textbook. Barzan points to the word *fritid* 'spare time' and and says that he read it as the similar word *framtid* 'future'. This action by Barzan can be seen as face-saving for Maryam, by showing that we all make mistakes, and that it is okay to do so when learning.

Table 6: Excerpt 6

B: Fritiden أنا قريتليك فرامتيدن	B: **Spare time** I read 'future' to you
M: وأنا كمان،	M: Oh, me too

In common with Table 5, Table 6 shows Barzan sympathising with Maryam in the hardship of learning a second language and admitting that he too sometimes makes mistakes.

In the excerpts in Tables 1–5, analysis of the interaction order in the classroom shows how Barzan positions himself and is positioned as SGMT assistant by his student, thus contributing to our understanding of the roles that the SGMT assistant assumes in this context.

4.2 Historical bodies of the participants and the institutional setting

In this section, an analysis of the historical bodies will be presented. The analysis is based on the collectively constituted experiences of individuals as well as institutions across time, expressed in interviews and talks with Barzan, teachers and principals, as well as observations of their practices.

In interviews, Barzan described his educational and linguistic background. His parents were Kurds from Iraq who migrated to Iran where Barzan and his siblings were born. The dominant language in the family was the Kurdish variety Sorani, while the language he used with his friends in the neighborhood was Arabic. Farsi was the medium of instruction in the school. At the age of 20, Barzan returned to Iraq with his parents, and he studied general Physics at the university, where Arabic was the dominant language. Thus, he had his first twelve years of schooling in Farsi but took his academic degree in Arabic.

As an immigrant in Sweden, he studied Swedish as a second language and he has children in pre-school and primary school. Thus, Barzan shared the experience of being a second language student, in his case in Iran, Iraq and Sweden, with the students in the LIP. He had also studied a university course to prepare for being a SGMT assistant (7.5 ECTS), similar to those presented in Section 4.3, "Discourses in place". Thus, his main competences in relation to those competences outlined in national policy documents as important for SGMT assistants (Swedish National Agency of Education 2015) are linguistic competence in Swedish, Farsi, Arabic and Sorani and academic competence from his education in Iraq and Iran including general subject knowledge; specifically in Natural Sciences and Mathematics. He also has experience of the Swedish education system

as a parent, a student in Swedish as a second language, as a university student, studying a course for SGMT assistants, and from his work as a SGMT assistant in secondary school. From observations, it is also clear that he has developed knowledge about his role, students' needs, teachers' varied understanding of his role and about his place in the organisation, gained through his experience as an SGMT assistant,

Teachers who worked in the LIP at this particular school had varying qualifications and competences. All teachers who were observed (14) had a teacher's degree, and eight of them were qualified teachers in Swedish as a second language with experience of teaching in multilingual classrooms. During observations and interviews, both principals and many of the teachers expressed uncertainty concerning the role of SGMT assistants in the school. One principal referred to the assistants as "mother tongue teachers" and another said that she was happy to have hired "a teacher in Tigrinya", referring to another SGMT assistant. When a third principal talked about SGMT assistants she referred to them as "reception teachers I may say Mother Tongue Tuition teachers. This is what they're called on paper but here they also work with a reception group, those who are most new with us". This statement refers to the fact that Barzan had come to an agreement with the principal that he took the role as a teacher in Mathematics for a group of recently arrived students, and that this was also the case with some of the other SGMT assistants, despite the fact that they lacked teacher education in the subject. Thus, it seems that from the perspective of the principal, competence in a language shared with the students was perceived as more important than Swedish language skills, pedagogical knowledge or subject knowledge. Both principals and teachers, however, also expressed ambiguous views of students' linguistic competence. On one hand they were aware of the importance of acknowledging students' varied linguistic repertoires in the classrooms, but on the other hand, some of them expressed doubts about the benefit of multilingual practices in classrooms. For example, while one of the three principals stressed that it was important for students to be able to use their other languages and to explain things to each other using languages they shared, the two other expressed skepticism towards multilingualism. One claimed that students should be encouraged to use only Swedish and the other argued: "They have to start talking Swedish with each other" [otherwise] "they easily only resort to Somali". While all the teachers of Swedish as a second language expressed positive views towards the use of various linguistic resources among students, some of the other teachers explicitly stated that they preferred that students use only Swedish in the classroom, such as in Table 7, from an interview with one teacher (T) and the interviewer (I) (emphasis added).

Table 7: Excerpt 7

I: Så du menar att det är mer ett problem i och med att dom inte pratar svenska?	I: So you mean that it is more of a problem when they don't talk Swedish
L: Kaos. Det är som, ja det är som ett kaotisk ja. Man kan, alltså man kan använda ordet mångfald bara för att, va heter det skönmåla det. [skratt] Nej det är sådär mångfald man använder positiv.	T: Chaos. It's like, yes it's like chaotic yes. You can, that is you can use the word diversity to, you know, give it a positive twist [laughs] No it's like diversity, you use that to describe something in positive terms.
I: Så du menar att det är ett språkligt kaos?	I: So, do you mean that it is linguistically chaotic?
L: Alltså jo, jo vilken, jo det är språkligt kaos eftersom alltså vi som skola vi vill att dom ska lära sej svenska och borde ge och ha nåt, borde ge verktyg för att komma på ett annat sätt att dom kan tala svenska, i den sociala miljön.	T: I mean, yes, yes what, yes it's linguistically chaotic because, that is, we as a school we want them to learn Swedish and ought to give and have something, ought to give them tools to find another way for them to talk Swedish, in the social environment.

This teacher in Social Sciences expressed a negative view of students' use of other languages, which he compares to chaos and also expresses a wish for a school policy stating that Swedish should be used.

Explicit collaboration between Barzan and the teachers was only observed during classes in Swedish as a second language and not in other subjects. During the interview, Barzan said that in the course for SGMT assistants that he had attended, he had received a guide planning collaboration with teachers, which he then had presented for the teachers at a team meeting. However, only one teacher had accepted the guide and only in relation to one student. As a result of the course for SGMT assistants, Barzan also took the initiative to create bilingual wordlists for students in various subjects. He collaborated with other SGMT assistants and mother tongue tuition teachers. Moreover, to help as many of the students as possible, he found other people in and outside school that spoke the same languages he did and also Somali and Tigrinya. However, he said that only some of the teachers had shown interest. Barzan's conclusion from this experience was that the teachers saw him (and other SGMT assistants) as interfering with their work rather than as supporting colleagues. He claimed that when the

School Inspectorate had investigated the school, one thing that they had questioned was the role of SGMT assistants. Thus, he had suggested to one principal that someone should be appointed to take responsibility for SGMT in the LIP programme.

Barzan expressed his understanding of power relations at the school claiming that teachers are the ones who decide, and not SGMT assistants or principals. He said that during meetings with the principal, he had suggested changes to support the students' subject learning, but that this advice had been rejected by teachers, who did not want to collaborate with SGMT assistants. However, this was not the case for all teachers; Barzan had also experienced more successful collaborations. Regardless, his overall impression was that he was treated as inferior to the teachers, who decided if, when and how collaboration could take place.

Through the historical body of Barzan, represented in this section through his talk and classroom practices, a picture emerges of how his competence and role are negotiated. Barzan's linguistic competence, university studies in Physics and his own experiences of being a multilingual student are not valued in the school. Rather, he is positioned as inferior by some teachers. His perceptions, firstly of not being given agency in relation to teachers and secondly, that it is teachers and not him who are the ones who have the power to decide, shows that he does not feel heard, not even when he presents material related to the university course that he took part in. Most teachers did not acknowledge his experiences or knowledge. Thus, his inferior position in relation to the teachers stands in stark contrast to the mutual respect expressed between him and Maryam in the previous Section 4.1. The professional role negotiated in the interaction order with the students collides with how Barzan's historical body is positioned and negotiated in relation to teachers, placing the SGMT assistant in an ambivalent position.

4.3 Discourses in place

In this section we present our analysis concerning research question 2 that asks what knowledge is expressed as central for the profession of the SGMT assistant in policy documents and course syllabi. As mentioned earlier, Barzan had participated in a university course for SGMT assistants which had provided him with ideas about how to collaborate with the teachers at the school he worked at.

University courses as well as national policy documents produced discourses in place that enabled certain practices, presented in previous sections. While teacher education is regulated by the Swedish Higher Education Act (Swedish

Ministry of Education 1992) and the Higher Education Ordinance (Swedish Ministry of Education 1993), there are no formal educational requirements for assistants in SGMT. It is the principal at each school who decides who can be employed as an SGMT assistant. Hence, in order to analyse the discourses in place in the practice of SGMT, we include the policy material produced by the Swedish National Agency of Education and syllabi from three universities that offer courses aimed at SGMT assistants. The Swedish National Agency of Education has highlighted that the following aspects have a positive impact on SGMT (Swedish National Agency of Education 2015: 32–33):

- The SGMT assistant has good competence in the mother tongue and the school system in the country where the student previously attended school.
- The SGMT assistant has well-developed linguistic awareness, including subject language both in Swedish and the mother tongue and can use that in order to plan how to use the languages to support the student.
- The SGMT assistant is knowledgeable in pedagogy, including pedagogical awareness and the ability to use different methods. Moreover, the assistant has knowledge about subject teaching in the Swedish school and can evaluate how to support the student.
- The SGMT assistant is familiar with the Swedish school system and the legal regulations for the type of school that she/he is working in. The assistant needs to be knowledgeable about the national curriculum, syllabi and individual support activities.
- The SGMT assistant is focused on and familiar with the goals and requirements that the students need to achieve. The assistant can plan the guidance with the student and the subject teacher in relation to the goals and requirements and be familiar with the prior knowledge needed to comprehend the subject.
- The SGMT assistant is familiar with the school subjects that she/he is guiding the students in.

The Swedish National Agency of Education argues that these six aspects in relation to the competence of SGMT assistant are important in order for the support to be successful, but also that many schools face challenges in finding assistants that comply with the recommended competences (SNAE, Swedish National

Agency of Education 2015). The competence of SGMT assistants can be described in terms of a) linguistic competence in the two languages (including linguistic awareness) and competence in b) the Swedish school system and policy, c) the school system in other countries from where the students have migrated, d) subject knowledge, and e) pedagogy.

During the last decade, various courses have been developed to educate SGMT assistants, courses that commonly cover about 7.5 ECTS. For this study we have included courses from three universities. Two courses are oriented towards SGMT in general and are both worth 7.5 ECTS (University B and C), whereas one is oriented towards SGMT and mother tongue teaching and is worth 15 ECTS (University A). The analysis of the syllabi shows that students in these courses are expected to achieve knowledge in several fields, including linguistic knowledge and awareness, pedagogy, intercultural aspects, Swedish school system and policy and collaboration.

Linguistic knowledge and awareness are mentioned in all syllabi but mainly emphasised in syllabi oriented towards subject language. None of the syllabi mention general competence in either Swedish or the other languages in which the assistant is expected to work. In one syllabus, students are expected to identify and use different types of written expressions, and during the course they are given the opportunity to practice different types of writing (Uni A). In all syllabi, the language development of students is mentioned, stating learning outcomes such as knowledge about theories and research in multilingualism and their importance for language and learning among multilingual students and newcomers (Uni B), parallel development of language and knowledge and relations between everyday language, academic language and subject language (Uni C). Moreover, the syllabus at Uni A includes learning outcomes related to working with texts across subjects, differences between oral and written texts and text genres in different subjects.

Knowledge about pedagogy is included in the learning outcomes of all syllabi. Students are expected to plan and discuss successful learning situations and environments for their students' language development (Uni A), analyse pedagogical choices in their own practices in relation to the theoretical framework of the course and their students' learning abilities (Uni B), and describe how digital tools can be integrated into the pedagogical practices (Uni B and C). Moreover, students should discuss the pedagogical approaches used in SGMT and their role as an assistant and describe pedagogical models and approaches (Uni C).

Intercultural competence or an intercultural approach is mentioned in two of the syllabi, one stating that:

> students should be able to account for central aspects of the school's values and views of knowledge and to discuss these from the point of intercultural competence. (Uni B)

Similarly, the learning outcomes in the syllabus for Uni C are about describing and discussing an inclusive and intercultural approach in school in general and in SGMT specifically.

In regard to the Swedish school system and policy, two syllabi include learning outcomes where students are expected to account for basic policy and regulations in the Swedish school system and the fundamental values and tasks of the school (Uni B and C). Finally, two syllabi include learning outcomes where students should discuss successful forms of cooperation between SGMT assistants and teachers (Uni B and C).

Comparing the six aspects formulated by the Swedish National Agency of Education and the learning outcomes and content in the three syllabi, there are similarities and also differences in what is constructed as legitimate knowledge for SGMT assistants. The linguistic competence of the assistants in Swedish or the language/languages that they are expected to give support in are not mentioned in the syllabi. Language competence, including the ability to mediate and move between languages, is thus either expected to be something that assistants already have, or it is not considered important. The "in-betweenness" in regard to interculturality is mentioned in two syllabi but then mainly in terms of approaching the values and goals in the Swedish curriculum rather than as an aspect of the instruction in the different subjects. To sum up the analysis of discourses in place: even though there is a lack of a general teacher education for SGMT assistants, the national policy documents as well as the syllabi of the university courses analysed show the diverse competences needed to perform the work successfully. Thus, the course material as well as national policy documents became relevant for and were used by Barzan to claim his position in the school in relation to the principal, as apparent through interaction order and historical bodies.

5 Discussion and conclusions

The aim of this chapter was to examine and problematise the social action of SGMT assistants by focusing on the construction of legitimate knowledge. The chosen example is from an upper secondary school and some aspects may thus not be valid for primary school, lower secondary school, or adult education which have other types of organisation. Through nexus analysis, here with Barzan in focus, the complex and ambiguous role of SGMT assistants, highlighted

also by Rosén et al. (2019, 2020), Reath Warren (2017) and St John (2021), becomes apparent. The analysis of discourses in place shows that although the SGMT assistants in most cases lack a formal teacher degree, eligibility criteria for the job include advanced language skills (Swedish and the language of SGMT), pedagogy, subject knowledge and teaching, interculturality as well as knowledge about the Swedish school system and policy. These diverse and advanced competences also become visible through the different roles Barzan takes on in the classroom in relation to the students and in his reported conversations with teachers and principals. However, in relation to the teachers in the school, Barzan is mainly expected to translate with minor impact on the content and the instruction. He expresses feelings of inferiority and lack of agency in relation to teachers. Despite his several attempts to develop collaboration, using tools that he had developed based on the university course on SGMT that he took, few teachers showed interest or engagement. Barzan perceives that most teachers do not acknowledge his competence except that as an interpreter in the classroom, something that left him feeling frustrated, and that he was not able to support students in an effective way. At the same time, however, Barzan was also expected to take on the responsibility as a teacher for the students during certain classes.

The in-betweenness of the role of SGMT assistant (St John 2021) was expressed in some of the course syllabi in relation to interculturality. This in-betweenness also became visible through the historical bodies and interaction order in the classroom. The difference between Barzan's perception of how he was positioned by teachers and how he was positioned and positioned himself in relation to Maryam shows how the role and legitimate knowledge of the SGMT assistants are intertwined and contextual in the social practices. Although Barzan is positioned as valuable and knowledgeable both in policy and by the principals, this had only a minor impact on his role in the classroom and in his relationships with the teachers. Thus, Barzan had few opportunities to actually use the knowledge and competences he developed in the university course on SGMT. Competence and expected competence are related to this variation in roles, where Maryam positions him as knowledgeable while many teachers position him as mainly a translator. Also, the principal's decision to position him as teacher based on his linguistic competence to some extent makes his lack of teacher education invisible, putting linguistic competence in focus.

The role of principals becomes clear here, both in terms of giving the SGMT assistants at the school clear instructions regarding the expected outcomes of their work and also creating a framework for collaboration between teachers

and SGMT assistants. Although Barzan talks about attempts made by the principal to improve the support through SGMT at the school, these attempts have not resulted in any real change. The lack of knowledge among principals and teachers about the function and role of SGMT at this specific school and also in Swedish schools in general (Wedin & Rosén 2022) means that there is a two-fold risk. On the one hand SGMT assistants may be given responsibility for teaching, without having the necessary competence, while on the other hand they may be perceived as lacking competence and thus become marginalised at the school. The lack of a clear policy in regard to SGMT assistants' competence and professional role in the Swedish school creates a situation of uncertainty and ambivalence for both the assistants and teachers as well as students. Thus, the conditions for SGMT may differ between schools, and students are not provided with equal possibilities; a problem also raised by the Swedish School Inspectorate (2017). Furthermore, the uncertainty may result in the work of SGMT assistants becoming invisible in the school or that SGMT assistants are left with the responsibility of newcomers without the support from qualified subject teachers. Newcomers, such as those in the LIP, are often under a lot of pressure to complete their studies in order to be able to continue in the education system. SGMT assistants can play a key role in creating a successful learning environment for these students, but this requires structured collaboration with teachers, building on a shared responsibility for the students. In order to enable a successful collaboration, the asymmetric relations between teachers and SGMT assistants needs to be addressed.

This study highlights the importance of teacher education for preparing preservice teachers to work with newcomers as well as with second language learners more generally. Since newcomers have the right to SGMT, teachers need to be prepared to collaborate with SGMT assistants and to understand their different roles and responsibilities. As has been shown by Hermansson et al. (2022) and Wedin & Rosén (2022), education in Sweden for teachers and principals does not prepare them to support newcomers or second language learners. The discontinuity between documents and policies on an official level and attitudes and practices on classroom levels that these earlier studies showed are reflected in the results of this study as well. Here, the lack of alignment between the course given to SGMT assistants and the attitudes of teachers and principals reveals a need for consistency through all teacher education to create conditions for equitable education for students who are newcomers and more generally for multilingual students.

Acknowledgements

We would like to express our thanks to Lovisa Berg who transcribed the Arabic dialogue, and helped us with the interpretation of the interaction between Barzan and Maryam. The study of Barzan was part of the research project *Recently arrived students in Swedish upper secondary school: A multidisciplinary study on language development, disciplinary literacy and social inclusion* (2018–2021), which was financed by the Swedish Research Council, grant number 2017-03566.

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Chapter 4

Preparing pre- and in-service teachers in Iceland to work in multilingual classrooms

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Increased immigration in Iceland has led to growing ethnic, linguistic and religious diversity among students. This diversity presents challenges for teachers and teacher educators. The aim of this study was to deepen understandings of teacher educators' perceptions of preparing pre- and in-service teachers for working in linguistically diverse classrooms. The study was carried out by four teacher educators at the University of Iceland. Twenty-eight participants (teacher educators and colleagues of the researchers) were interviewed in 13 focus groups. Teacher educators say that while they do not always place emphasis on theories of multicultural or multilingual education, they attempt to model effective teaching practices and provide pre- and in-service teachers with opportunities to broaden their experience and understanding of working with diverse student groups. These findings can help teacher educators understand how diversity in the student population impacts on teacher education, and shed light on needs in teacher education regarding work in linguistically diverse contexts.

1 Introduction

One of the major challenges for teachers in modern times is the continuous search for pedagogy and teaching approaches to meet the growing diversity within schools. Increasing rates of immigration to Iceland, especially in the last 20 years, is leading to a growing population of students with different ethnic, linguistic, and religious backgrounds. In 1997, 0.8% of compulsory school students

Hafdís Guðjónsdóttir, Jónína Vala Kristinsdóttir, Gunnhildur Óskarsdóttir & Samúel Lefever. 2025. Preparing pre- and in-service teachers in Iceland to work in multilingual classrooms. In Anne Reath Warren, Jonas Yassin Iversen & Boglárka Straszer (eds.), *Teacher education for working in linguistically diverse classrooms: Nordic perspectives*, 77–97. Berlin: Language Science Press. DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.15280899

had a language other than Icelandic as their mother tongue (Statistics Iceland 2018). In the autumn of 2017, the proportion was 9.9% of the student population, which represents an increase of over 300 students from the previous year. In the autumn of 2022, 6,570 students or 14% of the students in compulsory schools had a mother tongue other than Icelandic, an increase of 670 students from the previous year (Statistics Iceland 2023).

These changes in recent years call for a reconceptualisation of how teachers are prepared for teaching in diverse settings. To face these challenges, it is necessary for school leaders and teachers to consider how they can create effective learning environments for diverse groups of students (Ainscow 2008, Day & Gu 2010, Florian & Beaton 2017). In the Icelandic national curriculum, there is a strong focus on ensuring that all children have access to meaningful learning in schools. It emphasises that diversity and varied abilities of students are respected and any form of discrimination and exclusion in schools is unacceptable (Ministry of Education, Science and Culture 2011). An audit of the Icelandic system of inclusive education reported a solid foundation in legislation and policy, which is in line with relevant international conventions (European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education 2017). According to the audit, education legislation in Iceland builds on a broad conceptualisation of inclusion with a focus on justice and equity. Schools are advised to create spaces for all students to participate, enjoy learning and make progress. However, the auditors concluded that the legislation has not been well implemented. Many teachers and administrators also question whether teacher education and professional development opportunities in Iceland have enabled schools to implement inclusive education for all learners (European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education 2017). This is corroborated by other studies from Iceland and the UK, where pre-service teachers report a lack of relevant courses in the study programme and too little focus on practical pedagogy aimed at teaching multilingual students (Flockton & Cunningham 2021, Gunnþórsdóttir & Óskarsdóttir 2025 [this volume]).

To meet the demands of increasing diversity in schools and classrooms, teacher education needs to place emphasis on inclusive and multicultural education, together with the teaching of additional languages (Banks 2016, Ladson-Billings 1995b). Teacher education must attend to this focus in two different ways, in the content area (what to teach) and through pedagogy (how to teach) (European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education 2011). With these two aspects in mind, teacher educators must consider how they can best prepare pre- and in-service teachers to work in inclusive schools and classrooms with diverse groups of students.

In this chapter, we will present and discuss the findings of a research study conducted at the University of Iceland's School of Education whose purpose was to explore teacher educators' perceptions of preparing pre- and in-service teachers for working with students with multicultural and multilingual backgrounds.

2 Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework for this chapter centres around teacher education pedagogy, as well as insights from multicultural and multilingual education. These perspectives afford us with the necessary theoretical foundation to explore teacher educators' perceptions of preparing pre- and in-service teachers for working with students with a multicultural and multilingual background. In the following, we first outline some key characteristics of teacher education, before we briefly introduce the benefits associated with a multicultural and multilingual approach to education.

2.1 Teacher education pedagogy

Developing a pedagogy of teacher education involves more than simply delivering information about teaching and subject content (Loughran 2005). The pedagogy of teacher education is about understanding the complex interplay between human, material, and non-tangible elements (Hordvik et al. 2020). It is about understanding the relationship between teacher educator and pre-service teacher, between pre-service teachers and subject matter, and finally between context and content (Loughran 2013). It encompasses understanding how learning influences teaching and the ways teacher educators teach. Each teacher educator brings multiple aspects to their teaching, such as personal practical knowledge, perspectives, perceptions, and expectations (Russell 2007). Each university classroom is therefore influenced by the knowledge, experience, and beliefs of both the teacher educator and the pre- and in-service teachers. The learning material, discourse, traditions, and university rules also affect the teaching (Loughran 2014).

All teachers, including teacher educators, deal with complex realities in their everyday practice. Therefore, the ability to critically reflect on their practice and to develop an understanding by questioning and systematically exploring theories of teaching and learning is important (Loughran 2002, Watts & Lawson 2009). This ability to analyse and make meaning from personal experience is crucial for the development of professional knowledge. Reflective learning involving various epistemological challenges, including reasoning and sense-making, is widely

used in teacher education programmes (Russell & Martin 2017). Reflection, however, can be complex, and pre- and in-service teachers need to be guided through their cognitive thinking, have a space where they can reflect on their learning and develop their work through continuous feedback (Korthagen & Vasalos 2010). Along with their emotions and personal needs, pre- and in-service teachers also need to explore how their mission influences their professional identities, their behaviour, and the competences they develop for teaching in different environments (Korthagen & Vasalos 2010).

Teaching diverse groups of students integrates professional knowledge about teaching and learning and involves an ethical and social commitment to students. The pedagogy of responsive teaching builds on pedagogical knowledge, understanding and skills of the teacher. It centres on students' responses, fostering flexibility and setting clear goals (Dozier & Rutten 2005). The pedagogy of responsive teaching facilitates differentiation among students, contexts, methods, materials, and resources. These pedagogical qualities are witnessed in teachers who understand individual differences, are committed to the education of all students, and have a knowledge base which enables them to differentiate between students. Responsive teaching is student-centred learning where diversity is the norm (Guðjónsdóttir 2003, Guðjónsdóttir & Óskarsdóttir 2016). In the current study, these aspects of teacher education pedagogy help us gain a better understanding of the complex interplay between all actors and elements of the university classroom.

2.2 Multicultural education

In response to the increase in the student population with diverse racial, ethnic, linguistic and cultural backgrounds comes the need to incorporate multicultural education and its principles in teacher education. The aim of multicultural education is to create equal educational opportunities for all students and to remove barriers to educational opportunities. It emphasises that teachers value multilingual students' experiences and knowledge, build on their strengths and support them in their learning (Gay 2018, Nieto 2010). Multicultural education aims at empowering the school culture through equity pedagogy, content integration, knowledge construction and prejudice reduction (Banks 2016). Dialogue and positive interaction between students and teachers are particularly important in the language learning environment, where students must learn to communicate in an additional language. In multicultural education, it is believed that the way students learn is deeply influenced by their cultural identity (Banks 2016), and

therefore it is important when teaching diverse groups of students that the educational approaches value and recognise students' cultural and linguistic backgrounds (Gay 2018).

Culturally responsive teaching is such an educational approach. It refers to teaching methods that build on cultural knowledge, experiences, and learning styles of diverse groups of students (Ladson-Billings 1995a). The method empowers students by drawing on their linguistic and cultural resources and enables them to become more successful learners by increasing their self-confidence and willingness to participate (Gay 2018, Ljunggren 2016, Prediger & Neugebauer 2023). Student-oriented and flexible methods of teaching and assessment help to improve the educational experience of all students (Al-Azawei et al. 2017). This approach to teaching and learning strives to give all students equal opportunities to learn and succeed and therefore it is consistent with multicultural education. In the study at hand, we are interested in what teacher educators say about the incorporation of elements of multicultural education into their own teaching practice and whether they mention teaching pre-service teachers about multicultural education.

2.3 Multilingualism and additional language teaching

The benefits of multilingualism for individuals and societies have been researched and discussed by many scholars (Chumak-Horbatsch 2012, Cummins 2000, García & Kleifgen 2010, García & Wei 2014). There is consensus among researchers that multilingualism is a valuable resource that should be recognised and nurtured as it paves the way for broad perspectives, tolerance, and active participation in a democratic society (García & Velasco 2014, Ljunggren 2016).

Cummins (2000) argues that schools and educational communities should invest in social justice and acknowledge how policy making, attitudes, beliefs and expectations exclude some children while welcoming others. Schools should strive to create learning environments that respond to the needs of multilingual students and their families and develop ways to implement inclusive and socially just practices which acknowledge multilingual students' backgrounds, previous experience and knowledge. Research in Nordic countries has shown how a focus on inclusion, social justice and equity in schools promotes active participation of all students and their families (Lefever et al. 2018, Ragnarsdóttir & Kulbrandstad 2018, Tran et al. 2016, Ragnarsdóttir & Schmidt 2014).

A common factor shared by many students with a migrant background is that of learning an additional language, typically the majority or school language. These students have often grown up in a multilingual environment and bring

that knowledge with them when they enter school. Prediger & Neugebauer (2023: 18) found that "language-responsive instructional approaches can enhance the learning of both monolingual and multilingual students (newly immigrated and resident students), and students with all degrees of language proficiency".

All schools have language policies, but they are often not clearly articulated. As pointed out by Cummins & Early (2015: 7), school language policies should address two aspects: that multilingual students extend their knowledge of the school language while learning academic content, and secondly, that "linguistic and cultural diversity are positioned within the school not as problems to be resolved but as instructional assets".

Generally speaking, language teaching in Iceland has focused on foreign language learning, where exposure to the languages being taught (such as Danish) is limited and language learning takes place mainly in the classroom. On the other hand, Icelandic is taught as a mother tongue or the majority language, which differs greatly from teaching Icelandic as an additional (or second) language. Being able to communicate in the majority language is crucial for the social participation and educational attainment of multilingual students. Research has shown that limited language skills, lack of support and inadequate language teaching for multilingual students can impact negatively on their learning outcomes and sense of belonging in the learning environment (Sinacore & Lerner 2013).

Cummins & Early (2015) explain that students who are learning the majority (or school) language as an additional language are dealing with two types of language ability, conversational skills and academic language skills. Most students will acquire proficiency in conversational language within one or two years of exposure to the language. However, it typically takes from 5 to 10 years for students to acquire the academic language proficiency necessary for successful school study (Wong Fillmore & Snow 2000). Lucas et al. (2008) have identified important principles for teaching multilingual students. One principle is to provide multilingual students with ample opportunities for comprehensible input and output in the additional language. Active use of the language (both oral and written) deepens students' awareness of language forms and functions and is essential for language acquisition. Another principle is the recognition of multilingual students' first language as an important resource for additional language learning. It is a valuable tool for thinking and communication, and cross-lingual transfer between the first language and additional languages enriches both languages. Thirdly, Lucas et al. point out how multilingual students are often prone to school-related anxiety. They face difficulties in expressing themselves due to their limited language proficiency in the school language and are not able to demonstrate their knowledge, interests, or personalities easily. This may distract

students from focusing on language learning and inhibit their social interaction, which is important for language development. Therefore, providing a welcoming and supportive classroom is an important principle for ensuring multilingual students' well-being and sense of belonging. In summary, a multitude of factors influence multilingual students' additional language learning. While additional language teaching should aim at developing both communicative skills and academic language, it must also take into account the individual needs of multilingual students, that can vary greatly due to linguistic background, age, personality and home environment. It is immensely important that teachers (and teacher educators) understand the impact that multilingualism and language learning have on students' academic and social development (Flockton & Cunningham 2021, Paulsrud et al. 2023).

3 Research methodology

The aim of this qualitative study was to develop an understanding of how teacher educators at the School of Education, University of Iceland, prepare pre- and in-service teachers for teaching in linguistically diverse classrooms. The educational and professional development of both pre-service and in-service teachers in Iceland are primarily in the hands of teacher educators from two tertiary-level institutions; the University of Iceland and the University of Akureyri. Participants in this study, teacher educators at the University of Iceland, were chosen because of their expertise in general pedagogy, pedagogy of subject teaching, and inclusive education. It was important to us to collect data from the perspectives of the teacher educators, to learn how they address issues of diversity and multilingualism in their teaching. Thus, the main research question guiding our study was: What are teacher educators' perceptions of preparing pre- and in-service teachers for working with students with multicultural and multilingual backgrounds?

The School of Education is divided into four faculties responsible for the education of teachers: the Faculty of Education and Pedagogy, the Faculty of Health Promotion, Sport and Leisure Studies, the Faculty of Subject Teacher Education and the Faculty of Education and Diversity. The teacher education programmes are mostly situated in the first three faculties mentioned, and they all offer five-year study programmes that end with a master's degree in education which is required to receive teacher certification. Since initial teacher education was extended from a three-year bachelor's degree to a master's degree in 2008, many in-service teachers have come back to obtain a master's degree in education. In

addition, individuals who have received a bachelor's degree in fields other than education can complete a two-year teacher certification programme at the master's level. Thus, the teacher education programmes at the School of Education include bachelor and master level programmes, and the programmes at the master's level are attended by both pre-service and in-service teachers.

The research study was carried out by four teacher educators, the authors of this chapter. Twenty-eight teacher educators participated in the study; all faculty members in the School of Education. Ten of the participants were specialists in teacher pedagogy at preschool and compulsory school levels, and four were specialists in special education or inclusive education. Ten participants were members of the Faculty of Subject Teacher Education and were experts in the teaching of mathematics, natural sciences, social sciences, foreign languages, Icelandic, arts and crafts or ICT. The remaining participants were experts in the fields of upper-secondary education, physical education, literacy or assessment methods. All but two of the participants had many years of experience as teacher educators.

Data were collected through 13 focus group discussions with up to four participants in each group. The focus groups were organised according to teaching area and school level. For example, specialists in language teaching at the compulsory level were grouped together, specialists in upper-secondary teaching formed another group, and teacher educators with a focus on general pedagogy at the compulsory school level formed a third group. In some cases, there was overlap between school levels such as in a group which consisted of general pedagogy teachers at both pre-school and compulsory school levels. The focus group discussions took place from spring 2019 to spring 2021. The discussions were 30–45 minutes in length and were recorded and transcribed verbatim.

The focus group approach was selected for this study to create a space for dialogue about the participants' teaching. The interaction within the focus group was of importance because it contributed to the development of ideas and responses within the group. The questions used with the participants were open-ended and non-directive since our intention was to give the participants an opportunity to share their personal experience of how they prepare pre- and in-service teachers to work with multilingual students (Bryman 2004, Eatough & Smith 2017).

The teacher educators were given the focus questions beforehand and were asked to discuss how they prepare pre- and in-service teachers for teaching diverse groups of students. The four researchers, individually, had the role of moderating 2-4 focus group discussions each. As moderators we posed questions to the group, invited participants to speak, managed time and the recording device.

In addition, each researcher participated as a member of one focus group discussion. As researchers, we were aware of potential advantages and disadvantages of our dual role as both moderators and participants. Our aim was to explore our own perspectives and practices as well as those of our colleagues. As participants, we could take an active part in the focus group discussion with our colleagues in a safe environment. The discussions gave us an opportunity to reflect, share and develop ideas jointly with other specialists. Furthermore, all the participants expressed their gratitude for receiving the opportunity to reflect on and discuss their professional beliefs and practices with other specialists. Nevertheless, there could be a possibility that participants did not wish to discuss aspects openly due to work relationships. Although there was no indication of this in the data, this should be considered one of the possible limitations of the current study.

In analysing the data, we applied an interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA) approach, beginning by identifying essential elements and relationships related to the aim of the research. The coding was selective, and the focus was on teacher educators' descriptions of the pedagogical approaches and practices they used to prepare their students for teaching in linguistically diverse classrooms (Eatough & Smith 2017). As the analysis developed, we catalogued codes, identified patterns, and grouped them according to the conceptual framework of teacher education pedagogy, multicultural education, and multilingualism and additional language teaching.

The next step was to go through each theme and summarise it. We then structured and supported the themes by bringing in evidence from the data in the form of participant quotes. Next, we wrote a description with verbatim examples and a structural description where we reflected on what we learned from analysis of the focus group discussions (Braun & Clarke 2013, Wolcott 2001). Finally, we wrote a composite description of our findings where the voices of participants were in the forefront (Creswell 2008). The focus group meetings were all conducted in Icelandic and therefore the transcripts were also in Icelandic. We, the researchers, translated the quotes that are presented in the findings.

All ethical standards for research prescribed by the University of Iceland were followed in the study, including the Act on personal data protection and processing of personal data[1] and the University of Iceland's (2019) Code of Ethics. Pseudonyms are used to protect the identity of the participants.

[1]https://www.personuvernd.is/media/uncategorized/Act_No_90_2018_on_Data_Protection_and_the_Processing_of_Personal_Data.pdf

4 Findings

The following themes were constructed during the analysis process: teacher education pedagogy, multicultural education, and multilingualism and additional language teaching. The participant quotes presented here are representative of the teacher educators' views and perceptions of how they prepare pre- and in-service teachers for teaching in multilingual classrooms.

4.1 Teacher education pedagogy

Teacher education pedagogy was discussed at length; it was important for the teacher educators to be a model for teaching diverse students in inclusive schools, in other words to "practice what they preach" or "walk the talk":

> We do not lecture about teaching methods. We teach about them by using them ourselves. Our students get open tasks and need to explore, discuss, collaborate and use all kinds of tools, such as digital tools. They get the chance to reflect on their own understanding of teaching and adapt these methods to their own ideas. We finish the course by summing up the methods we have used to help our students focus on important features of teaching. Our goal is that they will be able to use rich and creative methods in their own teaching. (Rúna)

The teacher educators recognise the importance of providing pre- and in-service teachers with opportunities to experience first-hand what they are being taught – those pedagogical practices are the core of teacher education:

> We are faced with the challenges of having diverse groups of students and need to find ways to respond to their needs. By using project-based learning, our students can relate to their own interests and use their findings in their daily life and work. By sharing their findings with each other, they learn about the quality of having students with diverse backgrounds within the group. (Margrét)

Some teacher educators gave examples of activities or projects that they implemented in their teaching as a means of enriching students' own learning experiences:

> For example, a classroom activity that we do in a course for pre- and in-service teachers is to have them create their own "identity text" and share it with the others. It's great to see how they tackle the task and see the outcomes. They show a lot of creativity and depth of understanding. (Árni)

Many of the discussions reflected the teacher educators' vision that all learners should flourish in school. One example comes from a teacher of a course about inclusive practices:

> …if one looks at this as if we are preparing people for working in inclusive education, education for all, and dealing with diverse groups of students, then what is perhaps reflected in our teaching is precisely the flexibility in projects. …I think we are working in a way that we would like them [students] to adopt …And the mindset really is that we [students] are all different, and we need different things to be successful. (Sjöfn)

In courses about information technology, student-oriented learning is strongly reflected:

> …I emphasise student-oriented learning, students have a choice of projects. We always have a diverse group of students in the information technology course. A strong emphasis is on [appealing to] students' interests and that the project they are working on is something they find interesting, …something they can take advantage of, and sometimes it's something related to daily life; this interests the student. (Dísa)

Although the teacher educators come from different disciplines and differ in their pedagogical focus, their theoretical stance was similar. The teacher educators expressed a common belief in inclusive and equitable education. Reflection on their own learning is an integral part of many of the courses, for example in this course for pre-school teachers:

> In this course about early childhood education, we try to build a platform where our students discuss and reflect together on inclusion and how we can support children with diverse needs, such as children with multicultural backgrounds, to participate in all pre-school activities. (Auður)

This emphasis on reflection opens the way for discussions in class that help the pre- and in-service teachers to better understand how to respond to children with diverse backgrounds. A teacher educator who teaches a course about inclusive practices also focused on reflection:

> In one of the course's assignments our students are urged to analyse something that is at their heart, a challenge they have found difficult to overcome, something that they really want to dig into and become a specialist in. They

> then introduce their findings to other participants in the course and in that way we develop a learning community together. In these communities our students' collaborative reflection results in rich funds of knowledge that everyone gains from. (Nanna)

The reflection becomes a part of how learning is interpreted in different settings and a source for the pre- and in-service teachers to develop their own beliefs and understanding of teaching and learning. The aim is that, as professionals, they can identify the situations they are working in, and the issues or challenges they face.

4.2 Multicultural education

Although specific emphasis on multicultural education theory was not frequent in the teacher educators' discourse, they were aware of the necessity of preparing pre- and in-service teachers to teach students with diverse backgrounds and needs. Their strength in using inclusive teaching approaches at university level helped them understand the importance of meeting the needs of multilingual students. The discussion in the focus group meetings reflected the teacher educators' vision to prepare pre- and in-service teachers to work in multilingual classrooms.

In the programme for physical training instructors, the teacher educators emphasise that their students learn to embrace diversity within schools:

> We prepare them to meet the learning needs of all their students. We are still developing our ways of preparing them to teach in multicultural and multilingual settings since this is relatively new in our country. Children who don't understand each others' language participate in games and instinctively play together. Through sport activities they learn to communicate through body language and gradually with spoken language. When our students do their practicum they experience working in multicultural settings in some of our schools. (Ösp)

An arts educator also mentioned the practicum as an opportunity for students to experience working in multicultural settings:

> It depends on which school they go to. In some schools there are many children of foreign background. What visual arts and sports have in common is that everyone can participate. I introduce my students to the work of artists who emphasise multiculturalism and urge them to use that approach in their own work. (Hulda)

The teacher of a mathematics course emphasised an inquiry approach and open tasks for pre- and in-service teachers. The intention in this course was to make learning appropriate for diverse learners, by building on their resources and recognising both their cultural and linguistic backgrounds:

> …these are people who are learning to become teachers. They will meet all kinds of children and they need to be able to respond to and work with a diverse group of learners. I organise my teaching so that all my students feel at home, and everyone can cope with the challenges I'm presenting. (Kristín)

A newly hired teacher educator talked about her own lack of knowledge with regard to working with linguistically diverse classrooms:

> The area of students with foreign backgrounds is my weakness. Although it's something that is there subconsciously, I feel like I need more information. So, I've been looking for information about ways to prepare pre-service teachers for working with students with diverse cultural backgrounds. (Jóna)

The quotes from the teacher educators show an emerging awareness of responding to the growing diversity of languages spoken in Icelandic schools and finding ways to effectively prepare pre- and in-service teachers to work in multicultural classrooms. The teacher educators critically reflect on their own practice and work towards developing their professional knowledge and teaching practices.

4.3 Multilingualism and additional language teaching

Some of the teacher educators talked about the need for more knowledge and a greater understanding of multilingualism and additional language teaching. They acknowledged that students need to re-examine their views towards language learning and language use in the classroom and gain an understanding of how learning Icelandic as an additional language differs from learning Icelandic as a mother tongue. A teacher educator who teaches Icelandic grammar expressed:

> [We need to] help pre- and in-service teachers take a wider look at language, both to increase their tolerance of Icelandic spoken with an accent, and to realise that there is not just one type of Icelandic, that there are many types. I put a lot of effort into these things in order to prepare them for teaching students with diverse backgrounds. (Þórunn)

In a course about reading instruction, the learning of children with a mother tongue other than Icelandic is discussed:

> We are aware of the relation between language development and learning to read. We need to attend to the children's social communication. The learning of language is strongly connected to communication. The multilingual children need to talk to the Icelandic children because that is how they learn the language. (Anna)

This teacher educator emphasises that children who are learning an additional language need to practice the new language but does not acknowledge that multilingual students' first language is an important resource for additional language learning. This seems to embody a monolingual viewpoint which puts emphasis on the majority language and fails to recognise knowledge of other languages as an asset.

In the pre-school teacher education programme, multilingualism is addressed in a course about language development. The teacher educator expressed the necessity of a compulsory course about multilingualism for all pre- and in-service teachers:

> In my opinion, all pre-school teachers should be required to take a course on multilingualism and Icelandic as an additional language. It is so important because there are so many children with foreign backgrounds in our preschools. (Vala)

A teacher educator who teaches courses about language teaching methods and language learning expressed similar concerns:

> I would like to see more emphasis put on learning about language teaching methods and language learning in our teacher education programme, including Icelandic as an additional language, so that everyone has some insight into what it means to learn a new language and how language is so important for communication at school and with parents and others. (Árni)

> Additional language teaching focuses on a variety of ways to teach vocabulary and communicative skills. A lot of emphasis is placed on communication, that students learn how to express themselves in the new language. Less emphasis is put on learning grammar, especially with younger learners, instead the focus is on how we use the language to communicate with others and understand our surroundings. (Árni)

In summary, the findings of the study show that the teacher educators do not always place specific emphasis on multicultural education or additional language learning, but attempt to prepare pre- and in-service teachers for teaching in multilingual classrooms by organising their courses in ways which consider students' diverse backgrounds and needs. They utilise a variety of approaches and practices in their teaching which are learner-centred and inclusive, thus creating learning spaces built on students' resources (experiences, strengths, interests). They model effective teaching practices and provide students with opportunities to broaden their experience and understanding of working with diverse groups of students.

5 Discussion and conclusions

The purpose of the research was to develop an understanding of how teacher educators at the School of Education at the University of Iceland perceive the preparation of pre- and in-service teachers for working with students with multicultural and multilingual backgrounds. Similar to findings from other contexts, the teacher educators in the current study are conscious of the diverse student population in Icelandic schools at all levels and admit that they need to consider that in their teaching at the School of Education (Flockton & Cunningham 2021, Paulsrud et al. 2023). They are aware that the increase in the number of multilingual students calls for changes in classroom practices and teacher education (Day & Gu 2010). The findings suggest that a specific focus on multicultural education in the teacher education programme is lacking and depends mostly on the interest and knowledge of individual teacher educators (e.g. Paulsrud et al. 2023). On the other hand, the teacher educators are aware of the necessity of preparing pre- and in-service teachers to teach students with diverse linguistic backgrounds, and several of the teacher educators feel that more emphasis is needed on teaching Icelandic as an additional language.

Developing a pedagogy of teacher education is more than simply delivering information about teaching and subject content (Loughran 2005); it also involves an understanding of the complex interplay between human, material, and non-tangible elements (Hordvik et al. 2020). The pedagogy of teacher education stresses that it is important for teacher educators to serve as models for teaching diverse students, in other words to "practice what they preach" or "walk the talk".

Another important factor of teacher education is the ability to critically reflect on one's own practice (Loughran 2002, Watts & Lawson 2009). Data from

our study provided examples of teacher educators' critical reflection and their efforts to improve their professional development. Reflection on learning is an integral part of many courses taught by the teacher educators, and they emphasised providing pre- and in-service teachers with opportunities to reflect on their own learning. Such reflections can enable pre- and in-service teachers to develop their own beliefs and understanding of teaching in linguistically diverse classrooms. Being able to analyse and make meaning from one's own experience is crucial for the development of professional knowledge (Russell & Martin 2017).

Teaching approaches and practices which are learner-centred and inclusive are discussed widely in the focus groups. The teacher educators put emphasis on creating learning spaces which build on students' resources and give them opportunities to learn how to work with diverse groups of students. However, there is little indication of teacher educators working specifically with theories of multilingualism or additional language learning. There is no discussion of the importance of taking advantage of the whole linguistic repertoire of students and the positive impact it can have on students' self-esteem and well-being. In fact, in some cases there seems to be tension between monolingual and multilingual approaches.

Inadequate language teaching and lack of support for multilingual students can have a negative impact on their academic progress and sense of belonging (Sinacore & Lerner 2013). Cummins & Early (2015) and Lucas et al. (2008) stress the importance of creating learning environments that recognise multilingual students' language knowledge as an asset, not as a deficit. Our findings indicate that knowledge and understanding of multilingualism and additional language teaching is not widespread among the teacher educators and was only dealt with in a few courses. To overcome this deficit, it is essential that teacher education provides pre- and in-service teachers with knowledge about additional language teaching that will help multilingual students to develop language skills necessary for positive learning outcomes and social participation in school and society (Lucas et al. 2008). At the same time, it has to be acknowledged that multilingual students' needs vary greatly according to both background and environment.

The findings from this study shed light on both strengths and weaknesses within the group of teacher educators regarding teaching in multilingual classrooms. The teacher educators are specialists in teacher education pedagogy but are lacking in knowledge about multicultural and multilingual education. The need for strengthening the multicultural and multilingual focus of the teacher education programmes is clear.

The outcomes of the study can help teacher educators understand how diversity in student population impacts on initial teacher education. They shed light

on the importance of integrating both theory and practice in teaching and in the development of educational programmes whose aims are to prepare pre- and in-service teachers for working in multilingual classrooms. Culturally responsive teacher education which recognises and responds to the abilities and needs of multilingual students is essential for ensuring social justice and equity for all in today's schools.

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Chapter 5

Multilingualism in Danish pre-service teachers' writing assignments: Between theory and practice

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The study is conducted in the context of Danish teacher education, and explores pre-service teachers' reported knowledge about multilingualism and multilingual pedagogy. Through analysis of successful pre-service teachers' examination papers, we explore how well pre-service teachers demonstrate their knowledge about multilingualism. Using semantic gravity analysis, we also explore how they describe implementing this knowledge in the context of supporting multilingual students' learning in mainstream classrooms. This analysis provides a useful tool for reflecting on pedagogic and assessment practices for teacher educators and other professional degree educators. Our analyses show that pre-service teachers value multilingualism but have difficulty demonstrating in writing how to implement multilingual pedagogies. Investigating the degree to which pre-service teachers can demonstrate their understandings of theoretical concepts has broader implications for both teacher educators and educators of other professions, in terms of how we assess tertiary students' understandings of theory, and how they describe implementing theory in their future practice.

Winnie Østergaard, Anna-Vera Meidell Sigsgaard, Thomas Roed Heiden, Lone Wulff & Christine Worm. 2025. Multilingualism in Danish pre-service teachers' writing assignments: Between theory and practice. In Anne Reath Warren, Jonas Yassin Iversen & Boglárka Straszer (eds.), *Teacher education for working in linguistically diverse classrooms: Nordic perspectives*, 99–126. Berlin: Language Science Press. DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.15280901

1 Introduction

Teaching in any setting is a multifaceted and complex endeavour. When preparing pre-service teachers for their profession, their degree programme requires them to adopt changes in perceptions of phenomena in teaching and learning, as well as to gain knowledge about situations on which they often have intuitive views. Social discourses, political debates, and personal experiences all inform the pre-existing knowledge that pre-service teachers bring to their educational settings. The primary aim of this chapter is to explore how pre-service teachers demonstrate understandings of one such topic in their examination papers. The particularly politicised and debated topic explored here is supporting multilingual students in mainstream education.

Everyday opinions on educational topics are different from professional and research-based knowledge in the field. The everyday understandings of pre-service teachers at the start of their degree programmes are unsurprisingly influenced by personal school experiences and public discourse. One role of teacher education is therefore to support pre-service teachers' transition from intuitive to theoretically founded understandings. This could support future teachers in making informed and theoretically founded decisions in their practice (Rusznyak 2021, Tilakaratna & Szenes 2021). In Denmark, strengthening pre-service teachers' connection to pedagogical practice (Rasmussen 2022) as a way of meeting the well-known challenge pre-service teachers have in combining theory and practice has received attention in recent years (Cochran-Smith & Zeichner 2005). This study, therefore, can shed light on some of the difficulties pre-service teachers experience in what is often referred to as the theory-practice divide (Gravett 2012).

In this chapter, we explore pre-service teachers' development of knowledge about multilingualism and multilingual students, as demonstrated in examination papers written for a course (*Teaching bilingual students,* see Section 2.2) in Danish teacher education programmes. Specifically, we examine how pre-service teachers move from intuitive to more theoretical understandings in the field of additional language education and how they connect this theoretical knowledge to classroom practice, by analysing pre-service teachers' examination papers. We are interested in exploring if (and if so, how) pre-service teachers view students' multilingualism as a resource for learning (García et al. 2017), as opposed to the more commonly held, uncritical viewpoint, in which multilingualism is seen as an impediment to learning. After completing a course on teaching multilingual students in mainstream classrooms, all pre-service teachers in Denmark must write an examination paper in which they analyse pedagogic practice from an

additional language perspective and provide suggestions for pedagogic practice that will support multilingual students' learning in mainstream classrooms. In this examination paper, pre-service teachers must therefore apply theories on multilingualism to the context of their teaching subjects, to demonstrate their ability to support multilingual students' learning. Doing so requires them to make connections between theory and practice. In this chapter, therefore, we explore how pre-service teachers demonstrate their knowledge about multilingualism in their written examination papers by analysing how they describe implementation of theories on multilingualism into pedagogic practice.

In Denmark, as in other countries, making use of students' multilingual repertoires in mainstream teaching is commonly seen as a challenge, despite research pointing to the advantages of multilingual approaches (Dewilde 2020, Laursen 2019, Paulsrud et al. 2017). For example, although an established perspective in additional and foreign language education internationally, the concept of *translanguaging* (García et al. 2017) has only recently become a topic of interest among researchers in Denmark. The publication of the first (and as of yet, only) Danish-language book on translanguaging in educational practice (Holmen & Thise 2021) has however facilitated the inclusion of multilingual approaches in both in-service and pre-service teaching degree programmes. This is also the case in the obligatory course for all pre-service teachers, called *Teaching bilingual students*, which we explore in this chapter.

The learning outcomes and assessment criteria of the *Teaching bilingual students* course are informed by a positive and *additive* perspective on multilingualism and multilingual students, in contrast to the more *subtractive* perspective (Holmen 2019) apparent in the Danish Public School Act. How pre-service teachers resolve this seeming paradox, and how well they demonstrate their knowledge about multilingualism, can potentially influence pre-service teachers' pedagogic practices significantly, motivating our investigation. Learning more about how students in a professional degree programme take up new and developing perspectives in associated research fields has implications both locally, i.e. in structuring and restructuring related degree programmes and curriculum content, but also more generally in terms of how knowledge from research fields is recontextualised to a professional degree programme.

An underlying assumption in professional degree programmes, such as the one in focus here, is that engagement with theory will inform and improve future practice (Shay et al. 2016). However, pre-service teachers often have difficulty writing about pedagogic practice in a theoretically informed way (Nielsen et al. 2006). This chapter builds on earlier work by Meidell Sigsgaard & Jacobsen (2021) that also explored pre-service teachers' examination papers for the

Teaching bilingual students course, comparing how successful[1] and less successful examination papers respectively connected theory with practice. That study did not reflect on which of the knowledge and competency areas pre-service teachers chose to write about, considering instead students' comprehension of relevant theories in general. For the purpose of this study, we are specifically interested in exploring how pre-service teachers demonstrate knowledge about theories of multilingualism. This can provide insights into tendencies in the field of multilingual and additional language education as they develop in the context of teaching multilingual and additional language learners in mainstream classes in Denmark. The specific research questions for this chapter are therefore:

- How do pre-service teachers demonstrate understandings of multilingualism in their written examination papers for the obligatory teacher education course, *Teaching bilingual students*, in Danish teacher education?
- To what degree are they able to link theoretical understandings with examples of pedagogic practice?

Analysing pre-service teachers' reported ability to recontextualise theoretical knowledge into specific contexts of pedagogic practice can also provide more general insights from an assessment perspective. In tertiary education fields such as teacher education, as well as many other fields, it is relevant to investigate how well students demonstrate connections between their observations of practice and theoretical concepts and how well they are able to recontextualise theoretical concepts to new practice situations (Berry et al. 2008, Rusznyak et al. 2021). It is in doing both that they convincingly can demonstrate their professionality. How pre-service teachers do so with presumably new understandings of multilingualism is the focus of this chapter, and it provides broader insights for reflecting on, working with, and assessing students' knowledge about both theory and practice.

2 Background

To set the context for our study we first map connections between politics, policy and practice (Biesta 2011), focusing on the terms *bilingualism* and *multilingualism*

[1]Successful papers in Meidell Sigsgaard & Jacobsen (2021) were papers achieving a passing grade of average or above. We apply the same criteria for a successful paper in the present study.

in Danish school-policy documents. Investigating these uncovers current theories on multilingualism in existing research in both Denmark and in the Nordic countries and underpins the specific context of this study: assessment for the course *Teaching bilingual students*.

2.1 Multilingualism in Danish school-policy documents

The relevant policy documents regulating Danish public schools, the Public School Act, and The Decree of Public School Teaching in Danish as a Second Language do not include the terms *multilingualism*, *linguistically diverse classrooms* or *multilingual practices/resources*. Instead, the Public School Act uses the term *tosproget* [bilingual],[2] defining the relevant students as "children who have a different mother tongue than Danish, and who learn Danish only through contact with the surrounding society, perhaps for the first time through formal education" (Ministry of Children and Education [Børne- og Undervisningsministeriet] 2022).[3]

The use of the term *bilingualism* in Danish policy documents is problematised by Kristjánsdóttir (2011), who points out that these documents enact and represent social practices of discrimination with significant pedagogical consequences. For a student to command more than one language is seen as a challenge for social integration in Danish schools (Kristjánsdóttir 2010, 2011). The monolingual language ideology makes it difficult to leverage students' multilingual backgrounds as a resource within the framework of the public school (Kristjánsdóttir 2018). Together with political and media discourses on, e.g., immigration, this can result in pre-service teachers expressing scepticism about including "immigrant languages" in a public school setting. Iversen (2021), Kulbrandstad (2004) and Daugaard & Dewilde (2017) challenge these monolingual tendencies, maintaining that multilingual practices support the Nordic educational system's values of child-centred pedagogies, respectful of diversity.

2.2 The *Teaching bilingual students* course in Danish teacher education programmes

The Danish teaching degree programme is a standardised, nationally regulated, four-year bachelor's degree programme, offered by the Danish University Col-

[2] All Danish language citations included in this chapter have been translated into English by this chapter's authors. This includes both quotes from curriculum documents/mandates and from the analysed pre-service examination papers.

[3] This official definition means students growing up with Danish and another language at home are not technically categorised as bilingual.

leges. It prepares primary and lower-secondary school teachers, and contains obligatory courses in Teacher-Professional Competency, practicum placement and three teaching subjects (e.g. Arts, Biology, English) chosen by the pre-service teacher. Content and assessments for all the degree programme's subjects and courses are defined by the Ministry of Higher Education and Science.

This chapter focuses on the assessment of the obligatory teacher education course, *Teaching bilingual students* (10 ECTS). The aim of the course is to prepare pre-service teachers to meet the needs of multilingual learners in their future classrooms. Upon completing the course, the pre-service teachers submit an examination paper individually or in groups, on a self-chosen topic based on the following national prompt:

> In the examination paper, students must analyse a situation from a lesson, a sequence of lessons, and/or a textbook or other teaching materials from one of the students' present or future teaching subjects based on a relevant issue concerning second language teaching. The analysis must lead to suggestions for revised didactic measures as a means of scaffolding bilingual students in the subject or themes in question. (Ministry of Higher Education and Science [Uddannelses- og forskningsministeriet] 2020)

This question requires pre-service teachers to develop and demonstrate theoretically informed knowledge and how to apply this in practice. Pre-service teachers must demonstrate their understanding of several associated knowledge and competency criteria, e.g., "knowledge of multilingual students' linguistic practices and resources and being able to use this knowledge in application to pedagogic practice" (Ministry of Higher Education and Science [Uddannelses- og forskningsministeriet] 2020), within one of their teaching subjects. In requiring pre-service teachers to focus on one of their teaching subjects, this course compels them to focus on the teaching of that subject, incorporating their knowledge about multilingualism in order to meet the learning needs of multilingual learners in mainstream classrooms. How pre-service teachers demonstrate this in their written examination papers is the focus of this chapter and compels a description of the theories on multilingualism (see Section 3.1) underpinning the *Teaching bilingual students* course.

3 Understanding multilingualism: Bridging theory and practice

Because the teaching degree programme aims to prepare teachers for the teaching profession, pre-service teachers must demonstrate that they know both relevant content from their course studies and how to apply it in teaching. To explore *how* pre-service teachers demonstrate knowledge about multilingualism in their written exams, we include two different theoretical perspectives. Section 3.1 concentrates on current theories on multilingualism from relevant literature in Denmark and internationally. This also serves as the theoretical perspective used in the initial analysis of our data, addressing our first research question. Section 3.2 introduces the theoretical concept *semantic gravity* from Legitimation Code Theory (Maton 2014) for identifying varying degrees of context-dependence of knowledge, between theory and practice. This analytical perspective is used to illustrate how pre-service teachers operationalise in writing their knowledge about multilingualism in educational practice, and addresses our second research question.

3.1 Theories on multilingualism

Multilingualism can be understood as people's ability to navigate a complex diversity of languages in social practices (Hodge & Kress 1988, Laursen 2019). Operationally, multilingualism can be understood as knowing and using more than two languages, while at the same time also experiencing a sense of belonging to specific social groups (García & Wei 2014). In educational settings, multilingual approaches can build an important foundation for multilingual learners' opportunities to make meaning in school and in the world.

García (2008) connects the term multilingualism to the term *multilingual awareness*, while at the same time problematising the lack of focus in (American) teacher education on this area. She proposes *translanguaging pedagogy* as a way of providing all learners with equal educational opportunity and building a more just society, arguing that all teacher education programmes must prepare teachers for multilingual education (García et al. 2017). Translanguaging pedagogy can be subdivided into *translanguaging to learn,* which is focused on students' opportunities to draw on available language resources, and *translanguaging to teach,* which focuses on teachers' organisation of teaching practices concerning multilingual students (García & Wei 2014). These themes are expanded into three strands of translanguaging pedagogy: *translanguaging stance, translanguaging design*, and *translanguaging shifts* (García et al. 2017). *Translanguaging*

stance refers to teachers' beliefs that multilingual students have a holistic language repertoire, and their leveraging of students' multilingualism for learning. *Translanguaging design* refers to planning instruction to support students' capacity to engage meaningfully with content, promoting language development and making space for multilingualism. Finally, *translanguaging shifts* refers to the flexibility and responsibility in "moment-to-moment moves" concerning multilingual students' needs (García et al. 2017: 61).

Daugaard & Laursen (2021) discuss translanguaging pedagogy and its possibilities in the Nordic context. They point out, however, that Nordic public school teachers do not have the same opportunities for making use of translanguaging pedagogy, especially translanguaging to teach, as referred to by García & Wei (2014). As the teachers in García and Wei's study work in Spanish and English bilingual contexts, they understand their students' language repertories better than teachers in many Nordic classrooms, where many different language backgrounds are present. In a Nordic context, therefore, it may be preferable to explicitly develop pre-service teachers' opportunities to enact translanguaging pedagogy which supports students' potential for translanguaging to learn (Daugaard & Laursen 2021).

3.2 Semantic gravity: Navigating between theory and practice

In the context of our study, pre-service teachers must demonstrate how they can apply knowledge about multilingualism to pedagogic practice. To trace this, we employ *semantic gravity* from Legitimation Code Theory (LCT) (Maton 2014).

LCT provides a sociological framework for researching and informing practice (Maton 2014), providing powerful analytical tools for revealing what is seen as valued in various contexts. LCT's dimension of *semantics* provides analytical and conceptual tools for making organising principles of *meaning-making* visible (Maton 2014). The semantics dimension includes two concepts, semantic density and semantic gravity, of which semantic gravity is the relevant concept for investigating connections between different levels of context-dependent meaning.

Semantic gravity (SG) refers to "the degree to which meaning relates to its context, and is seen as stronger (+) or weaker (–) along a continuum of strengths" (Maton 2014: 63). Here, the meaning explored is pre-service teachers' knowledge about multilingualism, as expressed in the analysed examination papers. To demonstrate how varying strengths of semantic gravity are enacted in the examination papers analysed, we introduce a so-called *translation device* (Maton & Chen 2016, Maton & Doran 2017), see Table 1.

Table 1: Translation device showing the operationalisation of semantic gravity

Strength of semantic gravity	Descriptor: How each strength of SG manifests in the examination papers	Examples from examination paper 2
Weaker (SG–)	Abstractions, theoretical concepts or ideas concerning multilingualism and names of theorists No direct connections to the data	Recognition of the mother tongue as a resource can contribute to establishing a metalinguistic affordance, which can benefit all students' understanding of languages and linguistic development. (p. 21)
Mid-strength (SG0)	Generalisations about multilingualism/interpretations about multilingualism, multilingual pedagogy and multilingual students	When the Syrian students are given the opportunity to use their mother tongue, they will, [...] take part in filling out the metalinguistic affordance. This [...] could contribute to a more explorative conversation about language (Daugaard 2013: 113–114). (p. 13) Since the explanation has taken place in the mother tongue, the teacher in the case has no way of knowing if the explanation is correct. (p. 12)
Stronger (SG+)	Description of an observation or activity exhibiting multilingualism/excerpt from transcriptions including multilingualism	The teacher's reaction to this is to ask: "Do you know the word in Syrian?" to which student B answers: "I know what you mean, but we don't have a word for it." [...] the teacher turns to student A and says: "oh, so you just explained what it means?" (p. 12)

The left column of the translation device shows semantic gravity as a continuum of relative strengths.[4] Following Kirk (2017), we operate with three relative strengths of semantic gravity: strongest semantic gravity (SG+) at the bottom, mid-strength semantic gravity (SG0) in the middle, and weakest semantic gravity (SG–) at the top of the continuum (see the second column of the translation device, Table 1). The third column provides a descriptor of what characterises each of these strengths of semantic gravity in the context of the examination papers analysed. The fourth column gives examples from the data of each of the three strengths of semantic gravity. For clarity, all the data excerpts in the translation device are from examination paper 2, in which the pre-service teachers analysed a case exploring how micro-scaffolding and including multiple languages in instruction could support multilingual students' language development in upper-primary Danish lessons.

In the context of the examination papers for *Teaching bilingual students*, Meidell Sigsgaard & Jacobsen (2021: 182) defined stronger semantic gravity (SG+) as being "associated with descriptions of teaching materials, cases, teaching plans, activity descriptions and/or excerpts of dialogue from the classroom and can include quotes from transcriptions…". Working from this point of departure and with an eye for meanings relating to multilingualism, stronger semantic gravity (SG+) refers to pre-service teachers demonstrating knowledge of multilingualism closely related to the context of their analysed data. This happens, for example, when pre-service teachers include a transcript of a teacher talking to a student referring to aspects of multilingual/linguistic awareness or incorporating multiple languages. An example of this is seen in the excerpt from the analysis section of paper 2, where the pre-service teachers summarise what they observed in a lesson: "The teacher's reaction to this is to ask: 'Do you know the word in Syrian?'" (see the bottom row of the translation device); including a description of an incident from the observed lesson, and a quote in which the observed teacher refers to a students' native language is an example of stronger semantic gravity (SG+) in the examination paper.

Conversely, weaker semantic gravity (SG−) is seen when the pre-service teachers "directly name theories and models which they have learned about throughout the course, such as when [...] students name concepts and terms from theories of (second) language and literacy development" (Meidell Sigsgaard & Jacobsen 2021: 183). In the context of this chapter, weaker semantic gravity is when pre-service teachers demonstrate understandings of multilingualism that are less

[4]LCT conventions prescribe placing the strongest semantic gravity at the bottom and weakest semantic gravity at the top of the continuum (see e.g. Maton 2014: 111).

context-dependent. This occurs when pre-service teachers refer to theoretical concepts of multilingual language development or pedagogy such as translanguaging, often with reference to relevant literature in the form of a citation. An example of this can be seen in the top row of the translation device, when the authors refer to theoretically informed perspectives on multilingualism, referring to "…the mother tongue as a resource" and connecting it to another theoretical term, in this case, "metalinguistic affordance". Here, the pre-service teachers are making a claim about multilingualism which is not related to the context of their data, thus exhibiting weaker semantic gravity (SG–).

The mid-strength section of semantic gravity scale (SG0) refers to "…meanings which generalise over specific episodes or illustrations, but which are not entirely abstracted from a contextual base" (Kirk 2017: 4). In this chapter, mid-strength semantic gravity can be seen when pre-service teachers make generalisations or interpret their data. An example of this occurs when the authors of paper 2 suggest that giving Syrian students the opportunity to use their mother tongue can help foster other students' curiosity and contribute to more explorative conversations about language (see the middle row in the translation device). Here, the pre-service students are making a generalisation based on their specific pedagogical context (referring to the Syrian and other students in the observed class), as well as interpreting this generalisation by connecting it to theoretical concepts (the terms *scaffolding* and *metalinguistic affordance*). The mid-strength section of the semantic gravity scale also includes pre-service teachers interpreting their data, as seen in the other example in the SG0 row above, where the authors write: "Since the explanation has taken place in the mother tongue, the teacher in the case has no way of knowing if the explanation is correct". Mid-strength semantic gravity (SG0) is seen in the examination papers when the authors interpret their data or make generalisations.

It is important to note that the classifiers stronger (+) and weaker (–) used with semantic gravity do not carry positive or negative connotations: the "+" simply refers to a relatively stronger semantic gravity (SG+) (i.e., a greater degree of context-dependence), and vice versa, with "–" denoting less context-dependent meanings or a weaker semantic gravity (SG–). Semantic gravity analysis reveals variations in context-dependence in a text. In the context of this chapter, we use semantic gravity to show how pre-service teachers demonstrate their understanding of multilingualism, and how they are able to link between theory and practice in their written exams. Such analysis allows us to see how pre-service teachers are able to interpret specific pedagogic practice by referring to theory (i.e. can they link specific examples of pedagogic practice with theoretical perspectives, moving from stronger semantic gravity to weaker semantic gravity),

and conversely, how convincingly they can implement these theoretical perspectives to inform pedagogic practice (moving from weaker semantic gravity to stronger semantic gravity). As in other studies of English for Academic Purposes and reflective writing, successful analyses and discussions include so-called *semantic waves* in which different strengths of semantic gravity are woven together (Kirk 2017, Meidell Sigsgaard & Jacobsen 2021, Tilakaratna & Szenes 2021).

4 Method and steps in the analytical process

To explore pre-service teachers' understandings of multilingualism we contacted all the teacher educators teaching the obligatory course *Teaching bilingual students* and asked them to forward all successful examination papers that had a focus on multilingualism from 2020 and 2021. Our aim was to collect examination papers where pre-service teachers explored, reflected on and implemented multilingual students' diverse linguistic repertoires as a resource for learning. Based on our own experience as teacher educators of this course, however, we anticipated finding only few such examples. Our teacher educator colleagues confirmed that hunch in their responses, commenting that multilingualism and/or multilingual pedagogies were not common topics chosen by the pre-service teachers for their examination papers. Of the examination papers collected (see Table 2 for an overview of the examination papers collected and their topics), only those which mentioned multilingualism in the problem statement of the paper or made explicit use of multilingual approaches, e.g., in their "Suggestions for Pedagogic Practice" section, were included in our study. This resulted in a dataset of only five examination papers.[5]

The analysis was completed in two phases. The first phase addresses the first research question: How do pre-service teachers demonstrate understandings of multilingualism in their written examination papers for the obligatory teacher education course, *Teaching bilingual students*, in Danish teacher education? In this phase we identified and categorised pre-service teachers' understandings of multilingualism (described in Section 5.1). The second phase uses semantic gravity to explore the degree to which pre-service teachers demonstrate their ideas for implementing multilingualism approaches in practice, thus addressing research question 2 (Section 5.2).

Inspired by the theoretically informed perspectives on multilingualism and in particular by translanguaging pedagogy as described in Section 3.1, four cate-

[5]All authors of the collected examination papers were informed about the research purpose, and all have provided written permission for the use of their examination papers in this study.

Table 2: An overview of the collected examination papers

Paper	Subject	#A[a]	Problem statement, concerning additional language didactics
1	Danish	3	How can a teacher scaffold both academically and socially the transition from the reception class, i.e. sheltered Danish instruction, to mainstream instruction classes?
2	Danish	2	How can a teacher, through micro-scaffolding and the inclusion of multiple languages in their teaching, support multilingual students 'development from everyday language to subject-specific language in the subject Danish in upper primary school classes?
3	Arts	1	How can arts education, specifically initial interpretation and analysis, support language development in both mono- and multilingual students?
4	Danish	2	Which challenges can be identified in the Clio-unit[b] "Managing the instructive text" with regard to multilingual students' academic and linguistic development, and how may the unit be reframed so these challenges are minimised while simultaneously strengthening a resource perspective on multilingualism in the classroom?
5	Mathematics	2	How does the unit on "Angles"[c] fit into the Pedagogic Register model? What kind of challenges may this have for multilingual students' learning, and how can we restructure the unit in order to accommodate these challenges?

[a]Number of authors (pre-service teachers).

[b]Clio is a publisher of digital teaching materials, part of Alinea Publishing, offering topics in many school subjects online for subscription members. Many Danish schools subscribe to Clio and other digital teaching materials platforms.

[c]The unit on "Angles" refers to a chapter from a Mathematics textbook, which the authors of paper 4 analysed.

gories of knowledge about multilingualism were identified in the examination papers, in the first phase of analysis:

1. referencing multilingualism and literature on and related to multilingualism,
2. theoretically informed arguments including multilingualism and multilingual pedagogies,
3. analyses of cases and/or teaching materials from a multilingual perspective, and
4. examples of teaching/learning activities including multilingualism and/or multilingual approaches.

All four categories reveal different aspects of pre-service teachers' knowledge about multilingualism. The first two categories reflect pre-service teachers' translanguaging stance while the last two reflect translanguaging pedagogy from the perspective of translanguaging design and translanguaging shifts. The last category also connects to translanguaging to learn and translanguaging to teach.

Because we are also interested in determining how pre-service teachers express their ideas for implementing their theoretical knowledge about multilingualism in pedagogic practice, we completed a second analysis phase using semantic gravity, thus addressing the second research question: To what degree are they able to link theoretical understandings with examples of pedagogic practice? This phase of analysis focused on the two sections of the examination papers where students must transform their theoretical knowledge into pedagogic practice, i.e., the analysis section and the suggestions for pedagogic practice section.

Applying semantic gravity analysis to all examination papers' *analysis* section gives us insight into how well pre-service teachers are able to interpret pedagogic practices using theories on multilingualism. Semantic gravity analysis of each examination papers' *suggestions for pedagogic practice* section demonstrates pre-service teachers' ability to recontextualise in writing their knowledge of theories on multilingualism in terms of future pedagogic practice. Although such analysis does not demonstrate how well these pre-service teachers actually teach, the semantic gravity analysis does allow us to draw some conclusions about how well they understand theories of multilingualism and multilingual pedagogy, and their ability to describe how they could apply these in pedagogic practice.

5 Analyses and results

This section presents our two analyses and related findings. First, we present analysis and findings from examining the examination papers for understandings of multilingualism, and in doing so comment on their connection to translanguaging pedagogy. Second, we examine the pre-service teachers' reported ability to implement multilingualism and multilingual approaches from the perspective of semantic gravity.

5.1 Exploring the examination papers for understandings of multilingualism

All five examination papers from our dataset include examples of the pre-service teachers demonstrating knowledge concerning multilingualism (category 1). This is seen, for example, when pre-service teachers define their use of terms connected to multilingualism, as seen here:

> In this examination paper we have chosen to use the term multilingual students rather than bilingual [students], given the fact that students with mother tongues other than Danish have very different language profiles (Knudsen & Wulff 2017: 3) […], therefore, [we] speak of multilingual students in order to capture all the differences in the language use of the individual student […]. (Paper 5, p. 3)

All five papers also demonstrate theoretically informed arguments including multilingualism and multilingual pedagogies (category 2). This is seen, for example, when pre-service teachers explain the reason for choosing a theoretical term or position, as in the following:

> We are using García and Wei's notion of translanguaging which must be understood as a pedagogical praxis where one acknowledges the linguistic repertoire of the students and makes use of them in teaching in order to strengthen their participation and learning (Holmen & Thise 2019: 14). (Paper 5, p. 3)

Four of the five collected papers included analyses of cases and/or teaching materials from a multilingual perspective (category 3). That this category was missing in paper 5 can, perhaps, be explained by the fact that the pre-service teachers of that paper analysed Danish teaching materials which did not incorporate or make room for other languages. The other four papers all include analyses of teacher-student interactions and/or teaching materials in which other

languages were used or talked about. An example of this category can be seen in the following citation from an analysis of teacher-student interaction:

> Muhammed will probably be left with the feeling that multilingualism in this class is not viewed as a resource. The class discussions are, as previously mentioned, conducted solely in Danish – a monolingual classroom. (Paper 1, p. 15)

Concerning category 4, examples of teaching/learning activities including multilingualism, the overall picture varied. All five examination papers included some suggestions for allowing students to make use of their full linguistic repertoire in classroom activities. These varied, however, on a wide spectrum from optional (as when allowing students to make use of their mother tongue in the classroom on their own initiative) to necessary (as when using other languages is essential for completing an activity). When using other languages is necessary for completing an activity, we see this as an example of translanguaging to teach.

In the following example from the *suggestions for pedagogic practice* section of examination paper 4, the pre-service teachers suggest that the students make use of their "strongest" language. This suggestion falls somewhere in the middle of the spectrum from optional to necessary, and is suggestive of more of a translanguaging to learn activity:

> After the short individual thinking-time, the students must be given e.g. 2 minutes to talk to their partner about the answer. Here it is once again possible to make use of grouping students with the same strongest language who can work together. After this the whole class can answer (Podcast n.d.). The method gives more and better answers, because the students have been given the time to think and to formulate their thoughts […], and the important thing about the pyramid model is that thinking-time and room for the students' own languages is given (Podcast n.d.). In this way, the method supports the resource-perspective on multilingualism in the class. (Paper 4, p. 15)

In contrast to the above example, two of the examination papers demonstrated examples of multilingual approaches (also category 4) leaning more towards the necessary end of the spectrum. In both of these cases, the pre-service teachers included activities involving students' parents (and the languages spoken at home) as a necessary resource for learning. An example of this is seen in paper 4, where the pre-service teachers include the activity known as *conversation homework* as a valuable learning activity for multilingual children:

> In order to further support translanguaging and a resource-perspective in general, one could consider using conversation homework as an element. The students could, for example, instruct their parents (or other significant adults) [in their home language] in the same or similar assignment as they themselves carried out during the "action" phase activities […]. (Paper 4, p. 13)

Analysing the dataset from the perspective of the four categories of multilingualism shown here provides an initial overview of pre-service teachers' understandings of multilingualism in the context of teaching in the mainstream classroom. In all five papers, pre-service teachers demonstrate an emerging translanguaging stance in that they all have examples of category 1 when referencing multilingualism and literature related to multilingualism. An emerging translanguaging stance is also detectible in that all five papers also include theoretically informed arguments including multilingualism and multilingual pedagogies (category 2). Finding these in the examination papers suggests that the authors of all five papers demonstrate a theoretically underpinned understanding of multilingualism, where multilingualism is seen as a resource for student learning.

Translanguaging design and translanguaging shifts, however, were demonstrated less clearly. Analyses of cases and/or teaching materials from a multilingual perspective (category 3) only appeared in those examination papers which analysed teacher-student interactions in which multilingual students were involved. Category 4 was the least convincing category, in that the examples of teaching/learning activities including multilingualism and/or multilingual approaches included were often optional and up to students' own initiative rather than an integral part of the teaching activities suggested. This implies pre-service teachers are more able to implement translanguaging to learn and less translanguaging to teach.

Analysis based on the four categories of multilingualism indicates that the pre-service teachers do demonstrate understandings of multilingualism as a resource for learning from a theoretical or logical point of view. The four categories did not, however, provide adequate nuance for determining *to what degree* pre-service teachers can describe how they would apply their theoretical knowledge in pedagogic practice. For this we turn to the semantic gravity analysis.

5.2 Weaving together theory with pedagogic practice: Semantic gravity analysis and results

In the first stage of analysis (above), we identified where in their examination papers the pre-service teachers referred to multilingualism and multilingual ap-

proaches. Conclusions based on that first stage of analysis were unclear in terms of how the pre-service teachers implemented multilingual approaches in their own reported and/or predicted practice. In this section of the chapter, therefore, we look more closely at the examples of multilingualism identified in categories 3 (analyses of cases and/or teaching materials from a multilingual perspective) and 4 (examples of teaching/learning activities including multilingualism and/or multilingual approaches) from the perspective of semantic gravity. In the examination papers these occur in the *analysis* and *suggestions for pedagogic practice* sections, respectively.

Analysing pre-service teachers' understandings of multilingualism from the perspective of semantic gravity reveals both their ability to interpret examples of practice from a theoretical point of view, and their potential ability to implement theoretically informed perspectives on multilingualism in their pedagogic practice. The identified examples of category 3 (in the analysis section) were analysed and categorised into the three strengths of semantic gravity. An example can be seen here from paper 2, where the pre-service teachers analyse an observed interaction between multilingual students and a teacher:

> When the teacher turns to student A and says: "well, so you've just explained what that means?" **[SG+]**, she actually engages in a completely different and new conversation **[SG0]**, which moves on a more metalinguistic level (Knudsen & Wulff 2021: 28) **[SG–]**. (Paper 2, p. 12)[6]

In the example above, the beginning of the sentence up to and including the quote is coded as stronger semantic gravity (SG+), as it refers directly to an observation of pedagogic practice. The second part of the sentence makes an interpretation of what happened, commenting on how what the teacher said can be understood in terms of how conversations flow and what is being talked about. This is therefore coded with mid-strength semantic gravity (SG0). The last part of the sentence makes specific reference to literature in which multilingualism is described and includes both a theoretical term *metalinguistic understanding* and a literature reference (Knudsen & Wulff 2021). Here, the pre-service teachers refer to theoretical understandings of multilingualism, demonstrating weaker semantic gravity (SG–).

[6]To demonstrate the semantic gravity coding in this and the following examples, we have added our coding directly in the quote from the examination papers using bolded square brackets. For example, the first **[SG+]** in this example refers to the semantic gravity strength of the text up to the square bracket, "When the teacher turns to student A and says: 'well, so you've just explained what that means?'".

Seeing all three strengths of semantic gravity as in the example above makes for a more convincing demonstration of the pre-service teachers' ability to interpret pedagogic practice from theoretical perspectives on multilingualism. To show how often these manifest in the collected dataset, the following table lists the number of instances of each strength of semantic gravity for each examination paper's analysis section.

Table 3: Semantic gravity (SG) in understandings of multilingualism in the examination (analysis)

SG strength	Paper 1	Paper 2	Paper 3	Paper 4	Paper 5
SG–	7	5	1	1	0
SG0	10	22	3	7	0
SG+	2	10	2	0	0

Table 3 shows that two of the examination papers (4 and 5) do not include examples of stronger semantic gravity (SG+) in their analysis section. While paper 5 does mention translanguaging in its theory section, this theoretical perspective is not used to analyse their data. As a result, paper 5 shows no instances on the semantic gravity scale above. In contrast, paper 4 does implement multilingualism in the analysis section. As the table shows, however, the bulk of their understandings of multilingualism are in the mid-strength level of semantic gravity (SG0). When concerning multilingualism, their analysis section includes mostly generalisations such as the following:

> It is not at any point considered in the activities that multilingual students who have limited linguistic competence in the new language can benefit from using their strongest language **[SG0]**, which would give them a better opportunity for learning, as expressed in the following quote. "[…] By including the students' strongest language, the students get other opportunities […] to enter into a dialogue with the academic material. This provides better opportunities for learning […]" (Holmen & Thise 2020: 95) **[SG–]**. (Paper 4, p. 10)[7]

Although the authors of paper 4, in the example above, do connect to translanguaging theory by including a quote from relevant literature, they do not make

[7]Part of the citation included by the authors of paper 4 has been omitted.

an explicit connection to their data. This makes for a less convincing demonstration of the pre-service teachers' ability to interpret pedagogic practice and leaves it up to the examiner to trust both that this summary is true and that the interpretation of the data holds.

Similarly, the suggestions for pedagogic practice section of the examination paper also provides opportunities for the pre-service students to demonstrate their understandings of multilingualism (category 4) by writing about how they would implement theory in the practice of teaching a specific school subject. Table 4 below shows the strengths of semantic gravity of each occurrence of understandings of multilingualism identified in the papers' suggestions for pedagogic practice sections.

Table 4: Semantic gravity (SG) in understandings of multilingualism in the examination (pedagogic practice)

SG strength	Paper 1	Paper 2	Paper 3	Paper 4	Paper 5
SG–	8	3	2	6	3
SG0	9	5	3	6	3
SG+	9	4	0	3	2

An example of this can be seen in paper 5, where the pre-service teachers describe an activity. They want the students to perform, generalise and interpret the activity, and finish with a reference to translanguaging theory:

> Last but not least, we will give the students the task of going home and showing their parents, siblings or others the video from our action phase activity – without sound **[SG+]**. In this way, the teacher can once again utilise translanguaging by having the multilingual students explain what is happening in their own language **[SG0]**, and the teaching thus integrates multilingualism **[SG0]** – it is not about knowing the most technical words in Danish, but about communicating about something they have learned in a language in which they feel safe at home (Holmen & Thise 2019) **[SG–]**. (Paper 5, p. 17)

This example starts with stronger semantic gravity (SG+) in that it gives a fairly concrete description of a so-called "conversation homework" activity, in which students must talk with their parents about a video seen in class. This is followed by two sentences at mid-strength semantic gravity: first a sentence

generalising how the activity is an example of a multilingual activity, followed by a sentence offering an interpretation of what such an activity can mean in terms of activating students' multilingual repertoire. The last sentence, starting with "– it is not about knowing", connects their generalisation and interpretation to an aspect of translanguaging pedagogy (feeling safe) with a literature reference to Holmen & Thise (2019).

In comparison, the pre-service teacher in the following example does not make use of stronger semantic gravity when making a suggestion for pedagogic practice:

> In the keyword dialogue activity, the inclusion of English is suggested **[SG0]**. This could also open up to other languages, thereby increasing the opportunity for multilinguals to contribute, which could increase the diversity of found images **[SG0]**. This speaks to Holmen & Thise's thesis that multilingualism can be a resource for students and for teaching **[SG–]**. (Paper 3, p. 13)

Unlike the previous example from paper 5, this suggestion from examination paper 3 does not include a concrete description of the activity suggested. The authors only refer to the *keyword dialogue activity* from their analysis section without expanding on it. The pre-service teacher could have presented more details about how including English and other languages could be implemented, for example, by providing a list of relevant English keywords for the students to use in their search, or by asking students to brainstorm keywords in any other known (to them) languages and translate these prior to searching. Such examples would have strengthened the semantic gravity and made a more convincing demonstration in writing of the pre-service teachers' potential ability to implement a multilingual approach in their teaching.

Our semantic gravity analysis of the collected examination papers' *analysis* section and the *suggestions for pedagogic practice* section shows that all five papers include references to literature about multilingualism. In the examination papers, pre-service teachers thus demonstrate that they are able to make less context-dependent meanings about multilingualism (SG–). Furthermore, they demonstrate an ability to generalise about multilingual theories and interpret their data from multilingual perspectives, displaying mid-strength semantic gravity (SG0). However, describing how they would implement this theoretical knowledge in practice, describing concrete examples of multilingual practices in classrooms (SG+) is less prevalent in the examination papers analysed.

As seen above, both the *analysis* sections and the *suggestions for pedagogic practice* sections of the papers contain relatively few examples of stronger semantic gravity (SG+), compared to the other two strengths of semantic gravity. This suggests that the pre-service teachers may face challenges in operationalising their understandings of multilingualism and incorporating elements of e.g. translanguaging to learn and translanguaging to teach (García et al. 2017) in their future practice. While referencing theory and making generalisations about its usefulness in an educational context is necessary for demonstrating comprehension of a concept such as translanguaging, not including concrete examples of what it could look like in an educational setting results in less convincing examination papers.

6 Discussion and conclusion

For most pre-service teachers, the *Teaching bilingual students* course is the only one in their degree programme which requires them to learn about multilingual students' learning prerequisites. It is arguably also the only course which explicitly positions students' multilingualism as a resource. The course content draws on fields including but not limited to linguistics, pedagogy, literacy development, cultural studies and language education. The teacher educators teaching this course are experts in additional language teaching and learning rather than in teaching subjects (Mathematics, Science, History etc.) or the core pedagogy subjects of the teaching degree programme. It is up to the pre-service teachers themselves, therefore, to do the work of integrating theories of, for example, multilingualism, from the *Teaching bilingual students* course with the teaching of their chosen subjects. That, combined with the fact that the course is obligatory for all pre-service teachers, makes it unique in a Nordic context. Further research in the Nordic context of teacher education would be valuable, for example in comparing how multilingualism and linguistic diversities are included in pre-service teachers' degree programmes, with the purpose of examining the relevance of promoting equal and democratic learning opportunities for all students in both general instruction as well as within each subject.

When teaching the obligatory teacher education course *Teaching bilingual students*, we occasionally experienced opposition from the pre-service teachers. A common challenge for pre-service teachers is accepting that students' diverse language repertoires can be activated in subject teaching as a way of supporting development of both students' subject content knowledge as well their linguistic competencies. While such an understanding of multilingualism is well

supported by research in the fields of additional language education (Daugaard & Dewilde 2017, García et al. 2017, Schleppegrell 2002), changing the mindsets of pre-service teachers who believe that multilingual students are in some way deficient (Kristjánsdóttir 2006, 2011, Laursen 2019) proves challenging (Jaspers 2022).

While our study cannot answer the question of whether the *Teaching bilingual students* course has changed any pre-service teachers' perceptions on multilingualism towards a more additive perspective, some interesting insights may nonetheless be gained. One of the aims of this chapter was to investigate the degree to which established concepts from the field of additional language education (in this case, multilingualism) are taken up, understood and operationalised by pre-service teachers in their examination papers. The fact that only very few pre-service teachers choose to focus on this aspect in their examination papers, combined with the findings presented above, gives us as teacher educators cause for reflection and suggests that this perspective is either not very well understood by the pre-service teachers and/or otherwise under-prioritised as a useful perspective. This suggests that knowledge about translanguaging and seeing multilingualism as a resource for learning is not common among pre-service teachers and could therefore be strengthened in their degree programme. This gives teacher educators food for thought in that this knowledge is indeed something we wish our pre-service teachers to develop.

As our first phase of analysis shows, those pre-service teachers who chose to include a multilingual perspective in their examination papers do recognise the value of multilingualism as a tool for supporting students' subject learning. Our second analysis phase shows, however, that their operationalisation of this perspective into pedagogical practice is less convincing (see also Alisaari et al. 2025 [this volume], Heikkola et al. 2025 [this volume], Iversen et al. 2025 [this volume]).

While in this chapter we have looked at one specific theoretical perspective (multilingualism) from a relatively small educational field (additional language education), the findings from our semantic gravity analysis are more far-reaching. This kind of analysis of pre-service teachers' writing is more broadly relevant for educators in any professional field requiring practitioners to reflect on practice in a theoretically informed way. Examining how convincingly students demonstrate understandings of relevant theoretical concepts in their writing and how they apply these understandings to real scenarios is not limited to the case of teacher education. Nevertheless, studies in Denmark (Nielsen et al. 2006) as well as internationally (Calderhead 1987, Le Cornu & Ewing 2008, Rusznyak 2021) show that it is often difficult for students to do this convincingly.

Our study confirms results of previous research, suggesting that students' abilities to "weave together" various levels of context-dependent understandings can provide convincing demonstrations of reflective thinking (Hood 2016, Kirk 2017, Szenes et al. 2015). Our findings provide teacher educators with a tool for reflecting on pre-service teachers' reported understandings of a central theoretical perspective (multilingualism as an additive perspective) in our field, and can be useful in terms of deciding how to (re-)focus on this perspective in our teaching. This perspective will be useful in the coming years with the implementation of the latest teacher education reform in Denmark, in which a greater emphasis is placed on pre-service teachers' practicum, requiring pre-service teachers to spend more time in practice while continuing to require reflecting on practice through theoretical perspectives.

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Chapter 6

Norwegian pre-service teachers' orientations, knowledge and skills regarding multilingualism

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In this chapter, we investigate 106 Norwegian pre-service teachers' views and experience with multilingualism from different stages of their teacher education and from four different teacher education institutions. The data were collected as part of three recent doctoral studies (Fylkesnes 2019, Iversen 2020, Thomassen 2021) and consist primarily of focus group and individual interviews. Drawing on Lucas & Villegas' (2011, 2013) framework for preparing linguistically responsive teachers, we focus our analytical attention on what orientations, knowledge and skills the pre-service teachers demonstrate. Our analysis indicates that pre-service teachers generally have the fundamental orientations necessary for linguistically responsive teaching, yet they seem to lack the necessary pedagogical knowledge and skills needed to enact these orientations in their teaching. Based on our findings, we argue that Norwegian teacher education needs to put greater emphasis on developing pre-service teachers' pedagogical knowledge and skills if they are to enact linguistically responsive teaching.

1 Introduction

Since the teacher education reform of 2010 (Ministry of Education and Research 2010, 2016), Norwegian teacher education has increasingly emphasised educating teachers for working with multilingual and emergent multilingual learners.

Jonas Yassin Iversen, Wenche Elisabeth Thomassen & Sandra Fylkesnes. 2025. Norwegian pre-service teachers' orientations, knowledge and skills regarding multilingualism. In Anne Reath Warren, Jonas Yassin Iversen & Boglárka Straszer (eds.), *Teacher education for working in linguistically diverse classrooms: Nordic perspectives*, 127–149. Berlin: Language Science Press. DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.15280903

Between 2013 and 2017, this attention towards multilingualism in teacher education was supported through a state-funded initiative referred to as "Competence for diversity" (The Norwegian Association of Higher Education Institutions 2016). This initiative was meant to support teacher educators in their efforts to realise the ambitions of preparing pre-service teachers for the multicultural and multilingual reality of today's classrooms, described in national guidelines (The Norwegian Association of Higher Education Institutions 2016) and regulations (Ministry of Education and Research 2010, 2016).

Nonetheless, researchers have continued to identify a concerning lack of attention towards multilingualism and pre-service teachers have continued to report limited knowledge about multilingualism and lacking skills to teach multilingual and emergent multilingual learners (Dyrnes et al. 2015, Randen et al. 2015, Skrefsrud & Østberg 2015, The Evaluation Group 2015). Over a decade since the teacher education reform of 2010 was implemented, the question still remains whether the emphasis on educating teachers for working with multilingual and emergent multilingual learners has led to the education of linguistically responsive teachers. This is investigated though the following research question: What orientations, knowledge and skills about multilingualism do Norwegian pre-service teachers demonstrate?

In order to answer this research question, we analyse empirical data from three recent doctoral studies (Fylkesnes 2019, Iversen 2020, Thomassen 2021) in light of Lucas & Villegas' (2011, 2013) framework for preparing linguistically responsive teachers. In conclusion, we discuss what potential and limitations in Norwegian teacher education's preparation of pre-service teachers for multilingual classroom can be identified from our findings. Our concern is not to assess the individual pre-service teachers' orientations, knowledge, nor skills. Rather, our concern is to investigate to what degree Norwegian teacher education is able to educate linguistically responsive teachers.

2 Background and previous research

In Norway, primary and lower secondary school teacher education programmes are integrated five-year master's programmes regulated by the government through national guidelines (The Norwegian Association of Higher Education Institutions 2016) and regulations (Ministry of Education and Research 2016). Together these guidelines and regulations contribute to a rigorous standardisation of teacher education programmes across institutions. Up until the 2010 teacher education reform, a four-year general teacher education prepared teachers to

work at all levels throughout primary and lower secondary education (grades 1–10), and to teach across all subjects. However, the 2010 teacher education reform divided the general teacher education into two separate programmes, thus qualifying teachers either for teaching in grades 1–7, or 5–10. In 2017 an additional reform was implemented. This reform extended both teacher education programmes from four-year programmes to five-year master's programmes (Ministry of Education and Research 2016).

The year before the implementation of the latest reform, the Norwegian government-appointed expert group on the teacher role argued that it was necessary to continue to improve the presence of multicultural perspectives and Norwegian as a second language across all subjects within teacher education (Dahl et al. 2016). The expert group's call for improving the multicultural focus within teacher education was based on research on how teacher education programmes and teacher educators had met the burgeoning diversity in the student population. This research had not been reassuring in the sense that teacher educators had reported that they were struggling to adapt to the multilingual reality (Randen et al. 2015), and that there was a lack of awareness about issues relating to multiculturalism and multilingualism within teacher education (Dyrnes et al. 2015). Furthermore, research suggested that diversity has been given limited attention within the different subjects of teacher education (Skrefsrud & Østberg 2015), and that many pre-service teachers felt unqualified to work with multilingual and multicultural students (The Evaluation Group 2015).

Despite these findings, the policy documents presented above suggest an emergent tendency to acknowledge the multilingualism found in Norwegian society at large, and in schools. This is most prominent in the national guidelines and regulations for teacher education (Ministry of Education and Research 2016, The Norwegian Association of Higher Education Institutions 2016). As part of the 2017 reform, a revised version of the national guidelines (The Norwegian Association of Higher Education Institutions 2016) and regulations for the teacher education programmes were adopted (Ministry of Education and Research 2016). These regulations state that pre-service teachers should acquire "comprehensive knowledge about children's development, education and learning in different social, linguistic and cultural contexts"[1] (Ministry of Education and Research 2016). In the national guidelines for teacher education (both 1–7 and 5–10), there are also some relevant learning outcomes for different subjects, but they are still rather general and superficial. For examples, the guidelines for mathematics (1–7) state

[1]All quotes from Norwegian policy documents have been translated from Norwegian into English by the authors.

that "teaching should be adapted to the different needs of students, where the different cultural, linguistic and social backgrounds should both be taken into account but also considered a resource" (Ministry of Education and Research 2016: 23). The most concrete guidelines are described in the subject of Norwegian, where it is stated that students should have "knowledge about language and identity, Norwegian as a second language and multilingual practice" and also have knowledge about how to assess language competence (Ministry of Education and Research 2016: 28). With this context in mind, it is hence necessary to explore whether the increased emphasis on educating pre-service teachers for working with multilingual and emergent multilingual learners has led to the education of linguistically responsive teachers in Norway.

Internationally, there is an extensive body of research that focuses on pre-service teachers' knowledge – or lack thereof – about teaching multilingual students or second language learners (Acquah & Szelei 2020, Acquah et al. 2020, Anderson & Stillman 2013, Bravo et al. 2014, Groulx & Silva 2010, Tandon et al. 2017, Villegas et al. 2018). Recent studies have produced promising findings regarding in- and pre-service teachers' attitudes and beliefs concerning multilingualism in education (Duarte & Günther-van der Meij 2022, Paulsrud et al. 2023, Schroedler et al. 2023, Thoma 2022). Studies also find that pre-service teachers' positive beliefs do tend to lead to more multilingual practices in the classroom (Kirsch et al. 2020, Palviainen et al. 2016, Schroedler & Fischer 2020). Despite a comprehensive review by Villegas et al. (2018) confirming that there are many studies on pre-service teachers' *beliefs* about multilingualism, it also points out that these studies frequently lack a concern for how to prepare pre-service teachers to analyse the language demands embedded in academic text and learning tasks. The tendency to focus on in- and pre-service teachers' beliefs related to multilingualism, rather than practices, has persisted in recent research in the field (Aleksić & Bebić-Crestany 2023, Döll & Guldenschuh 2022, Duarte & Günther-van der Meij 2022, Paulsrud et al. 2023, Thoma 2022). Consequently, pre-service teachers might become insecure about how to translate positive beliefs about multilingualism into their own teaching practice (Schroedler et al. 2023). In conclusion, Villegas et al. (2018) therefore argue that there is a need for pre-service teachers to be provided with knowledge about a) second language learning and b) the comprehensible input students receive, as well as c) the differences between everyday language and academic language. Furthermore, quite a few studies that focus on how teacher education can better prepare pre-service teachers for working with multilingual students highlight the importance of providing pre-service teachers with sound opportunities to meet, teach and practice with emergent multilingual learners in multilingual and multicultural classroom settings (Bravo et al. 2014,

Groulx & Silva 2010) and to model culturally responsive teaching (Acquah & Szelei 2020).

3 Theoretical framework

As pointed out in the previous section, much research has explored pre-service teachers' preparedness for teaching multilingual and emergent multilingual students. Several researchers have attempted to summarise key insights from this research and identify what knowledge and skills pre-service teachers need to have in order to provide quality education for multilingual students. For instance, Howard & Aleman (2008) concluded that pre-service teachers need knowledge of "subject matter and pedagogical content knowledge, knowledge of effective practice about teaching in diverse settings and development of a critical consciousness". A widely recognised framework summarising the expertise of linguistically responsive teachers was developed by Lucas & Villegas (2013). This framework has been applied in teacher education research in diverse settings over the course of the past decade (cf. Alisaari et al. 2025 [this volume], Heikkola et al. 2025 [this volume], Tandon et al. 2017).

In their framework, Lucas & Villegas (2013) have included three orientations and four types of pedagogical knowledge and skills they see as fundamental for linguistically responsive teaching. The framework was originally developed to assess teacher preparedness to teach "English language learners" in the US context. The framework was not intended to be used as a formula for teacher educators, but rather developed as an attempt to combine central insights from the field of second language learning. In this chapter, when applying Lucas and Villegas' framework for preparing linguistically responsive teachers to a Norwegian context, we have replaced the concept *English language learners* with García's (2009: 60) concept *multilingual* and *emergent multilingual learners*. Following García's (2009) conceptualisation of multilingual and emergent multilingual learners, we use these concepts in order to accentuate that students who are in the process of acquiring the language of instruction (i.e. emergent multilinguals) bring a wide repertoire of linguistic resources with them to school and that students who already have acquired high proficiency in the language of instruction (e.g. multilinguals) also benefit from linguistically responsive teaching (e.g., García 2009).

Lucas & Villegas (2013: 101) first describe what they refer to as three fundamental orientations necessary for linguistically responsive teaching. They define orientations as "inclinations or tendencies toward particular ideas and actions, influenced by attitudes and beliefs" (Lucas & Villegas 2011: 56, 101). According

to Lucas & Villegas (2013: 101), the three fundamental orientations necessary for linguistically responsive teaching are:

- *Sociolinguistic consciousness:* An understanding that language, culture, and identity are deeply interconnected, and an awareness of the sociopolitical dimensions of language use and language education.
- *Value for linguistic diversity:* Knowledge of key psycholinguistic, sociolinguistic, and sociocultural processes involved in learning a second language, and of ways to use that knowledge to inform instruction.
- *Inclination to advocate for multilingual and emergent multilingual learners:* Understanding of the need to take action to improve multilingual and emergent multilingual learners' access to social and political capital and educational opportunities, and willingness to do so.

Furthermore, Lucas & Villegas (2013: 101–102) describe four elements of pedagogical knowledge and skills they consider fundamental for linguistically responsive teaching. They define knowledge and skills as "the complex and interconnected disciplinary knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, knowledge of learners, and pedagogical skills needed by successful teachers" (Lucas & Villegas 2011: 56). These knowledge and skills are:

- *A repertoire of strategies for learning about the linguistic and academic backgrounds of multilingual and emergent multilingual learners in the language of instruction and their native languages:* Understanding of the importance of knowing about the backgrounds and experiences of multilinguals and emergent multilingual learners, and knowledge of strategies for learning about them.
- *An understanding of and ability to apply key principles of second language learning:* Knowledge of key psycholinguistic, sociolinguistic, and sociocultural processes involved in learning a second language, and of ways to use that knowledge to inform instruction.
- *Ability to identify the language demands of classroom tasks*: Skills for determining the linguistic features of academic subjects and activities likely to pose challenges for multilinguals and emergent multilingual learners, including identifying key vocabulary, understanding syntactic and semantic features of academic language, and the linguistic expectations for successful completion of tasks.

- *A repertoire of strategies for scaffolding instruction for multilingual and emergent multilingual learners:* Ability to apply temporary supports to provide multilingual and emergent multilingual learners with access to learning the language of instruction and content taught in this language, including using extralinguistic supports such as visuals and hands-on activities; supplementing written and oral text with study guides, translation, and redundancy in instruction; and providing clear and explicit instructions.

As stated earlier, Lucas and Villegas' framework was primarily developed to meet the needs of *emergent* multilingual students. When we expand the use of the framework to include multilingual learners in general, this can potentially raise some issues that need to be addressed. In line with other researchers focusing on multilingual learners, we argue that sociolinguistic consciousness, appreciation of linguistic diversity, and an inclination to advocate for multilingual and emergent multilingual learners is also fundamental for students who are not in a process of learning a language of instruction (García & Kleyn 2016, García & Wei 2014). All multilingual learners also benefit from meeting teachers with an awareness of the sociopolitical dimensions of language use and language education and who let their appreciation of multilingualism inform their instruction, and advocate for their students (García et al. 2017). Moreover, all multilingual learners benefit from meeting teachers who are able to consider their students' complete linguistic repertoire, who are able to identify language demands, and provide the necessary scaffolding as part of their instruction (García & Kleyn 2016, García & Wei 2014). This is obviously most critical for emergent multilingual learners, but also fundamental for all multilingual learners – regardless of their proficiency in the language of instruction.

4 Method

In the following, we first present the data and participants involved in the current study. We also include some ethical considerations involved in re-using qualitative data for secondary analyses, before we describe how we have analysed our data.

4.1 Data collection, participants, and ethical considerations

In our analysis, we revisit our three doctoral studies' data on Norwegian preservice teachers' orientations, knowledge, and skills regarding multilingualism, at different stages in teacher education (Fylkesnes 2019, Iversen 2020, Thomassen

2021). The three studies are based on qualitative data acquired from a total of 106 pre-service teachers, primarily through focus group and individual interviews, with additional data collected through classroom observation, and the collection of pre-service teachers' linguistic autobiographies. To analyse data from different research projects with distinct research questions and research designs is complex (e.g., Irwin & Winterton 2011). Consequently, we decided to focus our common analysis on the data we shared across projects, namely the focus group and individual interviews. In the following, we refer only to our interview data.

The data were gathered from four different teacher education institutions across Norway and at different stages in the participants' teacher education (see Table 1). Because of the rigorous standardisation of teacher education programmes in Norway, there is limited variation in the orientations, knowledge, and skills pre-service teachers are expected to develop over the course of their teacher education.

Table 1: Four groups of participants. "PST": pre-service teachers

	Research project			
	Iversen (2020)	Thomassen (2021)		Fylkesnes (2019)
Participants:	Year 1 PST ($n = 24$)	Year 2 PST ($n = 56$)	Year 4 PST ($n = 11$)	Year 4 PST ($n = 15$)
Universities:	A and B	C	A, B, and C	A and D

Iversen (2020) collected data from first-year pre-service teachers, Thomassen (2021) from both second- and fourth-year pre-service teachers, and Fylkesnes (2019) from fourth-year pre-service teachers. Whilst Iversen's doctoral study explored pre-service teachers' first encounter with multilingualism during their practicum from a translanguaging perspective, Thomassen's doctoral study investigated pre-service teachers' competence to teach in multicultural and multilingual classrooms, from a Norwegian as a second language perspective. Fylkesnes' doctoral study investigated how actors in teacher education use and make meaning of the floating signifier *cultural diversity*. Although Fylkesnes' doctoral study was primarily interested in the conceptualisation of cultural diversity, the data collected from the focus groups are nonetheless relevant for this chapter's analysis, due to how pre-service teachers' answers extensively focused on issues related to multilingualism and emergent multilingual learners.

The re-use of qualitative data for secondary analyses has become increasingly common over the past decades (Bishop & Kuula-Luumi 2017). Notwithstanding this trend, there are specific challenges associated with secondary analyses of qualitative data, and with the combination of previous separate data sets for a secondary analysis. Irwin & Winterton (2011) have pointed out that qualitative data might not be suitable for re-use due to the researcher's distance from the collection of primary data, and related knowledge of the particular contexts of data collection. In the case of the study at hand, the decision to re-use and combine our own previous data for new analyses enabled us to draw on our intimate knowledge of the data and context for data collection. Nonetheless, due to the qualitative nature of the three research projects and the methodological differences in data collection, we cannot describe a clear progression in the participants' orientations, knowledge and skills from early to later stages in their teacher education. Hence, in the analysis, we describe the most prominent patterns in our data material without connecting the results to the participants' stage in their teacher education. With this in mind, we still argue that the patterns we describe in part can be ascribed to their teacher education, and that they provide important insights into the degree to which Norwegian teacher education is perceived to be able to educate linguistically responsive teachers.

4.2 Analysis

Despite the three studies' different foci, they all provided rich data on pre-service teachers' views and experiences with multilingualism. Due to our common interest in pre-service teachers' orientations, knowledge and skills regarding multilingual classrooms, we found the framework for preparing linguistically responsive teachers, developed by Lucas & Villegas (2011, 2013), to be useful for our analysis.

We conducted a theory-driven thematic analysis (Brinkmann & Kvale 2015), where each researcher deductively categorised their transcribed focus group interviews according to the three orientations and four elements of fundamental knowledge, and skills, which Lucas & Villegas (2011) describe in their framework for preparing linguistically responsive teachers. Each statement could be simultaneously categorised according to multiple categories. To illustrate this process, we have included a few brief examples in Table 2 (page 136).

Following the initial categorisation, we compared and discussed our findings within each of the three categories (e.g., Johnson & Christensen 2019: 594–596). Through this comparison, we noticed several converging patterns between the different data sets: The pre-service teachers expressed similar orientations, similar levels of knowledge about multilingualism, and similar levels of skills regard-

Table 2: Example of categorisation. All excerpts from the empirical data have been translated from Norwegian into English by the authors. All names are pseudonyms

Category	Iversen	Thomassen	Fylkesnes
Sociolinguistic consciousness	*Nora:* They preserve their mother tongue. That's positive, I would say. *Elise:* It's important for the students' identity, and, well, their personal development.	*Christina:* They shouldn't be robbed of their own language and their own identity. You do not leave your culture or your language at the door.	*Tor:* I think some teachers think that minority students should (…) forget about their culture and language (…) I think that's wrong.
Value for linguistic diversity	*Josefine:* It's a resource, to know several languages. They're, well, lucky to be able use them.	*Emil:* I think it's very interesting with students who have other languages (…) It's a strength.	*Liv:* Recognition of cultural and linguistic background is very important in schools today.

ing multilingualism in education, but their particular knowledge and skills varied. Moreover, the analysis revealed some salient limitations, particularly relating to the pre-service teachers' knowledge and skills.

In line with our research question and qualitative approach to thematic analysis, we were not concerned with quantifying how many pre-service teachers demonstrated "adequate" or "inadequate" orientations, knowledge, and skills (e.g., Brinkmann & Kvale 2015). Rather, we focused our analysis on the most salient tendencies in the pre-service teachers' orientations, knowledge, and skills, and which potential limitations in Norwegian teacher education's preparation of pre-service teachers for multilingual classrooms this variation might indicate.

5 Findings

In the following, we will describe and exemplify the most prominent patterns found in the data. We will start the presentation of findings by describing the pre-service teachers' orientations, before we turn to the pre-service teachers' knowledge and skills.

5.1 Norwegian pre-service teachers' orientations

According to Lucas & Villegas (2013), sociolinguistic consciousness, value for linguistic diversity, and inclination to advocate for multilingual and emergent multilingual learners are necessary orientations for linguistically responsive teaching.

Our analysis revealed that the pre-service teachers exhibited an emergent, though limited, sociolinguistic consciousness. Regardless of how far the pre-service teachers had come in their teacher education, the participants generally articulated an acceptance of the dominant policy discourses about multilingual and emergent multilingual learners, emphasising the importance of developing high proficiency in Norwegian and a swift mainstreaming into the monolingual norms of Norwegian education. Nonetheless, they also displayed what could be described as an emergent sociolinguistic consciousness (e.g., Lucas & Villegas 2013), in terms of how they seemed to connect language, culture and identity. This is evident from the extract below:

> *Kim:* (…) I think some teachers have this thought that the students are supposed to … the linguistic minority students are supposed to become similar, that they are supposed to, in a way forget about their own culture and their language and only adopt the Norwegian, in a way. So, I believe that that's a bit wrong, a bit wrong way of thinking because they, all students have, also the minority students have the right to keep their language as they learn the Norwegian language, and I believe that it is important that the teacher recognises the students' first language as well.

In line with the general patterns in our data, the excerpt above exemplifies how Kim challenged the ongoing assimilationist attitudes within Norwegian education and opened up for a more multilingual approach to education. Kim displays an understanding of the connections between language, culture, and identity, and comments on the limitations of a one-sided emphasis on developing students' Norwegian language skills. As such he reflects how most of the pre-service teachers in our study displayed an awareness of the sociopolitical dimensions of language use and language education (e.g., Lucas & Villegas 2013).

There was a salient pattern in our data where the pre-service teachers express appreciation for linguistic diversity by describing multilingualism as something "positive" (cf. Østergaard et al. 2025 [this volume]). The pre-service teachers mentioned the advantages of being multilingual for further language learning, the benefits of being able to maintain relationships with relatives in other countries, and the importance of preserving students' languages for their identity development. However, some pre-service teachers struggled to articulate what was

"positive" about multilingualism and how this appreciation could inform their own instruction:

> *Greta:* Opportunities… I see several… I think it's very important that the world, and Norway as well, becomes wider, because I think that we can develop further if we have knowledge about the multicultural and the multilingual… I think that the interest in languages can increase… I think that students with Norwegian as a second language have a lot to offer us (…)

Despite Greta's positive remarks about multilingualism, she positions "the multicultural" and "multilingual" as an Other who can benefit an implicit "us". Furthermore, Greta's comments regarding multilingualism illustrate how the pre-service teachers' positive statements often were somewhat superficial. Nevertheless, the pre-service teachers were able to identify psycholinguistic, sociolinguistic and sociocultural benefits of multilingualism, particularly in acquiring the language of instruction (e.g., Lucas & Villegas 2013).

The pre-service teachers' inclination to advocate for multilingual or emergent multilingual learners was not consistent – neither at an individual level, nor at group level (cf. Østergaard et al. 2025 [this volume]). Nonetheless, the pre-service teachers were concerned with central values in Norwegian education, such as equality and inclusion, and they were usually aware of the rights of emergent multilingual learners to differentiated Norwegian instruction, mother tongue education, and bilingual subject instruction. Across different student groups, there was a concern for securing students' rights:

> *Greta:* I would've checked, well, if the student came from somewhere else and didn't know a single word in Norwegian, I would of course take her or him to adapted language education.
>
> *Researcher:* Yes.
>
> *Greta:* Because that's exactly the law. Yes, I know that much, but not exactly word by word.

"Adapted language education" includes both differentiated Norwegian instruction, and sometimes even mother tongue education and bilingual subject instruction. The participants saw access to advanced competence in Norwegian as the primary social and political capital, and as the principal requirement to access educational opportunities. Hence, the pre-service teachers' potential advocacy for students' access to "adapted language education" was, in effect, geared towards a rapid inclusion of students into a more or less monolingual mainstream.

Despite their concern for students' academic success, certain pre-service teachers considered challenges associated with multilingualism in education to be the responsibility of other actors in the education system.

In conclusion, the pre-service teachers demonstrated an emergent sociolinguistic consciousness and appreciation of linguistic diversity. However, their inclination to advocate for multilingual learners was inconsistent. Furthermore, their positive orientations were often superficial, and the monolingual bias found in Norwegian education also influenced the pre-service teachers' emphasis on rapid acquisition of and high proficiency in Norwegian.

5.2 Norwegian pre-service teachers' pedagogical knowledge and skills

Lucas & Villegas (2013) describe four elements of pedagogical knowledge and skills they consider fundamental for linguistically responsive teaching. These four elements are: strategies for learning about multilingual and emergent multilingual learners' background, understanding of and ability to apply key principles of second language learning, ability to identify the language demands of classroom tasks, and a repertoire of strategies for scaffolding instruction for multilingual and emergent multilingual learners.

The pre-service teachers' interest in their students' linguistic and academic backgrounds varied and they consequently demonstrated a limited repertoire of strategies for learning about multilingual and emergent multilingual learners' background (e.g., Lucas & Villegas 2013). Rather, they were eager to consider all students with apparently high competence in Norwegian as monolingual, even when they suspected that many students in fact were multilingual. This is exemplified in the excerpt:

> *Nora:* Had I entered the classroom without knowing anything about anybody's linguistic background, I wouldn't have thought about it at all. That this student wasn't Norwegian. Because I haven't, maybe you have, but I haven't.

In this example, it seems that the pre-service teacher was unaware of the importance of knowing about the backgrounds and experiences of multilingual and emergent multilingual learners, regardless of their proficiency in the language of instruction. From the analysis of our data, it seemed that the pre-service teachers only found the multilingual students' background relevant when they believed the students faced linguistic challenges. Nonetheless, when the researchers explicitly asked for strategies to learn about the linguistic and academic backgrounds, the pre-service teachers were able to describe such strategies:

> *Betty:* (…) If there was something I wanted to ask about the student, I think I would have included the mother tongue teacher and asked, yes, I think so. And also asked for suggestions, for example about [the students' proficiency in] Arabic, which I have very limited knowledge about, and find out at which level it was… and then… and the parents as well, to find out what they were talking at home, how they do it at home (…)

The pre-service teacher in the example above suggested that the teacher can contact the mother tongue teacher of the student and parents. As part of learning more about and getting to know the students' background, Betty's aim seemed to be to figure out "which level the student is at". In addition to this example, one pre-service teacher proposed that students could present their own cultural and linguistic background to the whole class, as a way for both the teacher and the rest of the class to learn more about each other.

The pre-service teachers articulated mostly a limited understanding of and ability to apply key principles of second language learning. One pre-service teacher mentioned Cummins' dual iceberg model, however, without being able to adequately describe its content:

> *Alex:* I agree that teachers need more competence related to this area. It is a theory, it is, or it is a model. Iceberg-model. The Cummins model. I do not know if you have heard about it. And it is concerned with, that foundation that it, well, both languages, and was it not about how this foundation is both languages and that they build on each other? Or, that the mother tongue is the foundation perhaps. I do not exactly remember how it was, but at least I think that it should be included in teacher education.

Another pre-service teacher said that they "had learned a lot about this as part of the Norwegian subject", also apparently without being able to articulate how principles from second language learning could inform the pre-service teacher's teaching practice. Pre-service teachers who had studied Norwegian as part of their teacher education mentioned that they had learned about contrastive grammar, while pre-service teachers who had studied English mentioned key principles for second language learning when discussing multilingual and emergent multilingual students' needs. Yet, another pre-service teacher described how the instruction about multilingual and emergent multilingual learners' needs in teacher education had been rather superficial:

> *Anna:* The thing I most remember is that, when we were learning about this topic, I remember it was mostly to categorise the different concepts, what

> is mother tongue, what is bilingual, and then a little about what is the most typical [language] mistakes [made by emergent multilingual learners].

The pre-service teachers in our data seemed to find it challenging to recall and articulate concrete theoretical or methodological principles for working with multilingual or emergent multilingual learners. In individual interviews, five pre-service students mentioned "knowledge about the students' language system" as important. Nonetheless, the pre-service teachers' knowledge of key psycholinguistic, sociolinguistic, and sociocultural processes involved in learning a second language, and of ways to use that knowledge to inform instruction, was quite limited (e.g., Lucas & Villegas 2013), regardless of where the pre-service teachers were in their teacher education.

Furthermore, the pre-service teachers' ability to identify the language demands of classroom tasks was also limited (cf. Heikkola et al. 2025 [this volume]). This pedagogical skill involves the ability to determine the linguistic features of academic subjects and activities likely to pose challenges for multilingual and emergent multilingual learners, and to consider this in the planning and conducting of teaching. When explicitly asked in the interviews, the participants provided examples of language demands of classroom tasks:

> *Greta:* I think that many of the concepts we have in Norway are rather similar, or that we have many concepts for similar things, like in the movie we watched about multilingualism, no, about second language learning in science class, where they were talking about the difference between a branch and a twig and a tree. And that second language learners may know the word and how to pronounce it, but they don't know that it refers to exactly that thing, and that's where they misunderstand (…)

As with the example above, the pre-service teachers understood that subject-specific terminology can be challenging for some multilingual and emergent multilinguals, just as it can pose a challenge for all students. Notwithstanding such examples, their comments on language demands of classroom tasks were generic and did not provide any concrete examples of how they analysed language demands as part of their lesson planning.

Finally, the pre-service teachers described their repertoire of strategies for scaffolding instruction for multilingual and emergent multilingual learners (cf. Alisaari et al. 2025 [this volume], Heikkola et al. 2025 [this volume]). This skill involves the ability to apply temporary supports to provide multilingual and emergent multilingual learners with access to learning Norwegian and content

taught in Norwegian (e.g., Lucas & Villegas 2013). The pre-service teachers provided several examples of how they had spontaneously scaffolded instruction for emergent multilingual students as part of their practicum. These examples included using extralinguistic supports such as visuals and hands-on activities; translation through peer-support and digital tools, as well as providing clear and explicit instructions. Below is an example of how one participant had learned how to provide clear instructions in a class made up of mostly multilingual and emergent multilingual learners:

> *Marthe:* We were instructed [by the supervising teacher] that we had to give very clear instructions and assignments because the students kind of listen to you, but it's not certain that they understand you the first time. So, what we were told from the beginning was that we had to be super explicit, really. Things that were really not natural to explain several times, we had to do it. And that might be because of the students' language background.

This example aligns with the recommendations provided by Lucas & Villegas (2013). Although it is necessary to provide explicit instructions, the pre-service teachers usually described the different scaffolding strategies as spontaneous and quite unstructured solutions to problems that suddenly occurred in the learning situation. For example, pre-service teachers mentioned the use of Google Translate as a strategy when communication was breaking down in the classroom.

In conclusion, the pre-service teachers had a limited repertoire of strategies for learning about multilingual and emergent multilingual learners' background, an inadequate understanding of and ability to apply key principles of second language learning, restricted ability to identify the language demands of classroom tasks, and an insufficient repertoire of strategies for scaffolding instruction for multilingual and emergent multilingual learners.

6 Discussion

The aim of this study has been to explore whether the increased emphasis on educating pre-service teachers for working with multilingual and emergent multilingual learners within Norwegian teacher education over the past decade has led to the education of linguistically responsive teachers. This has been investigated though the following research question: What orientations, knowledge and skills about multilingualism do Norwegian pre-service teachers demonstrate? In the following, we will first discuss the main findings from our analysis, before we

discuss the potential and limitations in Norwegian teacher education's preparation of pre-service teachers for multilingual classrooms. In conclusion, we point out a few implications for language policy and education.

Through the application of Lucas & Villegas' (2013) framework for preparing linguistically responsive teachers, we identified a consistent discrepancy in the pre-service teachers' orientations, on the one hand, and their knowledge and skills, on the other hand. On the one hand, the pre-service teachers demonstrated orientations that suggested that they were willing and able to improve multilingual and emergent multilingual learners' access to social and political capital and educational opportunities. They demonstrated an understanding for the ways that language and identity are deeply connected, and they appreciated linguistic diversity. Despite these encouraging findings, there were still certain limitations to their critical awareness related to current language policies in education and a hesitance to advocate for multilingual and emergent multilingual students. These findings reflect findings from previous studies, which have also pointed out certain shortcomings in pre-service teachers' orientations (Anderson & Stillman 2013, Paulsrud et al. 2023, Villegas et al. 2018). Nevertheless, research suggests that pre-service teachers' orientations can potentially be influenced and changed through teacher education (Aleksić & Bebić-Crestany 2023, Döll & Guldenschuh 2022, Anderson & Stillman 2013, Schroedler et al. 2023, Villegas et al. 2018).

The pre-service teachers seemed more limited in their disciplinary knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, knowledge of learners, and pedagogical skills needed to enact linguistically responsive teaching. Even pre-service teachers who had studied second language acquisition as part of their Norwegian and/or English subject education in teacher education were unable to clearly articulate how they could support multilingual and emergent multilingual students in their future classrooms. It is discouraging that our data do not indicate a clear progression in the pre-service teachers' knowledge and skills from the first-year pre-service teachers to the fourth-year pre-service teachers. Our findings align with previous Norwegian research (Dyrnes et al. 2015, Randen et al. 2015, Skrefsrud & Østberg 2015, The Evaluation Group 2015), as well as international research (Acquah & Szelei 2020, Acquah et al. 2020, Anderson & Stillman 2013, Bravo et al. 2014, Groulx & Silva 2010, Schroedler et al. 2023, Tandon et al. 2017, Villegas et al. 2018), which also report that pre-service teachers are not sufficiently prepared to work with multilingual students. Specifically, analyses of teacher education programmes in Iceland and Sweden suggest that these programmes do not provide prospective teachers with the pedagogical skills necessary to enact linguistically responsive teaching (Gunnþórsdóttir & Óskarsdóttir 2025 [this volume]). These findings are also confirmed in studies of pre-service teachers' knowledge and

skills reported elsewhere in this volume (Alisaari et al. 2025 [this volume], Heikkola et al. 2025 [this volume], Østergaard et al. 2025 [this volume]).

It might be unsurprising that the pre-service teachers in our study articulated the necessary orientations, while at the same time were frequently unable to demonstrate the same level of knowledge and skills related to linguistically responsive teaching. Villegas et al. (2018) found in their review of research on pre-service teacher education for emergent multilinguals that studies on pre-service teachers' *beliefs* completely dominated the field of research. Similar tendencies were reported in Anderson & Stillman's (2013) review and can be observed in recent research (e.g. Aleksić & Bebić-Crestany 2023, Döll & Guldenschuh 2022, Duarte & Günther-van der Meij 2022, Schroedler et al. 2023, Thoma 2022). If researchers' over-emphasis on beliefs is reflected in teacher educators' instruction, it would be unsurprising if pre-service teachers develop the necessary orientations, without the pedagogical knowledge and skills necessary to enact linguistically responsive teaching. Researchers have also previously pointed out that pre-service teachers' positive positioning towards multilingual learners does not necessarily transfer into teaching practice (Schroedler et al. 2023).

Our findings suggest that the emphasis on educating pre-service teachers for working with multilingual and emergent multilingual learners within Norwegian teacher education since 2010 (Ministry of Education and Research 2016, The Norwegian Association of Higher Education Institutions 2016) seems to have contributed to the development of the fundamental orientations identified by Villegas et al. (2018) as crucial for preparing pre-service teachers for working in multilingual classrooms. Simultaneously, our findings also indicate that the most critical aspect for Norwegian teacher education in the years to come will be to provide all pre-service teachers with the knowledge and skills needed to enact linguistically responsive teaching. Furthermore, pre-service teachers – regardless of subject background – need to be able to visualise what linguistically responsive teaching looks like and be introduced to appropriate strategies and methods for enacting such teaching.

Moreover, our findings indicate that teachers would benefit from the current regulations and guidelines for teacher education in Norway (Ministry of Education and Research 2016, The Norwegian Association of Higher Education Institutions 2016) being more explicit about the specific knowledge and pedagogical skills needed for teaching multilingual and emergent multilingual students. Considering the linguistic diversity currently characterising schools across Norway, we argue that future national guidelines and regulations for teacher education should include explicit requirements regarding teacher educators' knowledge and skills. Findings from other Nordic countries and beyond indicate that

teacher education needs a stronger emphasis on practical knowledge and pedagogical skills related to teaching linguistically diverse students (Gunnþórsdóttir & Óskarsdóttir 2025 [this volume], Schroedler et al. 2023). Then it would be possible for teacher educators to capitalise on pre-service teachers' positive orientations and prepare them for enacting linguistically responsive teaching when they begin teaching.

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Chapter 7

"You have to choose your words wisely": Finnish pre-service teachers' understandings of, and support for, multilingual students' academic language development

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The aim of this study was to examine Finnish pre-service primary school teachers' (n = 92) understandings of academic language development and self-reported preparedness to support language learning when teaching multilingual students (MLSs) in Finnish primary schools. Data were gathered with a survey and analysed qualitatively and quantitatively. Results indicated that the pre-service teachers had a reasonable understanding of language learning and reported skills to support academic language development, but there were gaps in awareness of how to provide concrete linguistic support for MLSs. Moreover, there were considerable gaps in the pre-service teachers' grammar knowledge and one-third of them did not see a connection between language and mathematical problem-solving skills. The results indicate that the pre-service teachers' awareness of linguistically responsive teaching is still developing. Providing pre-service teachers with research-based and practice-oriented instruction for supporting academic language development in all subjects is needed.

1 The aim and background

The aim of this survey study is to examine Finnish pre-service primary school teachers' (n = 92) understandings of academic language development and self-

Jenni Alisaari, Leena Maria Heikkola & Raisa Harju-Autti. 2025. "You have to choose your words wisely": Finnish pre-service teachers' understandings of, and support for, multilingual students' academic language development. In Anne Reath Warren, Jonas Yassin Iversen & Boglárka Straszer (eds.), *Teacher education for working in linguistically diverse classrooms: Nordic perspectives*, 151–178. Berlin: Language Science Press. DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.15280905

reported preparedness to support language learning when teaching 7 to 13-year-old (grades 1 to 6) multilingual students in Finnish primary schools. In Finland, most primary school teachers teach all subjects in grades 1 to 6. The term *multilingual student* (MLS) refers to students who have a first language (L1) other than Finnish or Swedish, the languages of instruction in Finnish schools. However, we acknowledge that multilingualism is a much broader concept that can also include students whose L1 is Finnish or Swedish. We want to avoid deficit terms when referring to students, and thus, in this article, the term MLS covers both students with a migrant background and other students whose L1 is different than the language of instruction, including national minority language students. Since many of the MLSs in Finland have a migrant background, we pay special attention to this group in the theoretical part of this chapter.

As the number of MLSs continues to increase worldwide (Migration Data Portal 2020), the role of languages in learning is taking center stage in education. Studies have shown a significant gap in learning outcomes between students with a migrant background and majority-language speakers in many member countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), including Finland (Ahonen 2021). While mastering the more formal language used in school can be challenging for all students, regardless of their linguistic background, students with a migrant background often face a range of educational obstacles, including learning gaps, challenges in transitions, and lower educational attainment than their majority peers (Borgna 2017). Teachers play a significant role in making instruction comprehensible for their students. Teaching language and content simultaneously is necessary in order to help students understand and produce language in the ways it is used in different subjects (Cummins & Early 2015). However, several separate studies from different perspectives have shown a gap in Finnish in-service teachers' pedagogical skills and their knowledge about linguistic diversity (Alisaari et al. 2019, Alisaari & Heikkola 2020, Heikkola et al. 2022). Surprisingly, few studies have focused on how teachers can "analyze the language demands embedded in academic text and learning tasks, an indispensable skill to scaffold instruction adequately" (Villegas et al. 2018: 152) for learners of the language of instruction. This study aims to contribute to this topic.

Learning a language takes time. Attaining academic language proficiency may take five to seven years (Cummins 2021). To promote inclusive education for all learners, regardless of their linguistic backgrounds, developing meaningful approaches and methods for teaching both subject content and the language of schooling is essential (Harju-Autti et al. 2022). Thus, language-related pedagogical matters should be incorporated into teacher education. Little, however, is

known about pre-service teachers' competencies in regard to this issue in Finland. See, however, Heikkola et al. (2025 [this volume]), regarding pre-service subject teachers' preparedness for linguistically diverse classrooms.

The Finnish national core curriculum for basic education (Finnish National Agency of Education 2014) states that all teachers should integrate language and content in teaching. However, without specific and thorough teacher education concerning linguistic development and the role of languages in learning, the necessary language awareness is not attained. It is important to investigate how teacher education prepares pre-service teachers in this regard. This study examines pre-service teachers' understandings of academic language development and preparedness to scaffold their learners' learning of the language of instruction and subject-specific content (see Section 3.2 of this chapter, also Carlson et al. 2018). The study is guided by the following research questions:

1. How do pre-service primary school teachers understand and report supporting academic language development?

2. How prepared are pre-service teachers to support students in learning both the language of instruction and subject-specific content?

In this chapter, we first introduce notions of linguistically responsive teaching and teacher competencies and present some studies in these fields (Section 2). After introducing the methodology (Section 3), we present the study findings and discussion (Section 4), then finally our conclusions and practical implications based on this study (Section 5).

2 Language in teaching

2.1 Linguistically responsive teaching

In today's linguistically diverse schools, we must look beyond traditional language teaching to gain a deeper understanding of the role languages play in all learning. Language is essential for becoming socialised into the linguistic and cultural behaviours of different communities (Phinney & Ong 2007). Thus, the theoretical foundation for this study lies in sociocultural language learning theories (Lantolf & Thorne 2006, van Lier 2000, Vygotsky 1986), which view languages as being learned in social interaction and mediated by other language users in specific contexts. Importantly, language learners need comprehensible input as affordance to develop their language skills (van Lier 2000). Linguistically

responsive teaching means that teachers understand the significance of language in all learning and possess pedagogical skills that support learning in various situations (Alisaari & Heikkola 2020, Lucas & Villegas 2013). Knowing students' backgrounds and recognising the value of their linguistic resources is essential in linguistically responsive teaching (henceforth LRT) (Lucas & Villegas 2013). Several studies have indicated the importance of students' L1s in learning other languages and school subjects (e.g. Agirdag & Vanlaar 2018, Cummins 2021, Ganuza & Hedman 2018).

Linguistically responsive teachers also need to recognise the challenges that the language of instruction may pose to learners (Cummins 2021, Gibbons 2014, Lucas & Villegas 2013, Schleppegrell et al. 2004). Academic language differs noticeably from everyday social language (e.g. Beacco 2017, Beacco et al. 2016, Cummins 2021, Schleppegrell et al. 2004). While basic everyday language covers the vocabulary and grammar used in informal, spoken social interaction, academic language is more abstract in terms of both vocabulary and grammar. Moreover, subject-specific language includes linguistic features typical of a subject. As all learning is connected to language, it is essential to understand that all subjects have terms, concepts, and vocabulary that can be considered a new form of language, even for students who are fluent in the language of instruction (Lahti et al. 2020). However, academic language is particularly challenging for MLSs, and the optimal way to develop it is in discussions between the students and the teacher (Tharp et al. 2018). Therefore, academic and subject-specific language should be taught together with content knowledge in all subject areas (Carlson et al. 2018). Moreover, teachers should scaffold instruction so learners can accomplish academic assignments at otherwise unattainable cognitive and language levels (Gibbons 2014, Tharp et al. 2018, Villegas et al. 2018, Vygotsky 1986).

Some teachers have the misconception that the acquisition of language in general, and academic language in particular, occurs automatically in classrooms where academic language is used, regardless of the students' linguistic backgrounds (Carlson et al. 2018). Furthermore, it seems that teachers do not automatically develop an understanding of language dimensions (e.g. Alisaari & Heikkola 2020), that is, the ways language varies between everyday language, academic language and subject-specific language (e.g. Beacco et al. 2016). Mastering subject-specific language requires literacy skills that can only be acquired when literacy instruction is embedded in content classes (Shanahan & Shanahan 2008).

Teachers' knowledge concerning the role of languages in learning should be an essential part of their pedagogical and didactic skills (Carlson et al. 2018, Shanahan & Shanahan 2008). The ways teachers adapt their pedagogical practices to

learners' language skills affects how learners benefit from the teaching. Furthermore, it is optimal to facilitate the development of students' academic language skills in a structured and systematic manner in all subject teaching (Carlson et al. 2018, Shanahan & Shanahan 2008), not exclusively during language lessons. This can be effectively done through dialogue, where teachers facilitate learning processes (Tharp et al. 2018). These kinds of dialogues can be described as a form of scaffolding, part of the multifaceted support teachers provide to help learners learn (Gibbons 2014). Students who immigrated and began school in the new country at an older age are often highly dependent on teachers' support (Sharif 2017). However, effective pedagogy develops all learners' language and literacy skills across the curriculum (Cummins & Early 2015, Tharp et al. 2018).

2.2 Teacher competencies

According to a review of studies on the effects of pedagogical competences, there seems to be a relationship between teachers' general pedagogical knowledge, teaching quality, and students' learning outcomes (Ulferts et al. 2019). In Finland, the current national core curriculum for basic education requires teachers to possess specific pedagogical knowledge in relation to language awareness, including using students' multilingual repertoires as learning resources, and considering students' diverse backgrounds when planning instruction (Finnish National Agency of Education 2014). However, policy requirements alone do not necessarily lead to adequate changes on a practical level. Teachers need support in developing their competencies in fostering the learning of the language of instruction (Kieffer & Lesaux 2012), with special attention paid to using students' entire linguistic repertoires in learning (Cummins 2021).

Recent studies from many countries and different perspectives indicate that pre- and in-service teachers' competencies in supporting multilingual learners are still developing (e.g. Agirdag et al. 2014, Alisaari et al. 2019, Alisaari & Heikkola 2020, Faneca et al. 2016, Heikkola et al. 2021, Iversen 2020, Lundberg 2019, Rodríguez-Izquierdo et al. 2020). The deeper the teachers' understanding of language learning and the importance of linguistic support, the better they are able to facilitate students' learning and pedagogically justify their practices (Alisaari & Heikkola 2020, Heikkola et al. 2022). Thus, it is important to investigate how teacher education prepares future teachers to support all learners, regardless of their linguistic backgrounds.

3 Methods

The aim of this study is to investigate Finnish pre-service teachers' understandings of academic language development and their reported preparedness to support students in simultaneously learning the language of instruction and subject-specific content. In this section, we first present the research instrument and the participants of the study, and then we explain the data analysis.

3.1 Research instrument

The data were collected by means of a survey developed in Germany (DaZKom) and modified for the Finnish context. The original instrument was "intended to give empirically supported insights into how learning opportunities in academic teacher education must be designed for enabling the acquisition of a substantiated and standardized [German as L2] competency" (Carlson et al. 2018). In this study, as in the original instrument (Carlson et al. 2018), mathematics serves as an example for the realisation of subject-content integrated language scaffolding.

The original research instrument included a total of 68 items: 32 multiple choice, 14 closed-constructed, and 22 open-ended items. The Finnish version was modified due to differences in the educational contexts and the languages in question (German and Finnish). For example, in the Finnish study, only pre-service primary school teachers were studied, while in the original research, pre-service secondary school teachers were studied (Carlson et al. 2018). Some mathematical items that did not correspond to the Finnish primary school mathematics curriculum were changed; the new examples were modified based on Finnish primary school textbook examples (see Appendix A, Item A). Further, some language issues in German were not relevant in Finnish, so language tasks were adapted to reflect meaningful grammatical issues that can be challenging in Finnish. This required changing the whole task (see Appendix A, Item B). The instrument adaptation was conducted by the first author, an expert in language education, in collaboration with a university mathematics teacher.

The original research instrument was relatively long, and thus was shortened for this pilot study. The Finnish version consisted of 22 items: seven multiple-choice questions with three to six choices each (29 possible responses), 12 open-ended questions (e.g. regarding the use of students' linguistic resources for learning), and three background questions about the studies pre-service teachers had

completed.[1] In this study, the background questions and one multiple-choice question were omitted from the analysis because of a lack of space in this chapter and the questions' ambiguity.

The original research instrument was divided into three dimensions: 1) the role of language as a medium for interaction and classroom actions; 2) language learning processes, multilingualism, and learners' linguistic repertoires; and 3) teaching strategies associated with linguistic support. Recent research conducted in Finland suggests that the importance of L1 in learning is often overlooked in teacher education (e.g. Alisaari et al. 2019, Heikkola et al. 2022, Repo 2020). Therefore, a fourth dimension was added to the Finnish research instrument to reflect this research. Additionally, due to the modifications of the research instrument, we also adapted the descriptions of the dimensions of the instrument. Thus, the four dimensions in the Finnish instrument were: 1) developing skills in the language of instruction for learning; 2) knowledge of language, grammar, and semiotic symbols; 3) providing linguistic support; and 4) L1 as a tool for learning. To answer research question 1, we investigated pre-service teachers' responses across the four dimensions.

In order to investigate pre-service teachers' competencies to support students in learning (see also research question 2), we further analysed the pre-service teachers' competency at group level within the four dimensions. This analysis was based on Dreyfus & Dreyfus's (1986) model of adult skill acquisition that classifies learners as novice, advanced beginner, and competent. The competency levels were calculated based on the means of the participants' responses:[2] novice (0–1.49), advanced beginner (1.5–2.99), and competent (3–4) following the original model by Carlson et al. (2018). According to Dreyfus & Dreyfus (1986), novices determine their actions based on facts that can be identified without specific expertise, whereas advanced beginners already have experience in similar situations and base their actions thereon. Finally, competent teachers are able to make decisions based on experience and the ability to recognise a situation's most important features, and they also feel secure about and committed to their decisions (Dreyfus & Dreyfus 1986). This was the first time this research instrument was used in the Finnish context; therefore, this study serves as a pilot version for further research projects in Finland.

[1]The Finnish version of the survey can be obtained from the first author (see also Appendices A and B). There are also English versions developed, both in the US (Hammer & Viesca 2023) and in Canada (Bale 2023).

[2]See Section 3.3 for more information on the scoring.

3.2 Participants and the context

The data were collected from third-year pre-service primary school teachers ($n = 92$) at the beginning of a pilot course on multilingual pedagogies, to gain knowledge on the need for such a course at this stage of their pedagogical studies. Since the course was in its piloting phase, it was beneficial to investigate pre-service teachers' prior knowledge of academic language development and their preparedness to support (school) students in learning the language of instruction and subject-specific content simultaneously.

The main theme of the course was LRT, and it comprised issues related to multilingual pedagogy, teaching different subjects' content according to the principles of LRT, language development, assessment of language skills, supporting the development of MLSs' language skills, the role of L1 in learning, and teaching the subject "Finnish as a Second Language and Literature". Finnish grammar was not taught, but grammatical terms were used when talking about language; the pre-service teachers had already been taught grammar-related content during their first year, in a course related to the didactics of the Finnish language and literature. The course included both lectures (8 hours in total) and seminars in smaller groups (12 hours in total per group), and the pre-service teachers completed independent assignments to examine the themes covered in more detail.

Before starting the course and participating in the survey, the pre-service teachers were tasked with reading a book on learning Finnish as an additional language (Vaarala et al. 2016), as framed by the Finnish national core curriculum for basic education. The book covers multilingualism as a resource only very briefly, the main topic being teaching Finnish as a second language. Only 76% of the pre-service teachers reported reading the book, and only 30% stated that the book had helped them in answering the survey. Of the pre-service teachers ($n = 96$) who responded to the survey, 92 gave written permission to use their answers in this study.

In interpreting the results, the fact that one of the researchers in this study was also a teacher on the course has to be taken into account, as that may have caused some power imbalance. At the beginning of the study, the pre-service teachers were informed that the results could not be connected with individual participants, since we anonymised the responses before the analysis. In addition, the positionality of the teacher/author was thoroughly discussed among the researchers during the analysis process, and all the interpretations were done by the three authors.

3.3 Analysis

The data were analysed first qualitatively and then quantitatively. A rubric, namely the guidelines for the analysis,[3] which was created for analysing the data gathered from the original survey, was adapted for the Finnish instrument by all the authors. Next, all three authors analysed the open-ended items independently using the rubric and discussed the analysis of each item until consensus was reached in the negotiations. The first author analysed the multiple-choice questions, which had correct and incorrect answers.

After the answers were analysed qualitatively based on the guidelines created for the original survey, standardised total scores (max. 4 points) were calculated for the entire questionnaire, as well as separately for each of the four dimensions of the survey: 1) developing language skills for learning; 2) knowledge of language, grammar, and semiotic symbols; 3) providing linguistic support; and 4) using L1 as a tool for learning. The normalised total scores were calculated so that all total scores became 4. The results of the normalised total scores are presented in Table 1 (see Section 4.1). After presenting the normalised total scores, we discuss issues emerging from the qualitative analysis and give examples of participants' responses. These analyses were done to answer research question 1.

Next, competency levels were investigated to answer research question 2. As we collected the data for this study using Carlson et al.'s (2018) survey, we also followed their categorisation of competency, forming three teacher profiles based on the standard total scores: novice (0–1.49), advanced beginner (1.5–2.99), and competent (3–4) (Dreyfus & Dreyfus 1986). The frequencies of the competency levels are presented in Table 2 (see Section 4.2).

4 Results and discussion

In this section, in order to answer research question 1, we present the pre-service primary school teachers' understanding of language learning in the classroom based on the total scores of their responses (see Section 4.1). We also describe interesting themes that emerged from the qualitative data. Finally, in order to answer research question 2 concerning the pre-service teachers' reported preparedness to support their future students' language learning, we investigate the participants' competency levels based on their total scores (see Section 4.2).

[3]The guidelines included possible responses for each survey item and their scoring based on how correct the answers would be. See an example of the Finnish version of the rubric in Appendix B. The original guidelines have not been published.

4.1 Pre-service primary school teachers' understanding of language learning

In Section 4.1, we present the results of our analysis of participants' responses. We calculated total scores for all questions included in the survey and for the four dimensions (see Table 1).

Table 1: Total scores for the entire questionnaire and the four dimensions

Dimension	*n*	M	SD	min	max
Developing language skills for learning	67	2.8	0.5	1.1	3.6
Knowledge of language, grammar, and semiotic symbols	70	2.8	0.5	1.5	3.7
Providing linguistic support	75	2.9	0.8	0.0	4.0
L1 as a tool for learning	81	3.2	0.7	0.9	4.0
Total score (max. 4 points)	51	2.9	0.4	1.6	3.7

On average, the pre-service teachers' knowledge of the role of languages in teaching was relatively high. As not all participants answered all the questions, the total score for the entire survey could only be calculated for 51 participants. When looking at the four dimensions, the participants' knowledge related to the use of L1 to support learning was at a higher level than for other dimensions. This result differs from previous findings from Finland that have indicated relatively low awareness of the importance of L1 for learning (Alisaari et al. 2019, Heikkola et al. 2022, Repo 2020). However, these previous studies were conducted mainly among in-service teachers. The reason behind the more asset-oriented attitudes toward L1 might be related to the paradigm shift that has recently taken place in different societies and is leading to higher levels of awareness of the importance of L1 for learning (Aronin & Singleton 2018). This is also reflected in the curriculum for basic education in Finland (Finnish National Agency of Education 2014) which has potentially had an influence on teacher education, and thus on the participants of this study. However, a closer look at the pre-service teachers' attitudes toward L1 use reveals some contradictory attitudes (see below).

Qualitative analysis of the responses to individual items revealed great variation. For example, to investigate understandings of developing language skills for learning, the participants were asked to list what they believed to be the reasons for linguistic difficulties in a mathematical task. Only 27% of the participants

clearly analysed the difficulties, naming abstract concepts, grammatical knowledge, and vocabulary knowledge as possible reasons (Example 1). However, 60% of the participants were unable to identify specific reasons for the vocabulary or grammar being difficult (Example 2), and 14% gave insufficient responses (Example 3).[4]

(1) The first sentence is very long, and it is difficult to find the main points. Furthermore, the words are not used in their basic forms ("kepiltä," from the pole; "kepille," to the pole): [in Finnish,] you can only tell the difference by the locative suffixes.

(2) Long sentences in which it is difficult to find the main point.

(3) In my opinion, the sentence order is quite clear, and the sentences are short. In the assignment, there are abbreviations (m, cm), which may not be familiar concepts to all students.

In addition, only 28% of the participants recognised the connection between mathematical problem solving and language skills, while 41% argued that mathematical problems are usually presented in a linguistic format and thus require appropriate interpretation of the language used. However, 31% did not see a connection between language and problem-solving skills. Therefore, it seems that one-third of the pre-service teachers investigated in this study need to develop their awareness of LRT, as understanding the intertwined nature of language, thinking, and all learning is crucial for teachers (Alisaari & Heikkola 2020, Cummins & Early 2015, Lucas & Villegas 2013, Vygotsky 1986).

The participants' degree of knowledge regarding language, grammar, and semiotic symbols was concerning. The qualitative analysis revealed gaps in basic grammatical knowledge. When the pre-service teachers were asked whether there were comparative or superlative forms of adjectives (e.g., *faster, fastest*) in the text, one fifth of the participants found such forms even though they were not present in the assignment. Furthermore, as many as 61% incorrectly identified possessive suffixes in the assignment, mainly identifying genitive case suffixes as possessive suffixes (e.g., *hänen* 'hers' instead of *ikänsä* 'her age'). When the participants were asked to give examples of different grammatical forms, the possessive suffix was incorrectly produced by 62% of the participants. Past tense was correctly produced by only 37% and present tense by 44% of the participants.

This finding is in line with previous Finnish studies indicating that pre-service teachers' language knowledge is relatively weak (Tainio & Marjokorpi 2014, Tai-

[4]Examples from the responses were translated from Finnish into English by the authors.

nio & Routarinne 2012). At the time of data collection, the participants had completed all the Finnish language and grammar courses of their teacher studies, as they will teach Finnish after graduating. Thus, this result raises concerns about future teachers' abilities to integrate language and content teaching.

When examining what was reported regarding how to provide linguistic support, 67% of the participants mentioned more than one way to provide linguistic support (Example 4), 25% mentioned only one means of linguistic support (Example 5), and 8% were unable to provide any examples of linguistic support (Example 6).

(4) Visual support when solving the assignment. I would go through the terms, for example, what does three times total age mean?

(5) I would draw a picture of the situation on the board somehow. I would illustrate.

(6) It should be clear to the students where to begin solving the assignment, using arithmetic sequence.

The following types of support were mentioned: visual support (65%), elaborating on vocabulary (46%) and structures (26%), breaking the sentence into fragments (21%), additional oral instructions (17%), modeling the mathematical procedures (7%), using plain Finnish (7%), and peer support (1%). This is in line with previous research showing that Finnish teachers seem to be competent in supporting learning by using visual aids, while using more linguistically oriented support is lacking (Heikkola et al. 2022). More multifaceted support for learners would enable them to better understand the content (Gibbons 2014), which all students should have equal opportunities to access (Commins & Miramontes 2006).

When asked to reflect on the students' needs for developing academic competence specifically for producing mathematical texts in the future, 44% named either supporting the development from everyday language to academic language or elaborating on the structure of a word problem and guiding the student. For example, one pre-service teacher wrote: "You have to choose your words wisely" when describing how to scaffold the learners' understanding. In addition, 39% of the participants recognised the importance of subject-specific language development but gave fewer specific responses. However, 17% were not able to provide adequate responses. These results indicate that a notable number of the pre-service teachers in this study need more focused training in linguistically responsive pedagogy, especially in how language is essential to subject learning, thinking, and expressing ideas (e.g. Cummins & Early 2015, Shanahan &

Shanahan 2008). For example, in teaching mathematics, it is crucial that a teacher know how to actively support the development of subject-specific language and create opportunities for students to participate in cognitively challenging discussions (e.g., mathematical problem solving) as well as to understand instructions (Ahlholm & Portaankorva-Koivisto 2018, Carlson et al. 2018, Joutsenlahti & Tossavainen 2018).

When looking at the participants' understanding of the use of L1 as a learning tool, somewhat contradictory results were found. Half of the pre-service primary school teachers reported that they would limit the use of L1s during lessons to ensure that MLSs develop their Finnish. Furthermore, almost one-third of the participants reported allowing the use of L1s only if someone else, mainly the teacher, knew the language. Although half of the participants reported that they would restrict the use of L1s in the classroom to support Finnish language learning, 97% would nevertheless encourage the use of L1s to promote content learning. These somewhat contradictory findings resonate with earlier research from Finland, in which teachers' positive stances toward multilingualism and the use of L1 in general often did not actualise in their reported classroom practices (Alisaari et al. 2019). This may stem from the practical difficulty of dealing with a range of languages in class that teachers do not speak or understand.

Even though the participants gave contradictory responses regarding L1 use in the classroom, they were able to name reasons for the importance of L1s being present in the classroom: 85% of the participants provided more than one reason for advocating the use of L1 (for example, appreciating linguistic diversity, strengthening student identities, supporting learning outcomes, or highlighting language awareness). 15% responded more vaguely that L1 use might help students understand a lesson's content. Importantly, only 2% of the participants would allow the use of L1 only at recess. Thus, although the participants were unwilling to encourage L1 use in their classrooms, they acknowledged its importance for students' learning. This indicates positive attitudes that could be used as grounds for pedagogical practices that consider MLSs' L1s as learning resources. However, more work needs to be done to actualise L1 use in learning according to the requirements of the Finnish core curriculum for basic education (Finnish National Agency of Education 2014) and for the multilingual stage to actualise in Finnish classrooms (see also Aronin & Singleton 2018).

4.2 Levels of competency

In this section, we present the frequencies of the participants' responses as coded into the three different categories of competency (see Table 2).

Table 2: Percentages of participants in the three competency groups: novice (0–1.49), advanced beginner (1.5–2.99), and competent (3–4)

		%		
Dimension	*n*	Novice	Advanced beginner	Competent
Developing language skills for learning	67	1.5	64.2	34.3
Knowledge of language, grammar, and symbols	70	0.0	51.4	48.6
Providing linguistic support	75	4.0	24.0	72.0
L1 as a tool for learning	81	2.5	27.2	70.4
Total score	51	0.0	56.9	43.1

Although the detailed investigation of each individual dimension revealed some shortcomings (Section 4.1), when looking at the dimensions as whole, there are noticeably few novices. This indicates that a broader investigation provides a different and more positive perspective on the competence of the pre-service teachers. Thus, at the university where the study took place, teacher education seems to provide pre-service teachers with at least an elementary understanding of academic language development and ways to support it. When looking at the total score for the entire survey, 56.9% of the participants were advanced beginners and 43.1% were categorised as competent and therefore could be expected to be prepared to support language learning in the classroom. In the dimensions of providing linguistic support and L1 as a tool for learning, over 70% of the participants were categorised as competent. However, it has to be kept in mind that this result is based only on their self-reports. Although single items seem to indicate knowledge gaps (see section 4.1), since there were only few novice-level competencies, as a whole, teacher education at this particular university appears to promote understanding of the importance of L1 use and providing linguistic support in general. Our results indicate that in addition to encouraging pre-service teachers to better understand the importance of language in learning, thinking, and communicating, it is also of crucial importance to deepen their knowledge of language, including grammar. Half of the participants had significant gaps in their grammatical knowledge of the language that they will use for instruction in the future.

5 Conclusions

The aim of this study was to examine Finnish pre-service primary school teachers' understandings of academic language development and their reported preparedness to support language learning in the classroom when teaching MLSs in Finnish basic education. Since the data were collected from all the pre-service teachers in their third year at one teacher education institution only, the results cannot be generalised to other contexts (Finnish or international).

Based on this study, the Finnish pre-service teachers' overall understandings of academic language development and their reported preparedness to support language learning in the classroom vary. However, the results reflect the overall tendency seen in recent studies conducted in Finland (Alisaari et al. 2019, Alisaari & Heikkola 2020, Harju-Autti et al. 2022, Heikkola et al. 2022, 2025 [this volume]). Although there is a relatively good understanding of and support for academic language development, there are some gaps in awareness of how to provide linguistic support for MLSs (cf. Harju-Autti & Sinkkonen 2020) and how to use L1s as learning resources (Alisaari et al. 2019). However, the pre-service teachers in this study seemed to have a somewhat better understanding of the importance of L1 use and providing linguistic support than of the importance of developing language skills for learning or knowledge of language and grammar (cf. Gunnþórsdóttir & Óskarsdóttir 2025 [this volume], Østergaard et al. 2025 [this volume]).

One-third of the pre-service teachers did not see a connection between language and mathematical problem-solving skills, which leads us to conclude that their LRT awareness is still developing. The same conclusion could be drawn about the linguistic support, mainly visual or vocabulary- and structure-related, that the pre-service teachers said they would offer during a mathematics lesson. This seems to be common in Finnish pedagogical practices (e.g. Heikkola et al. 2022). Moreover, even though pre-service teachers in this study had high competence in awareness of the importance of students' L1s in learning, many of them reported that they would nevertheless restrict students' L1 use, indicating that monolingual ideologies exist among pre-service as well as in-service teachers (cf. Alisaari et al. 2019). Additionally, based on our results, pre-service teachers need support in how to scaffold their students in developing subject-specific language. This would provide more equal opportunities for all learners, especially MLSs, who may need extra practice with vocabulary, sentence structures, and meaning (Commins & Miramontes 2006).

While not a specific focus of the study, the fact that there were considerable gaps in the pre-service teachers' grammar knowledge after they had taken all

the Finnish grammatical courses of their teacher education is worrying. Grammatical knowledge is needed to enable future teachers to perceive language as a whole and support students' learning (Myhill 2000). In addition, classroom teachers have a responsibility to teach students the basics of grammar, especially in the upper grades of primary school (Tainio 2020). Therefore, they must have a strong knowledge of the language, including the basics of grammar. Knowledge of language can be seen as an important part of pedagogical competence; teachers' weak grammatical skills are likely to affect their ability to apply language knowledge in practice (Rättyä 2013).

The findings also suggest that the LRT requirements stipulated in the Finnish core curriculum for basic education are still difficult to achieve, especially considering that the third-year pre-service teachers in this study seemed to lack essential Finnish language skills. This would suggest that the current curriculum for teacher education at the university where this study took place does not provide sufficient knowledge regarding the Finnish language and grammar or language in general. Thus, offering pre-service teachers comprehensive information on language as well as research-based and practice-oriented instruction to deepen their knowledge of how to support academic language development in all subjects is recommended.

The instrument used in this study gave interesting insights into pre-service teachers' understandings of academic language development and preparedness to teach MLSs. However, the instrument would benefit from refinement, as this pilot study illustrates. For example, following the original guidelines for the analysis (Carlson et al. 2018) sometimes resulted in giving full scores even though the responses included negative attitudes or clear misunderstandings of issues related to language development. Even though these kinds of responses were rare, they highlighted these issues in the analysis process. This study was intended to be a pilot for further development and use of the research instrument; thus, both the questions and the guidelines for analysis would benefit from being rewritten and adjusted to better suit the context in which they are used.

Since immigration is rising globally, there is an increased need for awareness of the role of language in learning and teaching. Thus, the results of this study can be of interest to teacher educators and researchers in contexts beyond Finland, stimulating discussion and examination of similar issues in those contexts. In addition, the study makes a methodological contribution; the instrument used in this study was adapted from use in a German context to use in a Finnish context. The results indicate that this adaptation was fruitful, and thus, the research instrument could be used in different multilingual educational contexts in other

parts of the world, although it must be carefully adapted to country-specific educational policies.

Appendix A Items of original assignments and their modifications

Items were translated into English by the authors of the original research instrument and the modified research instrument.

A.1 Original assignment

A. Auction
Stimulus: The following test item comes up on a standardised test in your 7th grade math class.

- A dealer paid $10,000 for a boat at an auction. At the dealership, a salesperson sold the boat for 30% more than the auction price. The salesperson received a commission of 25% of the difference between the auction price and the dealership price.
- What was the salesperson's commission?
  a) $750
  b) $1,750
  c) $3,250
  d) $5,500
- Why does the contextual vocabulary (e.g. *dealer*, *auction*) cause more difficulties for multilingual learners than the subject-specific vocabulary (e.g. *difference*, *more than*)?
- Name at least one other difficult term and justify your answer.
- To what extent does this test item pose additional challenges for multilingual learners at the sentence and text level?
- Name at least one feature and support it with evidence from the text.

B. You want to use the following task for the next lesson:

- Leonardo da Vinci (1452–1519) describes the ideal measures of the human body as follows:

> The open hand from the wrist to the tip of the middle finger is a tenth of the entire height. The length of the foot is one-sixth of the height of the body. The head from the chin to the crown is one-eighth. The distance from the chin to the nostrils and from the lowest roots of the hair to the eyebrows is always the same and equals, just as the ear, a third of the face.

- Measure your height. What would the measurements of your hands, feet, face, and ears be according to da Vinci?
- Which linguistic elements can you identify in the task? Mark the right answer with a cross in each line and give an example if necessary.

  a) Demonstrative pronouns

  b) Prepositional verbs

  c) Prepositions

  d) Past participles

  e) Imperatives

  f) Compounds

A.2 Modified assignment

A. In the fifth-grade mathematics textbook (*Tuhattaituri* 5a, *Otava*) is the following assignment:

   - In a dog agility competition, the distance between two poles on the straight weave-pole path is always 60cm. The distance from the first pole to the last pole is 6m 60cm. How many poles are there on the straight weave-pole path in total?
   - Why does the contextual vocabulary (e.g., *agility competition*) pose more difficulties for multilingual learners than mathematics subject-specific vocabulary (e.g., *total*)? Name at least one other difficult word and justify your answer.

B. You want to use the following assignment in your lesson:

   - In three years, Sonja's grandfather will be three times as old as Sonja was last year. When adding Sonja's current age to her grandfather's current age, the total is 68. How old are each of them now?

- What kind of grammatical factors can you identify in the task? Select either "yes" or "no" for each listed item. If you select "yes," give an example.
  a) Past tense
  b) Comparative/superlative
  c) Imperative
  d) Present tense
  e) Participial phrase
  f) Possessive suffix

Appendix B Examples of the scoring guidelines concerning the responses for some of the survey items and their scoring based on how correct the answers would be

The questions are previously published in Alisaari et al. 2023.

Question 1: Contextual and mathematical vocabulary

The following assignment is in a fifth-grade mathematics textbook (*Tuhattaituri 5a*):

> In a dog agility competition, the distance between two poles on the straight weave-pole[5] trajectory is always 60 cm. The distance from the first pole to the last pole is 6 m 60 cm. How many poles are on the straight weave-pole trajectory in total?

A) Why does the contextual vocabulary (e.g., *agility*, *competition*) pose more difficulties for multilingual learners than mathematics subject-specific vocabulary (e.g., *total*)? Name at least one other difficult word and justify your answer. (0–2 points)

[5] A weave-pole is an agility obstacle consisting of a series of poles, and it is traditionally used in dog agility training and competitions.

- Mention of at least one difficult word AND explanation of why contextual vocabulary might be more challenging than mathematical vocabulary (e.g., the notion that life experience influences the development of contextual vocabulary) (2 points)
- Mention of one difficult word OR an example of why contextual vocabulary is more challenging than mathematical vocabulary (1 point)
- No mention of a difficult word OR suitable line of reasoning regarding vocabulary (0 points)

B) What other difficulties might the assignment cause for a multilingual learner at the sentence and text levels? (0–2 points)

- Mention of concrete, challenging words/grammatical features OR discussing difficulties on an abstract level (2 points)
- No mention of concrete, challenging words/structures OR of the task being too long (1 point)
- No mention of challenging words/structures OR an inappropriate response (0 points)

Question 2: Linguistic support

A) What kind of linguistic support would you offer multilingual learners either before or during the assignment to make the assignment easier to understand? Name at least two. (0–2 points)

- Mention of at least two of the following reasons (2 points):
  * Ensure students understand challenging words/phrases/concepts
  * Break the sentence into fragments
  * Use sentence/summary frames
  * Provide visuals that correspond with the word problem
  * Rewrite the question to be less linguistically complex/give students the formula/simplify the vocabulary/use imperatives
  * Strategy (e.g., use translators or Google)
- Mention of at least one of the reasons listed above (1 point)
- No mention of the reasons listed above (0 points)

B) Different types of linguistic support listed by the pre-service teachers based on their responses to question 2A.
   - The first three listed by the participants were included in the analysis.

Question 3: Link between mathematical and linguistic skills

What is the link between mathematical skills and linguistic skills? Explain. (0–2 points)

- Understanding and explaining the link between mathematical and linguistic skills (2 points)
- Naming the link between mathematical and linguistic skills (1 point)
- Vague response not naming the link between mathematical and linguistic skills (0 points)

Question 4

A) Justify your response to the following statements:

A) I would restrict conversations in first languages during lessons to ensure that my multilingual learners develop their basic and academic language skills in Finnish. (0–2 points)

B) First languages should be used in classrooms, but only when the teacher also knows the language(s). (0–2 points)

C) I would encourage multilingual learners to use their first languages to understand content in different subjects more easily. (0–2 points)

D) Name reasons why it may be good for multiple languages to be present in different subject classes. (0–2 points)

- Mention of at least two of the following reasons (2 points):
  - L1s are appreciated
  - Learners' identities as multilingual individuals are strengthened
  - Some learners have more courage to contribute during a lesson (e.g., group work) if they are can use their L1
  - Learners can understand the lessons' content (e.g., a task was understood)

  - Learners' L1s should be used as a resource
  - Language contrasts can highlight linguistic structures
  - Highlights awareness of languages
  - Helps build community in the classroom
  - Learning is encoded in L1
  - Encourage maintenance of L1
  - Building communities through L1

- Mention at least one of the reasons listed above (1 point)
- No mention of the reasons listed above (0 points)

B) Importance of L1

A) I would restrict conversations in first languages during lessons to ensure that multilingual learners develop their basic and academic language skills in Finnish. (0–1 points)

B) First languages should be used in classrooms, but only when the teacher also knows the language(s). (0–1 points)

C) I would encourage multilingual learners to use their first languages to understand content in different subjects more easily. (0–1 points)

- Understanding the importance of multilingual learners' L1s (1 point)
- Not understanding the importance of multilingual learners' L1s (0 points)

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Chapter 8

Mapping pre-service subject teachers' preparedness for linguistically diverse classrooms in Finland

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This study investigates pre-service teachers' knowledge of academic language demands, and their awareness of language-related practices. Data were collected via an online survey from three pre-service subject-teacher groups (studying to teach students aged 13–18) at the beginning and end of a year-long teacher education programme. Based on content analysis of the responses, all three groups were able to identify the language demands of academic tasks. However, awareness of language-related practices was vague in all three groups. Although the curricula for basic and upper secondary education in Finland emphasise the role of language in all learning, our study found that current teacher education programme may not be sufficient to prepare pre-service subject teachers for the multilingual realities of today's schools. The results deepen our understanding of the gradual process of developing teachers' preparedness for linguistically diverse classrooms, and indicate that linguistically responsive teaching practices should be modelled to support learning and multilingualism in the classroom, in Finland and globally.

1 Introduction

This study focuses on pre-service teachers' preparedness for multilingual learners. Specifically, it examines their developing orientations, knowledge and skills in instructing culturally and linguistically diverse students, which is referred to as linguistically responsive teaching (henceforth LRT, Lucas & Villegas 2013).

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LRT supports learning content and language with a special focus on students from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds (Lucas & Villegas 2013, see also Section 3). The study is part of a longitudinal project examining the effects of teacher education on teachers' beliefs and practices regarding working with emerging multilingual Finnish language learners (henceforth EMLLs). In this study, EMLLs refer to migrant background students studying in a Finnish-medium school in Finland. The ultimate goal for the present study is to propose recommendations for how teacher education in Finland, as well as globally could be developed to better prepare future subject teachers to respond to increasing linguistic (and cultural) diversity. In particular, we focus on the language demands of academic tasks and language-related practices that operationalise scaffolding in the learner's zone of proximal development (henceforth ZPD, Vygotsky 1978), that is, how students can reach a higher level of knowledge and skills with the support of a more skilful instructor or in interaction with their peers (see further in Section 3).

Teacher professionalisation should include *pedagogical language knowledge*: knowledge of language that is "directly related to disciplinary teaching and learning and situated in the particular (and multiple) contexts in which teaching and learning take place" (Bunch 2013: 307). In this study, teachers' knowledge is understood as "cognitive dispositions that are functionally responsive to situations and demands in certain contexts" (Kaiser & König 2019: 32; see also Klieme et al. 2008). We analyse how pre-service subject teachers' knowledge of academic language demands, and awareness of language-related practices develop during a year-long teacher education programme. Thus, the study aims to contribute to the field of teachers' professionalisation with regard to linguistic diversity.

The following research questions guided our investigation:

1. How does pre-service subject teachers' knowledge of academic language demands develop during a year-long teacher education programme?

2. How does pre-service subject teachers' awareness of language-related scaffolding practices develop during a year-long teacher education programme?

This study was motivated by the latest PISA assessments, which suggest a significant gap between the learning outcomes of native Finnish speakers and migrant-background students (Harju-Luukkainen et al. 2015, Leino et al. 2019, Vettenranta et al. 2016). Similar trends can be seen for other OECD countries as

well (Schleicher 2019). In addition, the study is positioned in the context of curricular reforms in Finland that require schools to promote cultural diversity, language awareness and multilingual approaches as key values (EDUFI 2014, 2019). In today's Finnish schools, *all* teachers are language teachers within their subjects, and language development and the attainment of the literacy needed for successful academic participation is central to all instruction. Thus, every teacher in Finland is required to be linguistically responsive (Lucas & Villegas 2013), that is, they need to understand the processes of language learning and ways to scaffold students' learning of language and content in their ZPD. This knowledge is important as it affects how teachers teach multilingual students (Lucas & Villegas 2013).

However, studies have shown that not all teachers in Finland have the pedagogical orientations, knowledge and skills needed to respond to increasing linguistic diversity (Alisaari et al. 2019, Repo 2020, Suuriniemi & Satokangas 2023). A similar situation has been reported in other Nordic countries (see Iversen 2021, Lundberg 2019, Rosén et al. 2019). Although language awareness could revolutionise schools and classrooms, questions have been raised about how the concept has been translated into linguistically responsive practices (Ahlholm et al. 2021, Zilliacus et al. 2017). In Finland, for instance, teachers' classroom practices sometimes reflect a persistent "Finnish only policy" (Alisaari et al. 2019). As the current curricula are relatively new, it is to be expected that teachers' practices are still developing. Indeed, changes in school culture and discourses are slow (Repo 2020, Tarnanen & Palviainen 2018), and often change does not happen when ordered from above (Hornberger & Johnson 2007).

As there is evidence that LRT is crucial for newcomers to a school system whose first language is not the same as the language of instruction (Gibbons 2014, Lucas & Villegas 2013, Schleppegrell 2002), it is important to study pre-service subject teachers' preparedness to support EMLLs and how their preparedness is supported in teacher education. There is evidence that training focused on cultural diversity enable teachers to affirm students' identities (Kimanen et al. 2019), and professional development increases early childhood practitioners' awareness of language learning (Kirsch & Aleksić 2018). The present study adopted the view that pre-service subject teachers' preparedness for linguistically diverse classrooms consists of their abilities to identify potentially challenging features of academic language and their awareness of language-related and interactional scaffolding practices. However, we are aware that being linguistically responsive also requires other types of knowledge and skills.

The chapter is structured as follows. In Section 2, we present the context of the study. The theoretical background of the study is described in Section 3, with sub-

sections on academic language demands (Section 3.1) and language-related scaffolding (Section 3.2). In Section 4, the methodology of the study is explained, with separate subsections focusing on participants and data collection (Section 4.1) and data analysis (Section 4.2). Results are presented in Section 5, with subsections focusing on academic language demands (Section 5.1) and language-related practices (Section 5.2). Finally, in Section 6, the results of the study are discussed, and conclusions drawn.

2 The context of the study: One-year subject teacher education programme

In Finland, subject teachers teach grades 7–9 (students aged 13–15) in basic education and grades 10–12 (students aged 15–18) in upper secondary school. In contrast to primary school teachers, who usually teach all subjects to students aged 7–12 (see Alisaari et al. 2025 [this volume]), subject teachers typically teach two different subjects. All subject teachers are required to obtain a three-year bachelor's degree and a two-year master's degree (five years total). This includes 120 ECTS (= European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System) in their major, the primary teaching subject, and 60 ECTS in their minor, the other teaching subject(s). One ECTS equals approximately 27h of work. In addition, subject teachers are required to complete pedagogical studies (60 ECTS) lasting one academic year either as a part of their bachelor's or master's degree or as additional studies.

The one-year teacher education programme consists of theoretical and subject-specific didactic studies, as well as practicums. Currently, there are eight universities that educate teachers in Finland. Finnish teacher education is research-based and highly valued. Even though teacher education is guided by the national core curricula, teacher education departments at universities create their curricula autonomously; thus, the curricula diverge quite significantly between the universities (Szabó et al. 2021). Furthermore, subject teacher education in Finland is organised according to the subjects, and there can be substantial differences in how broadly various topics, such as LRT, are discussed across diverse subjects.

At the teacher education department from which the participants in this study were recruited, the curriculum for subject teachers' pedagogical studies includes one course (5 ECTS) on subject-specific didactical skills that covers topics such as language-aware teaching, awareness of subject-specific language features, challenges of teaching subject-specific terminology, and significance of language and culture in learning. However, the course covers many other topics as well; thus, the time allocated to language awareness is brief.

In the curriculum of the investigated teacher education department, one of the four practicums is dedicated to linguistically aware teaching taking multilingual students into consideration in teaching a subject. According to the curriculum, all pre-service subject teachers shall become aware of the role of language in learning and teaching during their year of pedagogical studies. This study investigates pre-service teachers' awareness of the demands of academic language and their language-related practices for scaffolding instruction; both topics are addressed in the teacher education programme at the university in question.

3 Theoretical background

This study is based on Lucas & Villegas's (2011, 2013) LRT framework, which draws on a sociocultural approach to learning and teaching language(s) (Donato 2000, Gibbons 2014, Lantolf & Thorne 2006, van Lier 2000, Vygotsky 1978). Viewed through a sociocultural lens, language learning is a social and cognitive process (Lantolf & Thorne 2006, Vygotsky 1978). Language skills develop through repetitive interaction, collaborating (Dufva 2020, Vygotsky 1978) and sharing and recycling language or linguistic resources (Dufva 2013). The LRT framework consists of *orientations* (beliefs and values regarding language and linguistic diversity) and *pedagogical knowledge and skills* (Alisaari et al. 2025 [this volume]; see Iversen et al. 2025 [this volume]). In this study, these are assumed to be part of teachers' professionalism and cognitive competencies (Kaiser & König 2019) to teach EMLLs, in line with Bunch's (2013) call for pedagogical language knowledge. Below, we present selected studies on identifying academic language demands (Section 3.1) and language-related practices (Section 3.2), the two topics of investigation in the present study.

3.1 Identifying the language demands of academic tasks and discourse

Different contexts require different types of language use (Cummins 2000, 2021). In the context of schooling, language plays a central role in managing classroom activities and presenting content knowledge (Cummins 2021, Schleppegrell 2002). Thus, linguistically responsive teachers should be aware of the relationship between language and content. Furthermore, to support students who are simultaneously learning language and content, teachers must understand the demands of academic language and discourse (Cummins 2000, Gibbons 2014, Schleppegrell 2002). The term *academic language* refers to the language and literacy skills needed to function in the school context (Cummins 2000, 2021, Wong Fillmore & Snow 2000) and is used to identify the linguistic features of

school subjects and activities likely to pose challenges for EMLLs (Lucas & Villegas 2013). Academic language was included in the study's theoretical framework because developing higher levels of language proficiency is crucial for fully participating in today's text-oriented society (Cummins 2021, Haneda 2014). Traditionally, discipline-specific content learning has been based on textual artefacts and literacy-focused tasks (Barton 2007, Luukka et al. 2008), and according to Cummins (2021: 162):

> success in school for all students depends on the extent to which they develop competence in reading increasingly complex written texts and learning how to write coherently for a variety of audiences across the curriculum.

Academic language is demanding, as reading and writing in the language of schooling requires a specific set of linguistic resources (Cummins 2021, Gibbons 2014). Indeed, the syntactic and semantic features of academic language and different registers set higher cognitive demands than informal oral interactions, where the meaning is co-constructed (Schleppegrell 2002). This study draws on the assumption that academic language differs fundamentally from conversational language (Cummins 2000, Gibbons 2014, Schleppegrell 2002).

While oral academic situations do occur, research on students' language proficiency development often focuses on the challenges associated with written academic language (Biber 1986, Gumperz et al. 1984, Michaels & Collins 1984, Wong Fillmore & Snow 2000). To function in academic contexts, learners need linguistic resources to seek, analyse, and interpret information; understand and explain abstract concepts; and produce and edit written knowledge presentations (Cummins 2000, Gibbons 2014). These skills form the that is needed to become an active member of today's societies (e.g. Cope & Kalantzis 2000). Multiliteracy, which is required by the Finnish national core curricula for basic education and general upper secondary education (EDUFI 2014, 2019), refers to the competent use of different texts and genres in appropriate contexts; thus, just knowing subject-specific vocabulary is not enough for success in an academic language situation.

3.2 Practices for scaffolding instruction for multilingual learners

Lucas & Villegas (2013) use the term *scaffolding instruction* to refer to supporting multilingual learners' learning of the content and language of instruction by drawing on their linguistic resources (see also Vygotsky 1978). For teachers, *scaffolding* means the instructional adaptations used to make academic content

understandable for learners (see Gibbons 2014) while keeping the cognitive demands of instruction high (Villegas et al. 2018). Leaning on sociocultural understanding, teaching is facilitating, and learning happens through interaction (Teemant 2014).

Through scaffolding, learners can collectively complete academic tasks they could not do alone. Indeed, scaffolding is required for learners to participate in the teaching within their ZPD (Vygotsky 1978). Scaffolding and ZPD are two sides of the same coin, as it is only when scaffolding is needed – and provided – that learning takes place (Gibbons 2014). In other words, learning occurs when a more knowledgeable other, such as a teacher or a parent, collaborates with a student to help them function beyond their current capabilities (Gibbons 2014, Walqui & van Lier 2010). Scaffolding can also happen between peers, suggesting that learners can support each other's learning, as learners can recycle resources in interaction depending on their world knowledge (Walqui & van Lier 2010). In language learning, scaffolding aims to enable students to notice and adopt affordances that can be used for interaction (van Lier 2000).

Lucas et al. (2008) list seven different practices for scaffolding instruction for multilingual students: 1) using extra-linguistic aids, such as visual tools (pictures, videos) and graphic organisers (graphs, timelines); 2) supplementing or modifying written texts, for example, by developing study guides with questions, giving definitions and highlighting key terms, in order to enhance students' reading; 3) supplementing and modifying oral texts, for example, by reducing speech rate, avoiding idiomatic expressions and pausing more frequently to allow more time for processing and responding; 4) giving clear and explicit instructions; 5) facilitating and encouraging the use of students' first language(s); 6) engaging language learners in meaningful activities in which they can interact with others and negotiate meaning; and 7) minimising the potential for anxiety when using language in the classroom. Indeed, employing students' entire linguistic repertoires through multilingual (Cummins 2021) or translanguaging pedagogy (García 2009) can scaffold higher levels of academic performance. In addition, providing outlines for lectures, repeating key ideas (Gibbons 2014) and establishing classroom routines so learners know what is expected of them (Willett et al. 2007) support students' learning. The current study investigates whether pre-service subject teachers are aware of these kinds of linguistically responsive practices.

4 Methodology

In this section, we introduce the participants and data (Section 4.1), and theory-driven content analysis (Krippendorf 2012, Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2018), which was the method of analysis used in the study (Section 4.2).

4.1 Participants and data collection

The data for the study were collected via an online survey in Finnish. The data of the study consists of pre-service subject teachers' responses to one open-ended question that sought to measure participants' preparedness linguistically diverse learners. Analysis of the participants' responses to other questions in the survey has been reported elsewhere (see Heikkola et al. 2022).

The data were collected at the beginning and end of a year-long subject teacher education programme at a Finnish university; each participant responded to the same question twice. The data were collected during two consecutive academic years from two separate teacher education programmes. The investigated pre-service subject teachers did their practicums at a school where 64% of the students spoke first languages other than Finnish (40 different languages).

74 participants responded to the survey both at the beginning and end of the teacher education programme and gave their written consent to participate in the study. Of the participating pre-service subject teachers, 39 were linguistics/literature students (henceforth linguistics students, majoring in Finnish, or foreign languages, such as English, Swedish or German, or literature),[1] 21 studied natural sciences (majoring in mathematics, physics or chemistry), and 14 studied social sciences (majoring in religious studies or history). The different group sizes reflect the number of students in the different subjects undergoing teacher education.

Participation in the study was voluntary. Participants' privacy rights were respected by pseudonymisation of the data, that is, by using identification numbers for the participants and removing all personal information from the data for analysis, and by following the guidelines for ethical research.

The open-ended question included in the study introduced a fictional scenario in a linguistically diverse school. Translated into English by the authors it read:

> Imagine yourself in a situation in which you, as a teacher, are having a conversation at recess with an immigrant-background student. You notice

[1] In Finland, one can become a teacher of L1 Finnish or Swedish by majoring in literature, as the subject in school is called Finnish/Swedish and literature.

> that the student speaks Finnish fluently. However, once the lesson begins, you notice that the student has difficulties participating in the lesson. What do you think is the reason for this, and what would you, as a teacher, do in this situation?

The question was two-fold: asking "What do you think is the reason?" sought participants' understanding of academic language demands, while asking "What would you, as a teacher, do?" was intended to elicit ideas for suitable pedagogical practices for EMLLs. We expected the participants to reflect on why the student was having trouble in class and how they could make the academic content understandable to the student. The question intended to provide information on pre-service teachers' knowledge of academic language demands and language-related pedagogical practices that operationalise scaffolding in a learner's ZPD. It was assumed that these reflections stem from LRT, and it was designed to be unequivocal and accessible to all participants. The open-ended question was originally based on a question in the survey used by Alisaari & Heikkola (2020).

4.2 Data analysis

The data were analysed using theory-driven content analysis (Krippendorf 2012, Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2018), namely, reading and analysing the participants' responses based on current theories regarding LRT (see Section 3). This method allowed us to compare, contrast, categorise and test the pre-service subject teachers' theoretical knowledge and skills related to LRT, and thus, enhance the consistency of the analysis (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2018). Theory-driven content analysis was chosen as the method of analysis because it enabled us to investigate the pre-service subject teachers' preparedness for teaching linguistically diverse classrooms while comparing it to current theoretical understandings. We understand content analysis as a method to capture both qualitative and quantitative data (Krippendorf 2012, Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2018).

To ensure unbiased analysis, the data were randomised, so the authors were not aware of the respondents' subject groups. The analysis was done in four stages: 1) theory-driven coding of the data (Krippendorf 2012, Saldaña 2008, Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2018); 2) organising the responses according to the three subject teacher groups; 3) making comparisons between the responses from three teacher groups; and 4) looking at possible changes in responses before and after the year–long teacher education programme. Stage 1 was done in two steps, aligning with the two-fold question. Drawing on identifying the demands of academic language (e.g. Cummins 2000, Schleppegrell 2002), the potential reasons

for difficulties in following instruction were coded according to the following scale (D = demands):

D0: Language demands are not mentioned as a reason

D1: Narrow knowledge of academic language demands as a reason

D2: Partly theory-based knowledge of academic language demands as a reason

D3: Theory-based knowledge of academic language demands as a reason

Responses coded as D3 showed theory-based knowledge regarding the demands of academic language by explicitly describing the differences between conversational and academic language and at least hinting at contextual language use, such as the language demands of subject-specific tasks, genres and discourses. Responses coded as D2 were expected to contain similar knowledge of language demands but could contain some conceptual inaccuracies, or a mention of only one explicit context for language use. Those coded as D1 referred to language implicitly and did not explain how language demands could vary in different situations, or included responses only mentioning vocabulary. If language demands were not mentioned at all, the responses were coded as D0. Notably, some responses were coded into the lowest category even though they showed some knowledge of how situational factors affect language use (e.g. the student is more nervous in the classroom than during recess). However, as these did not mention academic language demands explicitly, they did not fully align with the theoretical framework of the study, and were thus coded as D0.

Next, looking at language-related and interactional pedagogical practices that operationalise scaffolding in a learner's ZDP (e.g. Gibbons 2014, Lucas & Villegas 2013), the participants' responses regarding their reported practices were coded using the following scale (P = practices):

P0: Language is not mentioned in the practices

P1: Language is mentioned in the practices

P2: Language is mentioned, and a concrete pedagogical practice is presented

P3: Language is mentioned, and multiple concrete pedagogical practices are presented

Responses coded as P3 mentioned multiple, concrete, language-related and interactional practices that operationalise scaffolding in a learner's ZPD. Responses coded as P2 included one concrete, language-related scaffolding practice, while those in P1 mentioned a language-related practice without a concrete proposition or an explanation of how such a practice would scaffold instruction for EMLLs. Responses naming practices not related to language were coded as P0. Similar to the D-categories, some of these responses were coded as P0 even though they were useful and suitable for classroom instruction (e.g. helping students to overcome anxiety in performing in the classroom).

After the initial coding, the responses were organised according to the three student groups, and the groups' responses regarding academic language demands (D) and language-related practices (P) were compared. The final analysis focused on the changes that took place when contrasting the participants' responses the beginning and end of the year-long teacher education programme. The analysis was conducted through cycles of identifying patterns, reading the responses at different levels of abstraction, and reflecting against the theoretical framework. Throughout the analysis, we kept analytic memos and systematically took different perspectives on the data. In addition, short descriptive codes were added to describe the main content of the coded parts of the responses for both categories.

5 Findings

In this section, we describe the participants' knowledge of academic language demands (Section 5.1) and discuss their awareness of language-related scaffolding practices (Section 5.2).

5.1 Pre-service subject teachers' knowledge regarding academic language demands

To address research question 1, the response categories regarding the participants' knowledge of academic language demands are presented in Table 1 for the whole group, as well as for the three subject groups separately.

Looking at the whole group, the pre-service teachers' theoretical understanding of language demands had increased during their year-long teacher education programme. Thus, it seems as though teacher education has benefited the pre-service subject teachers in supporting and developing their understanding of academic language demands. When comparing the three subject groups, namely

Table 1: Development of knowledge regarding academic language demands from before to after the teacher education programme. Percentages were calculated without the missing values. L = linguistics students, NS = natural science students, SS = social science students, mr = missing response

	All (N = 74)				L (n = 39)				NS (n = 21)				SS (n = 14)			
	before		after		before		after		before		after		before		after	
	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*
D3	35	26	53	39	39	15	64	25	19	4	24	5	50	7	57	8
D2	31	23	23	17	41	16	23	9	24	5	24	5	14	2	36	5
D1	26	19	18	13	15	6	8	3	43	9	38	8	29	4	7	1
D0	7	5	1	1	5	2	2.5	1	9.5	2	0	0	7	1	0	0
mr	1	1	5	4	0	0	2.5	1	4.5	1	14	3	0	0	0	0

linguistics, natural sciences and social sciences, the linguistics group seemed to benefit the most from the teacher education programme when looking at the most theory-based responses. They increased their theory-based knowledge of academic language demands from 39% to 64%, compared to a moderate increase from 19% to 24% in the natural sciences group and from 50% to 57% in the social sciences group.

In the linguistics group, the percentage of responses categorised as reflecting a partly theory-based understanding went down from 41% to 23%, whereas the numbers stayed the same in the natural science group (24%), and more than doubled (from 14% to 36%) in the social sciences group. Responses categorised as reflecting a narrow understanding of academic language demands decreased in all the three groups: from 15% to 8% in the linguistics group, from 29% to 7% in the social sciences group, and from 43% to 38% in the natural sciences group. A substantial number of responses coded as partly theory-based knowledge decreased at the end of the teacher education programme only in the linguistics group, with many responses being coded to the highest category, namely, theory-based knowledge of academic language demands. This trend was not seen in the other two groups.

Based on these findings, it seems that the linguistics group was best able to benefit from the teacher education programme in developing their understanding of the demands of academic language, followed by the social sciences group. The findings suggest that only a few pre-service subject teachers in the natural sciences group were prepared to use the opportunities offered in the teacher education programme to fully develop their understanding. These findings are in

line with previous research, stating that (future) language teachers often have a broader understanding of the role of language, and thus have a higher level of understanding regarding language demands compared to future natural sciences teachers (Alisaari et al. 2019, Heikkola et al. 2021).

Next, we compared the responses given before and after the year-long teacher education to see how individual participants' knowledge had developed (see Table 2). Three different response types emerged: 1) increased knowledge regarding academic language demands; 2) no change in knowledge of academic language demands; and 3) decreased knowledge regarding academic language demands.

Table 2: Development in knowledge regarding academic language demands from before to after the teacher education programme. L = linguistics students, NS = natural science students, SS = social science students.

	All ($N = 74$)		L ($n = 39$)		NS ($n = 21$)		SS ($n = 14$)	
	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*
Increased knowledge	40.5	30	41	16	48	10	29	4
No change in knowledge	40.5	30	46	18	14	3	64	9
Decreased knowledge	14	10	10	4	24	5	7	1
Missing responses	5	4	3	1	14	3	0	0

The understanding of academic language demands increased in the responses of 40.5% of the pre-service teachers from before to after the teacher education programme. However, another 40.5% of the pre-service teachers' responses reflected no change in their understanding during the teacher education. In 14% of the pre-service teachers' responses, there was a decrease in the understanding of the demands of academic language. Based on the findings, it seems that the teacher training programme has supported understanding for approximately 40% of the pre-service teachers. However, it should be noted that 35% of the pre-service teachers were already at the highest level of understanding at the beginning of the year-long teacher education programme. As it has been suggested that theoretical knowledge is the base for pedagogical practice (see Kirsch & Aleksić 2018), more focus is required on the demands of academic language, and, generally, on the role of language in all learning and teaching in teacher training.

Response examples illuminating the changes in the participants' knowledge are presented in Table 3. Participants' subject group and identification number are presented together with the example number.

Table 3: Examples of responses regarding knowledge of the demands of academic language. Each example includes responses from the same pre-service teacher before and after the teacher education programme. L = linguistics student, NS = natural science student, SS = social science student

(a) Increased knowledge

	What do you think is the reason?	
	Before	After
Example 1 (SS3)	The student has not learned vocabulary related to the subject. [D1]	The student has learned conversational Finnish but has not learned the school and subject-specific language. [D3]
Example 2 (NS12)	The concepts and phrasal structures can be very different compared to spoken language. [D2]	The language used during lessons is different from spoken language. [D3]

(b) No change in knowledge

	What do you think is the reason?	
	Before	After
Example 3 (SS2)	The language used during lessons might be foreign and academic for the student. [D2]	It might be that the student has difficulty mastering the language and vocabulary of the subject that is being taught. On the other hand, there might be peer pressure, and the student does not have the courage to ask/say things out loud in front of others. [D2]
Example 4 (L25)	Subject-specific language is often very different compared to language proficiency needed for everyday language use. Also, vocabulary is much more challenging in written theoretical language than in everyday speech. [D3]	For many, spoken language proficiency might be almost at a native level because the same structures and words are often repeated in spoken language. Modelling is essential for learning spoken language. However, the subject-specific languages are completely different from spoken language. The subject-specific languages are also challenging for native speakers, so special attention is needed with Finnish-as-a-second-language learners. [D3]

Table 3: Examples of responses regarding knowledge of the demands of academic language. Each example includes responses from the same pre-service teacher before and after the teacher education programme. L = linguistics student, NS = natural science student, SS = social science student (cont.)

(c) Decreased knowledge

	What do you think is the reason?	
	Before	After
Example 5 (NS13)	The reason might be that the student is fluent in everyday language. [D2]	[The student] doesn't know the vocabulary of the subject in Finnish. They are not willing to communicate with the teacher or do not want the teacher to understand the topic of the conversation. [D1]
Example 6 (L22)	The student can speak spoken language, but possibly the written language used in class creates a problem. [D2]	The student is insecure when using the language and may be afraid of being ridiculed if they make mistakes. It is also possible that the student has problems with reading and writing. [D0]

At the beginning of the teacher education programme, many of the participants understood language and academic language demands as comprising only vocabulary or terminology rather than entire texts and genres of discipline-specific contexts (Examples 1 and 2): such responses were coded as D1. However, other participants indicated that the student may be more fluent in some language domains, such as spoken language, than in other domains (Example 6). These participants often highlighted the student's conversational proficiency without explicitly distinguishing this from the language and literacy skills needed to function in academic contexts (Example 5). Often, situational language use was hinted at, but responses only explicitly named one situation. These responses were seen as reflecting partly theory-based knowledge and coded as D2. At the end of the teacher education programme, many of the participants were aware that academic language demands are fundamentally different from conversational language demands, and they were able to articulate their knowledge with concepts that aligned with the theoretical framework (Examples 1, 2 and 4), explicitly stating that language is used differently in different contexts. These responses were coded as D3.

The participants whose knowledge of academic language demands increased during the teacher education programme had often broadened their understand-

ing of language from it being limited to vocabulary or a specific language domain (e.g. speaking or writing) to it being different in different contexts, namely conversational language being different from academic language (Examples 1 and 2). When there were no changes in the participants' knowledge regarding academic language, it was often because they already possessed more knowledge at the beginning of the programme (Example 4). This was especially true for the linguistics students, as they had already been studying language and literature for years. In the other two subject groups, the responses hinted at a moderate level of understanding at the beginning of the teacher education programme (Example 3). However, these participants were often not as well equipped to articulate their understanding as the linguistics students. As this may be a factor affecting the coding, responses have been interpreted based on their intended meaning, not the wording of the responses.

Reasons for decreased understanding of academic language demands varied. Often, the participants' understanding was verbalised somewhat vaguely at the beginning of the teacher education programme (Examples 5 and 6). At the end of the programme, some responses only mentioned vocabulary (Example 5), which may reflect what the pre-service teachers had learned during their practicum. It is understandable that the participants' responses may have focused on something concrete, such as specific words, instead of holistically focusing on language as a situational phenomenon. The participants' experiences from their practicum are reflected in many responses given in the survey at the end of the programme. For example, some focused on affective factors that may be hindering students' learning, such as peer pressure (Example 3), attitude (Example 5) or anxiety (Example 6). While knowledge of these factors is essential for teachers, the students' responses may not have been coded highly on our scale on understanding academic language demands, as affective factors were not within the scope of the current study.

5.2 Pre-service subject teachers' awareness of language-related practices

In this section, we address research question 2. The response categories regarding pre-service subject teachers' awareness of linguistically responsive practices are presented in Table 4. In the analyses, we take all responses that mention language in some way to be promising signs of the participants' awareness of language-related scaffolding practices.

When looking at multiple language-related practices in the pre-service subject teachers' responses, the awareness of linguistically responsive practices in-

Table 4: Development of awareness of linguistically responsive practices from before to after the teacher education programme. Percentages were calculated without the missing values. L = linguistics students, NS = natural science students, SS = social science students

	All (N = 74)				L (n = 39)				NS (n = 21)				SS (n = 14)			
	before		after		before		after		before		after		before		after	
	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n
P3	8	6	31	23	7.7	3	38.5	15	5	1	9.5	5	14.3	2	43	6
P2	35	26	19	14	43.6	17	13	5	29	6	19	4	21.4	3	36	5
P1	31	23	24	18	13	5	15	6	52	11	42.9	9	50	7	21	3
P0	22	16	8	6	28	11	13	5	14	3	4.8	1	14.3	2	0	0
mr	4	3	18	13	7.7	3	20.5	8	0	0	23.8	5	0	0	0	0

creased from 8% to 31% during the teacher education. The awareness increased greatly both in the linguistics (8% → 38.5%) and social sciences (14.3% → 43%) groups, whereas in the natural sciences group the increase was more moderate (5% → 9.5%).

When analysing the whole group, the number of responses coded as including only one language-related scaffolding practice went down from 35% to 19%. Similar trends could be seen in the linguistics group (43.6–13%) and natural sciences group (29–19%). However, in the social sciences group these responses went up from 21.4% to 36%. On the other hand, in the social sciences group, there were fewer responses coded into the lower categories: language mentioned, or language not mentioned, at the end of the teacher education.

Based on these findings, it seems that the linguistics and social sciences groups benefited the most from their teacher education programme year when looking at their awareness of linguistically responsive practices. As with their knowledge of academic language demands, the natural science group is clearly different from the linguistics and social sciences groups also with regard to awareness of language-related scaffolding practices: a large part of this group's responses reflected no change in awareness, and, in addition, this group also had a high number of missing responses at the end of their teacher education programme.

It was expected that the linguistics group would be (the most) aware of linguistically responsive practices, as they are interested in language(s) and have studied language and language learning in their major studies. Based on the findings, it does seem that the linguistics group were more able to benefit from their teacher education in a way that supported them to become more aware of linguistically responsive practices. Moreover, the social sciences group was able to

benefit from the teacher education programme in such a way that their awareness regarding linguistically responsive practices increased during the teacher training programme. Similar findings pointing to the linguistics and social sciences groups' increased ability to benefit from teacher education and to increase their understanding of the overall importance of the role of language in learning and teaching have been shown (Heikkola et al. 2021). Heikkola et al. also showed that natural science students did not benefit as much as the other two groups, when it comes to understanding the role of language in learning and teaching.

When comparing the responses given before and after the teacher education programme, three different outcomes emerged: 1) increased awareness of linguistically responsive practices, 2) no change in awareness and 3) decreased awareness of linguistically responsive practices. The findings are presented in Table 5. Looking at the whole group, 38% increased their awareness. In the linguistics (46%) and social sciences (57%) groups approximately half of the participants had gained a higher awareness during their teacher education, whereas only 19% of the natural science pre-service teachers had done the same.

Table 5: Development of awareness of linguistically responsive practices from before to after the teacher education programme. LR = linguistically responsive, L = linguistics students, NS = natural science students, SS = social science students

	All		L		NS		SS	
Change in awareness of LR practices	(N = 74)		(n = 39)		(n = 21)		(n = 14)	
	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n
Increase	38	28	46	18	19	4	57	8
No change	31	23	21	8	43	9	36	5
Decrease	12	9	10	4	14	3	7	1
Missing responses	19	14	23	9	24	5	0	0

31% of the whole group remained at the same level of awareness regarding language-related practices during their teacher education. The natural science (43%) and social sciences (36%) groups had higher numbers of participants who remained at the same level compared to the linguistics group (21%). Looking at the whole group, 12% had a decreased awareness of language-related practices at the end of their teacher training. Here, there were no major differences between the groups: linguistics (10%), natural sciences (14%) and social sciences (7%). Thus, based on our findings, it seems that the majority of the pre-service subject teach-

ers had benefitted from their teacher training programme when it comes to pedagogical practices supporting multilingual students. Again, the natural sciences group differs somewhat from the two other groups, as not all pre-service teachers in natural sciences had gained as high an awareness regarding language-related scaffolding practices as the pre-service teachers in the other groups.

In Table 6, examples of changes in the participants' concrete, language-related scaffolding practices are presented. Similar to the responses regarding academic language demands, at the beginning of the teacher education programme, many participants focused only on word-level scaffolding, for example, supporting the development of the student's vocabulary, terminology and concepts (Examples 8 and 10). Responses focusing on vocabulary alone were coded as P1. At the beginning of their teacher education, many participants were able to name one language-related scaffolding practice, and emphasised modifying teacher speech or materials (Example 7), using plain Finnish (Examples 9 and 12) and being familiar with students' language proficiency levels (Example 11). However, few participants were able to give more than one language-related practice at the beginning of the teacher education programme.

At the end of the teacher education programme, most of the linguistics students were able to name two or more concrete language-related scaffolding practices (Examples 7 and 8). Some of these responses still focused on vocabulary, but holistic language-related scaffolding practices, such as examining language during lessons or using both spoken and written language when giving assignments, were also given. The linguistics students were more eloquent in verbalising language-related scaffolding practices at the end of their training than the other two groups. In the coding process, however, we aimed to interpret the content of the responses instead of the language, and did not penalise students for more straightforward responses.

Some participants were not able to verbalise more concrete language-related scaffolding practices at the end of the teacher education programme, and many remained at the vocabulary level (Example 10). Interestingly, some participants learned to "outsource" issues related to language to other professionals, such as special educators (Example 11) or Finnish-as-a-second-language teachers. Although Example 11 is about multi-professional collaboration, which may be beneficial for the individual EMLL, the response lacks active language support for the student, which conflicts with the principles of language-aware schools stated in the Finnish core curricula (EDUFI 2014, 2019). In addition, the participants often had very high expectations of their students' metacognitive skills regarding language learning; thus, the issue presented in the survey question was often seen

Table 6: Examples of responses regarding awareness of linguistically responsive practices. Each example includes responses from the same pre-service teacher before and after the teacher education programme. L = linguistics student, NS = natural science student, SS = social science student

(a) Increased practices

	What would you, as a teacher, do?	
	Before	After
Example 7 (L1)	As a teacher, I would pay attention to my own word choices, to how assignments are formulated and to how topics are taught. [P2]	During lessons, the ways language is being used should be examined critically. The student could be given wordlists or things could be made easier for them. [P3]
Example 8 (L16)	In my teaching, I would try to pay attention to this and explain difficult terms carefully. [P1]	I would ask the student about the matter. I would also ask how I could help the student to better follow the teaching. I would also try to pay attention to Finnish-as-a-second-language students in my teaching, e.g. by creating keyword lists to accompany assignment handouts and by supporting my speech, e.g. with the help of written notes on the smartboard. [P3]

(b) No change in practices

	What would you, as a teacher, do?	
	Before	After
Example 9 (SS6)	As a teacher, I would aim for clear instruction and blackboard notes. I would also support the student when they are doing assignments. [P2]	As a teacher, I would try to explain concepts, so that they are easier to understand, and I would make sure that everyone understands the content no matter how difficult the language is. [P2]
Example 10 (NS8)	Terms and concepts should be explained as clearly as possible. [P1]	I would pay attention to explaining terms. [P1]

Table 6: Examples of responses regarding awareness of linguistically responsive practices. Each example includes responses from the same pre-service teacher before and after the teacher education programme. L = linguistics student, NS = natural science student, SS = social science student (cont.)

(c) Decreased practices

	What would you, as a teacher, do?	
	Before	After
Example 11 (NS22)	It is important that the teacher understands how well the students can follow the teaching. The teaching should also happen without hurry and in peace. [P2]	I would contact special education, and we would think of a solution together. [P0]
Example 12 (L2)	It would be good for the teacher to coinsider this in their teaching and help the language learner by making the language used in teaching clearer. [P2]	As a teacher, I would speak with them about the matter during recess, and I would encourage them to use Finnish also during lessons. [P1]

as something the teacher could solve just by speaking with the student (Example 12). Compared to the linguistics and social sciences pre-service teachers, the natural sciences group had the most responses reflecting no change in or even decreased awareness of language-related practices. Often missing in the responses of all groups (even in the highest category level) were practices drawing on joint productive activities, collaboration and co-construction of knowledge (cf. Lucas & Villegas 2013), such as group work, mini-experiments or talking about the content with a partner. However, this may also reflect the survey question, which focused on the teacher and their actions.

6 Discussion and conclusions

Language is an essential mediator of teaching and learning (Bunch 2013). To be linguistically responsive and support multilingual students in learning both language and content, teachers need pedagogical language knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge and skills (Bunch 2013, Lucas & Villegas 2013).

Teacher education plays a role in developing pre-service teachers' knowledge about academic language demands and language-related practices. Many of the participants in this study increased their knowledge of academic language demands during the teacher education programme; their responses showed an un-

derstanding of the language (and even discourse) demands of academic tasks (Cummins 2000, Gibbons 2014, Schleppegrell 2002). Previous research from Finland and the Nordic countries has shown that often teachers' understanding of LRT is at a solid level (Alisaari et al. 2019, Alisaari & Heikkola 2020, Iversen 2021, Lundberg 2019). In addition, Alisaari et al. (2025 [this volume]) showed similar results, although for a different pre-service teacher population, namely pre-service primary school teachers, although they raise concerns regarding the pre-service primary teachers' grammar knowledge. In the present study, the pre-service subject teachers' responses often focused on language as a word-level phenomenon; thus, to gain theory-based knowledge regarding the demands of academic language, pre-service teachers should be better prepared to analyse syntactic and semantic characteristics of academic texts (Cummins 2000).

The participants were able to name concrete practices that support multilingual students' learning at the end of the teacher education programme more readily than at the beginning. The practices focused on supplementing teaching and modifying both written and oral texts. Notably, many of the practices regarding modifying written texts were primarily concerned with vocabulary at both the beginning and the end of the teacher education programme. This is in line with previous studies (Aalto 2019, Heikkola et al. 2021, 2022); (pre-service) teachers' pedagogical understanding of language often remains on the vocabulary level, and when asked for possible teaching practices, the focus is on terminology. However, the vocabulary-based practices were somewhat refined towards the end of the programme; at the beginning, the responses included explaining difficult words to students, while at the end, many participants suggested giving students lists of keywords to scaffold assignments. Furthermore, at the beginning of the programme, modifying oral texts usually meant that the teacher were being mindful of their word choices, speech tempo and the provision of explicit instructions (cf. Hite & Evans 2006). However, towards the end of the training, practices of oral text modification became more holistic and included a critical examination of language during lessons. The characteristic responses of the participants lacked practices listed by Lucas et al. (2008; see also Section 3.2). There were few mentions of visual aids, although previous research has shown that, of all the practices used, Finnish in-service teachers use extralinguistic cues, such as graphic organisers and visual tools, the most (Heikkola et al. 2022). The participants never reported using students' first language(s) as a resource in instruction, which resonates with previous findings from Finland: not many teachers are equipped to include students' first language(s) in multilingual pedagogies (Alisaari et al. 2019). However, multilingualism is generally viewed positively (Alisaari et al. 2019); teachers support immigrant-background children

speaking their first language(s) at home (Alisaari et al. 2021), and pre-service primary school teachers seem to understand the importance of L1 in learning (see Alisaari et al. 2025 [this volume]). As strong first-language skills support all learning (Gibbons 2014, Lucas & Villegas 2010), it is important for future teachers to understand the value of harnessing students' entire linguistic repertoires to support (content) learning, and to provide scaffolding for language learners by drawing on their linguistic resources (Cummins 2021, García 2009).

The participants rarely reported meaningful collaborative activities where students co-construct knowledge or negotiate meaning. The lack of such practices contradicts sociocultural understanding of (language) learning through social interaction (cf. Donato 2000, Dufva 2020, Lantolf & Thorne 2006, Vygotsky 1978), which is the premise for the Finnish national core curricula, and widely seen as the basis for all learning in school across the globe.

It was hypothesised that the linguistics students would have the highest levels of awareness of academic-language demands and linguistically responsive practices. Based on our findings, this seems to be the case. In addition, this group increased its awareness of LRT the most during the teacher education programme compared to the social sciences and natural sciences groups. This may be linked to the content of the teacher education programme: language-teaching-related studies potentially focus more on the implementation of language awareness. In addition, due to their area of expertise, linguistics students may have had the concepts and vocabulary to verbalise their thoughts on the role of language in teaching and learning more accurately than students of other majors (cf. Heikkola et al. 2021). However, such a finding raises questions about the challenges of teaching LRT principles to those pre-service teachers who possibly need this knowledge the most. Developing preparedness for linguistically diverse learners requires both time and interest; those who deem a topic relevant are those who learn the most (Repo 2020).

Given the qualitative nature of the study and the relatively small sample size, it is impossible to make strong generalisations from the findings. Nevertheless, the analysis provides a window into pre-service subject teachers' reasoning and the ways their thinking regarding linguistic diversity issues shifted during the year-long teacher education programme. A special strength of the study is its longitudinal nature. In contrast to many other Finnish and Nordic studies, this study has a longitudinal design, and has focused on the development of pre-service subject teachers' preparedness for linguistically diverse classrooms during a year-long teacher education programme. Through this design, we were able to investigate how pre-service subject-teachers' understanding of academic language demands and their awareness of language-related scaffolding practises developed within

a year. These results can thus be applied to other teacher education programmes to support courses that promote LRT.

The data collection method (an online survey) may have influenced participants' responses: short responses were expected. Asking respondents to write a short essay focusing on the different theories and practices taught in the teacher education programme could have captured more of the participants' knowledge and awareness. However, some development in the participants' knowledge about the demands of academic language and language-related practices was found, and participants reflections could be seen in their responses. In addition, a survey enabled reaching a larger group of participants than an essay may have. As the survey only took a short time to respond to, it was reasonable to ask participants to do so twice, which may not have been possible with an essay. Furthermore, the open question format allowed us to examine the pre-service teachers' development in their responses. When interpreting the findings, however, consideration should be given to whether the decrease in understanding of academic language demands and language-related scaffolding practices was due to lessened knowledge or low motivation to respond to the survey at the end of the academic year.

The findings of this study focus on language-related issues. We did not consider affective factors or classroom dynamics in the categorisation of the responses if language was not included, although these are important practices that support learning in general. Further research is needed to investigate the development of teachers' expertise related to non-linguistic pedagogical practices, including taking into consideration the affective factors related to learning.

Based on the findings of this study, a one-year teacher education programme may not be long enough to fully prepare pre-service subject teachers for the societal and curricular changes inherent to increasing linguistic diversity. Teacher's professionalisation develops slowly, and time is needed for teachers to reflect on the impact of their knowledge and practices. In the future, teacher education should have a strong(er) emphasis on LRT, especially in programmes for subject teacher groups other than future language teachers. Thus, more theoretical and practical education is warranted, especially for other subject groups. Furthermore, it is important to ensure that the topic of LRT is covered in professional development for in-service teachers as well. The extensive role of language in schooling should play a role in the subject teacher education programme, and LRT practices should be modelled to support (language) learning and multilingualism in the classroom. In this way, more pre-service subject teachers will have agency in supporting their EMLLs.

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Chapter 9

Changing teachers' monolingual habitus

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Education systems around the world struggle with the reality of linguistic diversity and frame it in contradictory ways. There is the positive goal of language learning and admiration for elite bilinguals. This coexists with language panic about the decline of the national language and deficit views of the language practices of migrant students.

Teacher education for working in linguistically diverse classrooms: Nordic perspectives exposes how these contradictions and tensions play out in the Nordic countries in the terrain of teacher education.

The Nordic countries are often seen as global beacons of modernity, social inclusion, and equal opportunities (Warren et al. 2025 [this volume]). Yet, even so, contradictions abound. There are the contradictions between policies that champion linguistic inclusion and the reality of their absence in the monolingual curricula for preservice teachers (Gunnþórsdóttir & Óskarsdóttir 2025 [this volume]). There are also the contradictions between hiring bilingual teachers to ensure support for newcomer students and the realities that there are no clear roles for these teachers within a school's organisation (Rosén & Wedin 2025 [this volume]). Then, there are the contradictions between championing multilingual learning in theory but reducing it to a language-free learner-centered approach in practice (Guðjónsdóttir et al. 2025 [this volume]). And finally, there are the contradictions between teachers being equipped with theoretical foundations in multilingual learning but not the practical tools to teach multilingual students (Alisaari et al. 2025 [this volume], Heikkola et al. 2025 [this volume], Iversen et al. 2025 [this volume], Østergaard et al. 2025 [this volume]).

All these contradictions are embedded within the wider contradiction of the Nordic countries being internationally touted as educational success stories,

Ingrid Piller. 2025. Changing teachers' monolingual habitus. In Anne Reath Warren, Jonas Yassin Iversen & Boglárka Straszer (eds.), *Teacher education for working in linguistically diverse classrooms: Nordic perspectives*, 209–214. Berlin: Language Science Press. DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.15280909

while the reality of widespread migrant student failure is swept under the carpet. As attested by the exceptional performance of Nordic countries on the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) (OECD 2023), the level of educational attainment is high across the region. Due to these successes, some Nordic countries, most notably Finland, have been held up as international role models for strong education systems throughout the 21st century (Ahonen 2021).

Yet the same PISA reports that place Nordic countries in the international vanguard when it comes to overall student performance in Mathematics, Reading, and Sciences also place them last when it comes to immigrant student performance. Non-immigrant students significantly outperform immigrant students in the Nordic countries. The same is true in many parts of the world. Elsewhere, however, the score difference between immigrant and non-immigrant students disappears after controlling for socio-economic status and language status. This is not the case in the Nordic countries, with Finland, Sweden, and Denmark having the greatest score differences between immigrant and non-immigrant students internationally in Mathematics, *after* controlling for socio-economic and language status (OECD 2023: 217). The same is true for disparate Reading scores, where all Nordic countries featured in this book (Finland, Sweden, Iceland, Denmark, Norway, in this order) are assembled at the bottom of the international comparative dataset (OECD 2023: 218).

How can the Nordic countries' outstanding commitment to educational equity and the high quality of education there co-exist with such dismal results when it comes to the education of immigrant children? The gap between inclusive policies and their operationalisation in teacher education documented in this volume may be part of the explanation.

But the studies assembled here raise a broader conundrum: how can we get linguistically diverse education right globally if the Nordic countries with all their advantages cannot get it right?

The contradictions and tensions related to the education of linguistically diverse students have been termed "the monolingual habitus of multilingual schools" by German education researcher Ingrid Gogolin (1994, 1997). Schools erase the de facto linguistic diversity that is present in any community by instituting a narrow set of monolingual policies and practices.

The monolingual habitus goes back to the 19th century when both the European nation state and formal education were simultaneously institutionalised. Although migration and globalisation have diminished the power of the nation state, the monolingual habitus of schooling remains in force (Piller et al. 2024).

Old habits die hard.

What the contributions assembled in this volume show is, in fact, substantial change on the policy level: there are policies to support the language learning of newcomers, there are policies to strengthen heritage languages, there are policies to include new migrants, and there are policies to educate prospective teachers about multilingualism.

Yet, changing habitus, "a system of durable and transposable dispositions" (Bourdieu 1993: 261), requires more than policies, because it is sedimented both in the individual and the collective.

The dispositions teachers bring to linguistically diverse classrooms are not only informed by ideas and experiences with language but also by ideas about the nation. Discussions about linguistic diversity are too often discussions about migrants and migration, as is evident from the definitional efforts expanded on classifying and counting immigrant students, who may or may not be immigrants themselves (Warren et al. 2025 [this volume]).

To make progress towards changing the monolingual habitus of schooling we need to disentangle migration and linguistic diversity.

Linguistic diversity is a fact of life, "the normal human experience" (Goodenough 1976), and all students – not just students classified as migrants – need support to develop high levels of multilingual proficiencies.

The language education challenge is threefold: first, all students must develop their proficiency in the school language. The academic proficiencies in the school language required to progress through education are no one's native language. Some students however can build on the linguistic resources acquired in the home to extend their academic literacies in the school language while others start from scratch, with many different linguistic and cultural constellations in between (Heath 1982). Teachers need to be socialised into a habitus that supports the academic language development of all students along with their content learning as a key task of schooling.

Second, most students need to learn one or more instructed languages. Except for students in the core Anglophone countries, English language learning is today inevitable for students internationally. How to teach English (and other instructed languages) effectively so that students can communicate in the global lingua franca constitutes a major teaching challenge that today falls no longer only on English language teachers but, with the expansion of English as medium of instruction programmes, is a question ever more teachers need to grapple with.

Third, students whose home language is substantially different from the school language should have the opportunity to also develop high levels of proficiency, including academic literacies, in their home language. To achieve this, the expansion of heritage language programmes is sorely needed. In fact, what

is desirable is the expansion of dual language programmes that raise the status of languages often considered of little value. The usual objection "we can't teach every language" does not hold because an increasing body of research now shows that dual immersion programmes are beneficial for all minoritised children, even if their personal heritage language is not involved. For instance, Purkarthofer (2021) shows that smaller class sizes, better resources, and teachers who are more supportive of multilingual students benefit all students in a dual immersion programme regardless of their actual heritage language.

Teacher education for working in linguistically diverse classrooms: Nordic perspectives marks an important milestone in the ongoing quest to change the monolingual habitus of the education system. The findings are relevant internationally: we need to break the ideological connection between migration and linguistic diversity to help build rich multilingual repertoires for all students.

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Name index

Teacher education for working in linguistically diverse classrooms

This volume presents studies on aspects of teacher education that prepare teachers for working in linguistically diverse classrooms and schools in five Nordic countries; Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden. This twin focus (teacher education in linguistically diverse contexts; and Nordic perspectives) makes the volume unique in its field, and contributes to international discussions on how teacher education can prepare pre-service and in-service teachers for working with linguistically diverse student groups.

The volume includes contributions on teacher education policies, teacher educators' perspectives on teacher education, and pre-service teacher perspectives on teacher education.

The ways in which teacher education prepares educators for working with newcomers and multilingual students has attracted considerable attention in recent years. This reflects the increasingly linguistically diverse nature of classrooms that teachers around the world meet, that is in turn, a direct result of intensified globalisation and transnational migration. Clearly, teacher education is crucial for successful implementation of educational provisions for multilingual students. Teacher knowledge, gained partly through teacher education, plays a central role in creating educational environments where multilingual students can thrive.

This volume focuses specifically on teacher education in a Nordic context, a region traditionally associated with progressive approaches in education based on principles of inclusivity, social justice and equal opportunity (Blossing et al. 2014, Frønes et al. 2020). In the twenty-first century, most Nordic countries have experienced increasing levels of migration. While multilingualism and transnational migration are not new phenomena in the region, geographical and social factors, as well as the ways humans communicate have helped make multilingualism more visible in the twenty-first century (Aronin & Singelton 2008). Schools in the Nordic countries have had to act quickly and think flexibly to meet the needs of an increasingly linguistically and culturally heterogenous group of students. The ability of the Nordic countries to provide these students with "inclusive, equal education and a fair chance to start a new life" constitutes in some ways the ultimate test of the "Nordic model" of education (Lundahl 2016: 10). Investigating how this challenge is addressed in different forms of teacher education is the topic to which this volume turns its attention.