

Plurilingual practice in language teacher education

An exploratory study of project design and ideological change

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Despite decades of research supporting the pedagogic value of learners' plurilingual resources to their linguistic and academic development, pre-service teachers frequently arrive at university inculcated in 'target language only' practices underpinned by monoglossic ideologies. The challenge for teacher education is to productively disrupt quotidian beliefs about language beliefs and prompt reconsideration of future classroom practices. Drawing on the work of the Douglas Fir Group (2016), this paper explores the identities, beliefs and values of two student-teachers as they emerged over the length of an innovative English-German pedagogic project on plurilingualism. The project involved German student-teachers developing a language portrait project for Grade 6 students; student-teachers using project data for undergraduate assignments; and English MA students interviewing young learners about their language portraits via videoconference. The videoconference provided young learners further opportunities to use their plurilingual resources and MA students with data for assignments on identity and investment. Working with DFG's framework (2016), we examine the interplay of the meso- and macro-dimensions of the larger project's design and the sometimes contradictory indexing of values and identities within and across activities. Analysis reveals that design choices sometimes unintentionally reinforced linguistic ideologies inconsistent with the project's objectives, though these conflicts also led student-teachers to unexpected insights. We close with personal reflections on the implications of the first iteration of this design-based research project for the advancement of plurilingual pedagogies in teacher education.

Keywords: plurilingualism, classroom interventions, language teacher education, teacher beliefs, reflective practice, language education

Overwhelmingly, contemporary classrooms remain havens for pedagogic practices rooted in monoglossic ideologies, despite decades of research that establish the value of learners' plurilingual resources to linguistic and academic development. The research cuts across geographic and disciplinary divides: researchers in foreign language education have demonstrated the contribution of language awareness activities and classroom translanguaging to the development of an additional language (Cenoz & Gorter, 2019, 2020; Dagenais et al., 2007); collaborations between language and literacy researchers and classroom teachers have shown how the creative, cognitively demanding use of plurilingual resources impacts not only academic success but also learners' larger sense of social belonging (Cummins, 2007; Cummins & Early, 2011; Lotherington, 2013; Potts & Moran, 2013); and scholars in the Global South have documented the skillful plurilingual practices of South African students as they navigate educational barriers buttressed by racist colonial ideologies (Krause, 2022; McKinney & Christie, 2022). However, myths of the superiority of monolingualism and monoglossic practices persist, reinforced by those same colonial histories and girded by the perceived economic value of languages such as English. There is no single mechanism for bringing about more effective, equitable and just educational environments for the world's linguistically and culturally diverse learners. A key element in any such transformation, though, is teacher education. Language teacher education, including pre-service and professional development programmes, are critical junctures for disrupting quotidian beliefs about language and for reimagining the place of learners' plurilingual competence in classroom practice. Few other points in a language teacher's career provide the time needed to reflect on the pedagogic, personal and social significance of learners' languages. For this reason, research into the design of teacher education programmes that develop dispositions, practices and values conducive to plurilingual education continues to be an urgent priority.

This paper is an exploration of one such design and of reimagining the place of social theories of second language acquisition in these efforts. Drawing on data from a pilot of an innovative English-German collaboration, we examine the interplay between the project's design and students' sometimes contradictory indexing of values and identities. In particular, we attend to the texts and interactions which become the focus of student-teacher reflections, the function of these texts as warrants for student-teachers' claims, and what this suggests about the effectiveness of the design in achieving its overall aims. Alongside this, we explore the utility of the interdisciplinary framework developed by The Douglas Fir Group (2016) in assessing teacher education programmes that aspire to advance plurilingual pedagogies. We then consider how research that focuses on design can support the advancement of plurilingual pedagogies more generally.

We begin by situating our work within discussions of plurilingualism in Europe and plurilingual education more broadly. We then explore the Douglas Fir Group's framework (hereafter referred to as DFG) and its potential for informing praxis before providing an overview the project's pedagogic design. Following this, we analyze the coursework and interview data of two university students, one undergraduate and one MA, who participated in the project and whose coursework focused on their involvement. The analysis leads to a broader discussion of future directions in language teacher education research that can support the advancement of educators' capacity to engage with plurilingual pedagogies.

Plurilingualism in theory and practice

Plurilingualism and plurilingual pedagogies

For language teacher education students in Germany and for many language educators in Europe, the predominant concept of plurilingualism is that advanced by the Council of Europe. The Council has long held that "a given individual does not have a collection of distinct and separate competences to communicate depending on the languages he/she knows, but rather a plurilingual competence encompassing the full range of the languages available to him/her" (2001, p.168). In other words, although languages are distinct and countable (German is a language, French is a language, etc.), an individual's competence is singular with their (plurilingual) competence being "the combined and composite nature of one's communicative repertoire" (Moore, Lau, & Van Viegen, 2020, p.31). That communicative repertoire is not a latent, unobserved potential but exists as observable action and is evident in an individual's "...ability (and willingness) to modulate their usage according to the social and communicative situation" (CoE, 2022, p.123). Thus, competence is what one does with the communicative resources available to them within the dynamics of situated social interaction.

Although the concept of plurilingualism did not originate with the Council of Europe (Moore & Gajo, 2009; Picardo 2013), its adoption by the Council and its place within the 2001 Common European Framework (hereafter referred to as CEF) accord it status beyond academia. It bears remembering, however, that the framework was adopted at a time when (1) scholars in applied linguistics were contesting prevailing monolingual ideologies in second language acquisition (SLA) (Larsen-Freeman, 2007) and (2) early efforts to decolonize curricula were gaining ground internationally (see for example Battiste, 2013; Smith, 2012). Thus, the Framework's development coincided with a more general shift in the field of applied linguistics and in education more broadly that invited a reimagining of

the language learner. Seminal concepts such as *second language learner*, a construct of SLA that had dominated since at least the mid-20th century and that relies on comparisons with an imaginary monolingual native speaker, were being forcefully challenged (Firth & Wagner, 1997). Plurilingualism offered and continues to offer an alternative concept of competence that elevates individual's successes in acting in the world.

That alternative combined with the CEF's explicit attention to pedagogy contributes to the usefulness of the concept of plurilingualism to classroom-based research. Again, the research cuts across a range of settings, with European researchers and teachers, at times connecting their efforts to earlier Canadian work on identity texts (Cummins & Early, 2011; Little & Kirwan, 2018; Scaglione & Caruana, 2018). In university settings, classroom-based researchers have employed the concept of plurilingualism to demonstrate the value of international students' linguistic repertoires in simultaneously furthering academic success and resisting hegemonic norms of standard academic English (Marshall & Moore, 2018, p.31). Others have shown how lecturers and students both plan for and spontaneously draw upon these repertoires to advance not only individual but also the classroom community's learning (Van Viegen & Zappa-Hollman, 2020). From the Global South come the increasingly frustrated voices of academics and teacher-educators whose efforts to 'delink from coloniality' are intimately entangled with increasing recognition for the value of student-teachers' linguistic repertoires (McKinney, 2022). In each of the above, rich, theoretically grounded pedagogies demonstrate the possibilities offered by learners' plurilingual potential.

But these spaces are not indicative of the broader context. In Germany, the United Kingdom and in other settings in which we have researched or worked, brightly painted school entrances welcome visitors in a range of languages, but those languages – and sometimes local dialects – are less evident in classrooms. This is true in language classrooms and in the mainstream classrooms that are de facto language classrooms for many plurilingual children. In Austria (Jessner & Mayr-Keiler, 2017), France (Dahm, 2017; Welply, 2017), Germany (Arslan, 2018; Cutrim Schmid & Schmidt, 2017), and Portugal (Faneca et al., 2016), scholars have demonstrated the continued pervasiveness of practices consistent with monoglossic ideologies. Where exceptions have been noted, they are often the more privileged settings of the so-called European schools where multilingual proficiency and cultural diversity are actively promoted (Durus & Ziegler, 2013; Wei, 2013). In Germany, however, efforts aimed at overcoming educational inequality are more likely to focus on transmitting the rules, structure and expectations of the German system (Arslan, 2018).

Designing for Plurilingualism in Student-Teacher Education

The relative imperviousness of classroom practice to changing conceptions of language cannot be a surprise when concepts such as plurilingual competence contrast sharply with student-teachers' personal experience. Tests of grammatical judgement, admonishments to speak the target language and questions such as "How many languages can you speak?" reinforce everyday understandings of linguistic competence as uniquely corresponding to a language. There is limited evidence that student-teachers' creative, flexible language use will necessarily lead to an interest in the design of plurilingual pedagogies; the Council of Europe has only just begun to remove references to 'native speaker' from its documents (2022). Further, the impact of personal language ideologies are not always evident to student-teachers. Gao (2019) observes that "one of the most significant challenges in my career as a language teacher educator has been to help language teachers recognize the deleterious consequences of the reigning monolingual prejudice in SLA research" (p.163).

But student-teachers' existing language ideologies are only one barrier to more widespread adoption of plurilingual practices in language and mainstream classrooms. The disconnect between theory, research and practice in language teacher education is well-documented, and the theoretical language used in research of classroom practice can obscure the degree, depth and scope of forces acting on individual classroom settings (Johnson, 2019; Johnson & Golombek, 2020). Language teachers engage in specifics and must reconcile their support for linguistic diversity with concerns pressed upon them by a range of educational actors (Jaspers, 2019). And it is language teacher-educators who must support students in preparing for the ambiguities and complexities that accompany more fluid conceptualizations of language (Johnson, 2019). There are multiple hurdles to designing plurilingual pedagogies at every stage of a language teachers' developing professional practice.

One challenge clearly identified by teacher-educators has been the lack of a coherent framework that '...has the potential to fundamentally change the way language teachers think about language and SLA' (Johnson, 2019, p.168). The DFG's transdisciplinary framework has been proposed as a possibility for addressing this need. It is a systematic integration of social perspectives on second language learning that theorizes language in and as social activity, and provides the analytical resources for examining language use at the micro-, meso- and macro-levels (see Figure 1). Cautiously, Johnson (*ibid*) has described its potential *if* it is married to strong fundamentals in teacher education.

We also see potential in the framework, albeit from a somewhat different angle. In our collaboration, we have sometimes been at odds over what constitutes

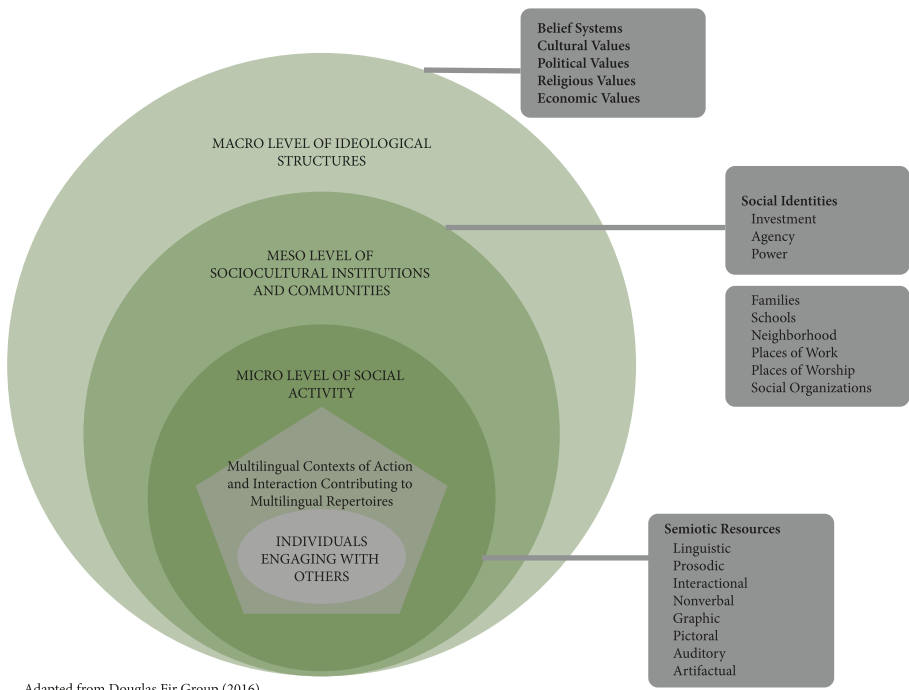


Figure 1. Three interrelated dimensions of social activity

innovation, what counts as progress and what criteria could be used to assess our success. We have come to realize how our judgements depend on our very different experiences of plurilingualism across four continents and in contexts with different histories of diversity, migration, colonialism, conflict, etc. It was evident that our histories as educators and researchers simultaneously blinded us to success and obscured how much remains to be done. The DFG framework offers support for designing and evaluating plurilingual pedagogies in teacher education and a rigorous basis for comparisons. By providing a multiscale reference for analyzing what student-teachers index when they design, engage with and reflect upon plurilingual pedagogies, it supports investigations of the ways in which texts and interactions *integrated into pedagogic designs* function as warrants for student-teachers' claims and how these texts function in shaping student-teachers' reflections. It also provides a common analytical language for discussing diverse data sets collected across multiple research sites and during different phases of a project. In short, we also see the DFG framework as offering multiple possibilities for the design of language teacher education and those possibilities are one avenue we explore in our pilot.

However, we agree with Johnson (2019) and others that the DFG framework is useful but not sufficient for such efforts. Language teacher pedagogy requires attention to pedagogy and three considerations highlighted by Johnson and Golembek (2020) are of particular importance to student-teachers' explorations of plurilingual pedagogies. First, student-teachers need to use and be encouraged to use their plurilingual repertoires. Plurilingual competence is what one does with and in language, and student-teachers' competence must be extended to the pedagogic use of what may be partial, incomplete and fragmented control over any a named language. Use provides the basis '...to scrutinize and unite everyday language through and with academic concepts, systemic and generalizable knowledge of entities and phenomenon in the world' (ibid, p. 122). Thus, wrestling with the ambiguities of plurilingualism can be supported, in part, by creating activities that engage student-teachers with their plurilingual competence and bring quotidian and scientific concepts into a new relation. Second, opportunities for rigorous reflection are essential for making sense of plurilingual experiences. While the value of reflective practice is limited by the experiences on which the learner is asked to reflect (Akbari, 2007), it is also limited by the quality of scaffolding that student-teachers are provided. Projects and coursework cannot replicate a language-teacher's experience of classroom responsibilities, but a sequence of coherently linked tasks allows student-teachers to "reflect on 'who they are' and 'who they are becoming' in relation to their professional practice" (Yuan & Mak, 2018). Engagement with student-teachers' inner lives, personal histories and tacit belief systems, a key facet of reflection (Farrell, 2022), may also impact the extent to which plurilingual activities act as a catalyst for shifts in individuals' language ideologies. Finally, careful consideration must be given to the mediational resources generated by the project, including but not limited to expert mediation provided by a tutor. Here we draw on previous studies that have investigated the value of learners' representations of their plurilingualism (e.g., Prasad, 2014; Melo-Pfeifer, 2015) and more particularly plurilingual portraits (e.g., Coffey, 2015; Haukäs, 2016; Jakisch, 2015; De Angelis, 2011) as an alternative means of sharing their diverse languages and cultures. We are particularly interested in the dynamics within which such portraits are created and shared, and whether that can assist the ideological shifts over a project's duration. As indices of the identities, belief systems and ideologies that constrain and enhance language learners' and teachers' agency, the portraits are a window into the impact of the designed social activities on student-teachers future plurilingual practices (Douglas Fir Group, 2016; de Costa & Norton, 2017).

Methodology

Data for this paper is drawn from an exploratory qualitative study into innovations in institutional collaboration in language teacher education and was carried out by academics whose British and German institutions had recently become Erasmus partners. The results of the pilot will inform a future design-based research (DBR) project that will investigate (1) the potential of such collaborations for advancing plurilingual pedagogies and (2) methods for assessing the impact of project designs. The pilot project involved academics, teachers and students in a German undergraduate education programme, a British Masters programme in applied linguistics and TESOL, and a German high school in southwest Germany.

Pilot study objectives

Because our interest is collaborative research that advances the design and practice of plurilingual pedagogies, the project aimed to engage students in all three institutions in plurilingual practices. Participating high school students studied English together and their teacher joined the project in part because it created an authentic opportunity for his students to use English. However, he shared our interest in exploring how his students would draw on their plurilingual repertoires, including languages other than the national languages of EU members and the local Schwabian dialect. Objectives for the undergraduate students included broader objectives linked to the development of their teaching practice as well as their capacity to design and implement plurilingual pedagogies. Objectives for MA students focused on theoretical understanding and research skills as well as their understanding of issues surrounding the plurilingual practices in language classrooms. Undergraduate and MA students were encouraged to draw upon their plurilingual resources, including their experiences as learners, throughout the pilot.

Project participants

Project participants included educators and students from three educational institutions: a research-intensive British university, a German University of Education and an English language 6th grade class in German gymnasium in southwest Germany.¹ Undergraduates in this project were enrolled in the seminar *Plurilingualism in the EFL context* that covered psycholinguistic, sociolinguistic, and educational aspects of learning English as a third language, plurilingualism and

1. The gymnasium students were roughly 11 years of age.

plurilingual-inspired approaches to EFL education. A significant portion of the seminar was devoted to the design of plurilingual tasks and professional reflection. The seminar also included a school-based research project, which later formed the basis for a student-led seminar presentation. The research project on which this paper is based was a project option.

In England, the project was integrated into a second language acquisition (SLA) module, a required module in the MA in Applied Linguistics and TESOL programme and a popular option for students registered in other MA programmes. The 20-credit module runs in the first term of the 1-year programme and covers cognitive and social perspectives of SLA. Assessment for the module consists of two 2,500-word papers. One option is to write a paper related to theories of identity, investment and agency. During the year this study was conducted, this option involved participation in the pilot study.

The pilot study was approved by both post-secondary institutions' ethics committees and was supported by the high school's senior administration. High school students had to have parental consent in addition to their personal consent; over 90% chose to participate. Because university students at both partner institutions had several coursework options, it was determined that undergraduate or MA students were not untowardly pressured to participate in the project.

Project design

The project was divided into three phases:

- Phase 1 German university undergraduate students designed and taught a unit involving the creation of plurilingual portraits to the Grade 6 high school students.
- Phase 2 English MA students interviewed the Grade 6 high school students about their plurilingual portraits.
- Phase 3 German and English university students completed coursework which drew on their work.

Figure 2 illustrates the flow of the project activities, with the blue scholar's cap representing work by the undergraduate students, red representing MA students and the green school representing the high school.

As can be seen from the Figures 2 and 3, the project created opportunities for reflection in and on action. Undergraduates, with the support of the second author, classroom teacher and peers, engaged in designing a sequence of lessons and related tasks, organizing materials and resources, and carrying out the lessons. MA students, with the support of the first author, prepared interview guides, conducted video interviews, and transcribed and analysed data. Coursework created opportunities for reflection on action, as did interviews with the undergraduates and (as shall be seen) informal conversations with the MA students.

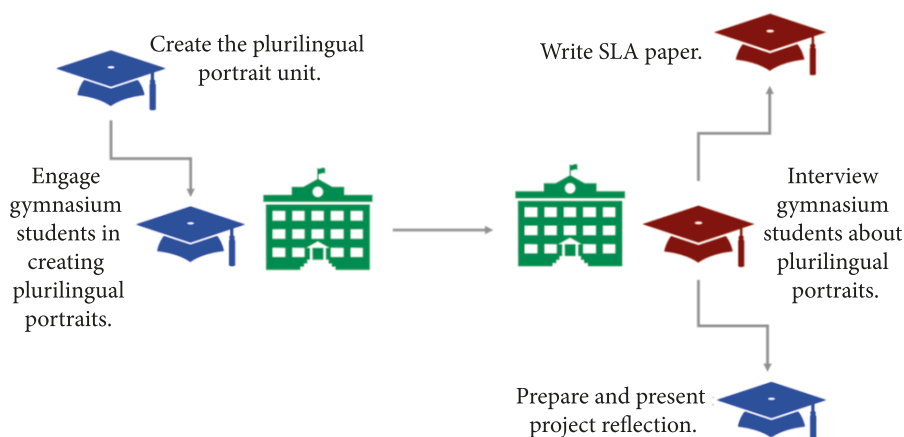


Figure 2. Sequence of project activities

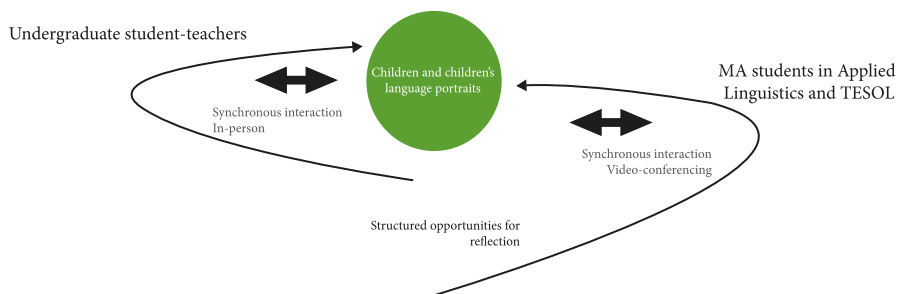


Figure 3. Project design – structured reflection

Listed below are the data collected during each phase of the pilot project.

Phase 1

- Undergraduates' unit planning documents.
- Undergraduates' written reflections on unit preparation.
- Undergraduates' video and audio-recording of high school students' small group interactions.
- High school students' plurilingual portraits.

Phase 2

- Planning documents, draft interview guides and email between tutor and MA students prior to interviewing high school students.
- Video of Skype interviews between MA and high school students.

Phase 3

- MA student coursework.
- Tutor's notes and reflections on post-interview interactions with MA students.
- Video of undergraduate presentations.
- Undergraduate interviews.

Although ethical approval allows for analysis of the high school students' classroom interactions and plurilingual portraits, our primary research interest is language teacher education and the design of plurilingual pedagogies. In this paper, we have selected two students whose coursework and interactions have proven useful for reflecting on the piloted design. Both students (1) engaged deeply in the project for reasons that proved to be personal as well as professional and (2) revealed contradictions in their thoughts and actions over the length of the project. Their documents, coursework, interviews and observations form the basis of the analysis that follows.

Findings and discussion

In this section, we first explore the interviews and presentation of Anastasia,² an enthusiastic undergraduate student. This is followed by an analysis of the coursework and informal conversations with Josh, an MA student with experience teaching English in foreign language classrooms. Each contribute to our understanding of interplay between the project's design and the dynamic evolution of these students' beliefs, values and identities as they relate to their future plurilingual practices.

Anastasia and the project's first phase

The project's first phase engaged undergraduate students in reflecting on the unit they designed and on their interactions with the German high school students with the intention of deepening understanding of the broader issues involved in adopting a plurilingual perspective in foreign language education. Three dominant insights emerged from Anastasia's work.

2. Pseudonyms are used for university and high school students.

My parents demotivated me

Among the four participating undergraduates, Anastasia appeared to be the most invested. She quickly assumed a leadership role in the group, assigning tasks and encouraging her classmates' involvement, and she was also interested in writing her B.A thesis on the project. Issues pertaining to plurilingualism and plurilingual education were personally relevant for her, as she was of Greek ancestry on her father's side and experienced challenges as a child with a migration background. In her interview, after the project was completed, she reflected on the status of minority languages in the German gymnasium. One child, she observed, had failed to include her heritage languages (Tamil and Hindi) when describing her plurilingual repertoire to the MA students.

...she had seen other kids being interviewed and she took an example of what they said and she adopted the same things. She said: "I learned German and I know how to speak English and French and a little Spanish". But that was it. That girl came from India, oh no from Sri Lanka, I'm sorry. And just afterwards during the interview we found out that she also speaks Tamil and Hindi. So, that was important for her to create some awareness for the languages she does speak....

(interview with student teacher, Germany)

Anastasia's comments followed an invitation to reflect on the project's potential added value for the gymnasium students. The benefit she highlighted was that the project activities allowed these students to engage with their full linguistic and cultural repertoires. Even though the child of Sri Lankan heritage did not mention Tamil and Hindi in her Skype interview, her heritage languages emerged in a subsequent activity. For Anastasia, plurilingual projects help learners to value their full linguistic repertoires.

As stated earlier, Anastasia also experienced life in Germany as a migrant child, one who had been made to feel uncomfortable in the Greek language.

I felt like sometimes my parents demotivated me. Well, I was talking Greek and I was trying to kind of learn that language, it's kind of difficult...my father tended to make fun of how I pronounce certain things, which is kind of his thing to cope with his stress, or I don't know, but he did that to me and I felt like it was very demotivating. So, having this in mind as a future teacher, that some students might have parents who aren't very engaging in their language production, that's interesting to keep in mind in order to create tasks that open it up for them, to motivate them, to say that this has nothing to do with your parents at home or your peers. If you have a language that you are able to learn just use the chance.

(interview with student-teacher, Germany)

The undergraduate students had prepared personal plurilingual portraits as part of their unit preparation and Anastasia's knowledge of Greek was commonly known. But the emotions she attached to the language and her experiences of her heritage language had not emerged at that time. Anastasia shared her story only in later reflection and only in connection with a story of another migrant child omitting her heritage languages from the interviews with MA students. Only then did she index her childhood identity as a struggling language learner and her future teacher identity as someone welcoming of her students' plurilingual repertoires, including those less privileged in the German context. The interview in which this emerged was not part of our pedagogic design, it was a research activity meant to assist us in evaluating the project. Despite having had multiple opportunities to reflect and share, it was only in this more personal setting that her story emerged.

Please just try to engage with me in English

Anastasia's written reflections created opportunities for her and her peers to examine issues involved in plurilingual education from multiple and perhaps broader perspectives. However, they also revealed how classroom interactions reinforced linguistic ideologies inconsistent with the project's objectives. For example, in responding to a prompt about the challenges she faced during the project, Anastasia expressed discomfort with students' use of German in the EFL classroom.

...my group had two students who were very engaged, who wanted to tell me things and who wanted to present their profiles as well, but the other students didn't. So, they slipped into German and it was very difficult for me to tell them 'please just try to engage with me in English'.

(interview with Anastasia, Germany)

Since the project took place in a German gymnasium EFL classroom, all stakeholders (class teacher, students, parents, student teachers) had at least some expectation that English would be the project's shared language of communication. Student-teachers were asked to encourage English in different phases of the lessons to ensure the gymnasium students were prepared for their online interviews with the UK MA students. In her later interview, Anastasia stated: "it was kind of devastating to see that they didn't want to speak in English with me".

Anastasia's experience highlights an ideological contradiction in the project's design. As much as the project espoused the value of students' plurilingualism, it also encouraged to the point of enforcing the use of English in the classroom. The contradiction flowed from a compromise that highlights how all projects, no matter how well-designed, are embedded in larger social structures that themselves

index contradictory values and beliefs. In this instance, the contradictions exist across multiple scales of the educational system. For example, German curriculum documents for English language education clearly emphasize the principle that English should be the consistent language of instruction, although other parts of the same documents explicitly acknowledge the value of students' plurilingualism (Bildungsplan Gymnasium, 2016). These documents impact the theoretical and practical education provided student teachers. In Anastasia's undergraduate TEFL programme, the plurilingualism seminar is one of the few that challenges monoglossic approaches in language education. Since most university instructors promote adherence to curricular recommendations for target language only approaches, students frequently demonstrate reluctance when discussing plurilingual education and question the idea of opening the EFL classroom to other languages and cultures. In this environment, it is not surprising that Anastasia's actions and reflection indexed values contradictory to the aims of the plurilingual project. It is telling that even upon reflection, Anastasia appeared unaware of the contradiction in her stance. Nowhere in her classroom teaching, field notes and journal writing, video-based reflection (analysis of video-recorded data), interview-based reflection, or group presentation did she question her response. Clearly, even the opportunity for multiple reflections did not lead to awareness of the contradictions between her actions as a teacher and her espoused values, or between the ideologies underpinning an English only classroom and her personal stated beliefs regarding plurilingualism.

The students got to know each other

When Anastasia discussed the project's potential impact during her group presentation, she again emphasised that she considered the project's best outcome that "the pupils got to know each other better". The same point was raised by the Grade 6 teacher during his interview and by the gymnasium students during a final group reflection. Perhaps because only the majority language (German) and a limited number of foreign languages (i.e., English and French) were regarded by the school as legitimate languages, most of these students were unaware of the diversity of cultures and languages present in their classroom. In her presentation, Anastasia discussed how the activities around the plurilingual portraits were especially valuable for a Turkish child who had recently immigrated to Germany.

I feel like the statement that we said beforehand that the students got to know each other better, specially applies to him. They got to know him. Beforehand he was perhaps a little shy to share his story, and this was the perfect opportunity for him to do that, and he did! So, the kids got to know each other. I feel like this was the best outcome!.

(Anastasia, final group presentation)

The plurilingual project was the first opportunity for a child recently arrived from Turkey to share his immigration story with the class. The project created an audience interested in his story, which might otherwise have remained unvoiced. Interestingly, in the same presentation, Anastasia also discussed how the use of English in this activity benefitted this child, since his knowledge of German was still very limited. She stated:

They (the rest of the class) saw him as a part of it, but I don't think they would have seen him as a part, if he wasn't able to communicate with them. You can see the impact that EFL can have on some students and on the class.

(Anastasia, group presentation)

Anastasia's description of the student's situation mirrors the experiences of many immigrant children in Germany who often view the EFL classroom as an "oasis" where they can communicate more equally with their classmates. Crucially for this paper, Anastasia focused on the activity design and how it allowed a linguistically minoritized learner to draw on his linguistic repertoire, to exercise agency and finally "feel part of the group". Amongst a group of her peers, Anastasia adopted the voice of a designer.

Anastasia and the plurilingual project

The project created multiple opportunities for Anastasia to reflect upon her activities as a student-teacher, as a designer of a plurilingual project and as plurilingual being. As the analysis demonstrates, however, not all reflections were consistent with a plurilingual understanding of language. The multiple cycles of reflection embedded in the project design appear to have supported Anastasia in connecting her identity as a plurilingual child in Germany with the experiences of students whose histories were most similar to her own, deepening her appreciation for the importance of making visible learners' linguistic repertoires. She observed, for instance, that plurilingual learners can sometimes struggle to share aspects of their diverse linguistic identities due to fear or concern about how others will react. However, we have also seen how the ideological contradictions in current German foreign language curricula manifested in Anastasia's actions in the gymnasium's EFL classroom more generally and her dismay when the gymnasium students did not speak to her in English. The project design did not address these contradictions nor this aspect of her identity as a language teacher. Thus, Anastasia's reflections simultaneously remade and reinforced the complexity of her attitudes towards her own and others' plurilingual resources, as she saw language function as both a marker of division and a bridge between people. By drawing upon the DFG framework, we are better able to see how the project

design simultaneously disrupted, reinforced and became part of the dynamic of Anastasia's development as a plurilingual educator.

Josh and the project's second phase

Before examining the interplay of the project's design and the values and identities indexed in Josh's coursework, it is useful to remember that the project aimed to enhance the value that the gymnasium students' attached to their plurilingual repertoires. Languages – that is, the students' plurilingual meaning potential – were both the subject and the means of their communication with undergraduate and MA students. English would predominate in the video conversations between the gymnasium and MA students but there was also the possibility for serendipitous use of other languages. Additionally, the importance gymnasium students attached to speaking to 'English' university students should not be underestimated. That and the fact these students knew that project participation was predicated on their plurilingual capacities combined to confer greater self-awareness of the value of their linguistic social capital. For the MA students, the gymnasium students' plurilingual portraits and interview data provided an opportunity to apply social theories of SLA and more particularly theories of identity to the analysis to the students' negotiation of their plurilingual identities.

MA students were aware that the project's aims included enhancing the gymnasium students' perceptions of their plurilingualism. They attempted to avoid overt bias when drafting their interview guides but knew their participation valorized the gymnasium students' languages, and indexed beliefs and cultural values consistent with contemporary applied linguistics scholarship. Tightly woven into the project's design, they could not help but be aware of their position when completing their coursework. Any meaningful critique of the project was indirectly a critique of their tutor and of their decision to act in ways that sanctioned the values and beliefs informing the project's design. As with the German undergraduates, the project created situated 'real life' opportunities for the MA students to reflect on their beliefs on the value of plurilingualism. However, how these reflections might be received was less straightforward. Their relatively short academic paper was submitted during the early stage of their MA studies, providing limited opportunities to know and trust their tutor.

Think through the worst possible consequences of its application

When MA students selected their SLA coursework options, they made a concomitant selection of the theories that would frame their analysis. Thus, when Josh chose to interview the German gymnasium students, he was also choosing to

cite and use dominant theories of identity in SLA, including the work of Norton. Norton's work, which had been included in the required readings, explicitly draws on post-structuralism and feminist theories, and her concept of identity is one of her seminal contributions to the field (Norton-Pierce, 1995; Norton, 2019). Students, however, had the same latitude as all academic writers to draw on literature they saw as relevant to their analysis. It is notable, then, that Josh opened his paper with a quote not from the field of applied linguistics, but from a talk given at Oxford by the psychology professor Jordan Peterson. Peterson was and is a significant but controversial figure. He has a significant social presence, particularly on YouTube, and his stance on what he describes as political correctness and identity politics made him a lightning bolt for debates swirling around Brexit, Trump's election and the rise of illiberal ideologies in democratic states.³ Josh opened his paper with a quote from Peterson, 'It's useful, if you have a theory, to think through the worst possible consequences of its application', and immediately followed it with a quote from Prasad (2014). The second quote was truncated to suggest a potentially problematic relationship between the use of plurilingual portraits and the reification of nationalistic and stereotypical symbols.⁴ In sum, the paper's opening adopted a position many applied linguistics would likely see as a damning criticism of plurilingual portraits, and possibly plurilingual practices more generally.

However, as we have pointed out, the indexicality of beliefs and values is never straightforward. As tutor, addressing the misuse of Prasad was relatively straightforward: Josh misrepresented Prasad's position. However, given that the Peterson quote, if not its author, was relatively innocuous, and the misrepresentation of Prasad contained a hedged ('may') concern about the uncritical use of nationalistic and stereotypical symbols. The sequence of these quotes suggested Josh was discomfited by some combination of pedagogic practice, the coursework and/or theories of identity in SLA, but the core of his concern was less certain. The project design was already producing unexpected outcomes.

3. Peterson has been criticizing political correctness on university campuses since the 1990s and has counseled university students to avoid fields heavily influenced by post-modernism and post-Marxism. Josh was unlikely aware that Peterson, now an Emeritus Professor at the University of Toronto, was referring to the time period when Norton was completing her PhD at the same university.

4. In the more extended text, Prasad presents a counterargument to this very point.

Participants lose sight of a more holistic perspective

Josh's analysis opens with a brief description of the gymnasium students' plurilingual portraits, and generally favorable comments on their creativity. However, he quickly turns to two concerns that dominate his paper. The transition is signalled by a comment on the gymnasium students' use of flags (see Figures 4 and 5): 'Nevertheless, national flags were the primary means of representing languages in all four portraits.' Neither Josh nor his interview partner knew that Anastasia and her peers had used flags when introducing the plurilingual portrait project to the gymnasium students nor that German undergraduates had not asked the students to critically reflect on the use of national symbols. This gap in the information provided by the project design meant they must rely on interview data to make sense of the gymnasium students' underlying belief systems.



Figure 4. Child's plurilingual portrait

Josh's concern about the use of flags, the presumed relationship between a nation-state and language, and the use of nationalistic symbols to sign the latter was not unwarranted. Martin's asserted Hungarian identity (see Figure 4) and the centrality of 'my body' in describing his picture did not dissuade him. These concerns superseded any discussion of language, as indicated in the following exchange between Josh and Martin:

Josh: *Martin, how about your picture?*

Martin: *I'm Martin. My body is the Hungarian flag because I'm from Hungary.*

For Josh, the conflict between his personal beliefs and the political values evident in Martin's statement superseded any discussion of language. Martin's asserted Hungarian identity and the centrality of 'my body' in his description of his picture became Josh's focus. He responded forcefully, matching the strength of Martin's claimed identity:

Here we see that for Martin, whose portrait is as blunt as his statement, nationality, not plurilingualism has informed his self-depiction. A final excerpt featuring Max demonstrates again the potentially divisive and nationalistic direction in which this activity can counterintuitively lead its participants.

Josh was clearly troubled by Martin's words, troubled as an educator but also as a person. Martin's portrait and statement are 'blunt'; the plurilingual portraits have responsibility, or 'lead' participants in a 'potentially divisive and nationalistic direction', a direction opposite to the plurilingual project's aims and perhaps what Josh had expected. Core beliefs appear to have been violated. In this instance, the plurilingual portrait and interview provide Josh with excellent resources for his assignment, but are used to support a conclusion we had not anticipated: plurilingualism in the classroom is now potentially dangerous and Josh's assignment suggests he is moving away from the classroom activities that sanction gymnasium students' plurilingualism.

However, unfettered nationalism was not Josh's only concern. His second point emerges from an exchange with Max. In what follows, Josh and his interview partner were attempting to tease out the significance of a child's visual segmentation his language worlds (see Figure 5). Max also used flags to signify his languages and the languages of his friends.



Figure 5. Child's plurilingual portrait

Josh's interview partner tried to make sense of the difference between Max's and his friends' plurilingual repertoires, focusing on the number each had been assigned. When Max equivocates, Josh asks for an example but Max is notably uncomfortable and demurs. Throughout the brief exchange, Max rejects any identity that distinguishes him from his classmates and suggests any response would be 'pretty arrogant'.

Partner: So, for you Max, would you say you know more languages than your friends, for example? And how does that make you feel? Is it fun for you, for other people?

Max: Well...

Josh: Give an example.

Max: If I would say that, it would be pretty arrogant.

MA partner & Josh: laughing]

Max: Well, when I look to [a friend's] profile, there are not so many languages than mine [mouths 'sorry' to friend]

Partner: No, but what I mean is when you see yourself as knowing a lot of languages, how does that make you feel?

Max: Um ... normal?

Context matters. The gymnasium students were interviewed in small groups to create a more comfortable setting for talking with the MA students, and Max's gaze and mouthing of 'Sorry' show his comments were directed not only at his interviewers but also his classmates. When he does respond to a question, he downplays his plurilingual competence and asserts he feels 'normal.' In his paper, Josh picks up on Max's resistance:

Here, the criticism of the plurilingual portrait as a pedagogical device is that in framing linguistic capabilities as constructive of identity, participants lose sight of a more holistic perspective of themselves and their classmates as complex, multi-talented, and inherently valuable individuals.

Max's comments are open to several interpretations, but Josh interprets them as evidence that plurilingual portraits may undermine students' 'more holistic perspective of themselves.' This view is not fundamentally incompatible with Norton (2019), who conceptualizes identity as 'multiple, changing, and a site of struggle' (p.303). However, Josh is effectively critiquing plurilingual portraits for restricting (1) learner's agency and (2) possibilities for seeing themselves and others as 'complex, multi-talented, and inherently valuable.' Perhaps because of the assignment length, Josh does not consider that such activities may support the students in resisting institutional practices that diminish the value of their plurilingual repertoire. Again, however, the Max's portrait and interview warrant very different claims than we had imagined when we designed the project.

The role of teacher's guidance

Josh was an intelligent, caring MA student, sensitive to the needs, interests and strengths of his international colleagues and eager to learn more about the professional field in which he had chosen to pursue a career. At the point this paper was written, however, he was willing to assert views that his peers might have considered problematic. While displaying the necessary academic performance of argument and counterargument, his assignment closes by returning to his opening quote and the need to 'think through the worst possible consequences of [a theory's] application,':

This seems an essential element of praxis. The potential negative consequences of researching plurilingual identities through self-portraits are that pupils uncritically rely on and reinforce stereotypical national identities. However, analysis also showed that self-portraits are a thought-provoking, enjoyable pedagogical activity that provide rich data for analysis. Further research in this area should focus on the role a teacher's guidance can play in shaping instantiated identities, and hence learning outcomes, particularly for young learners.

Framing his paper as a consideration of ‘the worst possible consequences of a theory’, Josh was able to critique the plurilingual portraits and the identities they instantiated, but only indirectly address the explanations which are offered by Norton’s work. While his conclusion discusses pedagogy and returns agency to the teacher, meso-level concerns of practice are ignored while he focuses on the ideological dimensions of the gymnasium students’ portraits and interviews. The conclusion suggests these concerns of practice and identity had never been far from his thoughts, but they were rarely in evidence in his assignment.

Josh and the plurilingual project

Josh did well on his assignment. It was well-written, thoughtful and balanced. Leaving aside the misrepresentation of Prasad, he demonstrated an above average understanding of the relevant literature and supported his points effectively. He adopted the critical stance valued in academic settings, acknowledged counterarguments and adhered to the stylistic demands of academic scholarship. But while a MA is not an undergraduate programme and cannot – and perhaps should not – perform the same functions as initial teacher training, the coursework was intended to disrupt existing beliefs and foster professional reflection. Whether and to what extent this had been the case was unclear until Josh set up a meeting with the first author after receiving feedback.

Feedback peppered Josh’s paper with questions such as ‘Blaming the portraits rather than the practice?’ and ‘...the focus (is) on the drawing instead of the practices around the drawing and interviews?’, and a final comment suggested that his last paragraph was perhaps getting to the nub of the issue. It was these comments Josh wished to discuss after receiving his feedback. He confessed to being reticent in critiquing the project because of the first author’s involvement and was relieved to have the opportunity to further explore his concerns. In this informal conversation, it quickly became apparent that his paper addressed deeply personal issues. They connected to his and his partner’s future, a partner he met while teaching in a non-English dominant context and who was from neither that context nor the UK. The nationalistic ideologies evoked by flags, the strong lines that assigned individuals to one nation-state or another, and Max’s discomfort amongst his friends all related to Josh’s imagined future for himself and his family. The blurred lines between a theory of plurilingualism and the plurilingual policies of the EU were also raised, signing as they do a potential hierarchy of which languages count. The project had indeed disrupted Josh’s thinking and provoked a deep and thoughtful reflection on the risks and opportunities created by valorizing plurilingualism in classrooms. What the project had not done was provide Josh with a space to talk through his ideas.

Conclusion

The premise of this paper is that pedagogic design matters. We have drawn on the project experiences and coursework of two students, Anastasia and Josh, to illustrate how participants in the early-stage design of an innovative English-German collaboration index dynamic and sometimes contradictory identities, ideologies, values and beliefs about plurilingual pedagogies. Anastasia's experiences in the German gymnasium support her reimagining of a) the place of plurilingual resources in learners' classroom experiences, including their function in bridging differences within the classroom, and b) her imagined future identity as a teacher who welcomes her learners' plurilingual repertoires. Josh's analysis addresses the beliefs, values and ideologies that are encouraged and reinforced through creation and discussion of plurilingual portraits. His coursework reveals less of his imagined future self, but while he does not dismiss the plurilingual projects' possibilities, he remains cautious of their practice. Interestingly, the two students' personal histories are central to the meanings these students make from the project.

The focus of these students' engagement with the project and its activities raise broader questions about plurilingual practices in language teacher education. For both students, the micro-level of social activity was key to imagining plurilingual futures. Anastasia largely ignored her role in creating tasks and activities; her reflections centre on small moments involving students with backgrounds similar to her own. Josh's use of interviews targets moments that are significant to him personally. The significance of these small moments to Anastasia's and Josh's evolving identities, belief systems and practices speaks to the nature of design and the carefulness with which details must be attended to. However, it also raises a concern that parallels Johnson's regarding the need to bring together academic concepts and the everyday (2019). Experience, not concepts or research, dominate students' coursework and reflections. While both students' coursework carefully meets assignment requirements for use of module readings and lectures, there is limited evidence that research was used to interrogate experience. This is a continuing challenge for teacher-educators that merits greater attention in future studies.

There is also the practical issue of the place of this project in Anastasia's and Josh's studies. The design embedded the project into modules for which Anastasia and Josh were assessed, and that also has implications for values, beliefs and identities these students were willing to share. With Josh, an informal discussion with the first author revealed that he had been unsure to what extent he could or should critique the project, that the beliefs and values espoused by those students he interviewed had affected him deeply on a personal level, and

that there was far more confusion in his current thinking than the paper had suggested. Not unexpectedly, student identities, indexed by Anastasia's practical concern for government curriculum and Josh's for module assessment, are a powerful force. Embedding the project within the degree programmes was and is essential to creating a workable design; however, Anastasia's and Josh's comments provide insights into the project's limiting factors and suggest more might be done to design for critical engagement.

We must also address the issue of flags and the uncritical acceptance of the relations between nation-state and a language. Nationalism need not be negative, but the dangers of unexamined nationalism are all too clear in this century as well as the last. While previous scholars have somewhat uncritically accepted how plurilinguals chose to represent their plurilingual identities, teachers have a larger social obligation to the design of social futures. This requires the delicate balancing of making classrooms safe for free and open speech while fostering the values of respect, tolerance and inclusivity that might mitigate the errors of the past. Failure to engage the gymnasium students in reflexive practice impacted the dynamics of undergraduate and MA students' reflections in ways we did not anticipate. Again, this is an issue of design.

Finally, we argue that DFG's transdisciplinary framework provides a valuable point of reference for design research. Scholars concerned with the advancement of plurilingual pedagogies need a means of making sense of others' designs. There is a danger that we accidentally talk past each other and attach dissimilar meanings to common terms, or that our sense-making is impeded by our lack of contextual understanding. As a field, we need a means for comparing and assessing designs that can overcome such difficulties and that provides a rigorous basis for cross-case comparisons. In this, we concur with Kramsch, who argues that increased reflexivity and focus on subjectivity within the field of applied linguistics does not mean that we can or should overlook the crucial role of theory in our work (2014, p. 50). The DFG framework has been more commonly used for locating scholars' work within its integrated account of language learning and acquisition. However, students do not limit themselves to a single scale or theory. Their reflections are messy and evolving, and the manner in which they draw on available texts and experiences does not have the consistency of careful scholarship. In language teacher education, the work of the DFG provides a framework for analyzing what and how our learners' index values, beliefs and identities and that allows for insights that might otherwise be overlooked. We argue the framework provides a basis for like-minded researchers to share insights from their designs, and perhaps a basis for further cross-case analysis of projects.

The complex range of identities, belief systems and ideologies that language teacher-candidates bring to their programmes of study are well-documented, par-

ticularly but not only in relation to value of their own and their future students' plurilingual capacities. Further, the realization of identities and the concomitant indexing of belief systems and ideologies are inseparable from the social activities in which they participate and on which they reflect. Given this, we have asked how our practices as academics and teacher-educators contribute to the dynamic interplay of ideologies, beliefs, values and identities that are an inevitable consequence of student explorations of plurilingual pedagogies. Greater attention is needed to the design of plurilingual pedagogic projects, which must be conceived not only as context and catalyst in the dynamic evolution of our students' professional identities, but as the substance of their reflections on their ideological frameworks. We make no claims as to the long-term impact of our project. However, we believe that neither Anastasia's interviews and reflections nor Josh's coursework would have indexed the same values, beliefs and identities without the ideological resources afforded by the project design. Pedagogic design matters.

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