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“ACCEPT ALL PUPILS AS THEY ARE. DIVERSITY!” – PRE-SERVICE PRIMARY TEACHERS’ VIEWS, EXPERIENCES, KNOWLEDGE, AND SKILLS OF MULTILINGUALISM IN EDUCATION

Summary. Schools across Europe are experiencing a growing number of multilingual pupils; however, teachers claim to be generally underprepared for dealing with this ever-increasing linguistic and cultural diversity. Initial teacher education often pays insufficient attention to multilingualism, thus there is a call for research on what pre-service teachers learn about the topic during training. Against this background, this small-scale exploratory study sets out to explore pre-service primary teachers’ (a) views of multilingualism in education in general, (b) experiences of multilingualism in education as trainee teachers, and (c) self-perceived knowledge and skills acquired and developed during training, in the context of the Netherlands. Based on 195 survey responses, descriptive statistical analyses indicate that the sampled pre-service primary teachers have slightly positive views of multilingualism in education, specifically regarding their opinions on the role of multilingualism in education, focusing on school and home languages, and their tolerance of multilingualism in the classroom and at school. A qualitative content analysis reveals that several pre-service primary teachers have had general experiences of teaching pupils with migrant backgrounds, such as in transition classes (Dutch: *schakelklassen*), and of teaching pupils who communicate with each other only in their home languages. Challenges in teaching multilingual pupils are also reported, such as the implications of being unable to understand pupils’ home languages. Regarding their self-perceived knowledge and skills, the content analysis shows that some pre-service primary teachers in this study are aware of how to encourage collaboration between multilingual pupils to involve their languages in their learning, and have knowledge of language comparison and awareness approaches that can be implemented in multilingual classrooms. A concerning finding, however, is that according to pre-service primary teachers’ self-reported communication skills for multilingual pupils, there is a tendency to use simplified language, which may have a negative impact on pupils’ language development. These findings highlight the need for further research that employs a mixed-methods longitudinal approach to gain insights into the depth of knowledge and skills acquired during training and how views of multilingualism in education influence classroom practices. This study further reveals shortcomings of primary teacher education in the Netherlands regarding the topic of multilingualism, which are followed up by preliminary recommendations for improving training programmes; for instance, training institutions should aim to collaborate with more multilingual schools where pre-service teachers can gain first-hand practical experience.

Keywords: multilingualism; multilingualism in education; pre-service teachers’ views; primary teacher education; the Netherlands.

Introduction

Despite multilingualism being an inherent part of Europe, many of its countries' education systems remain predominantly monolingual. Consequently, most teachers voice feeling underprepared for teaching in multilingual classrooms and for tackling the new pedagogical challenges that have emerged due to pupils' linguistic and cultural diversity (Langeloo et al., 2019; Raud & Orehova, 2020). This is particularly evident in the Netherlands, where around 27.7% of all primary school pupils have migrant backgrounds (CBS, 2022).

Multilingual pupils' academic performance can, however, improve when their home languages and cultures are involved in their education (García & Baetens Beardsmore, 2009; Sierens & Van Avermaet, 2014), though most teachers maintain the stance that this can prevent pupils from acquiring the target or school language to a high level (Pulinx et al., 2017). Pupils are therefore often discouraged from using their home languages (Van der Wildt et al., 2017), which can lead them to underperform and feel uncomfortable at school (Van Praag et al., 2017), thus having a negative impact on their well-being and perpetuating the achievement gap between minority language-speaking and majority language-speaking pupils (Schleicher, 2019).

The so-called *multilingual turn* defines the need to shift from traditional monolingual education systems to those based on bi- or multilingual ideologies (Conteh & Meier, 2014). In recent years, several projects have been set up in response to this demand, which have aimed to develop pedagogical approaches that facilitate the integration of regional, minority, and migrant languages into mainstream education (e.g., Duarte & Günther-van der Meij, 2018), with the goal of improving equity, inclusion, and pupils' academic progress. Moreover, efforts have also been made to give the topics of multilingualism and diversity a more prominent and impactful place in initial teacher education (ITE; e.g., Robinson-Jones & Duarte, 2021).

There is still, however, a general lack of attention paid to multilingualism in ITE (Lectoreninitiatief Professionalisering Taalonderwijs Nieuwkomers, 2017; Lundberg, 2019); thus, since teachers can influence each other's classroom practices (i.e. collective teaching efficacy; Beauchamp et al., 2014), it is essential that ITE addresses pre-service teachers' possible

preconceptions and misconceptions about multilingualism in education (Portolés & Martí, 2018), as otherwise, the achievement gap will likely persist, and fully inclusive education, in which pupils' home languages are utilised, will remain out of reach (De Angelis, 2011; Pulinx et al., 2017).

Although there is a wide body of research predominantly on in-service primary teachers' attitudes towards and knowledge and skills for multilingualism in education (e.g., Arocena-Egaña et al., 2015; Mitits, 2018; Pohlmann-Rother et al., 2021; Portolés & Martí, 2020), there are fewer studies on pre-service primary teachers' views (e.g., Schroedler & Fischer, 2020) and (self-perceived) knowledge and skills. The question thus also arises of what pre-service primary teachers learn during training. Considering this background, this small-scale exploratory study, therefore, sets out to gain general insights into pre-service primary teachers' views and experiences of multilingualism in education (i.e. at school and in the classroom) and into what knowledge and skills they perceive to have developed during primary school teacher education (PSTE). Moreover, we aim to shed light on the extent to which the topic of multilingualism is addressed in PSTE, which will contribute to the development and improvement of curricula on the topic of multilingualism. Based on a survey of 195 pre-service primary teachers conducted in the Netherlands, this study is guided by the following research questions:

- (1) What views do pre-service primary teachers attending Dutch higher education have of multilingualism in education in general?
- (2) What types of experiences of multilingualism in education do pre-service primary teachers report to have encountered during their training?
- (3) What self-perceived knowledge and skills for multilingualism in education do pre-service primary teachers report to have acquired and developed during training?

In the following sections, background information regarding multilingualism in education and ITE, and previous research on teachers' views of multilingualism in education are presented, followed by an explanation of the methodology

employed in this study. Subsequently, the findings are discussed in relation to previous studies. Finally, concluding remarks and preliminary recommendations on how PSTE programmes can improve training in the field of multilingualism are presented.

Multilingualism in Education and ITE

Multilingualism in education can be defined as "the use of two or more languages in education provided that schools aim at multilingualism and multiliteracy" (Cenoz & Gorter, 2015, p. 2), and often refers to schools with three or more languages in the curriculum and that acknowledge pupils' diverse home languages (Duarte & Günther-van der Meij, 2018). Considering these definitions, multilingualism in education is regarded in a broader sense in this study, referring to the general passive and active involvement of languages other than the school or target language in education, such as allowing children to use their home languages in the classroom (e.g., to explain instructions to each other) and implementing multilingual approaches (e.g., translanguaging).

It has been argued that "the inclusion of pupils' home languages at school and in the classroom can be beneficial for all those involved" (Gilham & Fürstenau, 2020); however, languages other than the school or target language are frequently ignored (Van Avermaet et al., 2018). This has led to multilingual pupils feeling less comfortable at school (e.g., Van der Wildt et al., 2017), and obtaining lower academic results compared to their monolingual peers, which is reflected in the achievement gap (Cummins, 2009). Pupils with migrant backgrounds in particular also tend to be proportionally over-represented in vocational or lower-level school tracks (Caro et al., 2009; Oakes, 2005). This is often the result of biased recommendations made by teachers that are based on evaluations of academic performance and socioeconomic status (Timmermans et al., 2015).

Since schools have generally made insufficient efforts to accommodate multilingual pupils (Cummins et al., 2015), the "monolingual habitus" (Gogolin, 1997) is still prevalent in many countries. Consequently, it has become an expectation that pupils acquire a "native-like" command of the dominant language (Braunmüller, 2006), and thus schools continue to "[work] towards

uniformity and monolingualism” (Spolsky, 2009, p. 91). Education policies are therefore still dominated by the view that high proficiency in the dominant language is key to academic success (Blommaert & Van Avermaet, 2008; Pulinx et al., 2017), which may in fact contribute to the achievement gap.

In several large-scale monitoring studies, such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development’s (OECD) *Programme for International Student Assessment* (PISA), an achievement gap is evident; for instance, “PISA data have consistently shown, in most countries, a performance gap between students with an immigrant background and native-born students” (Schleicher, 2019, p. 27). It should, however, be noted that the PISA 2018 study indicated that the concentration of disadvantaged students more negatively impacted immigrant students’ performance than did the “concentration of immigrants or of students who speak a language at home that is different from the language of instruction” (Schleicher, 2019, p. 29). As “a quick-win policy” (Schleicher, 2019, p. 29), it has been suggested that immigrants receive further language support, and approaches such as *Content and Language Integrated Learning* are implemented.

To exploit the benefits of multilingualism in education and to address the lack of academic support for multilingual pupils, several educational approaches (i.e. how theory is translated into teaching and learning practices by educators) have, in recent years, been developed and tested. For example, the Validiv-project (Valorising Linguistic Diversity in Multiple Contexts of Primary Education) aimed to determine the effectiveness of the immersion model, which suggests that immersing pupils solely in the language of instruction is the optimal approach for ensuring multilingual pupils acquire the majority language successfully, compared to a multilingual language policy (Van Praag et al., 2017). The study concluded that encouraging the use of home languages in the classroom should receive significantly more attention. It was further determined that when pupils’ multilingualism is acknowledged and used in school, both mono- and multilingual pupils feel more at home (Van Praag et al., 2017; see also García, 2009). Similarly, Stroud and Heugh (2011) argue that education systems in which languages are separated from each other are ineffective and insufficiently cater to learners’ needs. Studies on translanguaging in the Basque Country (Leonet et al., 2017), Friesland in

the Netherlands (Duarte, 2018), and Luxembourg (Kirsch, 2020) have also indicated that multilingual approaches can foster teacher-child relationships, support the revitalisation of minority languages (e.g., Basque and Frisian), increase language awareness, and develop pupils' language skills.

In light of previous research and the benefits of multilingual educational approaches, ITE should thus be designed in such a way that it provides (future) teachers with the necessary knowledge and skills to support and enhance their teaching in multilingual classrooms. These include knowing how and being able to utilise pupils' diverse linguistic backgrounds and engage in high-quality teacher-child interaction (e.g., Langeloo et al., 2019), as well as having knowledge of, for instance, theories on language acquisition, awareness, and comparison (De Oliveira, 2014; Raud & Orehova, 2020).

To enrich curricula on multilingualism in ITE, it has been recommended that pre-service teachers should also be exposed to a range of classroom environments in which they can apply their theoretical knowledge, develop their skills, and reflect on their practices (European Commission, 2017; Raud & Orehova, 2020). Most teachers, however, report having limited access to such opportunities (Herzog-Punzenberger et al., 2017). One example that underlines the relevance of this recommendation is that teachers often avoid involving pupils' home languages, since they fear losing control of the class and excluding pupils from activities (Berben et al., 2007), and feel uncomfortable when unable to understand what pupils are saying (Pulinx et al., 2017). This demonstrates teachers' lack of knowledge, skills, and practical experience needed for dealing with such situations.

De Angelis (2011) further proposes that ITE should also "[inform] teachers about the value of immigrants' languages and why they are an asset for the individual" (p. 229). Moreover, Haukås (2016), whose study also revealed that teachers feel underprepared for teaching in multilingual classrooms, drew on De Angelis' (2011), Hufeisen's (2011), and Otwinowska's (2014) research to conclude that the ideal teachers for implementing multilingual educational approaches should be, among others, multilingual themselves, and familiar with research on multilingualism. Teachers should also "be willing to collaborate with other (language) teachers to enhance learners' multilingualism" (Haukås, 2016, p. 3), given that teachers working at

the same school frequently influence each other's practices and beliefs. This is reflected in collective efficacy, which can be influenced by collaboration and social persuasion (e.g., feedback; Beauchamp et al., 2014), and has in turn been found to have a positive effect on pupils (Goddard et al., 2000).

Increased efforts should thus be made to ensure "student teachers' cultural and linguistic awareness, democratic values, and strategies for learner support in diverse school settings" (Raud & Orehova, 2020, p. 3) as well as their views and attitudes are addressed by teacher educators. By investigating pre-service primary teachers' self-perceived knowledge and skills for multilingualism in education, this study will also shed light on areas of improvement in PSTE in the Netherlands, which can act as starting points for further research.

Teachers' Views of Multilingualism in Education

Research on teachers' views of multilingualism in education has often unveiled negative attitudes and substantiated teachers' preferences to implement monolingual education policies, which indicates that teachers' practices are influenced by their attitudes. Consequently, teaching is not always as linguistically (Lucas & Villegas, 2013) and culturally responsive (Gay, 2010) as it could and should be. In Belgium, for instance, Agirdag et al.'s (2014) study found that primary school teachers considered pupils' use of Turkish at school or home a barrier to academic progress, though factor analyses indicated "that the extent of speaking Turkish ... was not significantly related to pupils' academic achievement" (p. 23).

Conversely, Haukås' (2016) study revealed that teachers in Norway believed that their own language learning was possibly facilitated by being multilingual, although they did not maintain the same opinion for their students. Overall, it was concluded that teachers did exhibit positive attitudes since they encouraged learners to use their previous linguistic knowledge, which theoretically will have also contributed to increasing their language awareness. Similarly, De Angelis (2011) comments that language awareness is key if multilingualism is to be exploited when learning a new language. Haukås' (2016) research was, however, limited to only Norwegian and English;

therefore, teachers' opinions of and attitudes towards other languages, such as minority languages, remain unexplored.

Teachers are also often unaware of how languages are processed and interact in the brain (De Angelis, 2011); this lack of knowledge likely influences teachers' possible preconceptions and misconceptions, as well as their views and practices (Portolés & Martí, 2018). As an example, teachers in the Basque Country expressed concerns that code-switching negatively affects language proficiency, thus favoured using only the target language in language lessons (Arocena Egaña et al., 2015). Such beliefs and practices are, however, thought to be influenced by the widespread monolingual ideologies in the Basque Country, as was also found to be the case in the Netherlands (Ticheloven et al., 2019). Moreover, Gkaintartzi et al. (2015) discovered that Greek teachers' attitudes towards immigrant pupils' home languages were positive and pupils were encouraged to use and develop them. Nevertheless, the teacher-participants did state that they "do not relate them [home languages] to the children's school language learning" (Gkaintartzi et al., 2015, p. 70), which suggests that some teachers may consider other languages not as useful as and/or inferior to the school language.

In contrast, Schroedler and Fischer's (2020) study found that the pre-service teacher participants "[tended] to believe in multilingualism being a resource and in the importance of supporting multilingual learners" (p. 17). Moreover, multilingual participants were more positive than monolinguals, as were female participants (see also Pulinx et al., 2017). Agirdag et al.'s (2012) study further revealed that less experienced teachers were more positive towards minority pupils. One reason behind this is that early career teachers are exposed to the latest research on multilingualism and diversity as part of their training, which implies that they are more aware of the importance and benefits of multilingualism (Mitits, 2018). It can therefore be argued that pre-service teachers may demonstrate similar views of multilingualism in education.

Considering the variation in teachers' views of multilingualism and preparation for teaching in multilingual classrooms, this study aims to explore pre-service primary teachers' (a) views of multilingualism in education in general, (b) experiences of multilingualism in education as trainee teachers,

and (c) self-perceived knowledge and skills acquired and developed during training, in the context of the Netherlands, using a self-report method (i.e. a survey; Williams & Steele, 2019). It is hypothesised that pre-service primary teachers will have somewhat positive views (Pulinx et al., 2017; Mitits, 2018), and since multilingualism does not always receive adequate attention in ITE, it is expected that pre-service primary teachers will report having developed only limited knowledge and skills regarding multilingualism in education, which will contribute to gaining a better understanding of areas of improvement in PSTE.

Methodology

Research Design

This small-scale exploratory study (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2005) employed a national online survey that was administered to pre-service primary teachers attending Dutch higher education. Due to the exploratory nature of this study, we designed a survey that consisted of both quantitative and qualitative items (i.e. open-ended questions). To collect more in-depth data and descriptions (Beckett & Clegg, 2007; Morse & Niehaus, 2009), open-ended questions were included to provide the respondents with more freedom in explaining their experiences of and self-perceived knowledge and skills for multilingualism in education, as opposed to asking them to respond by selecting from suggested answers, which may have resulted in bias.

Research Context: Primary Teacher Training in The Netherlands

Primary teacher training in the Netherlands is delivered at universities (Dutch: *wetenschappelijk onderwijs*; WO) or universities of applied sciences (Dutch: *hoger beroepsonderwijs*; HBO), with the former focusing more on research “to develop academic and critical thinking skills” (Baan et al., 2018, p. 1) and the latter on practical-based education. Pre-service primary teachers can follow a 4-year programme taught at HBO institutions, known as PABO (Dutch: *Pedagogische academie voor het basisonderwijs*), or a 4-year academic

programme that WO and HBO institutions offer in cooperation (Dutch: *Academische Opleiding Leraar Basisonderwijs*; AOLB). Internships form part of all Dutch PSTE programmes, often starting with one day per week in the first year, progressing to two days per week in the second, and concluding the programme with a 5-month placement. It should, however, be noted that comparing the findings for these programmes was not within the scope of this study, nor was accounting for possible differences in views, experiences, knowledge, and skills influenced by the pre-service primary teachers' year of study and number or length of internships. The topic of multilingualism has started to play a key role in PSTE in recent years; nevertheless, there are differences in the extent to which and how it is covered. A survey of pre-service primary teachers attending both of the aforementioned programmes was therefore selected to gain insights into how the topic of multilingualism is approached in Dutch PSTE in general.

Instrument and Procedure

An online survey of 37 items in total was developed based on existing instruments, which were selected due to their suitability for this study and standardisation in previous empirical research (Pulinx et al., 2017; van Beuningen & Poliženská, 2019; Van Der Wildt et al., 2017). The survey consisted of four sections that contained open and closed questions as well as statements that were to be ranked on a 5-point Likert scale. Sections 1 and 2 were used to answer the first research question, and Section 3 to answer research questions 2 and 3. In the following paragraphs, descriptions of each section are presented.

Section 1 ($\alpha = 0.79$), which consisted of 15 statements to be rated on a 5-point Likert scale (see Table 2; Pulinx et al., 2017; van Beuningen & Poliženská, 2019), was designed to gain insights into pre-service primary teachers' opinions on the role of multilingualism in education, focusing on school and home languages.

Section 2 ($\alpha = 0.85$), which consisted of four items, was designed to explore pre-service primary teachers' tolerance of multilingualism in the classroom and at school (Van Der Wildt et al., 2017; original confirmatory

factor analysis revealed a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.86), which provided another perspective from which to investigate their views. It should also be noted that the word "acceptance" rather than "tolerance" was used in the survey to reduce social desirability bias.

Section 3 included the following two open questions, which were used to answer the second and third research questions, respectively:

- (1) Give examples of your experiences as a teacher, which you have encountered during your internship(s), of teaching in classes with multilingual pupils.
- (2) Give examples of knowledge and skills acquired and/or developed during your study, internship(s), and workshop(s) that are related to teaching in classes with multilingual pupils.

Section 4 consisted of 14 items and was designed to collect respondents' socio-demographic information (e.g., age, education, home languages, and whether they considered themselves multilingual).

To improve content and face validity (Heale & Twycross, 2015), two experts in the field were asked to review the survey, which resulted in several items being rephrased. The survey was piloted between 9 and 13 March 2020 with five AOLB students, who were recruited using convenience sampling due to time constraints, which also resulted in the reformulation and addition of items.

Designed using Qualtrics survey software¹ the survey was written in Dutch and distributed between 20 March and 15 May 2020 via email to all WO and HBO institutions in the Netherlands that offer PSTE. All respondents gave their informed consent to participate in this study and data were treated anonymously.

Respondents and Sampling Strategy

Recruited using convenience sampling (Buchstaller & Khattab, 2014), 195 pre-service primary teachers were involved in this study, most of whom were

¹ <https://www.qualtrics.com/>

attending higher education institutions in the Dutch province of North-Brabant (50, 26%), followed by 43 in Groningen (22%), and 36 in South-Holland (18%). An overview of the pre-service primary teachers' background information by programme and combined is presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Pre-service primary teachers' background information by programme and combined

	PABO (<i>n</i> = 110)	AOLB (<i>n</i> = 85)	Combined (<i>N</i> = 195)
Age			
Mean (<i>SD</i>)	22.22 (5.74)	20.99 (3.18)	21.68 (4.82)
Min-max	17-51	18-46	17-51
Gender			
Male	17 (18%)	12 (14%)	29 (15%)
Female	92 (81%)	72 (85%)	164 (84%)
Non-binary/agender	1 (1%)	1 (1%)	2 (1%)
Multilingual			
Yes	65 (59%)	45 (53%)	110 (56%)
No	45 (41%)	40 (47%)	85 (44%)

Data Analysis

To answer the first research question, the quantitative data collected through survey Sections 1 and 2 were analysed at a descriptive level (Marshall & Jonker, 2010) using JASP (<https://jasp-stats.org/>; see Tables 2 and 3) to illustrate the sample's characteristics (i.e. describe and summarise their views of multilingualism in education).

To answer the second and third research questions, the responses to the open questions in Section 3 of the survey were coded in ATLAS.ti 8 by applying qualitative content analysis (Mayring, 2000), which was selected as it allows for inductive and/or deductive coding. Before the initial coding, the survey responses were read several times to ensure familiarity with

the data. Following the initial coding, which took an inductive approach because of its exploratory nature, the sub-codes were reviewed to increase the validity and reliability of the analysis, which led to some sub-codes being added, removed, merged into one, or renamed. The analysis resulted in 71 and 47 sub-codes for the pre-service primary teachers' (a) experiences of multilingualism in education as trainee teachers and (b) self-perceived knowledge and skills for multilingualism in education developed during training, respectively. These sub-codes were subsequently finalised and arranged into a hierarchy of codes and categories.

Responses analysed to answer the second research question ($n = 164$; 84% response rate) totalled 5,570 words and each averaged 34 words in length. To answer this research question, the following two categories were selected: (1) teaching pupils with migrant backgrounds and (2) challenges encountered when teaching in multilingual classrooms (selected code: *being unable to understand pupils speaking their home languages*). An example of how the data were coded for this research question is as follows: in the quote "I am doing an internship in a class with many students with an immigration background..." (PABO-2), "immigration background" is mentioned, thus the response was coded under the category teaching pupils with migrant backgrounds.

For the third research question, a total of 137 responses were collected (70% response rate), which totalled 3,664 words and each averaged 27 words in length. To answer this research question, the following three categories and (sub-)codes were selected: 1) utilising pupils' multilingualism in their learning (codes: *encouraging collaboration between pupils with the same home languages* and *methods for involving pupils' multilingualism in the classroom* [sub-codes: *encouraging language comparison* and *encouraging language awareness*]), (2) communicating with multilingual pupils (codes: *using visual aids and non-verbal communication* and *using simplified language*), and (3) shortcomings of PSTE (code: *lack of practical learning*). An example of how the data were coded for this research question is as follows: in the quote "What I have learned is that images and sign language can help a lot in explaining things..." (PABO-7), "images and sign language" are linked to communication, which resulted in this response being coded under using visual aids and non-

verbal communication and placed in the category of communicating with multilingual pupils.

Results

Pre-Service Primary Teachers' Views of Multilingualism in Education

To gain insights into pre-service primary teachers' views of multilingualism in education in general, Section 1 of the survey focused on their opinions on the roles of home and school languages in education. On average, the pre-service teachers scored 3.33 ($SD = 0.51$; 1 = *very negative* to 5 = *very positive*), suggesting that they had slightly positive views. The lowest average score was 1.60 and the highest 5.00. Regarding specific survey items, 47% of responses indicated agreement with, for instance, the statement that it makes sense for teachers to encourage pupils to use their full linguistic repertoires, thus including their home languages, during class (see statement 12 in Table 2). In contrast, the pre-service primary teachers generally agreed that multilingual pupils should speak only Dutch in class (45%; see statement 2).

Table 2

Pre-service primary teachers' opinions on the role of multilingualism at school and in the classroom, with a focus on home and school languages (N = 195)

Statement	Focus	1 Completely disagree	2	3	4	5 Completely agree
1. Multilingual pupils should only speak Dutch outside of class, also among themselves.	Home languages	13%	49%	17%	17%	4%
2. Multilingual pupils should only speak Dutch in class, also among themselves.	Home languages	2%	18%	8%	45%	27%
3. Speaking a language other	Home languages	23%	43%	18%	13%	3%

Statement	Focus	1 Completely disagree	2	3	4	5 Completely agree
than Dutch at home is detrimental to pupils' academic success.						
4. The school library (or media library) should have books/materials in the different home languages of the pupils.	Home languages	5%	15%	19%	47%	14%
5. Multilingual pupils should be given the opportunity to use their mother tongue in lessons.	Home languages	9%	32%	20%	31%	8%
6. Pupils with a migration background find it difficult to learn Dutch.	Home languages	3%	27%	36%	29%	5%
7. Learning a foreign language (e.g., English, French) is enriching for pupils.	School languages	0.5%	0.5%	4%	55%	40%
8. It is preferable that only the target language is used in the classroom.	School languages	1%	18%	23%	43%	15%
9. It makes sense for teachers to make pupils explicitly aware in class of similarities and differences between the languages they learn (Dutch, (other) foreign languages).	Home and school languages	2%	3%	10%	58%	27%
10. Pupils who speak another language at home will never speak Dutch correctly.	Home languages	53%	40%	4%	2%	1%
11. If multilingual	Home languages	6%	27%	22%	38%	7%

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Statement	Focus	1 Completely disagree	2	3	4	5 Completely agree
pupils also speak their own home language at school, this is detrimental to their Dutch and/or their proficiency in the target language.						
12. It makes sense for teachers to encourage pupils to use their entire linguistic repertoire (Dutch, (other) foreign languages, other mother tongues) during class.	Home and school languages	3%	12%	25%	47%	13%
13. The school should allow pupils with a migration background to speak a language other than Dutch at school.	Home languages	10%	33%	31%	22%	4%
14. Multilingual pupils should be encouraged, if they have a good command of the Dutch language, to speak their own home language in class/at school.	Home languages	10%	38%	30%	19%	3%
15. It is important for pupils to have a full command of their home language.	Home languages	1%	6%	20%	23%	50%

Note. To ensure consistent ratings across all items, ratings given to items 1, 2, 3, 6, 8, 10, and 11 were reversed during data analysis.

Section 2 of the survey aimed to investigate pre-service primary teachers' tolerance of multilingualism in the classroom and at school. On average, the pre-service primary teachers scored 2.75 ($SD = 0.83$; 1 = *not tolerant* to

5 = *very tolerant*), suggesting moderate tolerance. The lowest average score was 1.00 and the highest 5.00. More specifically, the pre-service primary teachers thought pupils should sometimes be allowed to use a language other than Dutch to, for example, explain lesson content to other pupils (34%). Regarding using another language in the playground, 30% of the pre-service primary teachers reported that this should often be allowed. In contrast, 22% of responses indicated that pupils should never be allowed to use a language other than Dutch whilst working in groups, and 33% reported that this should almost never be allowed. Thirty-nine percent of responses also suggested that pupils should almost never be allowed to use a language other than Dutch in the classroom, thus reflecting relatively low tolerance. Table 3 displays a complete overview of the results of this survey section.

Table 3

Pre-service primary teachers' tolerance of multilingualism in the classroom and at school

Statement	Never (1)	Almost never (2)	Sometimes (3)	Often (4)	Very often (5)
<i>"Pupils may use a language other than Dutch..."</i>					
1 to explain the content to another pupil	5%	23%	34%	28%	10%
2 in the playground	15%	18%	28%	30%	9%
3 during group work	22%	33%	28%	14%	3%
4 in the classroom	13%	39%	35%	11%	2%

Note. Items from Van der Wildt et al. (2017).

Experiences of Multilingualism in Education as Trainee Teachers

To answer the second research question, the responses to the open question on pre-service primary teachers' experiences of multilingualism in education were analysed using qualitative content analysis. In the following sub-sections, the two selected categories are presented and illustrated by English

translations of the original Dutch responses, with (quantitative) reference to the selected (sub-)codes.

Teaching Pupils with Migrant Backgrounds

The pre-service primary teachers in this study reported different levels of teaching experience in classes with multilingual pupils, which, according to six (4%) responses, was little or none: for instance, "I myself do not have much experience as a teacher with multilingual pupils. ... I notice that Dutch is almost always spoken at school and a few other languages" (AOLB-1). In 48 (29%) responses, however, it was suggested that they had somewhat more experience, which involved teaching pupils with migrant backgrounds (e.g., in transition classes; Dutch: *schakelklassen*), as illustrated by the following responses: "I had two Syrian girls ... in my class, who talked Arabic together... Neither I nor their classmates could understand them, but you could see that it made them blossom socially and emotionally" (AOLB-2), "In my first year [of training], I saw a transition class. All the pupils there were of Polish or Mediterranean origin" (PABO-1), and "I am doing an internship in a class with many students with an immigration background. Of the 26 students in my internship class, 6 are Dutch" (PABO-2).

Challenges Encountered When Teaching in Multilingual Classrooms

One key challenge reported by the pre-service primary teachers ($n = 15$, 9%) was that of being unable to understand what the pupils were saying in their home languages, and consequently not knowing how to react in these situations, as reflected in the following responses: "Two pupils with the same mother tongue (not Dutch) had an unfriendly conversation. I could not understand what was being said, so it was difficult to help the pupils or do something about it" (PABO-3), and "It sometimes happens at school that children call each other names [i.e. insulting each other] in their home language. I find such moments difficult because you don't know what the children are saying" (AOLB-3).

As a likely solution to avoiding such issues, four pre-service primary teachers reported that, at the schools where they were doing internships, using languages other than Dutch was forbidden; for instance, “The agreement within the school is that we all speak Dutch so that everyone can understand each other” (PABO-4). In contrast, another PABO student expressed that is important to “accept all pupils as they are. Diversity!”.

Self-Perceived Knowledge and Skills for Multilingualism in Education Developed During Training

To answer the third research question, the responses to the open question on pre-service primary teachers’ self-perceived knowledge and skills for multilingualism in education were analysed. In the following sub-sections, the findings for the three selected categories are presented.

Utilising Pupils’ Multilingualism in Their Learning

The analysis of the responses provided insights into pre-service primary teachers’ awareness of ways to utilise pupils’ linguistic backgrounds in their learning, which was primarily through encouraging collaboration between pupils who have the same home language to complete activities ($n = 21$, 15%), as illustrated by the following quote: “You can also have children who speak the same home language work together during a maths lesson, for example, after which they can present what they have learned in Dutch” (AOLB-4).

Furthermore, 23 (17%) of the pre-service primary teachers reported having some knowledge about how to involve and acknowledge pupils’ multilingualism in the classroom in general, and the potential benefits of such practices. The two most frequently mentioned approaches in these responses were *language awareness* ($n = 9$, 39%) and *language comparison* ($n = 6$, 26%); for example, “It can be very valuable to let children actively learn about each other's backgrounds and home languages and let them discover differences and similarities” (AOLB-5). PABO-5 also mentioned the following:

As a teacher, it does not mean that you have to be able to

speak the language flawlessly to apply it in lessons. During a vocabulary lesson, for example, the words for the topic 'school' can also be given in other languages. These languages can be compared with each other.

It should, however, also be noted that three responses revealed that pre-service primary teachers are exposed not only to multilingual classroom practices but also to those influenced by monolingual ideologies: "I noticed that my first mentor became very angry when a child wanted to translate a word for another child" (AOLB-6).

Communicating with Multilingual Pupils

Twenty-nine (21%) pre-service primary teachers reported having developed communication skills for multilingual pupils through their internships, their own backgrounds, and training in general. Using visual aids and non-verbal communication ($n = 16$, 55%) were the most frequently mentioned practices, with specific reference to using pictures and/or gestures, as illustrated by the following responses: "I was in a transition class a couple of times in my first year. It was very important to make everything visual so that the children could make a link with the knowledge they have from their mother tongue" (PABO-6), and "What I have learned is that images and sign language can help a lot in explaining things, both to the parents during a parent-teacher conference and to the pupils" (PABO-7).

Moreover, the practices of using simplified language and speaking slowly to multilingual pupils were identified in 10 (34%) of these responses; for instance, "I talk slowly and use short sentences. When I explain what the children have to do, I often use imperatives because this is easy for them to understand" (AOLB-7).

Six (4%) pre-service primary teachers, however, reported being unfamiliar with how to communicate with multilingual pupils who are not proficient in the majority language; for example, "I have no idea how I should communicate with [migrant] children" (AOLB-8).

Shortcomings of PSTE

Although not explicitly asked about their perceptions of PSTE regarding multilingualism, the analysis of the pre-service primary teachers' responses revealed that adequate attention is not always paid to the topic. In 32 (23%) responses, it was stated that they did not possess any knowledge or skills for dealing with multilingualism in education, and in seven cases (5%), a response was not provided. Moreover, it was reported in 12 (9%) responses that practical learning was rare, thus the focus was largely on acquiring theoretical knowledge, as illustrated by the following quotes: "Only the importance of multilingualism and the development of the home language have been explained to us. Little has been done with its practical application" (AOLB-9), and "We had a course on multiculturalism, but this did not really provide any practical training. This was mainly background knowledge" (AOLB-10).

Discussion

This study set out to gain insights into pre-service primary teachers' (a) views of multilingualism in education in general, (b) experiences of multilingualism in education as trainee teachers, and (c) self-perceived knowledge and skills acquired and developed during training, in the context of the Netherlands.

In response to the first research question, the descriptive analysis revealed that, in line with previous studies (Mitits, 2018; Pulinx et al., 2017; Schroedler & Fischer, 2020), the pre-service primary teachers in this study had slightly positive views of multilingualism in education; this was generally reflected in the ratings given to the items in Section 1 of the survey, which aimed to explore their opinions on the role of multilingualism in education, focusing on home and school languages. It is plausible that these positive views are in part due to these pre-service primary teachers likely being introduced to research on multilingualism during training, even if only to a limited extent (see, e.g., Mitits, 2018). A positive impact of having such knowledge may be that it could help pre-service teachers develop classroom practices that better accommodate multilingual pupils and exploit their full linguistic repertoires. As indicated by the results of Section 2 of the survey, it was further found that

the sampled pre-service primary teachers were moderately tolerant of multilingualism in education (see also Strobbe et al., 2017; Van Der Wildt et al., 2017). More specifically, the results suggest that the pre-service primary teachers in this study would be relatively tolerant of pupils only explaining lesson content to their peers in another language but not of them using a language other than the majority language (i.e. Dutch) whilst working in groups, such as to discuss a topic, or in the classroom in general; this implies that these pre-service primary teachers may feel uncomfortable in situations in which they are unable to understand what the pupils are saying. Nevertheless, the average score for this section (2.75), which denoted moderate tolerance, suggests that the sampled pre-service primary teachers are open to and have positive views of multilingualism in education and, to a certain extent, involving their pupils' home languages in their learning.

The qualitative analysis revealed that, in response to the second research question on pre-service primary teachers' experiences of multilingualism in education, around 29% had taught pupils with migrant backgrounds, such as in transition classes, while 4% reported having limited or no experience teaching pupils with diverse linguistic backgrounds. These responses provide insights into the range of different situations in which pre-service primary teachers can find themselves, such as teaching pupils who communicate with each other in their home languages rather than in the school or majority language (i.e. Dutch). A challenge arising from this is not always being able to understand these pupils, which was reported in 9% of responses, with the main consequence being that the pre-service primary teachers were often unsure of how to intervene and resolve the conflict between pupils, as reflected in other studies (Berben et al. 2007; Pulinx et al. 2017; Strobbe et al, 2017). These findings contribute to our understanding of why teachers may feel uncomfortable when teaching in multilingual classrooms (see also Pulinx et al., 2017), and therefore further stress the urgency for ITE, and PSTE in particular, that sufficiently prepare teachers for dealing with such situations and providing all pupils with the social, emotional, and academic support that they require and to which they are entitled.

According to the responses, some of the pre-service primary teachers in this study have also had experiences of multilingualism in education in both

favourable and less favourable situations, the latter of which included three of them being exposed to in-service teachers who opposed the use of languages other than the school language in their classrooms. As a result of experiences that involve the discouragement of multilingualism in education, pre-service teachers become aware of in-service teachers' resistance to changes in the education system and their possible overall lack of knowledge and skills relating to the topic (Mitits, 2018). This could negatively impact pre-service teachers' views and classroom practices as a consequence of collective teaching efficacy (Beauchamp et al., 2014); however, with improved PSTE, pre-service primary teachers, such as those in this study, may develop classroom practices that reflect multilingual ideologies, which are influenced by their positive views.

The reported experiences also support and highlight the importance of the recommendation of ensuring all pre-service teachers gain first-hand experience of teaching in multilingual and diverse classrooms (European Commission 2017; Raud & Orehova, 2020). Experiencing multilingualism in education and working with multilingual pupils could encourage pre-service teachers to reflect on their views and biases, and thus improve their approaches to teaching in multilingual classrooms.

Regarding the third research question, the qualitative analysis of the survey responses revealed that there was notable variation in the pre-service primary teachers' self-perceived knowledge and skills for multilingualism in education. It should, however, first be noted that due to the methodology used in this study and the varied length of the responses, the specific types and depth of the self-reported knowledge and skills could not be accurately determined. As one example, 32% of the pre-service primary teachers claimed to have knowledge and skills relating to utilising and involving pupils' multilingualism in their education. In 48% of these responses, encouraging collaboration between multilingual pupils to involve their languages in their learning was reported. Yet, according to the responses, this was only between pupils with the same home languages, thus it is not clear from this study whether these pre-service teachers are also aware of how to stimulate interaction and collaboration between mono- and multilingual pupils. Moreover, in 20% and 14% of these responses, the pre-service primary

teachers mentioned having knowledge of language awareness and comparison approaches, respectively. These are key steps in normalising multilingualism and validating pupils' languages in the classroom, which can contribute to improving inclusion and well-being by making pupils feel more at home (García, 2009; Van Praag et al., 2017), thus are approaches that all pre-service teachers should have knowledge of and be able to implement.

A further finding, which raised cause for concern, was related to pre-service teachers' self-reported communication skills for multilingual pupils, with 4% mentioning not having any and 19% reporting that they tended to use simplified language and visual aids. An important implication of this is that such a practice can be detrimental to pupils' language development, social skills, and academic performance if frequently used with limited or no high-quality verbal interaction (Langeloo et al., 2019; Vandenbroucke et al., 2018). This, in combination with the shortcomings of PSTE identified in 9% of responses (i.e. a lack of practical learning and experience), stresses the need for training that informs pre-service teachers of the benefits of multilingualism, prepares them for implementing approaches to dealing with multilingualism in education, and enables them to engage in high-quality, inclusive teacher-child interaction.

Conclusion

Initial teacher education in the Netherlands, and in Europe, often pays limited attention to the topic of multilingualism, which leads to early career teachers entering the sector without the level of knowledge and skills required to teach effectively in multilingual classrooms (Herzog-Punzenberger et al., 2017); however, further research is needed to determine which specific knowledge and skills, as well as attitudes, are key in delivering linguistically and culturally responsive education that is equitable and inclusive. The findings of this study do nevertheless contribute to our understanding of why pre-service and early career primary teachers may feel insecure about teaching multilingual pupils, as well as provide initial insights into the current state of PSTE in the Netherlands.

Considering the findings and shortcomings of PSTE identified in

the survey responses, two preliminary recommendations for improving training in the Netherlands regarding multilingualism are proposed, which may also be applicable to other European countries. Firstly, it is imperative that, to address the achievement gap and to protect and nurture pupils' well-being, PSTE curricula are reviewed and re-developed with a sense of urgency to ensure that teachers are adequately trained to deal with linguistic and cultural diversity. Secondly, this study has also revealed that PSTE in the Netherlands could implement improvements to better bridge the gap between theory and practice with regard to multilingualism in education. It should therefore be the training institution's responsibility to ensure all pre-service teachers are provided with sufficient opportunities to develop their skills and gain first-hand practical experience of multilingualism in a range of classroom and school environments. One potential approach to achieve this is by PSTE institutions recruiting more multilingual schools (i.e. schools in which there are multilingual pupils) where pre-service teachers can follow internships. Such an initiative may also benefit and influence in-service teachers in that they would likely learn about, for instance, research on multilingualism and the various related educational approaches from the pre-service teachers. This, however, requires further consideration by the training institutions to determine its feasibility, particularly concerning factors such as location and demographics, since not all schools are as linguistically and culturally diverse as others.

To interpret the findings of this study appropriately, a few limitations need to be acknowledged. It should first be noted that this study involved a relatively small sample, thus the results are not generalisable to all pre-service primary teachers studying at higher education institutions in the Netherlands. Moreover, only a descriptive analysis of the quantitative survey data was performed, thus inferential statistical analyses should be conducted in the future to investigate factors influencing pre-service primary teachers' views, such as gender, whether they consider themselves multilingual or not, the number and length of internships followed, and their year of study. Nonetheless, the findings presented in this study are a valuable starting point for follow-up studies.

Future research should thus involve a larger sample to improve generalisability, and also explore other factors, such as the province in which

training is being followed (in the case of the Netherlands, for instance) and the grade that pre-service primary teachers are training to teach. To enrich the findings of this study and identify the factors that contribute to significant growth in knowledge and skills for multilingualism in education, mixed-methods longitudinal research should be conducted in which self-reported data are compared and contrasted with classroom observations, interviews, and/or focus groups, as well as with the results of an investigation into the content of ITE curricula on multilingualism in education and objective data on knowledge and skills developed during training collected using standardised instruments. This would reveal the specific types and depth of knowledge and skills learned during training and the extent to which positive views are reflected in and influence classroom practices, and generate insights into pre-service teachers' interaction skills for pupils in multilingual primary classrooms. Such research would contribute to the knowledge needed to further develop training programmes that better prepare pre-service primary teachers for delivering more equitable and inclusive education in which all pupils' languages have a place.

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**„PRIIMKITE VISUS MOKINIUS TOKIUS, KOKIE JIE YRA.
ĮVAIROVĖ!“ – BŪSIMŲ PRADINIO UGDYMO MOKYTOJŲ
POŽIŪRIS, PATIRTIS, DAUGIAKALBYSTĖS ŠVIETIMO SRITYJE
ŽINIOS IR ĮGŪDŽIAI**

Santrauka. Visos Europos mokyklose mokosi vis daugiau daugiakalbių mokinių, tačiau mokytojai teigia esantys nepakankamai pasirengę spręsti šios nuolat didėjančios kalbinės ir kultūrinės įvairovės keliamų problemų. Pirminiame mokytojų rengimo etape dažnai per mažai dėmesio skiriama daugiakalbystei, todėl raginama atlikti tyrimus, ką būsimi pradinio ugdymo mokytojai studijuodami sužino apie šią temą. Atsižvelgiant į tai, šiame nedidelio masto tyrime siekiama Nyderlandų kontekste ištirti būsimų pradinio ugdymo mokytojų (a) požiūrį į daugiakalbystę švietimo srityje apskritai, (b) jų kaip mokytojų stažuotojų daugiakalbystės patirtį švietimo srityje ir (c) savarankiškai suvokiamas žinias bei įgūdžius, įgytus ir išplėtotus studijų metu. Remiantis 195 apklausos atsakymais, aprašomoji statistinė analizė rodo, kad tyrimo dalyvių – būsimų pradinio ugdymo mokytojų – požiūris į daugiakalbystę švietimo srityje yra gana teigiamas, ypač kalbant apie mokyklos ir namų kalbas bei toleranciją daugiakalbystei klasėje ir mokykloje. Kokybinė turinio analizė atskleidė, kad kai kurie būsimi pradinio ugdymo mokytojai turėjo bendrosios patirties, pavyzdžiui, buvo mokę migrantų kilmės mokinius pereinamosiose klasėse (oland. schakelklassen) arba mokinius, tarpusavyje bendraujančius tik savo gimtosiomis kalbomis. Tyrimo rezultatai taip pat atskleidė daugiakalbių mokinių mokymo problemų, pvz., sunkumus, kylančius dėl negalėjimo suprasti mokinių gimtosios kalbos. Turinio analizė rodo, kad kai kurie tyrimo dalyviai būsimi pradinio ugdymo mokytojai geba skatinti daugiakalbių mokinių bendradarbiavimą įtraukdami jų kalbas į mokymąsi ir turi žinių apie kalbų palyginimą bei kalbų supratimo metodus, kuriuos galima įgyvendinti daugiakalbėse klasėse. Tačiau reikia konstatuoti, kad, atsižvelgiant į būsimų pradinio ugdymo mokytojų įgūdžius bendrauti su daugiakalbiais mokiniais, pastebima tendencija vartoti supaprastintą kalbą, o tai gali turėti neigiamos įtakos mokinių kalbos raidai. Šios išvados skatina tolesnius ilgalaikius tyrimus mišriais tyrimo metodais, kuriais būtų galima gauti duomenų apie mokantis įgytų žinių ir įgūdžių lygį ir kokią įtaką besikeičiantis požiūris į daugiakalbystę švietimo srityje turi praktiniam darbui. Šiame tyrime taip pat atsiskleidė pradinio ugdymo mokytojų rengimo Nyderlanduose trūkumai, susiję su daugiakalbyste, pateikiamos preliminarios rekomendacijos dėl mokymo programų tobulinimo; pavyzdžiui, mokytojų rengimo institucijos turėtų siekti bendradarbiauti su daugiakalbėmis mokyklomis, kuriose pradinio ugdymo mokytojai gali įgyti praktinės patirties.

Pagrindinės sąvokos: daugiakalbystė; daugiakalbystė švietimo srityje; pradinio ugdymo mokytojų požiūris; pirminis mokytojų rengimas; Nyderlandai.