"That is a big shift for us": Teachers' and teacher educators' perceptions of multilingualism and multilingual operationalizations

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Abstract: This article explores how teachers and teacher educators perceive multilingualism in general, and how they comprehend four specific multilingual operationalizations in particular. It also examines how the participants perceive multilingualism in relation to their language subject(s) in the new national curriculum (LK20) in Norway. Data were collected using semi-structured interviews with four teachers and four teacher educators, and the analysis yielded three main themes. First, the participants regarded multilingualism as an important resource for both minority and majority language students in language acquisition and language use. Second, they reported a big shift in how they perceived multilingualism; from a narrow focus on language skills and fluency, to a wider emphasis on knowledge of languages, dialects and language learning. Third, despite this shift, the participants declared that they had insufficient knowledge of how to operationalize multilingualism systematically in their language classrooms. The implementation of the new curriculum (LK20) was viewed to be a good opportunity for developing more knowledge of multilingualism and multilingual operationalizations, but potential challenges to this were identified as the monolingual traditions underpinning the school structures and assessment cultures.

Keywords: Multilingualism, multilingual operationalizations, metacognition, language teaching and learning.

1. Introduction

Multilingualism is now seen as the norm rather than the exception in language education (Conteh & Meier 2014; May 2014; Dewaele 2015), and since some argue that "most people are multilingual to a certain extent" (Conteh & Meier 2014: 2), multilingualism may be regarded as a continuum, rather than a fixed category. Multilingualism is therefore here defined in a holistic sense "that takes into account all of the languages in the learner's repertoire" (Cenoz & Gorter 2011: 342).

The concept of "the multilingual turn" has also been upheld by several scholars within language acquisition studies (Conteh & Meier 2014; May 2014), and this has involved a paradigm shift in how language learning is perceived; from the static, monolingual ideal of the native speaker towards a more fluid, dynamic and multilingual speaker (May 2014; Makalela 2015). However, several studies show that this shift has mainly been a theoretical shift, and that monolingual teaching practices still dominate around the world (Paquet-Gauthier & Beaulieu 2016; Cummins 2017; Kirsch et al. 2020). Consequently, there seems to be a discrepancy between research and language policies encouraging multilingualism on the one hand, and actual classroom practices on the other hand (Cummins & Persad 2014; Lundberg 2019).

Some researchers therefore point to the need for a Gestaltshift in attitudes for major educational stakeholders, and claim that: "it appears that the most important challenge is … the need for a shift in attitudes of those who work with highly diverse classrooms on a daily basis, teachers, educators and policy-makers" (Herzog-Punzenberger et al. 2017: 34). Since teachers and teacher educators are important stakeholders who interpret and implement reforms and curricula, it is important to examine their perceptions of these in order to comprehend what hinders or promotes changes. "Perceptions" here denote opinions and perspectives, and is used synonymously with "beliefs" and "attitudes" since they often "[travel] under alias" (Pajares 1992: 309). They also "affect [the teachers'] behaviour in the classroom" (Pajares 1992: 307) and although teachers' perceptions are generally seen as difficult to change (Borg 2011), some studies have found that curriculum reform can bring about rapid and comprehensive alterations in teachers' perceptions (Sopanen 2019).

Research article

In order to analyze what promotes or hinders multilingual classroom practices in schools and teacher education, more empirical evidence on this is needed (Haukås 2016; Krulatz & Iversen 2019; Lundberg 2019), and semi-structured interviews have therefore been conducted with teachers and teacher educators in order to "enter into the other person's perspective" (Patton 2002: 3341). The aim of the current study is therefore threefold; 1) it will examine teachers' and teacher educators' perceptions of multilingualism, 2) it will examine their perceptions of multilingual operationalizations, operationalizations here refer to how multilingualism is implemented in the classroom, and 3) it will analyze how they perceive multilingualism in relation to their language subject(s) in the new national curriculum (LK20) in Norway. To do this, three research questions were developed:

- RQ1: What are the teachers' and teacher educators' general perceptions of multilingualism?

- RQ2: What are the teachers' and teacher educators' perceptions of four specific multilingual operationalizations?

- RQ3: What are the teachers' and teacher educators' perceptions of multilingualism in relation to their language subject(s) in the new curriculum (LK20)?

2. Theoretical background

When analyzing teachers' and teacher educators' perceptions of multilingualism, it may be appropriate to utilize the theoretical lenses of language ideologies by Richard Ruiz (1984) and the expansion of his theories into multilingualism-as-a-resource by Ester de Jong et al. (2016; 2019).

In his seminal article, Ruiz (1984) is concerned with language ideologies behind national language policies and language attitudes. He proposes three different orientations: language-as-problem, language-as-right and language-as-resource. However, he underlines that these are "competing, but not incompatible approaches" (Ruiz 1984: 18).

Language-as-problem refers to a view where one identifies and resolves certain problems related to language use and language planning, and stems from the one nation-one language ideology and reductionistic language views of the past where anything outside of the majority language was identified as problematic or challenging. This view has been found in educational policy documents in Norway, where "multilingualism", in Norwegian called "flerspråklighet", has been previously linked to minority language students and a lack of competence in the majority language (Sickinghe 2016; Haukås & Speitz 2018).

Language-as-right, on the other hand, stems from the idea that considers languages as basic human rights, and to be free "from discrimination on the basis of language" (Ruiz 1984: 22). This language ideology has reduced the discrimination of the culture and languages of many native peoples around the world, including the indigenous Sami population in Norway. However, Ruiz is also ambivalent about such a rights-perspective in language policies due to its confrontational nature "where the rights of the few are affirmed over those of the many" (Ruiz 1984: 24).

Therefore, Ruiz proposes a third, less confrontational and more holistic language ideology: language-as-resource. Here, he claims that "language is a resource to be managed, developed and conserved" (Ruiz 1984: 28), and that when languages are viewed as concrete resources in for example schools, industry and diplomacy, language minorities will also be viewed as "important sources of expertise" (Ruiz 1984: 28).

Building on Ruiz (1984), de Jong et al. (2016, 2019) argue that there is a need for a fourth, new paradigm called "multilingualism-as-a-resource" (de Jong et al. 2019: 107). They assert that it is vital to view *multilingualism* as an asset in schools, and that it is both destructive and inefficient to

disregard the students' diverse, multilingual realities outside of school. They also claim that teachers and teacher educators have a great responsibility when interpreting and applying new curricula in their classrooms, and that educators "must recognize and build on what students already know and our understandings of multilingual development and learning as they develop and implement their curriculum" (de Jong et al. 2019: 108-109). It is furthermore stated that a multilingualism-as-a-resource orientation is often contradicted and hindered by rigorous separation of languages and "overt policies that require monolingual environments in the language of instruction" (de Jong et al. 2019: 115).

2.1. Studies on multilingualism in education in Norway
Also in Norway, the concept of multilingualism as a significant resource has been highlighted in important steering documents like the previous Norwegian national curricula of English and foreign languages (LK06), the new national curricula (LK20) and in different white papers (see for example "Språk åpner dører"/ "Languages open doors", published by the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research, henceforth Udir 2007). Despite all this, reports still find that multilingualism to a large degree has been neglected in Norwegian schools (Language Council of Norway 2015; Dahl & Krulatz 2016; Haukås 2016; Iversen 2017; Burner & Carlsen 2019; Myklevold forthcoming).

Several studies also report that teachers lack knowledge of multilingualism and that multilingualism is still not fully operationalized in language teaching (Šurkalović 2014; Dahl & Krulatz 2016; Haukås 2016; Iversen 2017). In one survey, almost 80% of the teacher respondents had no education or training in working with multilingual pupils (Dahl & Krulatz 2016: 9).

Šurkalović (2014) reported similar findings in her study on multilingualism in teacher education, where she argued that the teacher students had insufficient knowledge of the prominence of multilingual pupils in Norwegian schools and that the teacher education programs did not assist them in compensating for that knowledge gap (Šurkalović 2014).

A study by Haukås (2016) examined teacher's beliefs about multilingualism and found that even if teachers are positive towards multilingualism, they do not often promote multilingualism, as they do not utilize learners' previous knowledge of languages. Haukås also reported that even though teachers think that collaboration between teachers across languages could strengthen their pupils' learning outcomes, such a collaboration is non-existent (Haukås 2016: 11).

Iversen (2017), in his study on the role of minority pupils' L1 when learning English, claims that even though the pupils make use of their L1 when learning English, for example through translations and grammatical comparisons, the teachers do not support or encourage such a multilingual and metacognitive way of learning languages (Iversen 2017: 35).

Myklevold (forthcoming), investigated the operationalization of multilingualism and the students' and teacher's perceptions thereof in a foreign language classroom in Norway. The operationalization consisted of a multilingual lesson plan based on cognates, internationalisms and textual patterns (see Method), and even though the teacher perceived a challenge to be the acquisition of knowledge of all the students' first languages, the multilingual lesson plan was reported by both the teacher and the students to facilitate text comprehension and metacognition.

2.2. Metacognition
As both Haukås (2014), Iversen (2017) and Myklevold (forthcoming) point to, an interesting aspect of multilingualism as a resource for improving language learning, is the importance attributed to metacognition. Flavell (1976) was the developmental psychologist who was the first to coin the term, but in language learning and teaching metacognition may be defined as "an awareness of and reflections about one's knowledge, experiences, emotions and learning" (Haukås et al. 2018: 3). Studies have shown that metacognition is important in order to strengthen language learning (Anderson 2008; Haukås et al. 2018), and as Dahm (2015) also observes, "[w]hen learners notice

similarities between two languages, they show a metalinguistic activity" (Dahm 2015: 45). Interestingly, the new national curriculum (LK20) also stresses the significance of metacognition such as "reflecting over own and others' learning" (Udir 2019: 11, my translation).

2.3. The new national curriculum (LK20) in Norway

In the new national curriculum (LK20), which was introduced and gradually implemented in Norwegian schools on August 1, 2020, the value of linguistic and cultural diversity is strongly emphasized. In the general curriculum, which is a separate document that lays down the core values and principles of the Norwegian school system, linguistic and cultural diversity is strongly promoted:

> Knowledge about the linguistic diversity in society provides all pupils with valuable insight into different forms of expression, ideas and traditions. All pupils shall experience that being proficient in a number of languages is a resource, both in school and society at large (Udir 2017: 5).

Furthermore, the individual subject curricula for Norwegian, English and Foreign languages all underscore the notion of multilingualism as a resource and that the knowledge of several languages shall be viewed as an important asset. In the Norwegian curriculum, it is stated that "the students are to become confident in language use and aware of their own linguistic and cultural identity within an inclusive collective where multilingualism is valued as a resource" (Udir 2019: 2, my translation), similarly, in the English curriculum it is stated that "the students shall experience that knowing several languages is a resource in school and in society" (Udir 2019: 2, my translation). This is even more highlighted in the Foreign languages curriculum, since a whole focus area, or core element, is named "Language learning and multilingualism", and where it is argued that "When starting the subject of foreign languages, the students are already multilingual and have comprehensive language learning experiences from different contexts" (Udir 2019: 3, my translation).

3. Method

Data were collected using semi-structured interviews with the teachers (*n*=4) and the teacher educators (*n*=4). The interviews were mainly conducted in Norwegian, since this was the major language of school instruction, and then translated into English by the researcher. However, since half of the participants had another mother tongue than Norwegian, they were informed that we could also conduct the interviews in English if this felt more natural for them, something which two of the informants wished to (see appended Interview guides in English and Norwegian). The participants were asked to comment on a multilingual lesson plan explored in a previous study by Myklevold (forthcoming). The aim of the previous study was to explore students' and teacher's perceptions of the usefulness of a multilingual lesson plan in German and English language education. This multilingual intervention consisted of a four-week multilingual lesson plan which employed four specific multilingual operationalizations taken from a set of descriptors identified in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) *Companion volume with new descriptors* (Council of Europe 2018). These operationalizations were chosen because they were concrete and easily applicable to language learning in the classroom, and because they represent important multilingual competence:

1. Capacity to use knowledge of familiar languages to understand new languages, looking for cognates and internationalisms in order to make sense of texts in unknown languages – whilst being aware of the danger of 'false friends' (Council of Europe 2018: 157)

2. Capacity to exploit one's linguistic repertoire by purposefully blending, embedding and alternating languages at the utterance level and at the discourse level (Council of Europe 2018: 158)
3. Can use his/her knowledge of contrasting genre conventions and textual patterns in languages in his/her plurilingual repertoire in order to support comprehension (Council of Europe 2018: 160)
4. Can use what he/she has understood in one language to understand the topic and main message of a text in another language (Council of Europe 2018: 160).

In the current study, the multilingual lesson plan was distributed to the eight participants 24 hours before the interviews were conducted, in order for them to have enough time to read through and go into depth of it. Both teachers and teacher educators were included as informants since they are important educational stakeholders providing essential information when interpreting and implementing curricula (de Jong et al. 2019).

3.1. Context and participants
The participants were purposefully recruited from two upper secondary schools (four participants) and two universities (four participants) in Norway. Purposeful sampling may be described as focusing on "selecting information-rich cases whose study will illuminate the questions under study" (Patton 2002: 230), and furthermore that "Studying information-rich cases yields insights and in depth-understanding rather than empirical generalizations" (Patton 2002: 230). In order to obtain these information-rich cases, a maximum variation sampling (Patton 2002: 234) was chosen.

Three criteria were followed for the selection of informants: a) participants with both longer and shorter teaching experience, b) participants with and without Norwegian as their first language (L1), and c) participants that represented as many language subjects as possible. Informed consent was obtained from all the informants, and their anonymity was protected through utilizing codes for both the schools and participants. As Table 1 demonstrates, half of the participants had another L1 than Norwegian; English, Frisian, French and Spanish. All participants were rather experienced teachers, and their teaching experience from the sector ranged from 8 to 31 years. The language subjects of the eight informants at their current institutions were either English, French, German or Norwegian, or a combination of these:

Table 1: Overview of participants' first languages, language subjects, years of teaching experience and institutional belonging

PARTICIPANT CODE	FIRST LANGUAGE (L1)	LANGUAGE SUBJECT(S)	YEARS OF TEACHING EXPERIENCE	INSTITUTION
TEACHER 1 (T1)	Norwegian	Norwegian	10	School 1
TEACHER 2 (T2)	Norwegian	English, German	18	School 2
TEACHER 3 (T3)	Frisian	English, Norwegian	23	School 2
TEACHER 4 (T4)	French	English, French, German	31	School 2
TEACHER ED. 1 (TE1)	Norwegian	German	22	University 1
TEACHER ED. 2 (TE2)	English	English	8	University 1
TEACHER ED. 3 (TE3)	Norwegian	English	20	University 2
TEACHER ED. 4 (TE4)	Spanish	English	12	University 2

3.2. Analysis
The interviews of the participants ranged from 42 to 65 minutes, and were subsequently transcribed by the researcher. The interview transcripts were examined using QSR NVivo10. The transcripts were analyzed in three cycles, and in order to validate the analysis, both analyst triangulation (Patton 2002) and respondent validation (Silverman 2013) were used. In the first cycle, in order to get acquainted with the material, the transcripts were read through and comments were made to text extracts which seemed to inform the research questions (RQs). In the second cycle, In Vivo coding was used in order to allocate preliminary codes to the transcribed material (Miles et al. 2014) by using the informants' own words and phrases as categories. In this phase, a colleague checked my suggested analysis, comparing the codes with the informants' statements, from which they were developed. Wherever he disagreed with my suggestions, we discussed the codes and I subsequently modified the ones we disagreed on. On the basis of these codes, I analyzed the rest of the material. Such analyst triangulation, that is use of another coder or analyst, is regarded as a way of enhancing the trustworthiness of the results (Patton 2002: 560). The In Vivo codes were compared internally in the third cycle, and in allusion to the theoretical framework presented above, the In Vivo codes were substituted by descriptive codes when they seemed to be more pertinent (Miles et al. 2104). In the final stages of the analysis, respondent validation techniques were also used, in that the researcher went back to two of the informants, one teacher and one teacher educator, with the tentative findings and adjusted them after their reactions (Silverman 2013: 288).

4. Findings
4.1. RQ1: teachers' and teacher educators' general perceptions of multilingualism
The participants all perceived multilingualism as a natural and important resource in language acquisition and language use. Teacher 1 (T1) described a multilingual person simply to be "somebody who has quite a lot of knowledge about languages", and teacher educator 3 (TE3) similarly used a holistic definition of multilingualism:

> TE3: I understand 'multilingualism' as knowledge about different languages. And then there is obviously a question of how we define languages. If we are thinking about variants of a language, then we can include dialects, or if we talk about languages in a bigger context, for example national languages. But in language learning, I think it concerns how to involve the linguistic resources one possesses at large, in order to learn languages, and use languages.

Interestingly, six of the eight participants also reported that they related multilingualism to *all* students in Norway, not just the minority language students, which supports the argument that all students in Norway are multilingual (Haukås & Speitz 2018: 304). Teacher 4 (T4) for example claimed that:

> T4: First and foremost, I think it's important to be aware of the students who come from regions with minority languages, and that we in Norway do not know, but which provides them with an enormous competence. … But also Norwegian students who are raised in Norway, have been exposed to Danish and Swedish, and start learning English very early, and maybe they have a grandmother from Germany, or France, or something, … and that also adds something, so I think that multilingualism is something that relates to almost *everyon*e.

The participants with other first languages (L1s) than Norwegian reported that multilingualism was a natural asset, for example teacher 3 (T3) reported that "It is the natural state of the world, … there

is nothing hocus-pocus about it" and teacher educator 2 (TE2) claimed that this was a continuum where it was enough to "touch on" or briefly use multiple languages for her to label it multilingualism: "what I know now about 'multilingual' is just being able to touch on other languages, so most people in this world are multilingual".

However, six of the eight participants also reported that they had experienced a 'shift' in their perception of multilingualism the last few years, and now had a wider definition of multilingualism. They also reported that their definitions had changed from a native speaker and fluency perspective to a more holistic perspective:

> T2: My definition has definitely changed, just in the last couple of years, actually. Because now I have perhaps become less anxious to call it multilingualism, or to define it as that. Because I don't think you have to be fluent to be multilingual, I think it can also involve knowledge, and knowledge about cultures, as well.

This new way of defining multilingualism was perceived by TE2 to be holistic and liberating, since this participant previously had had a monolingual view of language learning and claimed that "I have just spent a lot of years in my life feeling guilty … about mixing languages".

When substantiating their views of multilingualism, all the teacher educators and two of the teachers referred to the same steering documents of CEFR, LK06 and LK20. Teacher Educator 1 (TE1) claimed that:

> TE1: You obviously learn Norwegian and English in school, and German, or French, or Spanish… My entire language competence makes me say that I am multilingual today. The same is true for anyone who starts school, really, anyone who grows up in Norway, anyone who is exposed to these languages. And the dialects, and the diversity. But also because there are steering documents that state that we use our multilingual resources when we learn new languages, and that is with us all the way.

4.2. RQ2: teachers' and teacher educators' perceptions of four concrete multilingual operationalizations

All of the respondents viewed the multilingual lesson plan which employed four specific multilingual manifestations taken from CEFR (Council of Europe 2018) as a useful starting point for incorporating multilingualism in language education. T2 perceived this kind of operationalization to be "an unused resource" in the language classroom, and that it was a useful metacognitive learning strategy for the students if the teacher helped them become aware of it:

> T2: There is so much more to be gained here. If you think about the foreign languages, both on level I and level II, then there are especially words that look like your L1, or words that look like your neighboring languages, or … international words. … And I think that we cannot take for granted that each student immediately spots this alone, you should think that, but I experience it in the classroom, that that is not the case, so you have to help them to find that strategy.

However, multilingualism was also reported to be a vague and challenging concept, so the multilingual operationalization was therefore seen as a concrete attempt to manifest *how* multilingualism could be implemented in a classroom:

> TE3: I think that this is very interesting, because in my opinion one of the main challenges

with the term multilingualism is that it is quite vague. Very few have a firm grasp of how to use it in the classroom. And how to understand it, and how to operationalize it. So I find it important to be able to pin it down, and then I think that what the Council of Europe has suggested here, with cognates, and genres, and internationalisms, and so on, is a very interesting starting point to try out a way to comprehend multilingualism.

Teacher Educator 4 reported that this kind of multilingual task could motivate the students and all of the informants supported the view that the students could become more metacognitively aware through such a multilingual operationalization. Teacher Educator 4 (TE4), the informant with the biggest multilingual repertoire, reported a metacognitive advantage both for the teacher and for the teacher students, and was the only participant in the study who employed a systematic mapping of the previously learnt languages of the students through language biographies and language silhouettes:

> TE4: Normally for the [teacher] students … there is always a first assignment which is sort of a language biography. And then they have to talk about the languages they speak, and their relationship to them. And then of course, especially English, but any other as well, and bringing in also the affective things, like 'How do you feel about this language?'

In contrast, T2 reported that systematic mapping was not employed in the foreign language teaching at her school and claimed that "it is used to a very small degree, I think, which clearly is a weakness, as I perceive it now".

When asked about the importance of linguistic proximity in relation to the multilingual operationalization, several participants were unsure of this, but T2, T3, TE2 and TE4 suggested that one could work more in terms of language strategies, grammatical structure or metaphors than with cognates or vocabulary when languages were very different. However, TE1 perceived that the focus could both be on cognates and the transfer of language learning experiences when working with different languages such as Arabic and German:

> TE1: Berlin is probably called Berlin in Arabic as well, for example. … I don't know enough Arabic to know this, but I can imagine that these terms exist, and there are pictures here as well, aren't there? … But what you could say to…somebody that has Arabic as their mother tongue, is that you must focus on the language learning experience that this person has …

4.3. RQ3: teachers' and teacher educators' perceptions of multilingualism in relation to the new curriculum (LK20)

All of the teachers perceived the introduction of the LK20, and its emphasis on deep learning to be a good opportunity to use more time on multilingualism. One of the teachers, T2, also linked the introduction of LK20 to a clearer expectation of accentuating multilingualism: "I think there is a much clearer expectation now, which will be of help, I believe. Because now we have to work with that kind of learning here as well, we must raise our awareness ...". Similarly, one of the teacher educators, TE1, claimed that the introduction of LK20 will help strengthen the focus on multilingualism in teacher education: "[H]ere [in LK20] there is more force behind our claims and it is made more visible, I think. More legitimized, perhaps?"

However, several of the participants also noted several challenges behind the implementation of LK20 and multilingualism in their language subject(s), and the most preeminent issues identified were time restraints, lack of research on operationalizations of multilingualism and the monolingual

traditions behind school structures and assessment. T3 claimed that in order to change the current teaching practices, extensive collaboration between the language teachers is required, and reported that "we lack an arena for that". TE2 reported that the monolingual ideologies in academia are still prevalent, and that there is a "shift in thought" needed in order to avoid "the English only" paradigm. Also, the assessment culture was problematized by TE2: "Because, ehm… you have a limited amount of time in the classroom. … And so… if we start mixing into these different languages, how can we document that there's progression?". Similarly, TE3 argued that one of the biggest challenges in implementing multilingualism and multilingual operationalizations was the lack of clarity of the concept and that there is a need for more extensive, longitudinal research within all aspects of this field:

> TE3: [W]e need research on how this can be utilized, and on how the students perceive it, and how the teachers view it, and maybe also studies of learning effects. … Much research is needed over time, and it needs to materialize in learning resources, text books for teacher students, for pupils, courses, research on how to use it … and assess it.

5. Discussion

When the participants reported that they had experienced a shift in their perception of multilingualism, and now had a wider definition of multilingualism than what they previously had, this may be due to many reasons. The impact of 'the multilingual turn' in language learning (May 2014) may be one of the reasons for this, in addition to the important steering documents of CEFR (Council of Europe 2001, 2018), the previous Norwegian national curricula (LK06), the current reform (LK20) and the participants' own personal trajectories, but the teachers and teacher educators nevertheless seem to have undergone a change in how they perceive multilingualism. Sopanen (2019) claims that curriculum reform can assist in changing teachers' perceptions and make them more conscious of their own practices, and several of the teachers in the current study either refer to the new national curricula or the other steering documents when elaborating their views of multilingualism. Teacher educator 1 even argues that LK20 now 'legitimizes' an emphasis on multilingualism, which may imply that curriculum reform is being utilized as an important argument for devoting more time on multilingualism within teacher education.

Multilingualism was also perceived by the participants as an important resource and asset in language learning in schools, linking it closely to the language-as-resource ideology (Ruiz 1987) and multilingualism-as-a-resource orientation (de Jong et al. 2016, 2019). Most of the participants included both minority and majority language students in their definitions, and seemed to regard multilingualism as a continuum, rather than a fixed category. They included knowledge of languages, dialects, language learning and cultures in their wide definitions. However, despite their broader, heteroglossic definitions of multilingualism, they also often pointed to the fact that they lack knowledge of incorporating multilingual teaching practices systematically. There may be several explanations for this, but one important reason may be due to the monolingual assumptions underlying the school culture, assessment and teaching practices, which do not provide for opportunities to experiment with or develop multilingual lesson plans. As noted by de Jong et al. (2019), a rigorous separation of languages in time tables and monolingual assessment practices will discourage many opportunities for language teacher co-operation and obstruct multilingual teaching practices. Several of the participants claimed that there were no arenas for structured language teacher co-operation in their schools, which is supported in other studies (Haukås 2016), and that this was perceived as a flaw in the schools' structure and a missed opportunity for transfer of knowledge. Many opportunities for focusing on language awareness across the languages were lost, some reported. Other perceived weaknesses within the school structure were also identified by the participants, like for example the lack of mapping the students' previously learnt languages in a comprehensive way,

which may be due to the pervasive monolingual structures conserving traditional teaching practices, and which prevents flexibility or innovative thinking across languages for the teachers.

When asked about whether they perceived any opportunities or challenges concerning multilingualism in the new curriculum, several of the participants pointed to both the pressing time issue due to increased pressure for documentation, and the monolingual structures behind the assessment culture. TE2 asked "Because, ehm… you have a limited amount of time in the classroom. … And so… if we start mixing into these different languages, how can we document that there's progression?", and TE3 similarly argued that there is a need for more research on multilingualism and how to assess it. Here, the participants illustrate de Jong et al.'s (2019) point that the strong monolingual ideologies behind schools' assessment culture may impede a multilingualism-as-a-resource orientation for teacher educators and teachers. This also makes it difficult for teachers and teacher educators for adjusting and "finding themselves in linguistically diverse classrooms" (Lundberg 2019: 267), and may explain some of the participants' insecurity behind how to operationalize multilingualism in their classrooms. This challenge identified by TE2 also supports the argument made by Cenoz & Gorter (2017) that new, more holistic approaches should be introduced in both language policy and assessment of languages, something that the new curriculum in Norway so far has not grappled with, perhaps because it requires a comprehensively new structure of language learning and assessment practices. If monolingual, summative assessment awaits at the end of the school year, the time spent on multilingual practices will be diminished, because the teachers are preoccupied with documenting progression for each student in each, isolated language. This will probably also hinder some of the courage needed to utilize more time on language awareness and innovative, multilingual approaches in the classroom, as T2 reported.

The participants' perceptions of how to operationalize some of the competence goals concerning multilingualism in the LK20 were scarce, and few concrete examples were given. Several of the respondents claimed that this was a work in progress and would take some time, exactly because it was a big shift for them. The context of a new educational reform that has barely started may have added to this feeling of insecurity, but there may be other explanations as well. One of them may be the lack of operationalizations of the concept, in schools, textbooks and curriculum reforms, another one may be the previous lack of focus on multilingualism in schools and teacher education.

Despite the fact that the language subjects in LK20 highlight multilingualism and have at their foundation a multilingualism-as-a-resource orientation (de Jong et al. 2016, 2019), even here there seems to be a lack of operationalizations of the concept. How to define and implement multilingualism appears to be only scarcely treated in LK20, which may prove to be problematic for the teachers and teacher educators when incorporating the new subject curricula in their teaching. If this is the case, the concept of multilingualism may be perceived by the teachers as equally vague and difficult to apply in practice as it was in the previous curricula LK06 (Myklevold forthcoming).

The need for more operationalizations and scaffolding of multilingual teaching practices is also a point made by the participants, when claiming that more research is needed on how to concretely design, utilize and assess multilingual lesson plans. In order for the new curricula in English and foreign languages to be properly implemented, multilingualism should therefore be emphasized in teacher education, and teachers and teacher educators should be assisted in operationalizing multilingualism through research, courses and text books. This, in addition to a more flexible structure of language education where language separation is avoided and multilingualism is comprehensively valued as a vital asset (de Jong et al. 2019), could assist in maximizing the multilingual potential in contemporary classrooms for important educational stakeholders like students, teachers and teacher educators.

There are several limitations to this study. It should of course be noted that the participants in this study are composed of a small sample, that the data is self-reported and that only one data source (interviews) is used. It should be complemented with a bigger sample, and with more data sources

like classroom observations and questionnaires to improve the validity. Also, the fact that the participants had 24 hours to read the multilingual lesson plan prior to the interviews may have caused some of the participants to read up on the issue or use other sources of influences. Therefore, it would be useful to observe multilingual practices in situ, and over a longer period of time, to observe whether the findings could be validated further.

6. Conclusion

The participants reported that they had experienced a shift in perceptions of how they perceive multilingualism and now relate it more to language knowledge than to language skills or fluency. They include both minority language students and majority language students in their definitions, and refer to important steering documents such as CEFR, LK06 and LK20 as the basis of their definitions.

However, despite this shift in perceptions, many of the informants also reported that they possessed insufficient knowledge of how to concretely utilize multilingualism in their language classrooms, and that the provided multilingual operationalization was a useful starting point in this respect. Even though monolingual traditions underlying schools and teaching was perceived by some participants as potentially hindering the multilingual emphasis in LK20, the implementation of the curriculum reform was seen by most respondents to be a good opportunity for developing knowledge about multilingualism and multilingual operationalizations, and encouraging metacognition in their classrooms.

Since a holistic view of multilingualism seems to be dominant among the teacher and teacher educators in the sample, where they report that they relate multilingualism to *all* students in Norway, more studies on the experiences and effects of multilingualism for both minority language and majority language students should be carried out. In addition, future research could involve curriculum studies on how multilingualism is constructed and should be assessed in language learning. More research on *how* multilingualism can be implemented in language classrooms is also needed in order to provide present and future teachers and teacher educators with research-based knowledge of how multilingualism as a resource (de Jong et al. 2016, 2019) can be thoroughly utilized. This may be essential in order to mend the gap between multilingualism in research and multilingualism in practice, and advance from a shift in teacher perceptions to a shift in teaching practices.

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Appendices

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS, INTERVIEW GUIDE, MYKLEVOLD, G.-A.:

A) **Multilingualism in general:**
   i)   How do you perceive 'multilingualism'? Or 'a multilingual person'?
   ii)   Does 'fluency', how fluent you are, or frequency, how often you use the language, have anything to do with how you view multilingualism?
   iii)   Some researchers associate multilingualism mostly with minority language students, i.e. students who have another mother tongue than Norwegian, what are your thoughts on this?
   iv)   Has your definition of multilingualism changed in any way?
   v)   Do you have any thoughts on how your understanding of multilingualism can be used in practice in the classroom, for example regarding methods, tasks, etc.?

B) **Operationalizations of multilingualism:**
   A lesson plan for achieving multilingual competence for students can, for example, be one that contains a focus on: A) cognates, B) international words, C) genre knowledge and D) common textual patterns (CEFR 2018). The idea behind this is to "use knowledge of familiar languages to understand new languages" (Council of Europe 2018: 157).

   i)   Based on your experience with language teaching, how did you perceive the multilingual lesson plan provided?
   ii)   Some of the students in the previous study claimed that they thought that such a multilingual lesson plan improved their metacognitive skills, and one said that "It was useful to focus on it in more detail, because then you become more conscious of it". What is your opinion on this? And on language awareness?
   iii)   Do you usually map your students' languages in any way before you start teaching them?
   iv)   Some of the students also reported that they perceived the multilingual lesson plan as more useful in "similar" languages and in initial training in German than e.g. in English, as they already know many English words. What are your thoughts on this? With similar/dissimilar languages, and beginner/advanced language learners?
   v)   One student also asked "Can I use my Arabic when I learn Norwegian, or do the languages have to be more similar?" Do you have experience with this, or suggestions in terms of how to concretely solve this in language teaching?

C) **Multilingualism and the new curriculum (LK20):**
   When the new curriculum is implemented in the autumn, it is among other things stated that "multilingualism is to be valued as a resource" and that the students are to be able to "compare distinctive features of Norwegian with other languages […]" (from the Norwegian subject curriculum, my translation) and that the students are to be able to "Use knowledge of connections between English and other languages the students know in their own language learning" (from the English subject curriculum, my translation).

i)   How do you view the new competence goals in the new curriculum (appendix) in your language subject(s)?

ii)   How do you view the new competence goals related to multilingualism in your language subject(s)? For example the competence goal in Norwegian: The students are to be able to "compare distinctive features of Norwegian with other languages and show how linguistic encounters can create language changes".

iii)   How do you think that one could work with the above mentioned competence goals (or others concerning multilingualism) in your language subject(s)?

iv)   Do you see anything that creates new opportunities or that is challenging in the new competence goals in your subject?

v)   Are there any of these competence goals that you have focused on earlier in your teaching?

vi)   To what extent do you think that the LK20 will bring any changes in your language teaching in the future?

SEMI-STRUKTURERT INTERVJU, INTERVJUGUIDE, MYKLEVOLD, G.-A.:

A) Flerspråklighet generelt:
i)   Hvordan forstår du 'flerspråklighet'? Eller en 'flerspråklig person'?
ii)   Har 'fluency', altså hvor flytende du er, eller hyppighet, hvor ofte man snakker det, noe å si i din forståelse av flerspråklighet?
iii)   En del forskere forbinder flerspråklighet mest med minoritetsspråklige elever, altså de som har et annet morsmål enn norsk, hva er dine tanker rundt dette?
iv)   Har synet ditt på flerspråklighet forandret seg?
v)   Har du noen tanker rundt hvordan din forståelse av flerspråklighet kan brukes i praksis i klasserommet, f.eks. med hensyn til metoder, oppgaver, etc.?

B) Operasjonalisering av flerspråklighet:
Et forslag til å oppnå flerspråklig kompetanse for elevene er f.eks. et undervisningsopplegg hvor elevene bla. fokuserer på A) kognater (felles ord), B), internasjonale ord, C) sjangerkunnskap og D) felles tekstmønstre (CEFR, 2018). Tanken er at man skal «use knowledge of familiar languages to understand new languages/ bruke kunnskap om kjente språk for å lære nye språk» (Council of Europe 2018: 157, min oversettelse).

i)   Utfra din erfaring med språkundervisning, hva er ditt inntrykk av det flerspråklige undervisningsopplegget?
ii)   Noen av elevene i den første studien sa at de syntes et slikt flerspråklig opplegg hjalp dem med hensyn til metakognisjon i egen språklæring, én sa f.eks. at «Det var nyttig å fokusere på det mer i detalj, for da ble du mer bevisst på det.» Hva er din oppfatning av dette med språklig bevissthet?
iii)   Pleier du å kartlegge elevenes språk før undervisningen starter?

iv) Noen av elevene rapporterte også at de så det flerspråklig undervisningsopp-plegget som mer nyttig i «like» språk og i (nybegynner) tysk enn i f. eks engelsk, hvor de kan mange ord fra før. Hvilke tanker gjør du deg rundt dette med like/ulike språk og nybegynner/mer øvet språk?

v) Én elev spurte også «Kan jeg bruke min arabisk når jeg skal lære norsk, eller må språkene være mer like?» Har du noen erfaring rundt dette, eller forslag til hvordan konkret løse rundt dette i språkundervisningen?

C) Flerspråklighet og Fagfornyelsen (LK2020):
Når Fagfornyelsen blir implementert til høsten, står det bla. i ny Læreplan at «flerspråklighet skal bli verdsatt som en ressurs» og elevene skal kunne «sammenligne særtrekk ved norsk med andre språk […] (norsk) og at elevene skal kunne «Bruke kunnskap om sammenhenger mellom engelsk og andre språk eleven kjenner til i egen språklæring» (engelsk).

i) Hvordan opplever du de nye kompetansemålene i *Fagfornyelsen* (ved-lagt) i ditt/dine språkfag?

ii) Hvordan forstår du de nye målene relatert til flerspråklighet i ditt/dine språkfag? F.eks. målet i norsk etter Vg1: Elevene skal kunne «sammen-ligne særtrekk ved norsk med andre språk og vise hvordan språklige møter kan skape språkendringer»?

iii) Hvordan tenker du at man kan jobbe konkret med det ovennevnte målet (eller andre rundt flerspråklighet) i ditt/dine språkfag?

iv) Ser du noe som gir nye muligheter eller som er utfordrende med de nye kompetansemålene i ditt fag?

v) Er det noen av disse målene du har vektlagt tidligere i din undervisning?

vi) I hvilken grad tror du *Fagfornyelse*n (LK20) kommer til å bety endringer i din språkundervisning framover?