

## **SYMPOSIUM TITLE**

Teaching quality and the school experiences of multilingual learners: A critical perspective

### **Symposium Session Abstract**

Given the patterns of immigration over the last decade, the academic achievement of multilingual learners who are learning in a language different from their home languages has been a subject of significant interest across many nations. Helping multilingual learners succeed in schools requires both supporting their participation in curricular content and supporting their language development. The inextricable relation between language skills and learning of the content adds to the complexity of teaching and learning of multilingual learners. Research has consistently shown that teaching quality is a powerful predictor of student performance, with high-quality teaching being a critical determinant of student achievement (Rivkin, Hanushek, & Kain, 2005; Rockoff, 2004). Although teaching quality in general has been related to improved learning outcomes in schools, the connection between teaching quality and students' language resources and skills has been under-investigated.

The focus of this symposium is to critically analyze theories, policies, and empirical evidence regarding the relationship between teaching quality and language in the education of multilingual learners. Five papers from researchers in the United States, Colombia, and Norway document empirical findings from both preservice and in-service classrooms in national and international schools from more than five countries. The discussant will share insights that focus on the ways in which teaching quality is defined and enacted empirically across the papers' varied language contexts.

#### **Paper 1: Examining International School Teachers' Language Ideologies**

**Presenting Author:** Esther Bettney Heidt, University of Wisconsin-Madison

Current research indicates that teachers' beliefs have an influence on their instructional decisions and in turn, the learning experiences and outcomes of students (Deveney, 2007; Libby-Ireland, 2015; Torff & Figueroa Murphy, 2020; Rafzar, 2012; Wilkins, 2008), including their beliefs about language (Pettit, 2011; Venegas-Weber & Martinez Negrette, 2023). Teachers' language ideologies, a set of their beliefs, judgements, opinions, and feelings about language and its use (Abernathy, 2022; Fitzsimmons-Doolan et al., 2015; Kroskrity, 2010; Piller, 2015; Wollard, 1998), inform how individuals view languages, how and why hierarchies of languages are constructed and enacted in certain social spaces and why certain languaging practices are considered more valuable than others.

When teachers' beliefs about language, or the language ideologies, are hegemonic in nature and consistent with practices that marginalize and devalue linguistic diversity, it is detrimental and problematic for students' learning and linguistic identity formation (Abernathy, 2020; Čeginskas, 2010). However, shifting teachers' language ideologies can be challenging, as Thompson (2022) notes "the biggest obstacle to engaging teachers in (multilingual teaching) practice tends to be changing teacher attitudes: particularly, English language purism ideologies of monolingual teachers." (p. 21)

Within the context of international schools, there is often rich linguistic diversity, however schools' policies and program models often promote proficiency in an accepted standard variety of English as the desired and favored outcome for students (Hayden & Thompson, 2016; Spiers, 2016). These hegemonic language ideologies often position English proficiency as more valuable than students', families' and teachers' multilingualism.

While some educators are challenging hegemonic ideologies, scarce research documents international school teachers' current beliefs. In this study, the authors re-examine data from two recent empirical studies, one quantitative and one qualitative, in which they individually each explored teachers' language ideologies within international school contexts. In the first study, Olson-Wyman (2023) conducted a quantitative, non-experimental, survey-based study to identify what English medium international school teachers believed about language, what the components of these language ideologies were, and what factors influenced these ideologies. In the second study, Bettney Heidt (2022) examined teachers' language ideologies through a case study of an international school in Colombia. Bringing these two studies together created an opportunity for a more robust analysis, embracing methodological pluralism (Moss & Haertel, 2016) and expanding the static notion that mixed methods studies should follow only one path of study.

Through a collaborative re-examination, they identified personal factors and professional experiences that influenced teachers' language ideologies and their classroom practices. They also expand the notion of a static, one-way relationship between ideologies and teaching practices to instead present a more symbiotic and dynamic relationship. Based on these findings, the authors identify key considerations about the role of language ideologies within international school contexts and how educators might shift toward more counter-hegemonic beliefs and teaching practices in support of multilingual students, families and communities.

## **Paper 2:** Toward a Framework to Support Multilingual Learners through Core Teaching Practices

**Presenting author:** Mariana Castro, University of Wisconsin-Madison

Core teaching practices emphasize the significance of engaging students in active learning experiences, promoting critical thinking, deepening understanding and using precise language in classroom discussions (Grossman, 2021). Various lists of core teaching practices have been developed with common characteristics: they are research-based and have the potential to improve student achievement (Kane et al., 2011). However, while core teaching practices have shown promise in guiding educators toward effective instruction, they have traditionally excluded a focus on the teaching of multilingual learners, that is, those students who may speak multiple languages and are in the process of learning the language of instruction in addition to the curriculum content. For these students, attention to language is core to their learning.

Language education researchers have long studied the role of language in learning and understood the challenge multilingual learners have in performing “double the work” as their peers -learning the language and the content of multiple subjects (Short & Fitzsimmons, 2007, p. 27). In response to this challenge, language researchers have proposed various frameworks to develop academic language and literacy (e.g., Baker et al., 2014). This paper argues there is a need to go beyond the development of academic language and literacy and include a language focus in core teaching practices to specifically address the needs of teaching multilingual learners and support their meaning-making. Attention to language in core practices would address the double work multilingual learners engage in. To this end, the paper puts forward a theoretical framework for integrating language into core teaching practices to facilitate the access of multilingual learners to challenging and meaningful school curricula. Additionally, the paper describes the empirical research that an integrated framework for language and core teaching

practices would facilitate related to how to effectively support and enhance the teaching quality of multilingual learners.

### References

- Baker, S.; Lesaux, N.; Jayanthi, M.; Dimino, J.; Proctor, C. P.; Morris, J.; Gersten, R.; Haymond, K.; Kieffer, M. J.; Linan-Thompson, S.; & Newman-Gonchar, R. *Teaching academi content and literacy to English Learners in elementary and middle school*. (NCEE 2014-4012). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance (NCEE), Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Retrieved from the NCEE website: [http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/publications\\_reviews.aspx](http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/publications_reviews.aspx)
- Grossman, P. (Ed.). (2021). *Teaching core practices in teacher education*. Harvard Education Press.
- Kane, T. J., Taylor, E. S., Tyler, J. H., & Wooten, A. L. (2011). *Identifying Effective Classroom Practices Using Student Achievement Data*
- Short, D. & Fitzsimmons, S. (2007). *Double the work: Challenges and solutions to acquiring language and academic literacy for adolescent English language learners – A report to Carnegie Corporation of New York*. Washington,DC: Alliance for Excellent Education.

**Paper 3:** The Access Paradox in Nordic L1 Classrooms: Accommodating Dominant Academic Language Learning yet Valuing Learners’ Multilingualism?

**Presenting author:** Camilla Gudmundsdatter Magnusson, University of Oslo

In Nordic educational policy and curricula, students’ linguistic development including multilingualism is highly valued, to preserve and develop students’ mother tongue and indigenous and national minority languages (Alisaari et al., 2023), as well as to acknowledge an increasingly globalized and multicultural society. For example, in the curriculum for the subject Norwegian it is emphasized that “through the subject, the students will become confident language users and aware of their own linguistic and cultural identity within an inclusive community where multilingualism is valued as a resource” (Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research, 2020, p. 2). However, the teaching and learning of and through language in classrooms may involve an *access paradox*, as explained by Janks (2004). The perspective of access seeks to provide students access to dominant forms of language and ways of oral expression (Janks, 2010), while *at the same time*, teachers need to value students’ own language resources, recognizing their existing linguistic repertoires as valuable assets, and thus promote the fluid and dynamic use of multiple languages in the classroom (cf. translanguaging pedagogies; Garcia & Wei, 2014). In this paper, the potential access paradox in Nordic L1 classrooms is investigated through this dual perspective: whether and how teachers a) accommodate students’ language learning through access to dominant academic language while also b) encouraging students to draw on and develop their multilingual resources and finding ways to make these resources visible and valuable in the classroom space.

The present study relies on qualitative analysis of naturally occurring classroom instructional practices, based on classroom video observations. The study is part of the Nordic large-scale video study *Linking Instruction and Student Achievement* (LISA) (see Klette et al., 2017), in which data was collected from 112 lower secondary L1 classrooms from 2015 to 2021. The classrooms were sampled based on criteria related to demographic and geographical distribution, and for including multilingual classrooms. To delineate the sample, the analysis was targeted towards a prevalent practice in L1 classrooms, namely reading and text-based activities,

focusing on text talk situations in whole class settings that were available to all students. The sample for this study thus consists of video data from 68 Nordic L1 classrooms from the following countries: Norway (n=34), Sweden (n=12), Denmark (n=10), Finland (n=8), and Iceland (n=4), with a total of 288 lessons.

The analysis suggests that teachers pay attention to providing students with academic language (in Norwegian, Swedish, Danish, Finland Swedish, and Icelandic respectively), through providing multiple exposures to to-be-learned words and concepts. However, practices involving multilingualism as a resource are nearly nonexistent. It thus seems to exist a blindness to the access paradox in the language practices across these Nordic classrooms as access to dominant language forms is given attention while students' multilingualism is very seldom an integrated part of the LA text-based teaching. Taken together, the findings reveal what could be understood as a Nordic L1 normativity in the classroom practices. As implications, the Nordic L1 normativity is discussed in relation to monoglossic ideologies and McKinney's (2017) concept of Anglonormativity.

### References

- Alisaari, J., Daugaard, L. M., Dewilde, J., Harju-Autti, R., Heikkola, L. M., Iversen, J. Y., Kekki, N., Pesonen, S., Warren, A. R., Straszer, B., & Yli-Jokipii, M., (2023). Mother-tongue education in four Nordic countries – problem, right or resource? *Apples – Journal of Applied Language Studies*, 17(2), 52-72.
- Garcia, O. and Wei, L. (2014). *Translanguaging: Language, Bilingualism and Education*. Palgrave.
- Janks, H. (2004). The access paradox. *English in Australia*, 139, 33-42.
- Janks, H. (2010). *Literacy and power*. Routledge.
- Klette, K., Blikstad-Balas, M., & Roe, A. (2017). Linking instruction and student achievement; research design for a new generation of classroom studies. *Acta didactica Norge*, 11(3), 19-19. doi:10.5617/adno.4729
- McKinney, C. (2017). *Language and power in post-colonial schooling. Ideologies in practice*. Routledge.
- Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research (2020). *Curriculum for Norwegian*.

**Paper 4:** Fluid multilingualism: Opportunities for student talk in language lessons in Norway, France and England

**Presenting authors:** Sarah M Eiene and Lisbeth M Brevik

Embracing linguistic diversity in education is key to developing inclusive societies that respect diversity and difference (Council of Europe, 2008). Scholars have expressed concern about the lack of a multilingual pedagogy in the classroom that includes and draws on all students' existing language resources (Auger, 2007; Cenoz & Gorter, 2017).

This paper provides new knowledge by reporting from the LANGUAGES project, combining a student perspective and an observed perspective on language use in English and French lessons in Norway, France and England. LANGUAGES is a longitudinal project that examines the teaching and use of languages in three national contexts, where these languages have different statuses as first or additional languages, and where students' language resources vary extensively (European Commission, 2012). The project aims to spotlight the role that teaching plays in developing students' ability to communicate in more than one language. The classes in this project were strategically sampled to include language homogeneous and

heterogeneous contexts in the three countries and include eight French classes and eight English classes in each country ( $N=48$ ), among students aged 13–14 ( $N=1052$ ).

The paper reports on a case study that captures opportunities for student talk in the language classroom. Adopting a mixed-methods approach (Greene, 2007), this study includes two strands of data: (1) a thoroughly validated student survey (Haukås et al., 2021), where we obtained a quantitative and systematic overview of all students' reported language resources, and (2) a well-proven video observation design in the classroom (Brevik & Rindal, 2020; Klette et al., 2017), where we systematically recorded four consecutive lessons in each language class ( $N=192$ ). Video recordings provide information about how much time make up student talk during lessons, as opposed to when students do not talk at all, such as when they are listening to the teacher or doing independent work. Student talk is typically captured during whole-class discussions, group conversations or student-teacher dialogue.

Findings focus on similarities and differences between students' reported language resources and the actual use of languages in the classroom. Our results showed more variation in language use within than across countries, depending on overall speaking time during lessons, the language in question and its status in education and society. While English and French respectively, were the target languages of these classes, students used both the language of schooling and the target language to communicate easily in the classroom, while other languages were used infrequently (less than 1 percent of the time). This finding is in sharp contrast to students' reported language resources, which comprised knowledge of 13–27 languages in each classroom. However, within most classrooms, we identified what we refer to as 'fluid multilingualism', where the target language and the language of schooling were used simultaneously or interchangeably. The contribution relates to trends across the three countries, exemplifying similarities and differences in practices for capitalising on students' language resources in the language classroom.

### **Paper 5:** Enhancing Teaching Quality for Multilingual Learners through the Integration of Science and Language Teaching Practices

**Presenting authors:** Mark Olson & Mariana Castro, University of Wisconsin-Madison

While the United States has seen a rise in multilingualism over the last decade, only approximately 22% of Americans speak two or more languages (US Census, 2022). Yet, multilingual learners (MLs) are the fastest growing student population in schools (NCES, 2022) where most instruction occurs in English. Despite the growth of this student population, few teachers report feeling prepared to teach them, especially in subjects like science (Banilower et al., 2013). This is understandable as one considers the dynamic and complex nature of teaching subjects like science, which require building disciplinary knowledge and access to practices, and which is exacerbated when it involves teaching students who are navigating school in multiple languages (National Academy of Sciences, 2017). Training teachers to simultaneously attend to science and language affords collaboration across disciplines to broaden equitable participation for MLs (Lee & Stephens, 2020).

In this study, science education faculty worked with a multilingual learning researcher to conceptualize and pilot the integration of science and language teaching practices (SLTP) in a secondary certification program where pre-service teachers (PST) are prepared to teach science and English as a Second Language. To address the dynamic and complex nature of teaching science to MLs, PSTs engaged in mixed-reality simulations, where trained actors manipulated virtual avatar students. The simulations allowed PSTs to implement SLTP in controlled

environments before they entered the more complex reality of science classrooms. The research questions were: (1) what are essential elements in teacher-student interactions that help elicit and interpret MLs' thinking? and (2) how do mixed-reality simulations impact PSTs' self-efficacy in teaching science to MLs?

Beyond its impact in empowering MLs to express their thoughts, make decisions and solve problems in daily life, the collaboration across science and language in the study advances the call for multidisciplinary collaboration framed by the National Academies of Science. The findings have significance for the university site where the study was conducted, inform the teacher education field, and provide innovative models for preparing teachers to work with diverse learners.

### References

- Banilower E. R., Smith P. S., Weiss I. R., Malzahn K. A., Campbell K. M., Weis A. M. (2013). *Report of the 2012 National Survey of Science and Mathematics Education*. Chapel Hill, NC: Horizon Research, Inc.
- Lee, O., & Stephens, A. (2020). English learners in STEM subjects: Contemporary views on STEM subjects and language with English learners. *Educational Researcher*, 49(6), 426–432.
- National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. (2017). Promoting the educational success of children and youth learning English: Promising futures. *The National Academies Press*.
- U.S. Census Bureau. (2019). Language use in the United States: 2019. Retrieved from <https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2022/acs/acs-50.pdf>
- U.S. Department of Education, (2020). Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics.

## Session Extended Summary

Given the patterns of immigration over the last decade, the academic achievement of multilingual learners who are learning in a language different from their home languages has been a subject of significant interest across many nations. Helping multilingual learners succeed in schools requires both supporting their participation in curricular content and supporting their language development. The inextricable relation between language skills and learning of the content adds to the complexity of teaching and learning of multilingual learners. Research has consistently shown that teaching quality is a powerful predictor of student performance, with high-quality teaching being a critical determinant of student achievement (Rivkin, Hanushek, & Kain, 2005; Rockoff, 2004). Although teaching quality in general has been related to improved learning outcomes in schools, the connection between teaching quality and students' language resources and skills has been under-investigated.

The focus of this symposium is to critically analyze theories, policies, and empirical evidence regarding the relationship between teaching quality and language in the education of multilingual learners. Five papers from researchers living in the United States, Colombia, Guatemala, and Norway document empirical findings from both preservice and in-service classrooms in national and international schools from more than five countries. The discussant will share insights that focus on the ways in which teaching quality is defined and enacted empirically across the papers' varied language contexts.

Paper 1, *Toward a Framework to Support Multilingual Learners through Core Teaching Practices*, proposes a framework for integrating language into the definition and study of core teaching practices (Grossman, 2021). Currently, core teaching practices do not attend to language; this framework specifically addresses the language needs of multilingual learners (MLs) and can support their meaning-making across content areas. Attention to language in core practices addresses the "double work" MLs do when they engage in learning the language of instruction and the content of multiple subjects. The paper describes the foundational underpinnings of the framework and identifies promising areas of empirical research that scholars might productively attend to in the future.

Paper 2, *Examining International School Teachers' Language Ideologies*, examines the language ideologies of teachers in international schools, which are contexts of rich linguistic diversity, but where educators often enact school policies and program models that privilege proficiency in standard varieties of English. The paper re-examines data from two empirical studies, one quantitative and one qualitative, to investigate teachers' language ideologies and how those ideologies influence teachers' classroom teaching practices. The paper identifies critical factors in the role of language ideologies within international school contexts and hypothesizes about how educators might shift toward more counter-hegemonic beliefs and teaching practices in support of multilingual students, families and communities.

Paper 3, *The Access Paradox in Nordic L1 Classrooms: Accommodating Dominant Academic Language Learning yet Valuing Learners' Multilingualism*, investigates the use of language in Nordic L1 classrooms and the possible access paradox in accommodating students' language learning through access to dominant academic language, while also encouraging students to draw on and develop their multilingual resources. The paper relies on qualitative analysis of naturally occurring classroom practices, based on video observations of 68 L1 classrooms across five Nordic countries. Findings reveal an emphasis on access to academic language while multilingualism as a resource is nearly nonexistent. The paper discusses these

findings in relation to monoglossic ideologies and the concept of Nordic L1 normativity as a parallel to Anglonormativity.

Paper 4, *Enhancing Teaching Quality for Multilingual Learners through the Integration of Science and Language Teaching Practices*, explores the integration of science and language teaching practices in a secondary dual certification program in the US where pre-service teachers are prepared to teach secondary science to multilingual learners. As part of their coursework, pre-service teachers engaged in mixed-reality simulations, where trained actors manipulated virtual avatar students. The study uses qualitative methods to investigate the integration of language and science teaching practices and to analyze how the mixed-reality simulations impacted pre-service teachers' self-efficacy in teaching science to multilingual learners.

Paper 5, *Fluid multilingualism: Opportunities for student talk in language lessons in Norway, France and England*, reports on a case study that captures opportunities for student talk in the language classroom. This study is part of the LANGUAGES project, a longitudinal project that examines the teaching and use of the English and French languages in Norway, France and England. The analysis takes a mixed-methods approach, drawing on data from a validated student questionnaire and video observations from participants in study classrooms. Findings focus on similarities and differences between students' reported language resources and the actual use of languages in the classroom.

### References

- Grossman, P. (Ed.). (2021). *Teaching core practices in teacher education*. Harvard Education Press.
- Rivkin, S. G., Hanushek, E. A., & Kain, J. F. (2005). Teachers, schools, and academic achievement. *Econometrica*, 73(2), 417–458.
- Rockoff, J. E. (2004). The impact of individual teachers on student achievement: Evidence from panel data. *American Economic Review*, 94(2), 247–252.