



Towards a European Syllabus in Teacher Education
Facing future challenges together

Student Research Papers



TABLE OF CONTENTS

01	Introduction.....02
02	Democratic Education and Educational Projects - Challenges and Opportunities for the Construction of Participatory Schools – Case Study06
03	Students’ perceptions of active citizenship in a migrant context.....23
04	Multilingualism and Digitalization in Education: Comparative Perspectives of Teachers in North Rhine-Westphalia and Seville.....34
05	Teaching Philosophy in Finland: The Role of Educational Technology in High Schools.....67
06	Europe Through Language: A Path to Cultural Awareness and Critical Thinking. Didactic proposal contrasting German and Spanish contexts.....85
07	Student Well-Being and Participation in School in Finland, Germany and Japan.....111
08	Autonomy in the multilingual context: a case study in the second language classroom in a school in Witten, Germany.....131

Introduction

Teachers, trainers and educational staff are at the heart of education [...] they play the most important role in making education a fruitful experience for all learners. (European Commission, 2020, p. 9)

Across Europe, teachers are navigating learning environments transformed by digital technologies and artificial intelligence. They are educating highly diverse students, trying to address educational inequalities such as gender gaps in education or disadvantages faced by children from migrant or socio-economically underprivileged backgrounds. Furthermore, they are tasked to prepare children and youths for a more sustainable future as well as instill democratic values and active citizenship. To address these transformations, school education and teacher training must equip pre- and in-service teachers to meet these increasing demands and support the well-being of teachers and students. Impactful continuous professional development (CPD) and initial teacher education (ITE) are, therefore, essential to support teachers across Europe to adapt to these transformations, update their knowledge and skills and engage with good classroom practices and methodologies.

In its *Communication on Achieving the European Education Area by 2025* the European Commission (2020) identifies cross-cutting issues that are critical priorities in the advancement of Europe's education systems, such as education equality that focusses on inclusive education, especially regarding questions of gender equality and disadvantages faced by migrant children, as well as preparedness for the digital and green transitions. The ERASMUS+ Teacher Academy "Towards a European Syllabus in Teacher Education" (TESTEd) addresses these priorities, promoting five cross-cutting issues across all its activities:

- Education for a Sustainable Development (ESD)
- Democratic education and fostering active citizenship
- Diversity and equality of gender and sexual identity
- Multilingualism
- Digitalization of learning environments

Preparing pre-service teachers to integrate these cross-cutting issues in their future classroom is of special significance, as high-quality ITE can be seen as an important means to attract and retain excellent student teachers (European Council 2014, 2020; European

Commission, 2021b) as well as transport innovation into schools through well-prepared teacher novices. The TESTEd project, thus, committed to promote cross-cutting issues in ITE, amongst others through a Student Research Exchange program.

In the student research exchange, pre-service teachers from the five participating universities — Ruhr University Bochum, University College Cork, Universidade Católica Portuguesa (Braga), University of Oulu and Universidad de Sevilla — conducted explorations on different education systems, observing classes in their host countries, participating in school life and working with researchers at their home and host university. They analyzed how cross-cutting issues were implemented in the different education systems, implemented and evaluated their own innovative solutions, exchanged with teachers and teacher trainers, and documented good practices. Through research-based learning, student teachers produced knowledge, not only for their own future practices but also as impulses for the TESTEd project. They, also, critically engaged with research findings and the educational systems from their home countries developing an inquiring mindset, intercultural and reflective competences.

As in the first Student Research Exchange¹, this collection shares insights into the work of the participating student teachers. Across seven papers, student teachers focused on the cross-cutting topics of digitalization, democracy education and active citizenship, ESD and multilingualism, often highlighting their interconnectedness.

Digitalized classrooms and how well student teachers are prepared to deal with artificial intelligence was explored by David Lorenz. David Lorenz engaged with the topic of digitalization from another perspective, investigating the use of digital technologies in Philosophy education in Finnish classrooms. Through classroom observation, teacher interviews and a curriculum analysis, David Lorenz aimed to provide insights into how digital tools are integrated into teaching, what challenges arise and what benefits they offer. His findings highlight the changing role of teachers through more individualized learning offers as well as the need to find an appropriate balance and pedagogical basis for the use of digital tools in classrooms.

¹ Good practice papers from the first Student Research Exchange can be found online: https://tested-network.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/Tested_student-research-paper_vol.1.pdf.

The interconnectedness of multilingualism and digitalization was thematized by **Joana Koczy** in her paper on the influence of digital tools on multilingual approaches and language comparisons in classrooms. In her explorations, Joana Koczy asks whether an increase in the use of digital tools in classrooms leads to a simplification of communication between teachers and multilingual students and what concepts and goals teachers pursue in their usage of digital media to support multilingual interactions. She compares data from interviews with German and Spanish teachers, finding that while both teachers view multilingualism primarily as an opportunity further training programs for teachers are necessary for the comprehensive embedding of multilingualism in the sense of translanguaging and in connection with the meaningful use of digital media.

The topic of multilingualism is further examined by Marina Esperanza Martos Cruces and Veronica Ponce Dachelet. While **Marina Esperanza Martos Cruces** conducted an intervention study in German and Spanish classrooms implementing the Harvard's *Project Zero* to enhance students' understanding of cultural and linguistic diversity, **Veronica Ponce Dachelet** researched the role and perception of autonomy in multilingual second-language classrooms in a German *Gesamtschule*, deriving implications and recommendations for fostering autonomy in future classrooms.

Democracy education and active citizenship were the thematic focus of papers by Luís Paulo Ernesto and Nataly Eugenia Flores Muñoz. **Luís Paulo Ernesto** engaged with the question of how democratic values could be integrated into the design and implementation of pedagogical guidance tools in educational projects at an early childhood and primary school in Seville, Spain. In his analysis of interview, conducted with members of the educational community, he identifies strategies and challenges to the integration of democratic values, showcasing the importance of involving the whole school community in the development of these educational projects.

Nataly Eugenia Flores Muñoz explored the differences of perception of active citizenship between students with and without a migrant background at a Portuguese high school. Using interviews and a questionnaire, her study shows that there is a tendency from immigrant students to feel more aware about social activities and social justice issues, emphasizing the

relevance of personal and contextual factors that need to be considered in democracy education.

Lastly, **Jindae Park** addressed the question of how student participation affects their level of well-being in schools. In his study examining student subjective well-being and participation in Finland, Germany, and Japan, Jindae Park analyses suggest that student participation is positively linked to physical and psychological well-being stressing the importance of encouraging student participation in schools.

The papers presented in this second volume of student research showcase examples for international comparative research-based learning that offer insights into classrooms and higher education practices across the European Union and even beyond. They demonstrate the importance of explicitly integrating the cross-cutting issues — some in ITE and some in classroom practices —, making the case for a systematic and supported approach. The compelling instances of good practice in the student research will inform future iterations of international research-based learning at the participating institutions as an approach to student teacher mobility that not only strengthens future teachers research literacy but also fosters their openness to innovative classroom practices and methodologies.

Democratic Education and Educational Projects - Challenges and Opportunities for the Construction of Participatory Schools — Case Study

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Abstract

This study explores the relationship between Democratic Education and School Educational Projects, examining how democratic values can be integrated into the design and implementation of these pedagogical guidance tools. Through document analysis and content analysis of semi-structured interviews conducted with members of the educational community from an early childhood and primary school in Seville, Spain, the study identifies the explicit presence of democratic values in educational projects; barriers and strategies for including the entire school community in their development; perceptions of the effects of these practices on the development of civic skills and on building more inclusive and participatory schools. The study presents the Educational Project as a practical tool for implementing the principles of Democratic Education.

Keywords: democratic education, participation, educational project, autonomy.

Education in the 21st Century: What Are the Challenges for Schools?

The changes characterizing the 21st century deeply affect educational systems. This situation inherently presents social, economic, political, and technological challenges to educational actors. It, therefore, requires profound changes in educational systems to ensure both education for all and quality of teaching and learning. In the current context, we cannot have "a 19th-century school, with 20th-century educators/teachers, for 21st-century students" (Antunes & Silva, 2019, p. 11).

The school, from its structure to its management, is called upon to accompany the social changes that are occurring in the process of transitioning from tangible things to intangible ones (Han, 2022); preparing citizens who are capable of learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together, and learning to be (Delors, 1996). This is the most prominent challenge of education for the 21st century. It is, therefore, an education for life. Such education involves, according to the UNESCO report (1996), the design of an educational society.

In this society, multiple learning opportunities are offered, both in school and in the economic, social, and cultural life. Hence the need to multiply negotiations and partnerships with

families, the economic sector, the associative world, and cultural life actors (Delors, 1996). In this context, educating for the 21st century requires, according to Martins (2017, p. 14), "the recognition that it is essential to adapt to new contexts and new structures, mobilizing skills, but also being prepared to update knowledge and take on new roles."

School will be required, among other things, to provide education for democracy and, consequently, education for autonomy, education for values, and for citizenship.

For a terminological clarification of the terms autonomy and citizenship, without presenting the entire historical concept, it is understood that educating for autonomy means, from Freire's (1996) perspective, valuing the freedom and dignity of the individual who learns, which requires that the teacher should not impose knowledge, but create conditions for the student to build their own knowledge. This demands an ethical commitment, dialogue, and respect to ensure that learning is an active experience.

Citizenship, on the other hand, is the quality of a free, responsible, and active citizen; "it is the maturation of a social consciousness that understands itself as part of social problems simply because society is a 'res publica' and not a 'res privato'" (Faustino, 2014, p. 23). It is, therefore, a relationship of social, political, and legal rights and duties between individuals and the state, manifested in responsibility, solidarity, reciprocity, and participation. In the context in which this document is written, it translates into the right to a genuine (quality) education.

Democratic Education

The educational issue is viewed here as a socialization process, the goal of which, according to Piaget, is "to create individuals who are capable of doing new things, not simply repeating what other generations have already done [...] it is about forming minds that are capable of criticizing, verifying, and not accepting everything that is proposed to them" (Piaget, n.d. as cited in Cazalma, 2015, p. 107).

Thus, in the language of Paulo Freire (1996), education is a process that demands autonomy and awareness of incompleteness, as learning is constant. The teacher learns while teaching; the student teaches while learning. As Dewey (1916, 2001) teaches, it is a process of growth, of humanization that essentially consists in the moral, intellectual, and social development of

the individual. It is in this sense that education and democracy are seen as inseparable, as we view "democracy as an educational principle" (Lima, 2021), through which we are invited to learn democratic habits. To this end, it is necessary to uphold Dewey's (2001) idea that democracy goes beyond a political system; it is a way of life that promotes active participation, conversation, and collaboration among citizens. Education is called upon here to foster these competencies within democracy.

From Dewey's perspective (ibid), democratic education involves:

- a) Interaction and communication: education is a dialogical process.
- b) Flexibility and adaptation: the goal of education is the development of potential.
- c) Active participation: this includes making decisions about what and how to learn.
- d) Diversity and inclusion: schools should be spaces where different cultures, perspectives, and ideas are valued.

Democratic education is not only about ensuring that students have access to the educational system; it is primarily about ensuring quality teaching and learning for all, regardless of the level of education they attend. In this regard, Noddings' words are valuable when she states: "Not everyone needs to go to college, but everyone needs and deserves a genuine education" (2008, p. 37).

Democratic education requires interculturality, which remains a challenge for schools. As highlighted by Garreta Bochaca (2014), despite advances in intercultural education, there are still gaps in implementing effective practices that ensure equality in access to quality education.

Democracy in education is, therefore, realized through the acceptance of differences, whether they are physical, cultural, or of another nature. A school is considered democratic if and only if the principle of equal opportunities is realized within the school space, through cultural pluralism and the construction of knowledge resulting from the confrontation of cultures. The building of a democratic society begins in school.

School Educational Project: A Tool for Community Participation?

The school educational project (SEP) has had multiple interpretations and representations, among which the pedagogical orientation stands out: “A school educational project is a formal document in which schools identify their pedagogical goals, missions and orientations, their academic resources and organizational structures” (Benito, Alegre & González, 2014, p. 397). It is a formative tool that allows for the analysis of the intervention process in the school (Santos Guerra, 2002), requiring an effort towards collective learning, a condition for success (Broch & Cros, 1992).

It is a tool for participation insofar as it “carries a strategic intention that consists of transforming the school through the practice of participation and involvement in solving local problems, now considered as an issue inscribed in development” (Matos, 1996, p. 87). Participation is the engine of the educational project (Canário, 1992). The educational project must, above all, be a collective construction. As Machado (1999) emphasizes, it is “a joint action”.

Furthermore, school participation is not only a right but a civic duty, and it should involve teachers, students, guardians, and other educational agents. Lima (2001) characterizes this active participation as effective involvement in the organization, both individually and collectively. The author highlights that it should go beyond formal guarantees, seeking to expand rights through strategies such as electing representatives, participating in meetings, and formulating policies proposals and requirements. Effective participation is, therefore, essential for the realization of an educational project, as its absence leads to various types of dysfunctional projects, as Costa (2003; 2007) points out: “the plagiarism project,” based on mimicry; “the leader's project,” marked by excessive leadership protagonism; and “the sectarian project,” which disregards the school in its entirety.

Another perspective of the SEP (school educational project) relates to the construction of autonomy, as the SEP is a document for strategic planning (Carvalho & Diogo, 1994). School autonomy is not an end in itself, but a means to achieve learning outcomes. This concerns the learning of students, teachers, and the learning of the school itself as an organization.

Finally, the SEP is viewed as an element for school choice. As a criterion for choosing schools, the study investigates how the focus on educational projects is portrayed as a reason for school selection decisions and how its discussion is linked to other factors such as the social composition of the school (Benito, Alegre & González, 2014; Orellana et al., 2018).

The authors argue that, despite educational projects being promoted as tools for differentiation and freedom of choice, there is often a lack of deep understanding about these projects among parents. This suggests that these projects are not necessarily decisive in school selection. However, Benito, Alegre and Gonzáles (2014, p. 416) affirm:

Whether they are looking for privileged schools with academic excellence or seeking a school that will provide them with certain basic guarantees, most families look to educational projects for indicators of the quality of the school, of the opportunities for academic success that it offers. And yet a school's educational project provides other types of information: it reveals how it educates (its pedagogical and organizational model), not what it achieves (academic results).

The school educational project is a central tool in school administration and management, aiming to provide a pedagogical identity to the institution. Through it, the school builds its autonomy, manifested in the curricular options it chooses to implement, always in accordance with the current legal framework and the daily reality of the students, who are the reason for the school's existence.

Methodology

The methodological approach adopted is qualitative in nature, since the research results were not intended to be generalized. Considering that the incorporation of democratic values into educational projects is a legal requirement in Spain, a case study was used as a research strategy, providing a detailed description to ensure that 'no detail escapes scrutiny' (Bogdan & Biklen, 1994, p. 49). This is an instrumental case study, the aim of which is to delve deeper into the relationship between democratic education and educational projects in a school located in Seville, situated in a socioeconomically under-resourced area of the city, characterized by a culturally diverse population, including a significant proportion of immigrants.

For data collection, a document analysis was selected, covering, among other documents, the Organic Law amending Organic Law 2/2006, of 3 May, on Education, approved by the Plenary Session of the Senate on 23 December 2020, which constitutes one of the fundamental pillars of the Spanish education system.

These laws aim to adjust education to current social needs, ensure equality and quality for all students, and align with global goals such as the UN's 2030 Agenda. Articles 1 and 2 of the mentioned Organic Law 2/2006 establish education for democracy as one of the central principles of the Spanish educational system. According to Article 120, schools are considered democratic institutions where students, families, and teachers participate in decision-making. Article 121 defines the main guidelines for educational projects and advocates for pedagogical approaches that promote active citizenship.

The analysis of the **School Educational Project** focuses on the following approaches: integral development of students; Early attention to specific educational support needs; stimulating students' self-demand and responsibility; enhancing adaptation skills and academic success; promoting gender equality and respect for diversity; ensuring a safe and motivating learning and living environment.

Interviews were conducted with the **school director**, as he is ultimately responsible for the actions that take place within the school (Paro, 2010); with the **representative of the teachers**, since, as a specialized organization, the main collaborator in the school is the teacher. As Sergiovanni (2004, p. 132) states, "teachers practice a form of pedagogical leadership directly since they occupy the main role in the school and in the relationship that involves taking care of the child. They have the greater responsibility of guiding the child academically, socially, and spiritually from the world of childhood to that of adulthood."

Additionally, interviews were conducted with a representative of the parents' association and a representative of the school's administrative services.

Regarding ethical issues, a protocol was developed in light of the guidelines of the **Ethical Charter of the SPCE** (2020), the **Ethics and Conduct Code** of the **Catholic University of Portugal**, between the researchers and the institutions to obtain informed consent and, consequently, ensure the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants (Lima, 2006). The

free version of **ChatGPT** was used to assist in the process of translating some books to facilitate comprehension.

Research Questions

The research is carried out under the following questions:

- a) How are the principles of Democratic Education incorporated into the Educational Projects of primary schools in Seville?
- b) What are the challenges and opportunities for involving students, teachers, and communities in this process?
- c) How do democratic educational projects impact the school environment and the civic education of primary school students in Seville?

From these questions, specific aspects are analyzed, such as:

- a) The explicit presence of democratic values in educational projects;
- b) Barriers and strategies for involving the entire school community in their development;
- c) Perceptions of the effects of these practices on the development of civic skills and the creation of more inclusive and participatory schools.

Social and Pedagogical Characteristics of the School

Located in Seville, the subject of this research is a **public school**, notable for its inclusion and diversity in a culturally and socioeconomically diverse setting. It provides education at the levels of **Early Childhood Education and Primary Education**, focusing on curriculum adaptation, school support, and the prevention of academic and social difficulties.

Its mission is to foster the complete development of students, forming critical and independent citizens. The goal is to be a model in inclusive and high-quality education, based on principles such as gender equality, family involvement, peaceful coexistence, and sustainability. The collaborative management model involves all members of the school.

Presentation and Discussion of Results

The data for this presentation are, for better aesthetic framing, presented in the annex. It considers five categories and an equal number of subcategories, highlighting personal and

professional identity, democratic education in the school, participation in the school community, challenges in implementing democratic education, impacts of democratic practices, and concrete examples of democracy in the school.

Regarding the category of the interviewees' identity and the corresponding subcategory of institutional bond, it is clear that the interviewees have more than two years of service in educational institutions, and at least two years as employees of this particular school. All speak with joy and enthusiasm about their work situation, demonstrating academic freedom to discuss the issue at hand, democratic education, and the school's educational project. The principal, the representative of the teachers, and the representative of the parents and guardians speak with more precision about the topic. The representative of the administrative staff speaks freely but with some difficulty when discussing the subject, as this employee performs a strictly administrative role, with little to no contact with students. Her responsibility is exclusively limited to the administrative management of the school, as stated below:

Es que date cuenta, es que yo no hago nada de esto, yo lo que estoy solamente es para trabajar lo que son los papeles, nada más, la parte burocrática. Todo lo demás lo hace el equipo, el equipo directivo y los profesores, los maestros, yo no. Ni yo estoy en contacto con los niños, lo que pasa es que claro, cuando es la hora de entrada y la hora de salida, yo me asomo a verlos. Si a lo mejor hay que entregar un papel, pues yo no molesto a mis compañeras...² (EPA)

What is important to mention here is that, although there is some care in choosing words, the interviewee reveals that they have the possibility to participate and discuss certain issues of the school. Additionally, this employee voluntarily takes the initiative to contribute to values education at the school.

Regarding democratic education in the school and the integration of its principles into the school's educational project, there is unanimity in saying that these principles are present in all activities or school programs focused on education for values, expressing a concern with citizenship, peaceful coexistence, and respect, both in general and in pedagogical practices.

² 'I don't do any of this, I'm only there to work on the paperwork, nothing else, the bureaucratic part. Everything else is done by the team, the management team and the teachers, not me. I'm not even in contact with the children, what happens is that, of course, when it's time to come in and when it's time to go out, I go to see them. If I have to hand in a piece of paper, I don't bother my colleagues...'

There is an emphasis on valuing cultural diversity and the participation of students and families. There is a **Specification of behaviors that reflect the educational principles and values present in the school's educational project**, as can be read in the pedagogical characterization of the school.

The formation of norms, habits and values is developed at school level, in each classroom and in each area. and in each area. It is fully connected with what is done and lived in the classrooms, and recreation, which is why we consider the joint action of the whole school to be fundamental. (p. 178)³

Regarding the dynamics of participation within the school community, i.e., the involvement of different stakeholders in the construction of the educational project, the importance of active participation from the educational community in decision-making processes and school organization is notable. Everyone has space to express their opinions and contribute to educational activities and projects.

In the category of **challenges in implementing democratic education**, that is, the difficulties faced in applying democratic principles, there is an emphasis on how the school builds its own culture of values and participation. The interviews show an active effort from the school community to face challenges and improve the educational environment. However, there is also concern about the discrepancy between the values taught at school and the reality that students experience at home, especially regarding the influence of technology and misinformation. A critical concern is raised about the challenges posed by the profiles of students and families, highlighting the effort of the management to address these difficulties.

Regarding **activities that promote democratic values**, all excerpts highlight cultural diversity, promoting respect and contact between different groups; there is a concern with students' social development concerning norms, culture, and democratic coexistence. Practical and lived actions are mentioned, such as Olympiads, cultural representations, and celebrations.

Finally, the excerpts extracted from the category of **the impact of democratic practices**, focusing on civic education and the school environment, address essential aspects of student

³ From page 178 of the school's educational project.

formation, such as peaceful coexistence (EDG), democracy (EPROF), and environmental awareness (EPE). Therefore, there is an effort to develop values in students, whether it is mutual respect, democratic participation, or sustainability. Democracy is the foundation for the school's functioning, and the fact that the school is an institution for educational compensation is seen as an added value.

Conclusion

The study aimed to discuss the relationship between Democratic Education and SEPs, exploring how democratic values can be integrated into the design and implementation of these pedagogical guidance instruments.

The data obtained through document analysis and four interviews with members of the educational community at the public school (with educational compensation) located in an area of Seville that faces structural socioeconomic challenges and is home to a diverse community highlights the role of the school as a space for collective and intercultural learning. Although this school has the particularity of being compensatory, which increases its margin of autonomy, it is also under strict scrutiny from the educational inspection, as the director revealed, precisely to avoid what could be inferred as a form of regulatory disloyalty.

The principles of democratic education, such as diversity and inclusion, participation, autonomy and critical thinking, dialogue, and communication, are embedded in the school's educational project and are considered in pedagogical practices, as the interviewees understand that democracy is the foundation for the school's functioning.

The data presented here is real and has not been tampered with. However, the fact that we only interviewed a few representatives of the school groups, such as a member of the administration, a representative of the teachers, a representative of the parents' association, and a representative of the administrative staff, requires a deeper study involving students directly, as they are the reason for the school's existence. It also calls for a longitudinal study using questionnaires to involve a larger number of people.

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Annex I: Presentation of Research Data

Category	Subcategory	Context Units
Interviewee's Identity	Time of affiliation with the Institution	<p>a) EDG2: This is my sixth year. I've been a primary school teacher since 2007. This is my sixth year at this school, and my third year as director.</p> <p>b) EPROF3: I started at this school in 2017. I started as a substitute teacher in 2007, was a substitute for two years, and then in 2009, I got the permanent position. I was assigned to a preschool, where I spent 8 years teaching English.</p> <p>c) EPE4: I've been in the School Board for 3 years, I think, but it's not necessary to be part of the group to come and help.</p> <p>d) EPA5: I've been at this school since June of last year... No, sorry, I apologize, we are in 2025, since 2023, it will be 2 years this June.</p>
Democratic Education in School	Integration of democratic principles into the educational project	<p>a) EDG: Very concretely in subjects, for example, in the third cycle with citizenship... we have values education in all courses... emotional education is important. We value, in our community, the attention to different cultures.</p> <p>b) EPROF: Everywhere really. In our classes, in everything. From raising hands to start, to respecting the speaking turns, listening to each other, and involving the students when we do an activity.</p> <p>c) EPE: Promotes it by doing activities with the children, involving families in school events like Peace Day, Fall Day, Nations' Day, which is a celebration of different cultures, and it's carried out through everything.</p> <p>d) EPA: I like to interact, not to be cold... I don't want to see a child entering the school and not know them. I may not know their name, but I can recognize their faces, you know? But of course, my job is very different from others, very different. I'm the one least in contact with the students.</p>

<p>School Community Participation</p>	<p>Involvement of different actors in the educational project construction</p>	<p>a) EDG: For the entire educational community, the best functioning body is the School Board. It includes representatives from families, the full leadership team, PAS, the local government, teachers, and staff. It's a good forum where we all come together and discuss everything... the AMPA representatives are also there.</p> <p>b) EPROF: From cohesion activities to preparing for events like Peace Day, we meet continuously. The project changes annually, introducing new elements. We are informed and included in the changes.</p> <p>c) EPE: Yes, parents are always informed, and they are also given the chance to suggest things. We have direct contact with the teachers.</p> <p>d) EPA: Parents ask me: "What do you think?" And I've given opinions on things since I got here, and they've accepted all of them, even activities that aren't directly my responsibility. If I have an opinion, I will share it.</p>
<p>Challenges in Implementing Democratic Education</p>	<p>Difficulties faced in applying democratic principles</p>	<p>a) EDG: We've been working on democratic values for many years, such as celebrating Peace Day, mandatory celebrations, Andalusia Day, Constitution Day. But we've been more relaxed because it became a culture of spending a lot of time together.</p> <p>b) EPROF: The problem is when they go home, they face the opposite of what we teach them. They have too much freedom with phones, electronics, and they believe everything they see. We live in a society of lies.</p> <p>c) EPE: Challenges... I don't know how to answer that. We're very involved in everything. For anything the school does, like a field trip, they ask for parental help. The parents' association encourages everyone to join in.</p> <p>d) EPA: I think it's the type of students we work with. There are more difficult students and problematic families that make things complicated. But we work hard on this, and it's not just because I'm here; the leadership team is really great.</p>

<p>Impact of Democratic Practices</p>	<p>Influence on civic education and school environment</p>	<p>a) EDG: We work a lot on compensating for issues, and we're lucky that we don't have a lot of conflicting students.</p> <p>b) EPROF: You can feel democracy in school. If we didn't have democracy in the school, we'd be done for. It's the foundation of everything.</p> <p>c) EPE: Last year, or maybe the year before, the entire course focused on recycling, crafts, and everything was done with bottle caps and recycled materials. They even collected caps for a foundation. The kids are very involved in these types of activities.</p>
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Students' perceptions of active citizenship in a migrant context

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Abstract

This research addresses the cross-cutting challenge of democratic education and active citizenship. The aim is to compare the perceptions that students have in a migrant context. A questionnaire and an interview were conducted, and both groups recognize the importance of active citizenship, but they need to learn more about it. There is a tendency from immigrant students to feel more aware about social activities and social justice issues. The findings contribute to the debate about students being considered active citizens and the challenges they face, even more in a migrant context.

Keywords: Active citizenship, democratic education, migration.

Resumen

Esta investigación aborda el desafío de la educación democrática y la ciudadanía activa. Su objetivo es comparar las percepciones que tienen los estudiantes en un contexto migratorio. Se realizó un cuestionario y una entrevista y los principales hallazgos indican que ambos grupos reconocen la importancia de la ciudadanía activa, pero también la necesidad de aprender más sobre ella. Existe una tendencia de los estudiantes inmigrantes a sentirse más conscientes sobre las actividades y los problemas sociales. Los hallazgos contribuyen al debate sobre la consideración de los estudiantes como ciudadanos activos y los desafíos que enfrentan, aún más en un contexto migratorio.

Palabras clave: Ciudadanía activa, educación democrática, migración.

Introduction

The role of education in active citizenship is extremely important. That is because it allows us to shape the students' abilities to be part of society. The European Commission: Directorate for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture (2019) mentions citizenship competence as one of the eight key competences for lifelong learning, defining it as "(...) the ability to act as responsible citizens and to fully participate in civic and social life, based on understanding of social, economic, legal and political concepts and structures, as well as global developments and sustainability" (p. 14). For this reason, it is possible to determine the relevance of teaching

students the necessary skills to engage in everyday life. Active citizenship in a migrant context is an ever-evolving concept that challenges traditional conceptions of belonging in society. Therefore, exploring how immigrants reshape what active citizenship means to them in their host countries is a relevant issue to study. This perspective shifts the focus from laws to lived experiences, which affect even more immigrants and students because of the underage status, giving life to a whole new diverse range of valid expressions of active citizenship.

Despite its current relevance, the implementation of citizenship education remains a subject of debate. Heathcote (2017) contributes to this idea stating that “there has been much academic and theoretical debate about the value of citizenship education and what the curriculum should include” (p. 6). Additionally, contemporary democracies face additional challenges due to increasing linguistic and cultural diversity in schools. Wood (2024) notes that “the growth of globalization and international migration has presented schools with increased opportunities and challenges related to learning from and living with superdiversity” (p. 1). Addressing these challenges requires inclusive educational solutions that promote collective improvement.

Leal Tejeda (2018) contributes to this issue by emphasizing the relationship between citizenship, identity, and participation, stating that “the condition of being considered a citizen leads to the discussion about the role of identity and participation as a key goal for citizenship and particularly active citizenship” (p. 55). Despite these proposals, Heathcote (2017) raises concerns that “citizenship has been offered by policy makers and academics as a solution for a range of social problems, but little has been said about what pupils think about citizenship education and what a ‘good citizen’ is from their perspective” (p. 16). Therefore, the new challenge can now include students’ perceptions and understanding. By examining those aspects, this paper explores Stent’s conceptualization of active citizenship in a migrant context. It considers the structural barriers that migrants face, as well as the similarities or differences that may arise from students living in their home country.

Aim of the study

The aim of this study is to address one of the cross-cutting challenges that the European Union has identified and worked to improve through the European Union funded project

named TESTEd (Towards a European Syllabus in Teacher Education). The research aims to investigate democratic education and active citizenship in students and their perceptions, bearing in mind the differences that may arise in students who are living in their home country and migrant students. The European Commission named European Education and Culture Executive Agency (2017) states that “Contrary to old-fashioned views of citizenship education, which confined its role to conveying knowledge on political institutions and processes, modern citizenship education in Europe is more ambitious and multidimensional” (p. 2). For this reason, a special focus on a migrant context, which might possibly affect the students when trying to interact and become part of society, could shape differently the perceptions they have about active citizenship given the fact that they are immersed in a new and different culture and country.

Given the fact of imminent and growing cases of migration around the world, it is relevant to investigate and compare the perceptions that students have towards this topic in order to improve the education standards in Europe and provide more inclusive strategies in education. Therefore, having in mind the main hypothesis that for immigrant students, it is more difficult to be integrated and to feel part of the community as active citizens, despite living there, their views on active citizenship then may differ from the group of students who live in their country of origin.

This research will consider both groups of students, in order to identify differences or similarities in their conceptions.

The originality of this paper is given by the fact of being a second language teacher of English and Spanish, as well as, having the experience of immigration firsthand, which allows to better understand and comprehend this specific situation and validate it with real life data, giving voice to a specific, but big group of people facing this situation nowadays. It is possible to find many studies about active citizenship and it seems to be an ever-going debate about the exact meaning of it and the role that students have. However, being able to assess super diverse contexts, where there are evident language barriers, shows somehow the disadvantage of some groups. Being able to give voice to those that need assistance to become active citizens, might somehow allow other researchers a shift of focus and further ideas to overcome this aspect. This is also of great help for all those teachers who face this

kind of situation in their classroom given the increased flow of language and cultural diversity in the schools.

The timing expected to carry out this research mainly depended on finding ready-made tested and proven tools that could guide and support this research, as well as a vast reading and understanding of the issue. After that, it was necessary to reach out to some schools and prepare the informed consent for guardians. There is a research and design stage, an implementation stage, followed by grouping and analysis, which took about four months.

This research project has the main objectives of revealing the perceptions that high school students have towards active citizenship, especially being immersed in a language diverse context due to migrant situations in the classroom and the school. Therefore, the research questions that guide this study are the following:

- What are the perceptions that high school students have about active citizenship in a migrant situation?
- What similarities or differences are there between the perceptions about active citizenship of immigrant students and the students in their home country?

The hypothesis under this research aims to compare the perceptions of students whose mother tongue is Portuguese and students in a migrant situation, whose mother tongue may or may not differ, but who are definitely immersed in a new cultural context and see how both groups perceive the concept of active citizenship. It is then expected that immigrant students might have considerably lower expectations about active citizenship due to their context and the language or cultural barriers that may be affecting them.

Methodology

This research study employs a mixed-method approach, which allows quantitative (questionnaire) and qualitative (interview) data collection tools. This encompasses a broader analysis of the perceptions that the participants in this study have towards active citizenship.

There are two main groups of participants in this study. The first group are 13 Portuguese high school students, and the second one are 8 immigrant students from different backgrounds

whose mother tongue are Portuguese, Vietnamese, Spanish and who come from countries like Venezuela, Vietnam, Angola, Brazil and Mozambique.

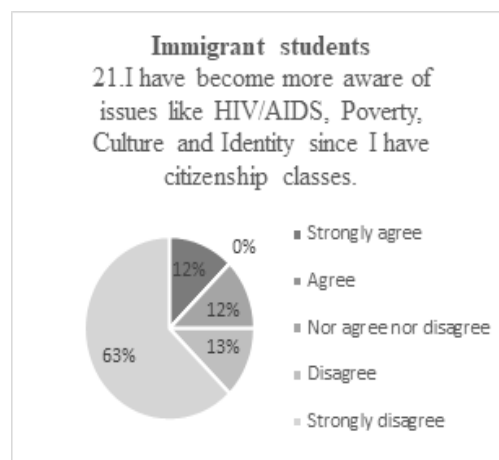
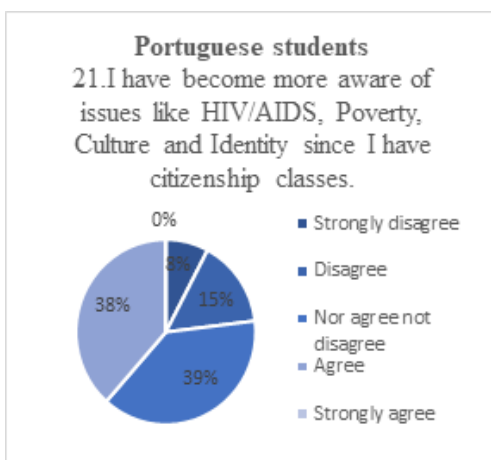
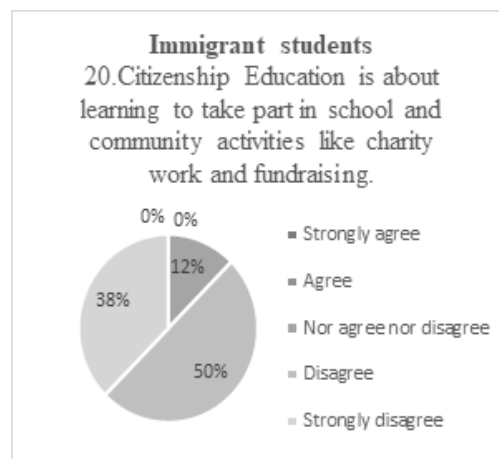
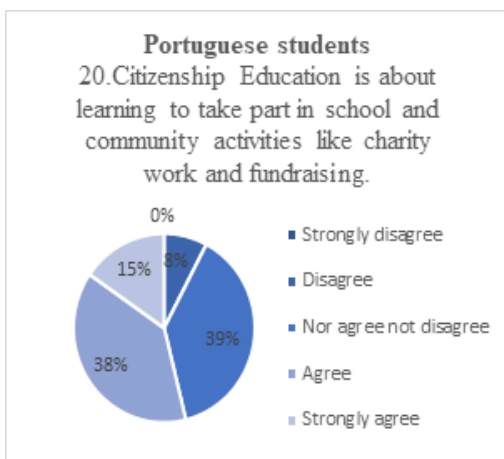
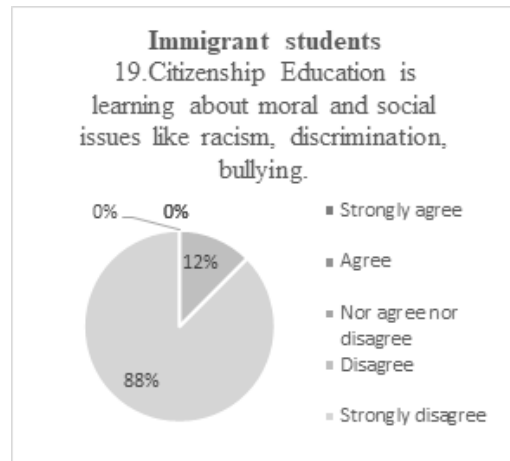
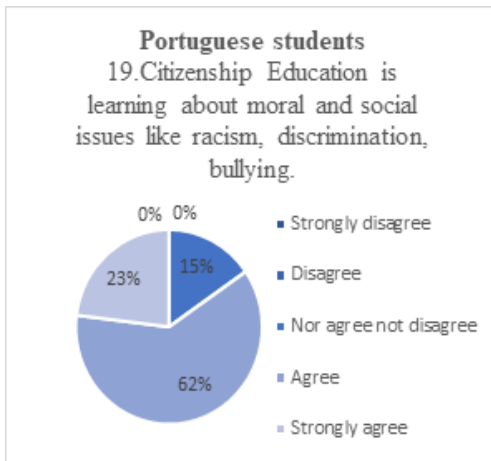
For quantitative data, the questionnaire used in this research was a combination of the most relevant statements from two already existing tools. One of them is an active citizenship questionnaire created by Andrew Peterson & Catherine Knowles (2009) and the other one is a survey created by Julie Elizabeth Heathcote (2017). In order to follow the aim of this research, the most accurate and relevant statements were selected, and some changes were made for them to fit in with the Likert scale type.

For qualitative data collection an interview was conducted with some of the participants. The interview was made by assembling different questions from two interviews that were meaningful and relevant for this study by authors investigating the same issue. For comparative purposes, there is only one general interview for all students. Most questions were taken from Paula Alejandra Leal Tejeda (2018), and one question was taken from the interview created by Julie Elizabeth Heathcote (2017).

Results

As a general result, from the data gathered in the questionnaires and the interviews it is important to mention that both Portuguese and immigrant students share the belief that citizenship education is essential for developing appropriate social behavior. While their fundamental understanding of the concept is similar, their personal experiences, particularly regarding community participation, discrimination, and cultural adaptation, influence their perspectives. Below, concrete data is available where such differences are noticeable. For instance, in Figure 19. The next statement questions whether citizenship education is about learning to take action in school or community activities like charity. In Figure 20, it is possible to check that immigrant students tend to agree more with this than Portuguese students, where there are even some who disagree. This reflects how this social part of helping and taking action is more developed in the immigrant students because of their context. Figure 21 asks students if citizenship education is learning about social issues like racism, discrimination, among others. In this case, both groups agree, but there is a slightly higher level of agreement from immigrant students. This may be because those topics are strictly related to their

situation. Also, in Figure 21 it is possible to see that the majority of the Portuguese students are not sure or tend to disagree with the statement, on the contrary, more than 50% of the immigrant students agree.



Additionally, for the interviews that were conducted, the table below sums up the main findings by summarizing the number of times that the same opinions were conveyed by the students.

Table 1: Overview of student responses

Nº of mentions	Most frequently mentioned topics within the students' interviews (50% and more).
6	The idea that active citizenship helps students to understand how the world works and how to behave in it, in order to prepare them for life.
4	The idea that being an active citizen is strongly connected with helping (volunteering).
4	The need for more in-depth discussion in certain topics that are only covered in the surface (racism).
3	The idea that the main purpose is doing good and respecting others as one of the main values of active citizenship.
3	The importance of the role of teachers is because their current active citizenship lessons are too structured and lack creativity.

Moreover, immigrant students highlight cultural adaptation as both a challenge and an opportunity for personal growth. For instance, volunteering and helping others are frequently mentioned as essential aspects of active citizenship. Immigrant students seem to emphasize social adaptation, cultural integration, and discrimination-related topics more strongly, while Portuguese students slightly differ from those perspectives.

The data suggests that while both groups share similar perspectives, there are notable variations in their responses. For example, regarding their perspectives on Cultural Learning and Integration. The questionnaire mentions cultural learning as part of citizenship education. Immigrant students likely see cultural adaptation as a necessary challenge, emphasizing their experiences of learning a new language, understanding social norms, and adapting to a different education system. Portuguese students may view cultural topics more academically rather than personally, as they are already immersed in their own national identity.

Conclusion

To conclude, this study raises a huge debate and discussion about the perceptions that young people are getting from the current developments of active citizenship within the curriculum. The educational community should be aware of this debate and there should be a deeper analysis in which teachers' perceptions are also studied, as well as the curriculums and contrasted with the already existing ones, where a higher emphasis is put on student teachers.

It is also crucial to see how meaningful, relevant and interesting applying these tools are for educational processes. It is expected that teachers and other school members will try to also imitate this research and apply them within their own school community. That is because it will allow them to better understand their work in teaching active citizenship and the similarities or differences that may be arising in their students and, most importantly, what to do and how to address such diversity. In order to carry out this research, there were some limitations such as time, the lack of participants and organization within the schools. It would have been more meaningful to also work with teachers and compare their perceptions as well and to include a wider number of students to fully grasp perceptions about active citizenship. These changes can be made and carried out in the future because more studies about this topic are necessary to finally improve and change education for all the students, especially the ones going through an immigration process.

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Multilingualism and Digitalization in Education: Comparative Perspectives of Teachers in North Rhine-Westphalia and Seville

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Introduction

Despite the omnipresence of multilingualism in a globalized world and its increasing importance in recent years, the use of the entire language repertoire is held back by a ‘monolingual habitus’ (Melo-Pfeifer & Von Rosen, 2021, p. 7), especially in German schools. According to the investigation into various studies by Melo-Pfeifer and Von Rosen, this everyday pedagogical practice is contrary to the positive attitude of teachers towards multilingualism (Melo-Pfeifer & Von Rosen, 2021, pp. 7-8).

It is undisputed that the onset of digitalization has changed and continues to change pedagogical practice nationwide (Kultusministerkonferenz, 2021). This has an impact on the culture of learning (e.g. learning with immersive media or artificial intelligence) and the associated teaching. As a consequence, this is also linked to how multilingualism is dealt with in the classrooms.

The German project *Mehrsprachigkeit als Handlungsfeld interkultureller Schulentwicklung* (Multilingualism as a field of action for intercultural school development; Lange, 2020, p. 104) highlighted not only the positive effects of using multilingualism in the classroom — such as the expansion of the shared linguistic repertoire, joint reflection on learning with and from each other, and language awareness —, but also the uncertainties and challenges teachers face in dealing with multilingualism. These include, for example, dealing with ignorance in the classroom situation or unforeseen questions.

Nevertheless, the issue of multilingualism does not only affect German teachers; their colleagues in other European countries, such as Spain, are also confronted with it. In particular, in cities such as Seville⁴, which are distinguished by their historical and cultural diversity, multilingualism plays a role in everyday school life, which can vary in its scope and intensity. Educators in Seville are confronted with the necessity of navigating a multitude of languages daily, whether due to the pervasive influence of Andalusian Spanish, the impact of

⁴ As part of the European project TESTEd (Towards a European Syllabus in Teacher Education), I was able to conduct research on the cross-cutting topics of multilingualism and digitalisation at the Ruhr University Bochum and the Universidad de Sevilla through a research exchange as a student teacher of German and pedagogy at the Ruhr University Bochum (North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany).

immigrant languages such as Arabic, or the growing prevalence of English in educational settings. The connection between North Rhine-Westphalia and Seville is not only based on the project partnership, but also on migration movements. While North Rhine-Westphalia is one of the federal states with a high proportion of people with a migrant background in Germany at 28% in 2018 (Göttsche, 2018), Seville, the capital of Andalusia, is characterized by a growing migrant population (Nohlen & Kölling, 2020; Asensio Pastor & Beltrán Medina, 2023).

Migration and the associated multilingualism confront schools with the challenge of appropriately promoting multilingualism and, in particular, heritage languages and integrating them into lessons. It is, therefore, not surprising that Rothstein (2021) sees the cross-cutting issues of language education, heterogeneity and inclusion as resulting in a further cross-cutting issue: Multilingualism. But how is the cross-cutting issue of multilingualism perceived and implemented? The influence of digitalization on teaching and multilingualism has already been explained. The question, therefore, also arises what role digitalization plays in the perception of the cross-cutting issue of multilingualism.

An intensive examination of the topic of multilingualism is undoubtedly important, but the focus of this work is not only on the examination of theoretical concepts. Rather, the aim of the research is to gain exemplary insights into the subjective construction of meaning as well as the concepts and theories of teachers on and about the use of multilingualism in their lessons and to find out what significance or influence increasingly digitalized learning environments have on this.

The second focus of this work, digitalization in schools, centers on the following questions:

- Does increasing digitalization and the associated digital tools lead to an improvement or simplification of the communication situation and the use of multilingual approaches from the teachers' perspective?
- Are there approaches (opportunities and challenges, relief, opportunities, further uncertainty factors, complication) in dealing with multilingual pupils?
- To what extent is this related to the basic attitude of teachers?

- How and under what conditions do teachers use multilingualism and language comparisons in their (digitalized) lessons and what concepts and goals do they pursue in doing so?

After a presentation of the current state of research and a sound theoretical background, two guided qualitative interviews are conducted, one with a teacher from North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany and another from Seville, Spain. The interviews are transcribed according to Kuckartz (2007) with translations into English, followed by a qualitative content analysis according to Mayring (2010). This analysis is computer-assisted using the MAXQDA program. The derivation of the analysis criteria required for the coding was carried out in a combined deductive-inductive manner — with the focus on the deductive analysis — in that theoretical aspects on the one hand and further criteria triggered by the interviews on the other can be taken up.

The aim of the research is to gain exemplary insights into how teachers deal with multilingualism, the subjective construction of meaning and the subjective concepts and theories of teachers on and about the use of multilingualism in their lessons and to find out what significance or influence digital tools or digitalization have in this context.

Theoretical background

In the following subsections, the concepts of multilingualism and digitalization, partly focused on the individual countries and their regions, are discussed and considered with regard to the research question.

Multilingualism

Not only people themselves, but also their multilingualism is individual. No one has exactly the same linguistic means and prerequisites as another person (Gantefort & Maahs, 2020). This also applies to idiolects, dialects, etc. According to Budde and Martinez (2023), multilingualism can, therefore, be understood as a dynamic and unequal competence. If we follow Riehl's (2015) definition, multilingualism means various forms of socially or institutionally conditioned and individual use of more than one language. This means that multilingualism, rather than monolingualism, is the norm (ibis.). Based on the distinction made by Gantefort

and Maahs (2020), Riehl (2015) also distinguishes between internal and external multilingualism. Internal multilingualism refers to the variants of a language, e.g. dialects, while the term external multilingualism refers to different standard languages.

The importance of multilingualism encompasses various aspects and dimensions. Riehl (2015) emphasizes the significance of multilingualism in three key aspects. In a psychological dimension, multilingualism is always a component of individual identity formation. Understanding communicative routines and behaviors is only possible in a deeper sense through multilingualism. The author highlights language awareness and related skills as a cognitive aspect of multilingualism. It is, therefore, crucial not to view multilingualism in a one-dimensional way but to adopt multiple perspectives. Multilingualism shapes and is shaped by culture, flexibility, perspectives, tolerance, and creativity. The author uses this as a basis to understand multilingualism not merely as a linguistic skill but also as a societal capital that can connect cultures. According to Budde & Martinez (2023), multilingualism as a competence can also contribute to increased language awareness. Prediger et al. (2019) even emphasize that it is important to allow, encourage and offer multilingualism in school all subject lessons, because they assume that languages function cognitively as communicative thinking tools. Their different ways of conceptualizing, enable diverse ways of thinking and approaching problems.

According to the authors, language education should not only be the subject of language subjects but should be established as a cross-cutting issue across all subjects.

In language acquisition itself, languages are differentiated according to the time of acquisition (Brehmer & Mehlhorn, 2018). For example, the language that is learnt uncontrolled as a child is considered the first language (L1). In a bilingual family, bilingualism can also be acquired here. A second language (L2) is a newly acquired language that is learnt in everyday life, at work or at school. Instructional support can be added. Languages that are acquired in a controlled manner in a classroom or institutional setting are categorized as foreign languages (L3). In addition, the heritage language is understood to be the language that is acquired and used in an uncontrolled family context, usually from birth. According to Brehmer & Mehlhorn (2018), the acquisition of the heritage language takes place before or parallel to the acquisition of the language of the majority society. According to the authors, people with a

heritage language are considered to be (at least) bilingual to a certain extent, as they have knowledge of their heritage language in addition to the language of the majority society. This knowledge is at least receptive and can vary. In order to be able to deal with multilingualism in the future, these conceptual distinctions are relevant insofar as they contribute to making social developments towards multilingualism more comprehensible on the one hand and to being able to better understand and describe multilingualism in its basic features on the other. Furthermore, an understanding of how multiple languages are used is also relevant regarding multilingualism in schools. Fürstenau (2022) emphasizes the actual use of language in bilingual or multilingual contexts as a prerequisite for understanding translanguaging according to García et al. (2015), through which the entire linguistic repertoire of a speaker can be understood as a linguistic repertoire: “[W]e will be able to define translanguaging as the deployment of a speaker’s full linguistic repertoire without regard for watchful adherence to the socially and politically defined boundaries of named (and usually national and state) languages” (Otheguy, García & Reid, 2015, p. 283).

The approach of translanguaging with the assumption of linguistic competence must, therefore, be distinguished from that of code-switching, as switching between languages (Auer, 2009; Sarter, 2013, p. 23; Gantefort & Maahs, 2020, pp. 2-3). The starting point of translanguaging is the understanding of languages in general, according to Gantefort and Maahs (2020). The authors put forward the central thesis that individual languages, such as German, Spanish, English or French, are to be understood as social constructions and thus do not exist as distinguishable and thus enumerable units but are first made into such (Gantefort & Maahs, 2020, pp. 1-2).

If we follow the ideas of Fürstenau (2022) and translanguaging, all linguistic experiences of learners can be incorporated and used for teaching, and, thus, also for teachers, and learning in the classroom. This seems particularly understandable about the use of language in the communication of multilingual people, in which linguistic means, regardless of their assignment to individual languages as social constructs, are mixed (Gantefort & Maahs, 2020, p. 2). In this context, von Rosen (2021) emphasizes that multilingualism promotes language (learning) competence and language awareness. According to the author, cross-linguistic learning and the transfer of knowledge can be stimulated by comparing languages, for

example. Von Rosen (2021) distinguishes between vertical language comparisons, which refer to the deepening and mastery of the target language, and horizontal language comparisons, which look at known languages, their structures and characteristics from the current level of knowledge. In this context, the author distinguishes two aspects of language awareness that differ in their focus: language awareness (*Sprachbewusstheit*) and multilingual awareness (*Sprachenbewusstheit*). The former describes a competence focused on reflecting upon and consciously utilizing knowledge of an individual language, understood as an acquired language. The latter refers to the competence of reflecting on and consciously applying knowledge generated through theoretical and practical engagement with multilingualism, thus encompassing multiple languages. According to the author, these two competencies should enable students, through language comparison, to develop hypotheses about linguistic phenomena based on precise observations of individual words and to begin testing them independently.

The importance of multilingualism in schools in North Rhine-Westphalia and Andalusia and how this is caused by social developments and compositions will be roughly outlined in the following two sub-chapters. It seems important at this point to highlight this in order to make differences in dealing with multilingualism comprehensible.

Multilingualism in North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany

Multilingualism in North Rhine-Westphalia can be linked to historical migration movements, among other things. In the 1950s, for example, there was an influx of ethnic German repatriates, and in the 1960s guest workers, mainly able-bodied men from southern Europe and countries such as Italy, Spain, Greece, Turkey, Portugal and the former Yugoslavia. This was followed by a second wave of migration in the 1970s due to family migration. In the 1980s, many sought protections due to conflicts in the Balkans, followed by the influx of people seeking protection, particularly from countries in the Near and Middle East (Syria, Iran, Iraq) and North Africa,

Afghanistan and Pakistan in the 1990s. In 2010 and 2011, people from EU crisis countries tended to move in, partly due to the financial crisis, and around 2015 it was refugees from Syria (Gröttsche, 2018). Migration and multilingualism - there may or may not be a connection

between these two aspects. Just because a person has a migrant background does not mean that they are multilingual.

According to reports from the NRW Ministry of Information and Technology (2022), 40.0% of the more than 2.4 million pupils at general education and vocational schools in North Rhine-Westphalia in the 2021/22 school year had a migrant background. This is an increase of 0.6 percent compared to the previous school year. Regional differences became clear, ranging from 18.5% in the Coesfeld district to 55.4% in Gelsenkirchen.

Figures published by the Ministry of Schools and Education of the state of North Rhine-Westphalia (2022) show that up to 19 other heritage languages are represented at elementary school in addition to German. Almost half of the pupils speak at least one other language and are, therefore, multilingual due to one heritage language.

Multilingualism in Seville, Spain

According to Nohlen and Kölling (2000), Spain was a country of emigration rather than immigration for several centuries. Andalusia also suffered losses due to emigration in the second half of the twentieth century. However, a high birth rate compensated for this loss.

The economic recession since 1973 has changed migration patterns and emigration and internal migration have declined rapidly. The number of immigrants has risen steadily since the 1990s, with an increase of up to 20% between 2000 and 2010. In 2018, 9.8% of the Spanish population migrated to the country. Of these, 65.3% do not come from EU countries, but mainly from Morocco, Romania and the UK. However, the number of migrants from South America has increased the most since 2017. Many of the foreigners residing in Spain are also living here illegally without a residence permit or work permit. They mostly come from the Maghreb, Latin America, Africa (Western Sahara) and the Balkans. As a Mediterranean country, Spain is particularly popular with refugees, as the coasts are sometimes less than 30 km apart. In 2018, Andalusia, with the second largest area of the autonomous regions, has the highest population density in Spain with over 8.4 million people. Seville is the fourth largest city in the country at the time of writing (Nohlen & Kölling, 2020).

Based on the history of migration, Turrel (2000) points out that multilingualism in Spain deals with the sociolinguistic and psycholinguistic aspects of both established and new migrant

minority groups in Spain. The author starts from two minority groups in Spain, the established and the new migrant minorities, which she shows to be relevant for current multilingualism in Spain (ibis.). She shows the development of and attitudes towards multilingualism among the population:

In the first place, the fact that nowadays, slightly over 40% live in these Autonomous Communities in which Spanish shares its official status with Basque, Catalan and Galician; in the second place, the issuing and implementation of linguistic policies by these historical communities' statutes designed to defend and promote these languages. In my view, this legal recognition takes a stand which has had and will have further, more subtle consequences: the recognition that there are migrant communities and many other languages spoken in Spain. However, this new deal will have to fight its way through because in origin it is actually a response to not very positive reactions to already existing bilingualism. (Turrel, 2000)

The quote illustrates that, in relation to Spain as a whole, there is not only an external but also a high degree of internal multilingualism, whose mental opening of the population towards external multilingualism is also becoming increasingly more pronounced.

Digitalization in schools

Before digitalization can be discussed in the context of multilingualism, it is first necessary to briefly consider what is actually meant by digitalization in schools. Reddel (2023) defines it as the use of digital technologies in everyday school life, which has an impact not only on the use of technologies but also on methodology.

The PISA special report *Were schools equipped to teach — and were students ready to learn — remotely?* from 2020 during the Covid-19-Pandemic highlights the opportunities and influences of digitalization:

Digital technologies offer the potential to provide new opportunities and alternative approaches for learning. They can shape what people learn, how they learn, where they learn and when they learn and, especially, the type of interactions between teachers and students. (OECD, 2020)

But just because digital technologies make this possible does not mean that they are used effectively and support learning: “The effectiveness of technology depends on how it is used” (ibis.).

Only 30% of school leaders in German schools agreed in 2020 that an effective platform to support online learning was available. At just over 50%, Spain was directly below the OECD average, although Spain's expenditure on education per pupil is lower than in Germany (Nohlen & Kölling, 2020). However, this discrepancy can also be due to other financial factors. The *Digital Pakt Schule 2023-2024* progress report (Kultusministerkonferenz, 2024) shows a sharp increase in regional and state-wide digital transformation measures in Germany. While there were 109 measures and €35,608,211 in federal funding at the end of 2020, €285,923,608 had been invested in 796 measures by mid-2024. Despite these changes and digitalization measures, it must be borne in mind that both Germany and Spain are pursuing federal structures and autonomies of the autonomous communities or federal states in Germany in the education system. This results in differences in the expansion of digitalization in schools in both countries depending on the federal state or autonomous region.

According to the Ministry of Schools and Education of the state of North Rhine-Westphalia (n.d.), the state plans to invest two billion euros in teaching and learning with digital media by 2025. Three fields of action are part of the digitalization strategy: Expanding digital infrastructures, supporting and training teachers and making learning and teaching contemporary.

Between 2020 and 2025, the Andalusia region made significant investments in the digitalization of the education system, with a major focus on digital equipment for pupils to improve access to digitalization. On the one hand, digital devices are to be made available (Radio Sevilla, 2024), and on the other, the autonomous region has received a 215 million Euro loan from the European Investment Bank (2024), which will be used to equip schools and promote digital learning environments, among other things.

It can, therefore, be seen not only that between 2020 and 2025 in both countries, and more specifically North Rhine-Westphalia and Seville, a lot has been and will be invested in digitalization in schools, but also that digitalization has an impact on learning depending on how it is used. The influence of digital tools or digitalization in the context of multilingualism will be examined below using two exemplary interviews.

Methodology and corpus

Interview survey

The qualitative survey method is used to collect data on teachers' individual and subjective constructions of meaning. The teachers are interviewed as experts, which is why the guided interview method is suitable (Zierer et al., 2013, pp. 65-66). The aim is to reconstruct knowledge, constructions of reality and strategies for action (ibid.).

The interview guidelines for the guided interview were developed based on literature in order to develop data on the research question and to enable “a simpler and more reliable interpretation of the data collected” (Meyer & Jansen, 2016, p. 121). It is important that the interview is not perceived by the teachers as judging or evaluating (ibid.).

According to the guidelines, the interview starts with a brief greeting and a low-threshold question in which the teacher talks about themselves and their school. This can create an introduction that gets the teacher into a flow of conversation and enables contextualization. This is followed by questions on multilingualism, which begin with the teacher describing their understanding of multilingualism and the role of multilingualism in their everyday school and classroom life. Building on this, the perception of multilingualism in the classroom should be discussed. Other optional questions address the aims of using multilingualism in the classroom, the design of learning environments and methods or strategies such as language comparisons. This is followed by a thematic reference to digitalization. The questions focus on the use of digital tools in the classroom regarding multilingualism and multilingual pupils. In addition, the influence of digital tools on dealing with multilingualism as well as expectations about future developments and own actions in this context are discussed. The survey concludes with a question about personal concepts for dealing with multilingualism, which is also aimed at scientific theories and approaches. The specific interview guide can be found in the Annex (Attachment 1).

However, the guideline-based interview method must also be viewed critically, as it leads to individual answers that can hardly be standardized. The formulation of questions in particular can have a considerable influence on whether information can be collected in line with the research interest (Zierer et al., 2013, p. 73). Due to the extensive amount of data generated in

an interview, the limited number of interviewees and the limited number of possible questions compared to quantitative work can be seen as a limitation of this methodology (ibid., 74). The evaluation of the data must also be viewed critically. The interpretation by the researchers, the presentation of selection decisions and the difficulty of generalizing results are factors that must be taken into account in qualitative empirical work. In the context of this paper, two interviews are conducted with teachers. The extent to which it is possible to generalize the results of this research project is explained in the following chapters.

The interviews were conducted in a face-to-face survey at the location of the respective schools in Seville and North Rhine-Westphalia. The list of questions developed from theory served as a guide for the course of the interview. Nevertheless, individual conversations were included according to the interest of the findings. While the first interview took place in Seville in October, the second one took place in Germany in January. Both teachers teach at least one language and have more than 20 years of teaching experience. There is a bilingual program at both schools, but only the teacher from Seville is actively involved in this program. As far as possible, the interviews were conducted using voice recordings in an undisturbed environment. Both interviews were conducted in German, as it was the language that all participants were most comfortable with in this situation. The interviews were transcribed into German and then translated into English. The transcription of the interviews translated into English is attached to the paper (Attachment 4 and 5). The transcription was carried out according to Kuckartz (2007)⁵. Linguistic details were not recorded, and the text was smoothed overall, as these are not highly relevant to the research findings. In addition, linguistic details would have been lost in the translation into English.

Qualitative Content Analysis

The method of qualitative content analysis according to Mayring is a standard method in the social sciences (Mayring, 2010, p. 601) and represents a method of qualitatively oriented text analysis (Mayring & Frenzl, 2019, p. 633), with which larger amounts of text, such as newspaper articles, school books or written communication, can be analyzed in a rule-based

⁵ The rules for transcription are listed in more detail in Attachment 2.

and, thus, intersubjectively verifiable manner (ibis.). Qualitative content analysis follows various basic theoretical and methodological principles, which are outlined below using the flow chart or structural model based on the content of the analysis (Mayring & Frenzl, 2019; Mayring, 2010).

After specifying and theoretically substantiating the central question, the material to be analyzed is classified in a communication model. In the following, the qualitative content analysis is divided into three procedures, two of which are briefly outlined here: Summarizing content analysis/inductive category formation and structuring analysis/deductive category application.

It should be noted at this point that, in the sense of a mixed-method approach, various combinations of procedures are possible (Mayring & Frenzl, 2019, p. 641). The theory-based category system, therefore, forms the center of the analysis. The assignment of the category to a text passage is to be understood as a rule-guided interpretation (Mayring, 2010, p. 603) and is carried out on the basis of a coding guide in which explicit definitions, prototypical text passages — also called anchor examples — and demarcation rules between the categories are compiled and expanded and revised in the analysis process (Mayring, 2000, p. 6). It is, therefore, a circular procedure that contains reworking feedback loops (Mayring, 2010, p. 603). The qualitative content analysis draws conclusions based on the qualitative and quantitative analysis of the categories (Mayring & Frenzl, 2019, p. 640):

Wenn auf diese Weise Textstellen Kategorien stabil zugeordnet werden konnte, so kann das alleinige Vorhandensein dieser Kategorien bereits als Ergebnis der Analyse gelten. [...] In vielen Fällen werden aber Kategorien mehrfach dem Material zugeordnet. (Mayring, 2010, p. 604)

If it is possible to assign categories to text passages in a stable manner in this way, the mere existence of these categories can already be considered a result of the analysis. [...] In many cases, however, categories are assigned to the material several times. (Mayring, 2010, p. 604)

With inductive category formation, on the other hand, the list of crystallized categories can be understood as the result (ibid.). These can be grouped according to theory, which increases the level of abstraction of the categories.

Qualitative content analysis is used below to evaluate the qualitative interviews conducted. The focus will be on the deductive approach, supplemented by inductive categories where necessary. The central research key questions in this paper are therefore as follows:

1. How do teachers create a learning environment for multilingual pupils whose strongest language (L1/heritage language) does not correspond to the surrounding language or the monolingual habitus of regional, school-based institutions, and what role does multilingualism play in this?
2. Are multilingualism and individual languages used consciously?
3. Is multilingualism seen as a resource, an obstacle or a challenge?

The theoretical background on which the deductive analysis will be based was explained in Chapter 2. The detailed and itemized coding guide can be found in the appendix (Attachment 3). As the procedure has already been described in this chapter, the analysis of the results follows.

Analysis

Deductive Analysis

Looking at the evaluation of the deductive analysis, it is immediately clear at first glance that the category Language 2, i.e. a second language that a person uses after L1 as an ambient language or due to other influences in everyday life or other contexts, was not coded. Although the teachers talk about heritage languages and the acquisition of other foreign languages in a school context, they do not specifically talk about the acquisition of second languages. This first and obvious result initially shows that second languages do not play a role for teachers in this context. The reasons for this cannot be answered in the context of this paper. The number of possible reasons for this result can be manifold, to name just a few at this point: the interview questions were not specifically aimed at the theoretical differentiation of language naming in language acquisition, the teachers do not know the differentiation, the differentiation does not seem relevant to the teachers in this context, the differentiations between L1 and L2 are not known to the teachers in contrast to L3, etc.

However, the deductive analysis of the two interviews also reveals some very interesting results. In the following, the aspects of the understanding of multilingualism, also in relation to internal and external multilingualism, a monolingual habitus, multilingualism as an opportunity and challenge and digital tools in the context of multilingualism will therefore be analyzed in more detail.

Right at the beginning of the interview, the answers to the question about the teachers' understanding of multilingualism reveal a different understanding:

TI: For me, multilingualism is the key to the future. The key that will open many doors in the future. (Transcript Interview Spain_English, Pos. 8)

TI: That people speak several languages at the same time. (Transcript Interview Germany_English, Pos. 12)

While the Spanish teacher tends to emphasize the opportunities offered by multilingualism, the German teacher takes a more definitional approach. It turns out that the Spanish teacher refers this statement to himself using the phrase 'for me' and emphasizes his own position more clearly. He goes on to emphasize: 'If you can speak more languages, you have more chances in life to find a good job, to have a better life' (Transcript Interview Spain_English, pos. 8). It is therefore more a perspective on multilingualism as an opportunity than a detailed understanding of what multilingualism encompasses and breaks it down into criteria. The German teacher continues her remarks by further distinguishing on a more definitional and categorical level between the mother tongue, which is taken up here as the first language, and bilingual or multilingual children growing up:

TI: So not just their mother tongue, but also other languages, and of course there are different degrees of this. So those who grow up multilingual, i.e. bilingual or even with more languages than just two, and then those who learn other languages later. (Transcript Interview Germany_English, Pos. 14)

A look at the quantity of coding also reveals a different understanding of multilingualism. External multilingualism was coded more than three times as often as internal multilingualism (15 to 4). This is particularly clear when comparing the teachers. While the German teacher addressed internal multilingualism four times, this did not play a role for the Spanish teacher. Thus, the German teacher differentiates between several forms of internal multilingualism, which for her appears in the explanations as a component of multilingualism:

TI: And of course, you can differentiate between youth language and everyday language, standard language and so on and so forth in every language. (Transcript Interview Germany_English, Pos. 12)

Moreover, she repeatedly addresses the aspect of internal multilingualism during the interview and emphasizes the difference between written language and spoken youth language, including in exams. She also addresses internal multilingualism in the context of L3 acquisition in the English lessons she teaches.

In the analysis of external multilingualism, the number of codes shows a somewhat more balanced ratio in the comparison of the two teachers. This criterion was coded six times for the Spanish teacher and nine times for the German teacher. The Spanish teacher emphasizes that it is very rare at his school for pupils to have a first language other than Spanish. His other statements refer to foreign languages learnt in the school context, particularly in relation to the bilingual subject German that he teaches. This also applies to the German teacher. She discusses the English lessons she teaches at the school and also emphasizes differences in language acquisition in L3 depending on the first language or L2: “you noticed the differences, depending on what their first language was” (Transcript Interview Germany_English, Pos. 48).

One topic that she is increasingly focusing on is the different heritage languages of pupils. She mentions Turkish, Arabic, Syrian, Russian and Ukrainian as examples, whereas the Spanish teacher mentions Ukrainian once.

IS: How often do you teach pupils whose strongest language is not German?

IT: Often. I just have to think about whether I have any classes in the classes I have right now that don't include anyone who has grown up with a different language. For example, I noticed in my fifth class that there are children in there who speak a different language at home, where you can hear it in their oral language use, but you can also see in their writing that they simply do certain things differently because of their first language at home. For example, Arabic-speaking children often make mistakes with the articles. (Transcript Interview Germany_English, Pos. 25-26)

These different perceptions are reflected in the explanations from the chapters on local multilingualism and make it clear that the perception of and engagement with multilingualism also depends on the confrontation with school (life) realities. For teachers who are confronted

with a variety of languages of origin, the topic has a different relevance than for teachers for whom this situation is (so far) an exception.

Different perceptions and understandings also emerge with regard to the monolingual habitus represented by the teachers. For example, the Spanish teacher considers it desirable to act monolingually in his lessons in the bilingual language German:

TI: Yes, it would be ideal if I spoke only in German all the time. Unfortunately, that's not the case, but I have to say that our students reach a very good level. (Transcript Interview Spain_English, Pos. 16)

This can be attributed to the communicative approach in foreign language teaching. In contrast to grammar-centered methods, this approach focuses on enabling students to communicate effectively in real-life situations (Decke-Cornill & Küster, 2015). While the approach itself does not advocate a monolingual habitus, its strong emphasis on the target language exacerbates the neglect of other languages and highlights their use in a negative light, even viewing them as obstacles. This is accompanied by a devaluation of linguistic diversity and the cultural identity of multilingual learners. Currently, the approach is increasingly linked to multilingual pedagogy, which leverages heritage languages as a resource to strengthen learners' confidence and promote translingual competencies (Reich, 2014). However, criticism of the marginalization of languages other than the target foreign language emphasizes that suppressing students' first language impedes personal development and hinders integration (ibid.).

The German teacher does not comment directly on the topic of monolingual habitus. However, it is clear from her further statements on language comparisons and the inclusion of other languages, which are described in more detail in the inductive analysis chapter, that she perceives this habitus to originate more from older, multilingual pupils. She describes the situation as follows:

IS: Okay. Can you give any examples where pupils have used multilingualism in a positive way? Perhaps on their own initiative or guided by you.

TI: Yes, actually not much on their own, because they are already quite separate. Especially those who grow up multilingual. Otherwise, I don't think they would voluntarily think about what multilingualism could offer them. But I will say, of course, if you nudge them towards it, they often think it's cool that they can somehow contribute something that others don't know. Now, for example, in the fifth grade in

the first English lesson, it was all about how we say "hello" to each other in the world. (Transcript Interview Germany_English, Pos. 35-36)

It is, therefore, very different how pupils themselves integrate their multilingualism. The teacher does not say whether she teaches English with a monolingual focus.

The fact that the teacher perceives multilingualism as an opportunity and an important skill for the future was already made clear in the introduction to this chapter. He does not make any further statements about multilingualism as an opportunity. In the context of communication between pupils during an exchange via WhatsApp, which is made possible by multilingualism, however, he problematizes and gives examples where this has led to problems. However, he qualifies his statement and points out, and this clearly refers to digitalization and less to multilingualism, that these problems already existed before such digital communication channels. The advantages that result from multilingual communication can also be reversed and pose a problem. However, this relates less to multilingual communication in school lessons.

When asked whether she has ever perceived multilingualism as a challenge, the German teacher's statement emphasizes multilingualism and its opportunities. She replies: "I can't think of any off the top of my head" (Transcript Interview Germany_English, pos. 34). In her answer, she leaves open whether it can be fundamentally challenging but emphasizes that she cannot think of any direct arguments that speak in favor of multilingualism as a challenge. The clear statement that she perceives multilingualism as a benefit speaks in favor of a positive perception of multilingualism as an opportunity. Like the Spanish teacher, the German teacher would like to pass on the perception of multilingualism as an opportunity to her pupils:

IS: Mhm, okay. What is your aim when you use multilingualism in the classroom?

TI: To raise awareness of the fact that languages help us to communicate in the world, especially in today's global world. That it makes sense to speak several languages and that it also makes sense to think about the different languages and cultures. (Transcript Interview Germany_English, Pos. 39-40)

This is particularly interesting in the context of multilingualism and digital tools. In the context of artificial intelligence, she describes it as both a challenge and an opportunity:

TI: As an opportunity, if you really use it wisely. If you really say, for example, I'll write my text myself in the foreign language and just let the AI check and revise it. I see it as

an opportunity for the students to get some initial feedback without it being directly in red, as they are used to from exams and from teachers. And then when they look at it a second time after the revision. Then they can actually learn more about it. But of course, that's the hope that the students will then consciously use all of this. Of course, many students don't. (Transcript Interview Germany_English, Pos. 62)

The German teacher makes it clear that the extent to which she uses AI tools in the classroom also depends on age, reason and knowledge about learning. She clarifies that she has not yet consciously used artificial intelligence in the context of multilingualism but adds that this could also be related to the fact that she has only taught fifth and sixth grade students in her language subjects recently. The Spanish teacher also places digital translation tools, some of which are supported by artificial intelligence, in a critical context:

TI: But then I tell them, if you do that, please don't use Google Translator. That's not very, I can't come up with the word, reliable. But then DeepL, for example, or other websites, online translators, programs that can help them. And why not? I can see straight away that they've done that, used something extracurricular. But why not, as long as they can do it later in the exam, so I mean they can repeat it. I just give them the tip, be careful. (Transcript Interview Spain_English, Pos. 36)

Both teachers rely on students using artificial intelligence for learning growth and not as a substitute for their own thinking and learning.

With regard to the use of digital tools, there are differences between the two teachers in the tools they mention. The Spanish teacher emphasizes the advantage of digital whiteboards as opposed to CDs and cassette recorders and, in addition to the translation tools mentioned in the quote above, refers to the hardware from laptops to tablets that students use to send emails. The German teacher refers to programs in addition to artificial intelligence. She mentions Mentimeter, Kahoot, the Microsoft Office 265 program and, more specifically, OneNote, which she uses in class. Critically reflecting, however, she notes that her colleagues at school use digital tools more and more intensively than she does. In the interview, she expresses interest but also skepticism about school and future developments:

TI: I'm curious to see what else will come (laughs). Let me put it this way, I couldn't have imagined ten years ago that we would be as far along as we are now. But well, I really have no idea what's behind it and I'm just amazed at how quickly it's all developed in the meantime. All of a sudden, we're being offered all kinds of opportunities that we can use. That's why I think that schools, which have been slow to develop, are also developing at this speed right now. It's all developing so quickly in the real world, but

schools as a system have generally always been sluggish and are now naturally lagging behind quite a bit. I'm curious to see how this will develop over the next few years and decades.

Even if this quote is not specifically related to multilingualism, it focusses on the potential of digital tools and is, therefore, included here. The teacher makes it clear that she can train herself with the Fobizz program, but has not yet done so with regard to multilingualism, but left the interview with the following take-away: “Yes, I'll have to try it out (laughs), because I didn't actually have any big ones back in English after that” (Transcript Interview Germany_English, Pos. 72).

Inductive Analysis

As part of the analysis, two criteria emerged from the material that appear to be important to discuss in this paper. Firstly, the motivation of the pupils from the teacher's point of view to deal with multilingualism, and secondly, language comparisons in order to address multilingualism in the classroom.

Teachers attribute the pupils' motivation for multilingualism differently. For example, the German teacher sees the motivation of younger pupils in particular to engage with multilingualism as being more about bringing in knowledge of other languages, mostly heritage languages in this context, from home. The teacher from Spain attributes this more to future orientation and the job opportunities that are open to the pupils as a result. This also reflects the social background to migration, which was outlined for both locations in the previous chapter.

Language comparisons as a way of addressing multilingualism were mentioned by both teachers:

TI: So, they can't speak German and so that they don't lose the thread, I mention a few examples in English and say, this is how it is in English, and this is how it is in German. So that they can compare, yes. Or French, if there's a word in German that has a French origin, I mention that too. There are more references. So, I very often go back to other languages in class, including Latin, so that our pupils have a broad view of the multilingualism of Europe. (Transcript Interview Spain_English, Pos. 18)

TI: Now we have Ukrainians in the school, for example. Unfortunately, I don't speak Ukrainian, and, in that sense, I sometimes say: How do you say that in Ukrainian? So that he feels somehow included and the topic doesn't remain so foreign to him. I don't

know how to express it, but rarely. I don't do it that often. (Transcript Interview Spain_English, Pos. 38)

Ti: Yes, of course, depending on the topic we're talking about, I always ask those who I know speak a language other than German at home, for example, how they pronounce it, what they would say. But apart from that, well, if I try to make it clear to them that they shouldn't write youth language and colloquialisms in the exam (laughs), of course that's also part of it. (Transcript Interview Germany_English, Pos. 20)

It can be concluded that integration via a language comparison is a good option for both teachers to integrate pupils with their different languages. Nevertheless, it is important to emphasize here that language comparisons enable students to develop hypotheses about linguistic phenomena through precise observations of individual words and even test themselves. Such comparisons would, therefore, not only serve the acquisition of the target language (which may also be a foreign language, representing vertical language comparisons), but could also contribute to both language awareness and multilingual awareness. Furthermore, they allow teachers to build on students' current knowledge levels and are feasible within classroom instruction.

The teacher from North Rhine-Westphalia places a different emphasis on the topic of heritage languages than the teacher from Seville. This could also be attributed to the differing didactics of foreign language teaching, multilingual pedagogy, and the language teaching approaches specific to the respective L1 (Decke-Cornill & Küster, 2015; Reich, 2014). The teachers themselves also describe a difference in proactivity in their lessons.

Significance and implications for educational practice

In contrast to a study by Panagiotopoulou and von Rosen, which shows that student teachers do not view their own multilingualism as a special resource for (future) teaching, but rather see it as an idealized continuous language separation and consequently advocate monolingualism in the context of German schools (Panagiotopoulou & von Rosen, 2017), two experienced teachers from Seville and North Rhine-Westphalia showed that they view multilingualism as a resource. This is exactly what they want to pass on to their pupils. It became clear that the integration of heritage languages was more of a focus for the German teacher than for the Spanish teacher, which can be contextualized with social developments in migration and multilingualism.

Prediger et al. show that the inclusion of family and heritage languages is also simplified when teachers and pupils speak the same language or pupils with shared family and heritage languages work together using the example of Maths lessons (cf. Prediger et al., 2019, p. 22). However, teachers who themselves do not have any skills in the family languages of the pupils can also take these into account in an appreciative manner and have the learners bring them into the classroom in a targeted manner (Gantefort & Maahs, 2020). The fact that this has already been discussed in the interviews in different contexts makes it clear that the topic of multilingualism and heritage languages is a present and current part of the classroom dialogue for both teachers. This focus on multilingualism must be emphasized positively so that lessons can continue to gain in breadth, depth, richness of methods, deepening of language learning issues, active participation and motivation (Oomen-Welke, 2020) through multilingualism.

The fact that uncertainties in dealing with multilingualism due to challenges⁶ — teachers put themselves in the position of ignorance and unprepared questions (Oomen-Welke, 2002) — were less addressed, cannot only be seen as positive. Rather, it must be critically scrutinized whether only languages that the teacher is familiar with are included in the course of language comparisons. Several aspects speak in favor of including languages that are also unknown to the teacher in the language comparison. For example, Bien-Miller and Wildemann (2021) emphasize that both multilingual and monolingual German pupils benefit from multilingualism in terms of their language awareness.

Another point that emerged from this paper is that teachers should be offered more training and active participation on the topic of multilingualism. Neither of the two teachers was able to present a concept or theory on this topic or describe its main features (without mentioning specific names or the like). This indicates that their knowledge is based on subjective attitudes and their own interest. However, it must be considered that both have been in teaching practice for more than 20 years and have accordingly had other (individual) foci in their teacher training. Supporting teachers even after their training and enabling lifelong learning

⁶ Another aspect of reducing uncertainty is the promotion of a positive error culture or error tolerance. As the topic of dealing with errors is highly complex, reference should only be made here to Käfer's (2022) book *Dealing with errors and their significance for learning success in English lessons*.

— with their individual foci and moreover cross-curricular issues — not only means that scientific concepts can continue to be used, but also that teaching in a globalized world can be carried out by teachers based on the latest techniques and scientific knowledge. In this way, lessons could be structured in a more contemporary, future-orientated and well-founded way for the pupils. This requires not only the interest of individual teachers, but also the appropriate institutional structures to make this possible. Both time and financial factors play a role here.

In addition, the use of digital media in the context of multilingualism is another aspect that needs to be addressed. While both teachers saw the use of translation tools as both an opportunity and a challenge, no other tools were mentioned in the context of multilingualism. This shows that further training opportunities should be created at this point to establish this link. Maahs et al. (2022) illustrate how a link between multilingualism and digitalization can be achieved in practice. They leverage the multimodality and hypermediality of digital texts. By interconnecting various representational formats, they enable learners to exercise individual choice in utilizing their multilingual competencies diversely. For instance, a student lacking written proficiency in Italian can still contribute their oral language skills via an audio recording within the digital editing tool during the collaborative process.

Conclusion and Outlook

The results of the qualitative analysis of two interviews in this paper show that multilingualism and digitalization are perceived and implemented differently in schools in North Rhine-Westphalia and Seville, but that there were nevertheless similarities. It emerged that the teacher from Germany also included internal multilingualism in her considerations, whereas this was not addressed by the teacher from Seville. Instead, the focus there is on external multilingualism, particularly with regard to languages with professional prospects, such as German, French or English (*lingua franca*).

Another key finding is the different perception of the monolingual habitus. While teachers in Germany tend to believe that pupils are strongly characterized by a monolingual perspective and often do not perceive their own multilingualism as a resource, Spanish teachers would rather have a monolingual focus in their German foreign language lessons. Despite these

differences, teachers in both regions see multilingualism primarily as an opportunity for the future.

The study also shows that although digital tools play a role in lessons in both countries, they are often not explicitly related to the promotion of multilingualism. They tend to remain at the dictionary level or are seen as a refusal to work on the part of the pupils (AI solves the tasks). In addition, the use of digital tools in lessons, regardless of multilingualism, is made dependent on the age of the pupils. Moreover, teachers mainly use digital media to design and organize lessons. The targeted use of digital tools to support language comparisons or translanguaging strategies is not mentioned. According to the German teachers, language comparisons to highlight similarities and differences between languages are used more frequently in the context of heritage languages, while according to the Spanish teachers, they are used less or not at all.

In conclusion, it can be stated that further training programs for teachers would be useful both for the comprehensive embedding of multilingualism in the sense of translanguaging and in connection with the meaningful use of digital media in this context. This could also make it possible to create a more comprehensive awareness among pupils about the possibilities of using their multilingualism and their linguistic repertoire and to value this accordingly. In this context, the use of digital tools can have a useful and facilitating effect for both teachers and pupils if they are used in a structured and elaborate manner.

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Annex I: Interview guidelines

Entry into the Interview

- First of all, tell me something about your school and yourself as a teacher (subjects and how long you have been a teacher).

Multilingualism

- I would like to talk to you about multilingualism. Could you tell me what you understand by multilingualism?
- What role does multilingualism play in your everyday school and classroom life?
 - Is it something you have to take into account on a regular basis? If so, in what way?
 - What type of multilingualism is involved? Do the pupils have other heritage languages?
 - How often do you teach students whose main language is not Spanish/German?
- How do you yourself perceive multilingualism in the classroom?
 - To what extent do you see multilingualism as a resource in the classroom?
 - How do you deal with multilingualism as a challenge?
 - Can you give examples of how you make positive use of pupils' multilingualism?
- What goals do you pursue when you use multilingualism in your lessons? Are there specific learning objectives or pedagogical goals that you want to achieve?
- How do you create a learning environment for students whose strongest language is not the language of instruction?
- What methods or strategies have you developed to help these students?
- Do you also use comparisons between languages (e.g. between Spanish/German and the students' heritage languages) in your lessons?

Digitalization

- What role do digital tools play in your lessons, especially with regard to multilingual students?
 - Do you use digital tools especially to integrate different languages?

- What influence does increasing digitalization have in the handling of multilingualism in your lessons?
 - Does it have a simplifying or aggravating effect?
 - What opportunities and challenges do you see with regard to the use of digital tools and support multilingual pupils?
 - Do you see new opportunities or uncertainties?
- How do you see future developments in dealing with multilingualism and increasing digitalization? E.g. expected changes in the next few years and effects on action

Personal concepts and theories

- How would you describe your personal approach to dealing with multilingualism in the classroom? Are there any theories or approaches that guide your actions?

Annex II: Transcription according to Kuckartz (2007)

The rules of this transcription system are based on Kuckartz (2007, p. 43).

- It is transcribed literally. Pronunciation deviations due to dialects are not transcribed.
- The text is approximated to written German and therefore smoothed.
- All information that allows conclusions to be drawn about an interviewee is anonymized.
- Clear, longer pauses are marked by ellipsis (...).
- Particularly emphasized terms are marked by capitalization. This rule deviates from Kuckartz due to legibility after coding.
- Approving or confirming utterances of the interviewer (Mhm, Aha etc.) are not transcribed as long as they do not interrupt the flow of speech of the interviewee.
- Interjections by the other person are placed in brackets.
- Any sounds made by the interviewee that support or clarify the statement (such as laughter or sighs) are noted in brackets.
- In contrast to Kuckartz, paragraphs by the interviewee are not marked with an "I", but with the abbreviation IS for interviewing student and TI for teacher interviewed.

Annex III: Coding guidelines

Category	Definition	Coding rule
Internal multilingualism	Internal multilingualism refers to the variants of a language, e.g. dialects.	Multilingualism is clearly related to internal multilingualism such as dialects.
External multilingualism	The term external multilingualism refers to different standard languages.	Multilingualism is clearly related to external multilingualism such as different languages, e.g. Spain, German, English.
Heritage language	The heritage language is understood to be the language that is acquired and used in an uncontrolled family context, usually from birth. The acquisition of the heritage language takes place before or parallel to the acquisition of the language of the majority society.	The teachers distinguish the languages they name according to the type and context of acquisition.
Monolingual habitus	A monolingual habitus describes the orientation towards and the normative preference for a single language as the basis for communication.	The teachers clarify monolingualism as a criterion.
L1	The language that is learnt uncontrolled as a child is considered the first language (L1)	The teachers distinguish the languages they name according to the type and context of acquisition. The L1 can also be named as mother tongue.
L2	A second language (L2) is a newly acquired language that is learnt in everyday life, at work or at school. Instructional support can be added.	The teachers distinguish the languages they name according to the type and context of acquisition.
L3	Languages that are acquired in a controlled manner in a classroom or institutional setting are categorized as foreign languages (L3).	The teachers distinguish the languages they name according to the type and context of acquisition.
Bilingualism	Bilingualism refers to the ability of an individual to speak and understand at least two languages to varying degrees.	Teachers identify bilingualism as an aspect of multilingualism and highlight bilingualism in this context.

	This can include the simultaneous use of the languages in different contexts as well as the ability to switch between the two languages as needed.	
Multilingualism as a chance	Multilingualism is identified as a space of possibilities and an opportunity, with its advantages and benefits emphasized.	Disadvantages are highlighted and, if necessary, named.
Multilingualism as a challenge	Multilingualism as a challenge focuses on problems and disadvantages.	Advantages are highlighted and, if necessary, named.
Digital tools	The effectiveness of technology depends on how it is used.	Teachers name digital tools and describe the ways in which they use them.
Concepts and theories	What background knowledge, concepts, and theories come to mind when they talk about multilingualism and digitalization?	Teachers name concepts or theories, or they express that they do not follow or are not familiar with any specific concept and/or approach.

Annex IV: Transcribed and translated Interview 1 (Spain)

Access the complete transcribed interview 1 via this link:

<https://ruhr-uni-bochum.sciebo.de/s/Ca5noV2jSil7ehM>

Annex V: Transcribed and translated Interview 2 (Germany)

Access the complete transcribed interview 2 via this link:

<https://ruhr-uni-bochum.sciebo.de/s/hzMXyHzd7DM6zRA>

Teaching Philosophy in Finland: The Role of Educational Technology in High Schools

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Abstract

This paper explores how digitalization of learning spaces affects teaching philosophy in Finnish high schools. As part of the TESTEd project, four teachers in different high schools in Oulu were contacted. They were interviewed about the digitalization of their classrooms and their lessons were observed. Additionally, the core curriculum for general upper secondary education was analyzed. The study aims to analyze how digital tools are integrated into teaching, what challenges arise and what benefits they offer. The findings indicate that Finnish high schools balance traditional and digital teaching methods.

Keywords: Finland, high schools, digitalization, core curriculum, TESTEd, philosophy, education.

Introduction

Why Technology, Philosophy and Finland?

The idea for this project was born one year before participating in TESTEd, when the Professional School of International Education (PiStE) at Ruhr-University Bochum sent me to Finland to study and visit high schools in Oulu. Unfortunately, my first attempt to find willing philosophy teachers in Finland was unsuccessful. Fortunately, TESTEd approved my idea and sent me on a one month stay in Oulu to collect data.

There is an argument to be made that philosophy is particularly suited to investigating the use of technology in high school classrooms. For one, reflection on technology has been part of philosophy since its beginnings, dating back to the ancient Greeks, such as Aristotele (c.f. Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy). Moreover, critical reflection on technology is part of philosophy in universities and secondary schools today. For example, researchers at Ruhr-University Bochum studied how high school students reflect on social media in seminars at the “Schülerlabor” (Richter & Matzke, 2025). Insofar technology and philosophy are interconnected since philosophy emerged.

TESTEd recommended visiting Finland to focus on the cross-cutting issue of “digitalization of classrooms”. Finnish researchers participating in the project are specialized in technology in

the context of education. For example, there is research at University of Oulu about Somekone, a simplified version of Instagram, where high school students learn about social media (Laru et al., 2024) The use of technology is part of the school core curriculum in Finland, making it reasonable to assume that there would be enough data available.

This paper aims to answer the question how technology influences teaching in Finnish high school philosophy classes. The use of digital tools in philosophy classes is already a topic of research (Bohlmann et al., 2023), but there is still a research gap in understanding how teachers integrate technology into their philosophy lessons in high school. The exploration is threefold, beginning with more abstract concepts and concluding with the investigation of more concrete materials:

1. What does the Finnish curriculum state about the goals of philosophy, and how does it incorporate the use of technology?
2. How do teachers view the use of technology in the classroom? What are their goals in teaching philosophy and how does technology improve or affect these goals?
3. How is technology concretely used in regular teaching practices?

Methodology

The methodology is qualitative and aims to explore the different aspects of digitalization in the Philosophy classroom. It employs different methods to generate knowledge about Finnish high school philosophy teaching. First, an analysis of the core curriculum regarding the integration of technology in the classroom will be conducted. Secondly, semi-structured interviews were conducted with four philosophy teachers to gain insights into their perspective on the use of technology. Thirdly, philosophy lessons were observed and different technologies were documented via photographic documentation. The teachers were observed once a week in their high school classes. The classes were philosophy courses one or two (see next chapter) at the end of the teaching period. By combining these methods, this study provides a more comprehensive understanding of the use of technology in Finnish classrooms.

Philosophy as a high school subject

Philosophy in high schools in Finland will be analyzed based on two important papers:

1. The National Core Curriculum for general upper secondary education 2019; written by the Finnish National Agency for Education
2. The long history of philosophy as a school subject in Finland: Continuities and Controversies; written by Tuukka Tomperi

The first paper shows the goals and tasks for each subject at high schools, while also formulating general goals, e.g. the goals of using digital tools in high schools. The second paper is a research paper that describes the history of philosophy as a school subject and its role today.

Philosophy in Finnish high schools dates back to the 16th Century, although its meaning developed over time. In the beginning the topics were broad but they became more specialized over the centuries. It became less important in the curriculum but that changed in the last century. Since 1994, philosophy has been a compulsory subject in Finnish high schools. Tomperi states:

The main point of the article has become now clear: in one way or another, philosophy has been present in Finnish upper secondary schools without a break throughout the history of formal education. Interpretations of the nature and function of the subject have varied, and sometimes it has been optional or taught only in some forms of upper secondary education, but at no point has it disappeared from upper secondary education completely. (Tomperi, 2024)

Today high school in Finland is a three-year program and two courses of philosophy are compulsory. The first course covers classical philosophy, e.g. the philosophy of Socrates or Nietzsche. The second one is about ethics, e.g. animal ethics. After this, students can take two additional philosophy courses. The third course covers social philosophy, e.g. political ideals or social contracts. The fourth course is about truth, e.g. theories of truth and scientific methods. Each course is worth two credit points. One credit equals 19 times 45 minutes lessons. The courses are finished with an (online-)exam or presentation, which are graded in Finland from 4 to 10. Grade 4 means failed, while 10 means excellent (National Core Curriculum).

The curriculum of Finland specifically describes the role of technology in a learning environment: integrating technology in the (philosophy-)classroom, teachers must consider “the students’ different backgrounds and capabilities, interests, views, and individual needs as well as the requirements set by the future and the world of work [...]” (p. 15)

Also, the curriculum emphasized digital literacy:

The students are guided in utilizing digital learning environments, learning materials, and tools in acquiring, processing, and evaluating as well as producing and sharing information. Individual progress, personal learning paths, and competence development can also be supported by offering students opportunities for completing online studies. (p. 15)

Looking into the National Core Curriculum for general upper secondary education 2019 from the Finnish national agency for education, there are five pages (pp. 242-247) dedicated to describe the role of philosophy in high schools. One of the tasks of teaching philosophy is “critical thinking”. The competences Philosophy should teach:

- Interaction competence
- Well-being competence
- Multidisciplinary and creative competence
- Societal competence
- Ethical and environmental competence
- Global and cultural competence

Under “General objectives of instruction of philosophy” the skills are acquired “within the tradition of philosophy and applied to current issues” (p. 242).

These competencies highlight that philosophy education in Finland is not just about knowledge, but also about developing skills for our complex world. They mix knowledge about historical philosophy with critical thinking skills to develop different competences.

The Interviews

The interviews were conducted at the schools before any classroom visits took place. The teachers all have attained significant levels of education: two of them having a PhD, and one teacher won a best (religion-)teacher award in Finland. All teachers share the same subject

combination in their teaching: Philosophy, Religion and Psychology. All teachers have at least ten years of teaching experience. The interviews provided insight into the perspectives of Finnish high school teachers. Their answers will be categorized in the group's *main goal of teaching philosophy, openness to new technology, awareness of negative effects, students as digital natives and teaching methods*.

On the **main goal of teaching philosophy**:

The final goal, in the end, is that the students are becoming themselves. This is what I mentioned in the beginning. If you have taught for a long time, you see students in adult life and then they don't come to thank you that it was good to know what Aristoteles said or certain specific ideas. It's not that kind of thing. It's the idea that they have really evolved themselves and they have found the direction of their life. That's what they come to. I would say it's also the final main goal in teaching philosophy. (Interview 1)

The main goal is that those students will become independent thinkers. They are critical, but still open to new challenges. They are the future of the world. For example, climate change and things like that. They must think and act. (Interview 4)

I mean, the first thing that comes to mind is critical thinking. [...] Really be able to appreciate the other person perspective. I wish we will also teach this alongside with critical thinking. (Interview 3)

The answer of Interview 1 is interesting, because of its different focus on the main goal. Comparing it to the competences in the Core Curriculum, it is strongly connected to the well-being competence. Philosophy education is seen as a space where students not only develop cognitive abilities but also emotional and social competencies, which help students to build their own beliefs and evolve into responsible individuals. The other two answers focus on different forms of critical thinking, they have a stronger focus on ethical and societal competence. Philosophy can help understand complex challenges such as climate change and encourage critical thinking while remaining open to new ideas.

On **openness to new technology**:

I think that we need to keep this kind of critical stance or critical position, in how much and in how to use technology, but at the same time, it shouldn't be too critical, you should use new methods and ways. But, you know, keep common sense in it. Technology should not replace humans. (Interview 1)

Of course, if they have some question, they really want to know something about it and just try to find it out. Artificial intelligence. It's OK for me. (Interview 2)

And the role of technology is pretty large. But still, it depends about your pedagogical ideas and action. (Interview 3)

I would say, you have pedagogical responsibility to build the teaching in the way you like it the best, and for example myself, I use of course technology, but I try to also a little bit limit it, because it's not good for thinking always." (Interview 3)

Nowadays, it's quite remarkable, because all of the books are in computers or in the Internet. Before, it wasn't like that we had paper books, which they could read. (Interview 4)

I also say that: now put your computers down like the laptops, the covers down and put your phones away. But I also think that it's really useful, because Internet offers so many possibilities to learn more than it says in the books or I can tell them, like in this ethics course. (Interview 4)

The teachers express a critical view on technology. They point out advantages but also remain critical. They want to use technology only in a pedagogical context and switch between digital and analog learning scenarios. Technology should be embraced as a tool for enhancing learning, but it should not replace human interaction. The teachers have witnessed the introduction of different technologies in the classroom and adapted accordingly to the needs of the students. Interestingly, the risk associated with technology, such as distraction, is recognized by students. They express a desire for teachers to alternate between digital and analogue modes. This shows that both teachers and students recognize the importance of managing technology in education.

On **awareness of negative effects:**

And indeed, if you use printed books, on average students say something like this, because if you have the digital book, one main reason is: it's so easy then to "I will click that page", "I will play that game a bit", so it's distracting and it's more difficult to focus and more difficult to get this kind of total picture. (Interview 1)

But that's often said: "We are doing it because of digitalization", but in reality, they are doing it because they think it's cheaper. (Interview 1)

I wish there would be a method to block all distractions. That they would only focus on: What is the issue of the class? Because if it's any bigger group or bigger class, some use 30%, 50%, 60%, 70% of the class period time in just being in there, you know, playing a game or being on social media. And they themselves see that's a problem that they do it. (Interview 3)

My feeling is the kind of that it's so easy just to read not so deeply text. You just have a quick look and then go again to another subject. So perhaps, it's a bit, not so profoundly reading so. (Interview 2)

So, there's a big, big danger that you are just following some sort of digital forms and you are concentrating in different kind of digital forms like Teams and like digital textbooks and these kind of things and you aren't any more like, really deeply thinking those issues by yourself and we are not so strongly in practical cases. (Interview 3)

In quite many high schools we have digital textbooks, and we have these national exams, so that would guide in some way at least how technology is used in practical way in finish high schools. At least teachers' independence has been quite big value, so teachers can quite strongly choose in what way they are using. So, there can't be some sort of values and systems, but still, there's freedom for teachers at least. Today it's not so strong anymore as it has been earlier, but still, it's existing. (Interview 3)

Now I can't remember, but it was some specific theory, that I asked ChatGPT to explain and give some examples and they weren't even near the right, but sometimes. (Interview 4)

I think we are like in the peak of the technology. I think we are living in a peak, you know, like a peak of a mountain of the using of technology right now. And I do expect that we are going back to traditional ways of teaching. How do I say it? I think many of these pedagogical manners with some they come and go, and I think that we are now living in an era with fancy technology and everything too much in my opinion. (Interview 4)

The answers show that the teachers reflect their use of technology in the classroom and are aware of the risks and drawbacks of using technology. These answers indicate that while teachers see the potential benefits of technology, they are also mindful of the distracting effects. Another important point raised is that the use of digital exams diminishes the autonomy of the teachers, because they must use digital tools to prepare students for the exam. As digital exams are often scheduled for the end of the term, there is pressure on the teachers to use digital tools to prepare students for this kind of exam. Furthermore, some teachers sense that we may be reaching a peak in the use of technology in education today, suggesting that more traditional teaching methods may become more important again in the future.

On views of **students as digital natives**:

Then on another level, they talk about digital natives. That is the generation. Not everyone. For example, if they have to do a PowerPoint presentation or Word

document essay, in upper secondary they usually know it OK, but in the lower secondary, like grade 7,8,9, they don't know how to use them. (Interview 1)

And of course most students, they still feel that this human. That learning is not just about the technique or technology. Although besides of information, it is also about the human contact. Which is key in learning this kind of encounter, being in real dialogue. Human to human so. (Interview 1)

Some are very, very prepared. They are better than me. I can ask them what I should do now if I have some problems. There's perhaps a big division between girls and boys. Sometimes some girls are not so interested in computers, but it's not, sometimes they are. But perhaps there is a slight difference. (Interview 2)

Well, it's a good question. Also, some of them are really good ones and some of them aren't so good ones. I would say that students quite often have pretty limited use of technology. These kind of social media issues, but they are not so good to use those deep technological things. (Interview 3)

They need a lot of help with the basic, like how do you use the basic tools? I think they are more familiar with like surfing in the Internet and things like that, but the basic tools when you have to produce products like well-organized text and the headlines. (Interview 4)

The digital skills of high school students vary a lot. The teachers point out that some students experience difficulties when using tools like Word. Especially lower classes struggle a lot. They are good at using social media and looking for information on the internet, but they need a lot of help understanding the different learning software. This observation underscores a discrepancy between the perception of students as digital natives and their actual competencies with learning technologies. Despite being surrounded by technology, many students lack the fundamental skills required to utilize educational tools effectively. Teachers acknowledge that they must allocate additional time to assist students in addressing this discrepancy in their digital literacy skills.

On **teaching methods**:

But if you somehow try to be very digital in your teaching, I think then it can be actually a negative impact. You have somehow to be proficient in it, so that it is beneficial for students. You should use what you feel is beneficial. So even traditional methods without much digital ways of teaching can work very well, if that's what you're comfortable with. You need to find your own balance. (Interview 1)

There are, when we have training days for teachers there's almost always, quite often, some new digital method that they introduced to us, for example Thinglink or some

base where you can cooperate, for example, between different countries, such great materials and there's all sorts of things that if you get into. (Interview 1)

My methods. Of course, there is some frontal teaching, the basics, and then couples discussing things and then some small group things, and sometimes we have some videos which will reflect on. Yeah, like normal. (Interview 2)

I would say, in philosophy it's really important to think things by yourself, write them down. So, think, write and discuss. That's the core. And of course you can use technology. But these three things are the most important ones in teaching and studying philosophy in general. (Interview 3)

So, students have those textbooks in digital world, in teams or have built some sort of learning groups in teams. So, we are using technology, but at the same time I have reorganized questions for them and they need to find those answers for those questions before they come to class. From the textbook and write them down. And when they come to classroom, then they start discussing about those issues. And when they have discussed in small groups, I will explain them the key ideas. And then we are transforming them in some sort of practical cases. So, this is the way, it's certain rhythm how we go forward. (Interview 3)

So, every pedagogical thing what you are using should support this learning and in finish high school learning is understood based on Blooms taxonomy of learning. (Interview 3)

Yes, and we use technology in different ways every day, every lesson. Also, phones. (Interview 4)

But I'm quite traditional teacher because I really do tell them to put the everything away and just listen and make notes like traditionally writing. Write down some notes almost every class. I think that even though the environment has changed, and technology is playing a big role in schools, but I still think that discussing things, especially in philosophy, and focusing on listening and write things down, that those things haven't changed. We as a people haven't changed and our cognitions and ways to learn. They haven't changed that much as this environment of reality. So that's why I like to think myself as a quite traditional teacher, and I have gotten good feedback from the student of that: Thank you, that you have make us to put our phones and computers away. (Interview 4)

The teachers express a variety of views on teaching methods, but they all want to balance traditional and digital approaches. It is important that the teacher is proficient in the relevant technologies. There are still the same concepts: frontal teaching and group discussions, which support interaction and engagement, demonstrating that digital tools are not always necessary and only complement traditional teaching methods. Digital tools have the potential to enhance processes, including critical thinking, written communication, and collaborative

discussion, within the context of the philosophy classroom. Some teachers try to find ways to build technology in pedagogical theories like Bloom's taxonomy. This suggests that the teachers have different approaches to integrate technology in their teaching methods but share the same goals regarding the use of technology.

The classroom observations

Different tools were documented during the observation. The course was designed to prepare the students for a digital exam at the end of the period. The entire exam was conducted digitally. There were different types of questions, ranging from "fill in the blank" to writing an explanation of philosophical terminology. Students answered the questions on their laptops. They had access to the exam platform but not to the internet. The following three figures show examples of the exam questions. Each has been translated into English:

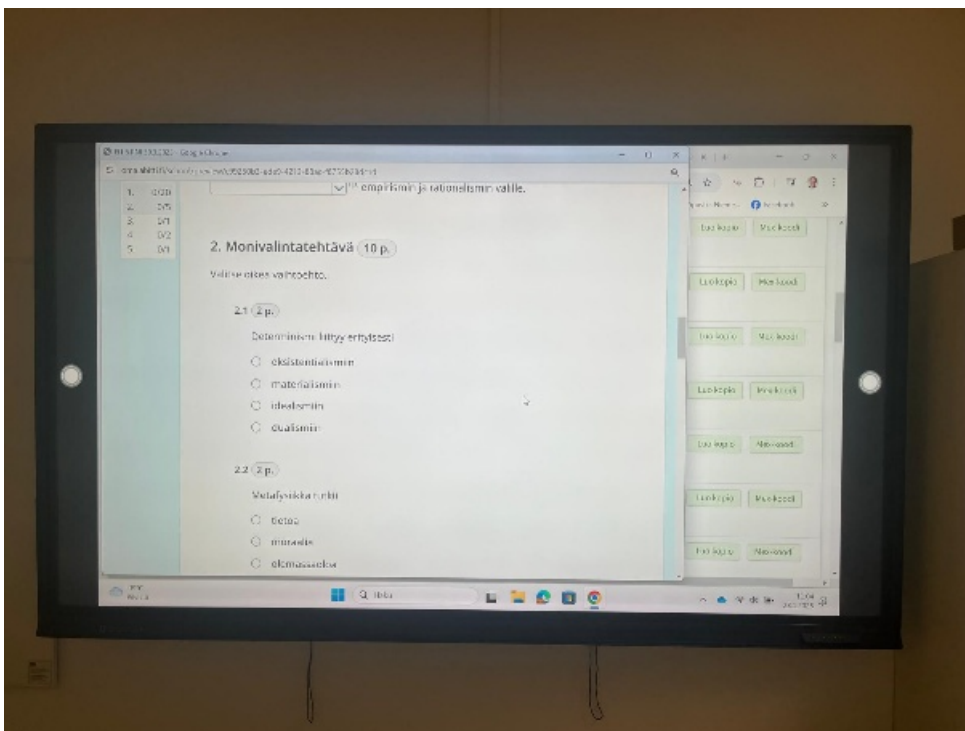


Figure 1: Multiply-Choice Question: "Determinism is particularly related to: existentialism, materialism, idealism or dualism"

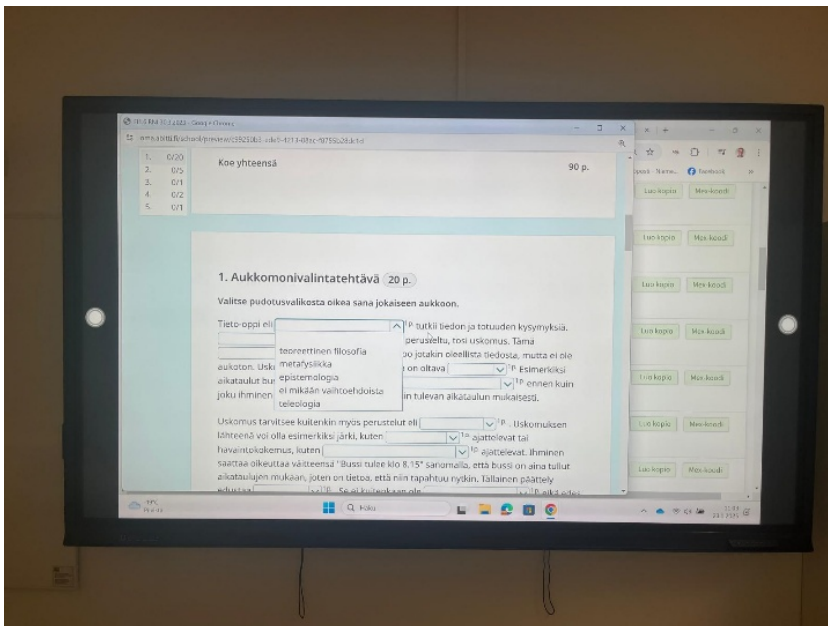


Figure 1: Fill the blank: “Epistemology, also [_], studies questions of knowledge and truth.” Answer options: “Theoretical philosophy, metaphysics, epistemology, none of the options, teleology”

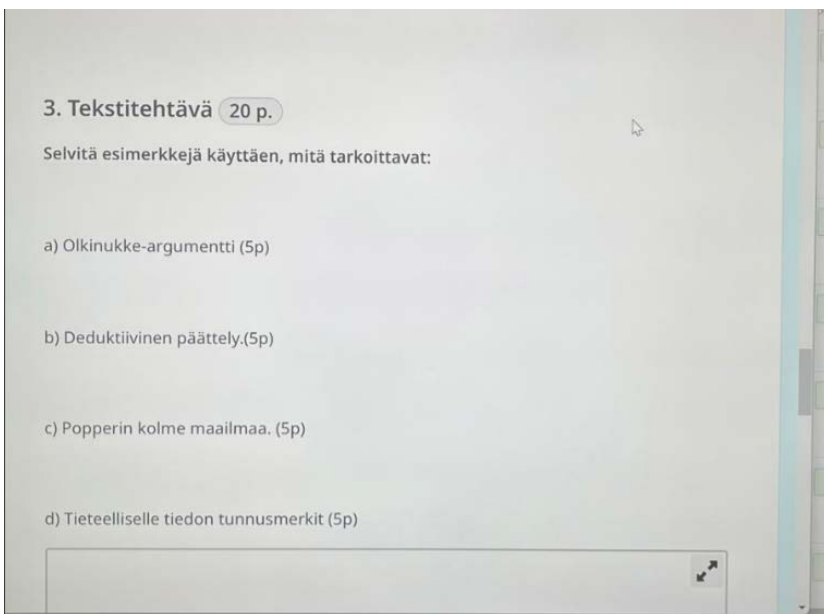


Figure 2: A textbox question: Explain what the following terms mean using examples: a) Straw man argument, b) Deductive reasoning, c) Popper’s three worlds, d) Characteristics of scientific knowledge

Interpretation of Figures 1-3

The example questions indicate a strong focus on factual knowledge about classical philosophy rather than on students writing an argumentative essay. They also reflect a tendency toward standardization and comparability between students. Unlike traditional paper-based exams, digital exams are more efficient and more measurable. However, the mandatory use of digital exams reduces the autonomy of the teachers. The teacher needs to

focus more on exam relevant questions and question types. Although the questions are about philosophy, the students themselves aren't philosophizing, rather they are reproducing philosophical knowledge. There is a tension between the competences outlined in the core curriculum and the structure of the exam, for example using critical thinking or ethical judgment. These examples illustrate a shift in teaching through digitalization. Today, teachers carry a greater responsibility to integrate factual knowledge with competence-based learning. Although the exams are conducted digitally, the actual teaching involves a mix of digital and analog tools. For example, the teachers use a classical textbook:



Figure 3: Pages from the textbook “Ideas” published by Otava Oppiminen. The book was used in all of the observed high schools and was called “the best book” by the interviewed teachers

Almost all students prefer the analog book and like to write on paper:

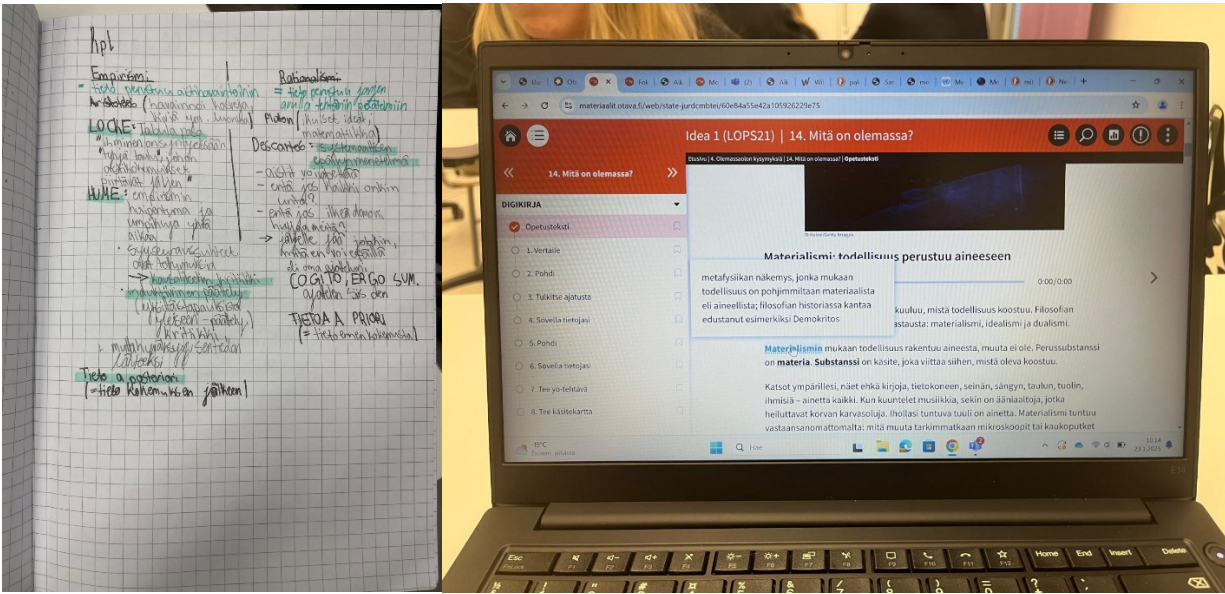


Figure 4: A comparison of empiricism and rationalism. Finnish students use the laptops for the online version of the book. One advantage: Key Words are linked and provide explanations.

Interpretation Figures 4-5

The figures show a learning environment which consists of a mix of digital and analog tools. The materials are expressions of pedagogical decisions and teaching routines. The fact that laptops were used and most students preferred to use the traditional book and regular paper suggests that both teachers and students are media aware. The use of a traditional textbook allows the teachers to switch to an analog setting if the risk of distractions is too high in a classroom. It enhances the “deep thinking” about questions as mentioned in the interviews. The handwritten student notes reflect individual responsibility and self-reflection. In Figure 7 the student is reading an article about materialism, but the student has 16 tabs open in their browser, potential for distraction. The piece of paper does not have the advantage of having key words linked, but also not the disadvantage of being a distraction. The use of both types of textbook shows that teachers are aiming for a pedagogical balance, where technology supports rather than detracts from learning.

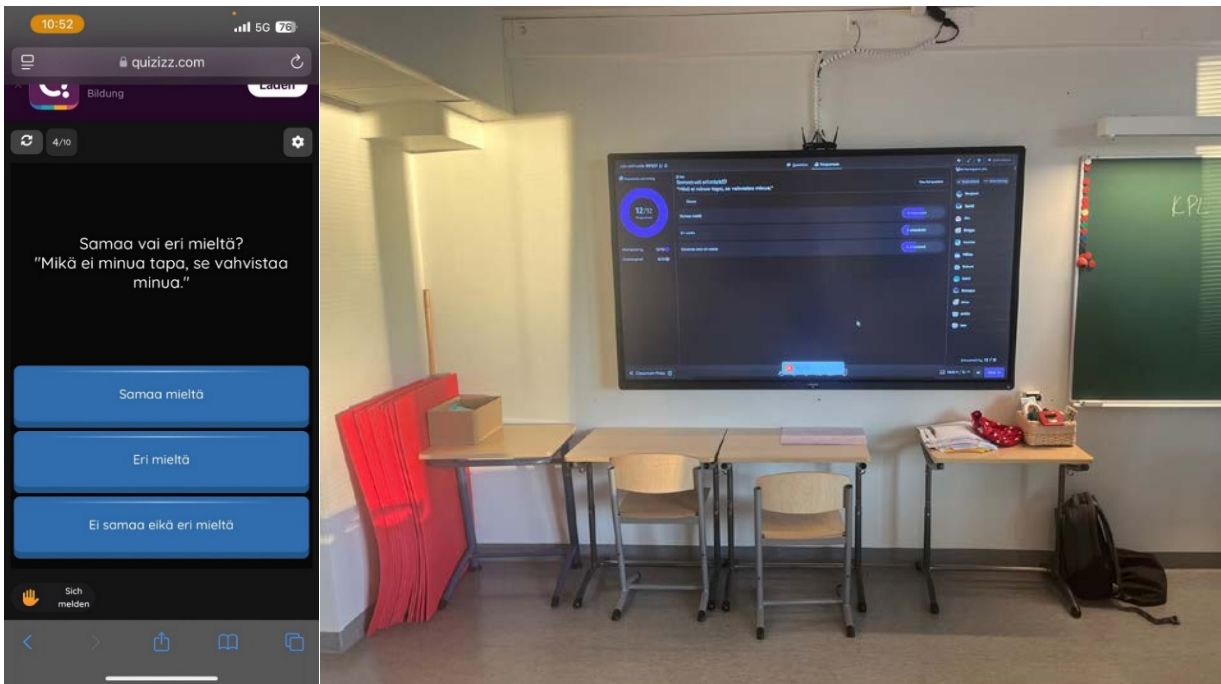


Figure 5: An example of a creative way of using a quiz app: Instead of a question, there is a philosophical statement. And instead of answers the options are: agree/disagree/no opinion. Here: “What doesn’t kill you makes you stronger” by Nietzsche. The students vote anonymously and see the public voting results.

Interpretation of Figure 6

Figure 6 shows the use of the quiz app “Quizizz” in an observed lesson. Students participate in the quiz app via their smartphones. It was the first lesson on Nietzsche and a short video about him was shown beforehand. This is an innovative way of using a quiz app. In the didactics of philosophy, it is always important to make pre-concepts explicit. Pre-concepts can be found in the “pre-judices, ethical intuition, ideologies or emotions” (Thein, 2019). This method encourages the students to participate in Philosophy class and make their pre-concepts explicit, as they see the public voting results and recognize that they share views with others, which makes them more likely to discuss these ideas in class. In this way, the use of the quiz app supports participation and self-reflection. It is an example of how the teachers adapt digital tools to the needs of teaching Philosophy. An anonymous vote with a public result would normally take a lot of time but via the app it only takes a few seconds.



Figure 6: Typical teacher table

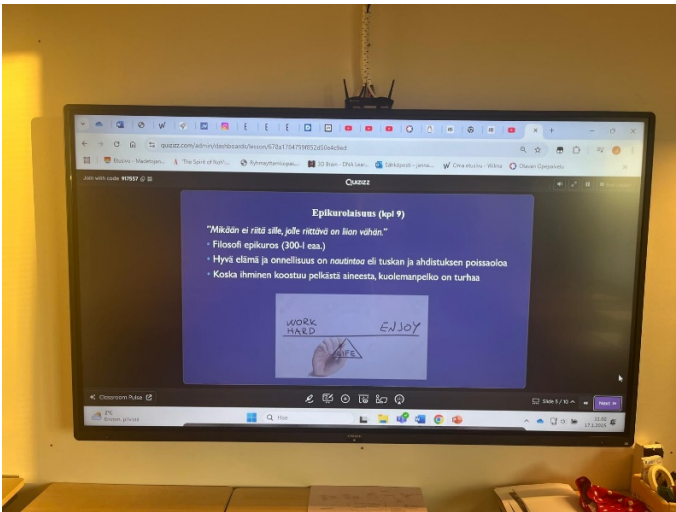


Figure 7: PowerPoint slides about Epicurus

Interpretation of Figures 7-8

Figures 7 and 8 illustrate the mix of digital and analog: The traditional textbook is in use alongside a laptop connected to a whiteboard which displays a PowerPoint presentation on Epicurus suggesting a hybrid teaching model. It reveals an orientation towards flexibility and adaptation. Traditional teaching practices such as listening, writing, and discussion are still present as teachers emphasize, and are seen as an integral part of teaching philosophy. It shows that the classroom is a well-constructed learning environment, where technology is not integrated for its own sake, but as a tool to support philosophical thinking.

Conclusion

By combining all three dimensions of this study; the core curriculum, the interviews and the classroom observations, it shows that technology is used in a highly reflective manner in Finnish philosophy lessons. Teachers recognize the need to use technology in the classroom, but all participants see some dangers or risks of digitalization in education. On the one hand, they point to new ways of teaching that would not be possible in an analog classroom. On the other hand, they see a problem in the reduction of teachers' autonomy. Namely, that digital teaching has now become almost mandatory, as exams are now conducted digitally.

Another topic is the ability to think critically, which students must learn. Students need to learn how to use digital tools responsibly, a process that requires affordability. The Core Curriculum highlights the need to develop digital competencies. There are many advantages to digitalization: high school students have almost unlimited access to information and can utilize digital textbooks and learning software. Learning is more individualized and there are new ways for students to participate in the classroom via Teams or Knowledge Apps. But there are daily challenges, e.g. the distractions caused by social media or mobile games. Teachers want to find a balance between traditional and digital teaching methods. Thus, the role of the teacher is again (or always) changing. Teachers must now integrate a whole new set of competencies to teach philosophy successfully in the digital classroom.

Outlook

The observations will be used for a master's thesis, tackling the topic from another perspective. A survey will be conducted among Finnish high school students to gather insights into their views on specific digital tools. Since this study focuses on observing actual philosophy lessons, it could contribute to open educational resources (OER), making the observed philosophy lessons accessible for more teachers.

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Europe Through Language: A Path to Cultural Awareness and Critical Thinking. Didactic proposal contrasting German and Spanish contexts

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Abstract

This project, part of the TESTEd initiative, aims to promote the value of linguistic diversity within the European Union to encourage active citizenship. In line with the Sustainable Development Goals, it seeks to cultivate cultural respect and critical thinking among students aged 10 to 12. Inspired by Harvard's Project Zero, the program employs thinking routines to enhance understanding of cultural and linguistic diversity. The intervention will take place in Spain and Germany, allowing for a comparison of results in culturally distinct contexts, while analyzing the impact of Spain's multilingualism compared to Germany's single official language.

Resumen

Este proyecto, que forma parte del proyecto TESTEd, pretende promover el valor de la diversidad lingüística en la Unión Europea para impulsar la ciudadanía activa. En consonancia con los Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible, busca cultivar el respeto cultural y el pensamiento crítico entre los estudiantes de 10 a 12 años. A partir del Project Zero de Harvard, el programa emplea rutinas de pensamiento para mejorar la comprensión de la diversidad cultural y lingüística. La intervención tendrá lugar en España y Alemania, lo que permitirá comparar los resultados en contextos culturalmente opuestos, a la vez que se analiza el impacto del carácter multilingüe de España en comparación con la lengua oficial única de Alemania.

Introduction

This research proposes an educational intervention within the framework of the TESTEd project (Towards a European Syllabus in Teacher Education), focusing on linguistic diversity in the European Union. Its goal is to promote active citizenship by emphasizing the cultural significance of languages beyond mere communication. Aligned with Sustainable Development Goal 16 (peace, justice, and strong institutions), the initiative aims to foster cultural respect and critical thinking among students aged 10-12. Drawing inspiration from Harvard's Project Zero educational approach, which incorporates *Thinking Routines* and Bloom's Taxonomy, the program seeks to enhance understanding of cultural and language diversity, as well as democratic values within the EU. The program will be implemented in two

different contexts — Spain and Germany — to compare results across varied cultural environments. Based on the plurilingual character of Spain, as opposed to the context of a single official language in Germany, the didactic proposal will analyze and compare the outcomes achieved.

Theoretical Background

Linguistic Diversity and Educational Systems in Spain and Germany

Linguistic diversity plays a crucial role in shaping national identities and educational frameworks. Spain and Germany represent two contrasting approaches to language policy within education, influenced by historical, sociopolitical, and demographic factors.

In Spain, although plurilingualism is protected by the Constitution, the reality in most of the non-bilingual Autonomous Communities is far from plurilingualism in the classroom. Spain's decentralized education system allows regional governments to implement their own language policies, particularly in autonomous communities with co-official languages. In these regions, bilingual education is the norm, with students learning both Spanish and the regional language as part of the curriculum. However, in other parts of the country linguistic diversity is less prominent, with Spanish remaining the dominant and sometimes exclusive medium of instruction. Spain's regional language policies foster a strong sense of linguistic identity, but they also generate political debates regarding national unity and cultural heritage (Reventa, 2005). Studies indicate that students in bilingual regions of Spain tend to have more positive attitudes towards linguistic diversity compared to those in monolingual regions (Siguan, 1994). There is tension between Spanish and regional languages, as a regional language can become a source of discord, acting as a factor of exclusion for some and a marker of identity for others (Pallach, 2000).

Germany operates under a federal system where each *Bundesland* determines its own language policies (similar to Spain). The migration situation in Germany is significant: in 2017, approximately 19.3 million people had a migrant background. Nearly one in four residents has parents or grandparents who emigrated from another country, and one in three German families has foreign roots (Foroutan, 2019, p. 36). While German is prioritized in educational

settings, heritage language programs exist to support students from multilingual backgrounds. Although discourses related to language education are constantly evolving and highlighting different aspects, the effective consideration of learners' multilingualism in schools and lessons has not yet been sufficiently implemented didactically (Wiese, Tracy & Sennema, 2020). However, multilingualism in Germany is often framed as a challenge related to integration rather than as a cultural asset. The focus on integration often results in policies that prioritize German language acquisition over the maintenance of heritage languages, leading to challenges in fostering an inclusive multilingual identity among students (Gogolin, 1997).

Harvard's *Project Zero*: Thinking Routines and Cognitive Development

Harvard's *Project Zero* provides an educational framework that emphasizes inquiry-based learning and metacognition. One of its key components is the use of Thinking Routines, structured cognitive strategies designed to promote deep reflection and analytical thinking (Ritchhart, Church, & Morrison, 2011). These routines help students examine linguistic diversity from multiple perspectives, fostering greater awareness of the cultural dimensions of language. The pedagogical foundation of this project aligns with Bloom's Taxonomy (Bloom, 1956), which categorizes cognitive skills from basic recall to higher-order thinking. By encouraging students to analyze and evaluate linguistic diversity, the implementation of Thinking Routines supports the development of critical reflection skills that go beyond rote memorization. The upper levels of Bloom's taxonomy -evaluation and creation- are particularly relevant in fostering metacognitive awareness about language and identity (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001).

Research questions

In order to frame the project and organize the main objectives to be achieved, three fundamental research questions are defined. Based on the subject matter of the study, the main research questions are as follows:

- Q1: Does the implementation of the Harvard's *Project Zero* help students to develop awareness of linguistic diversity in the EU?

- Q2: Does it foster an understanding of the link between languages and culture?
- Q3: Are there differences between a Spanish school and a German school?

Two centers will be selected where the teaching proposal will be put into practice. The methodology used will be the same, so that the information gathering processes are parallel. A chronogram will be drawn up to organize the activities in the centers, in particular to organize the weekly objectives during the research stay.

Table 1: Overview Research stay

Timeline	Goals and Achievements
First Week	Observations in class and interviews of the teacher (perception of linguistic diversity and relevance of different languages).
Second Week	Pre-test with students: background information on students and background knowledge of linguistic and cultural diversity and knowledge of the EU.
Third Week	Implementation: during two class sessions (each of 45 minutes), through the use of Thinking routines from <i>Project Zero</i> , adapted to the context and theme of the intervention. Compilation of the students' work.
Fourth Week	Post-test with students: same questions as pre-test, in order to be able to observe changes in the students' conception of European linguistic diversity.

Data Collection

Educational context

The target age for the application of the didactic proposal is 10-12 years. For this reason, a primary school (CEIP) in Spain and a *Gesamtschule* in Germany were chosen. Both pupils correspond to the same academic year (6th grade of Primary School in Spain and 10th grade of Secondary School in Germany) and the schools chosen are those where the other language is taught as a foreign language (Spanish school where German is taught as a foreign language and German school where Spanish is taught as a foreign language). In both cases, the main classroom teachers are foreign language teachers, which reinforces their relationship - and possibly their sensitivity - to linguistic diversity in the classroom.

CEIP Huerta de Santa Marina is located in the northern part of the historic center of Seville. Classes are taught from the first year of nursery school to the sixth year of primary school and at present there are two classes in each level. The school has around 500 pupils, 10% of

whom have a nationality other than Spanish or dual nationality. Another 10% of pupils are second-generation immigrants, with one of their parents having a nationality other than Spanish. This situation fosters a multicultural environment in the school, where the management team seeks to promote respect and learn about diversity. Since the 2012-2013 school year, the school has been participating in the Learning Community organizational model, in which the fundamental pillars are teamwork, collaboration and inclusion. The organization of the school as a Learning Community allows families to be involved in the decisions and development of the school, where constant evaluation of the functioning of the school is essential in order to move forward together. During the development of the teaching proposal, my reference group was Class 6B, where the tutor is a bilingual German specialist and the school's innovation coordinator. The 25 pupils in the group are very heterogeneous and have different levels of maturity. It is a class with a lot of interest and curiosity, where the age of the pupils makes it easy to delve deeper into complex topics.

Erich-Fried-Gesamtschule in Herne is a comprehensive school with a very diverse student body. It combines different types of school leaving certificates depending on the type of study that the students wish to pursue, which results in a large number of students attending this school. They have strong educational inclusion programs and emphasize social relations in the classroom, understanding, cooperation and peer support. Various foreign language programs are offered, as well as Erasmus+ programs fostering language and culture awareness in classrooms. There is a great deal of cultural diversity, and the school tries to work on this through different initiatives -perhaps the Turkish AG (group activity) for native speakers offered in the first years of the school is worth mentioning as a highlight-. During my stay, I attended several classes to better understand the context of the school, but I was mainly in 10. Klasse. This class was taught by two foreign language teachers (Spanish and French). The class consisted of 25 students with very different levels. In general, there was a very high level of activity, so it was often difficult to maintain attention and quiet in the classroom. However, they all participated in the experience in a very positive way, contributing to their visions and points of view.

Didactic proposal and presentation of the surveys

The classroom is divided into four heterogeneous groups in which all pupils work together to achieve a common goal. The proposal consists of two sessions of 45 minutes each, divided into Languages and Cultures and Languages of the European Union. The first is of a more general nature, introducing the topic and trying to attract the students' attention and to see their previous ideas and reflections. The second session deals with EU language policy, linguistic diversity and its impact on different contexts. This is done by means of documents with texts to support the information guided by the teacher (Annex I), as well as classroom presentations and adaptations of the *3,2,1 Bridge* and *Inner Circles of Action* Thinking Routines (Annex II). Also, some *linguistic pills* will be added to deal with topics such as minority or endangered languages in order to stimulate the interest of the students. At all times, the students' preconceptions are discussed, and their answers and ideas are shared, so that even though there are five small groups, the whole class acts as one big group.

In addition to the implementation of the proposal, two identical questionnaires will be administered to the students at the beginning and at the end of the process. They consist of three open-ended questions on which they are required to give their opinion in writing. The main objective is to study whether the students' answers vary with the implementation, and also to observe and analyze previous ideas. Secondly, two teachers are selected who are either class tutors or who are in contact with the students in this class for several hours a day. The teachers' questionnaires consist of a Likert scale with different statements on linguistic diversity, as well as a short interview (open questions) to find out more about the group of pupils, their linguistic history, the importance given to cultural diversity in the classroom. These questions will allow us to build up a more detailed picture of the pupils, which will enable us to assess diversity in the classroom and how it is dealt with during lessons.

Evaluation Process

The questionnaires for both teachers and students are designed to be anonymous, with each participant assigned an identification number that only they know. This approach allows for comparison of results to identify patterns and similarities between the pre- and post-implementation questionnaires. For the teacher questionnaires, the questions related to the

students' context will be compared to verify any regularities. Additionally, questions regarding teaching practices will be analyzed to identify similarities and differences in how linguistic and cultural diversity is addressed in the classroom. Finally, the teachers' perspectives will also be compared to determine whether their ideological positions on this issue are aligned or if there are differing viewpoints. As the students' questionnaires consist of open-ended questions, they are analyzed by grouping the answers. Additionally, they are examined based on two variables: their origin (Spanish or German) and the timing (before or after the didactic proposal).

Results

Teacher surveys

The results of the teacher questionnaires indicate a significant level of linguistic diversity in Germany. Out of 25 pupils, 12 have a second mother tongue, including Polish and Turkish. Some of these pupils have learned German as a foreign language within a German context. Additionally, there are two pupils with roots from Bosnia and Sri Lanka, which further enhances the multicultural environment in the classroom. Both teachers view cultural and linguistic diversity as essential to their teaching practice and incorporate the traditions of their students' cultures into their lessons. They also agree that languages are a fundamental part of our identity and believe that embracing linguistic diversity strengthens democracy, creating a very positive atmosphere in the classroom.

Language diversity is perceived positively by Spanish teachers, who appreciate multilingualism in the classroom. They believe it allows them to address essential educational values such as respect and the promotion of coexistence within the community. This perspective empowers students with multiple cultural backgrounds, encouraging them to view their diversity as a valuable asset that enriches the school environment. In this context, four students speak a second mother tongue in addition to Spanish (specifically German and French), while one student has learned Spanish as a foreign language (with Chinese as their mother tongue). The teachers also mentioned a project they conducted last year involving transmedia narratives, where they explored the family histories of the neighborhood and discussed themes related to identity and language.

Students Surveys

The results of the student questionnaires have been organized in a tabular format to facilitate a clear understanding and comparison of the data, given its extensive nature.

Table 2: Overview of student answers on the question “How do you deal with the diversity of languages in your class”

1	How do you deal with the diversity of languages in your class?		N ⁷
First time	German School	Positively, referring to linguistic diversity as something positive or even to the possibility of being able to learn other languages spoken in class.	11
		Neutral response, not highlighting the linguistic diversity in the classroom as a positive factor but not making any negative statements either.	8
		[Students with another mother tongue] They always try to speak German so that their classmates can understand them, even if they speak another language at home.	2
	Spanish School	Positive assessment of linguistic diversity in the classroom, with reference to its relationship to and importance for cultural diversity.	8
		Linguistic diversity is seen as positive because it enhances pupils' language learning.	11
		Positive feedback without much reasoning.	6
Second time	German School	Linguistic diversity is conceived as normal, commonplace and everyday. There are no value judgements, neither positive nor negative.	6
		Linguistic diversity is seen as positive: culture, identity, learning (for all learners).	15
	Spanish School	Linguistic diversity is valued as a positive factor linked to cultures.	14
		Linguistic diversity as a positive factor for communication, linguistic variety in the classroom as a positive feature for students learning foreign languages.	4
		Positive feedback without much reasoning.	3

⁷ The total number of students who have responded in this way (N).

Table 3: Overview of student answers on the question “Why are languages important”

2	Why are languages important?		N
First time	German School	Communication with other people as a fundamental reason for the importance of languages.	12
		Each country has its own language and therefore when we go to a country, we have to adapt ourselves to its language.	2
		Languages are important for the individual, for their own knowledge and job possibilities in the future.	3
		Consideration of languages to be important to be able to communicate when travelling with people in a foreign country.	2
		Lack of knowledge about the answer.	2
	Spanish School	Languages for communication while traveling abroad.	8
		Communication in a broader context -emphasizes understanding, connecting with others, and cultural learning-.	16
	Second time	German School	Speaking many languages is good for an individual because it enables communication with more people and understanding the world better.
Speaking many languages is positive to get to know other realities (cultures) in the world and to be able to communicate.			7
Spanish School		Languages that are linked to cultures: communication in the broadest sense of the term.	8
		Languages are essential for effective communication and understanding.	14

Table 4: Overview of student answers on the question “Do you think that taking an interest in other people’s languages and cultures is connected to respecting others? Do democracy and linguistic diversity have anything in common”

3	Do you think that taking an interest in other people’s languages and cultures is connected to respecting others? Do democracy and linguistic diversity have anything in common?		N
First time	German School	Democracy is about expressing our opinions and views and reaching agreement. In order to achieve this, we need language.	12
		Lack of knowledge about the answer.	7
		Doubts (no clear answer).	1
		These are unrelated concepts.	1
	Spanish School	Interest in other cultures is viewed as a form of respect and appreciation.	7

		Positive feedback without much reasoning.	10
		Generally positive feedback with some doubts involved, such as "I think," "I guess," or "maybe".	4
		If we do not respect and value other languages and cultures, we contribute to a process of discrimination.	1
		Not necessarily related.	2
Second time	German School	Democracy is about expressing our opinions and views and reaching agreement. In order to achieve this, we need language.	19
		Lack of knowledge about the answer.	2
	Spanish School	Interest in other cultures is viewed as a form of respect and appreciation.	12
		Positive feedback without much reasoning.	5
		Generally positive feedback with some doubts involved, such as "I think," "I guess," or "maybe".	4

Conclusion and Discussion

When applying Harvard's *Project Zero Thinking Routines*, students in Spain and Germany demonstrated an increased awareness of the connections between language, culture, and democracy. Following the implementation of these routines, all questionnaire responses showed a slight improvement. Although Germany exhibits greater linguistic and cultural diversity, which is not reflected in its legislative framework, the overall results indicate that promoting respect for linguistic diversity is crucial for developing democratic values and critical thinking skills. The educational intervention effectively enhanced students' recognition of linguistic diversity as an integral part of both personal identity and social cohesion. These results underscore the importance of ongoing efforts to integrate multilingualism and cultural respect into school curricula. To build on the findings of this study, future teaching proposals should continue to incorporate Thinking Routines aimed at strengthening the understanding of linguistic diversity. One potential initiative could be the creation of the *Babel's Book of European Languages*, which would serve as an Open Educational Resource (OER) applicable in any EU country.

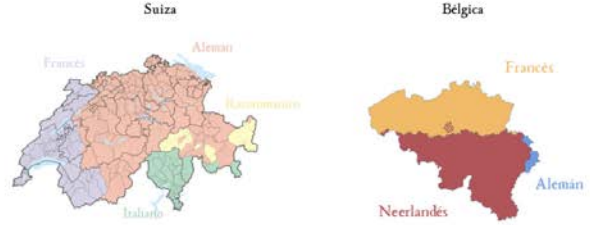
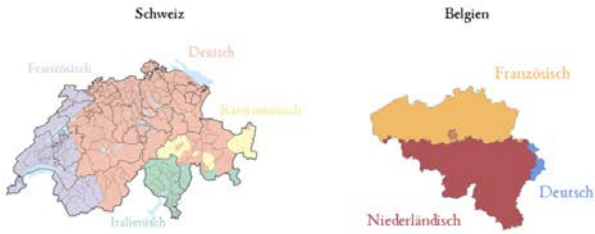
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Annex I

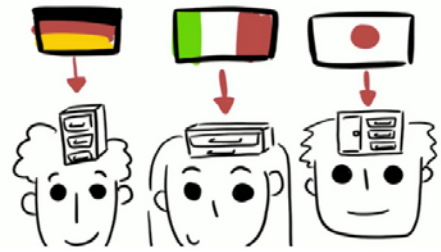
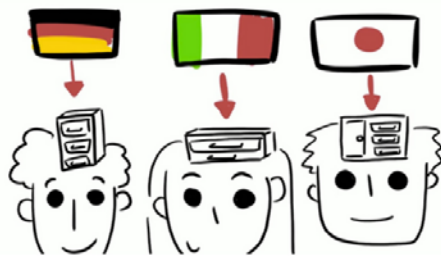
Es gibt Länder, die mehr als eine offizielle Sprache haben, wie die Schweiz, Belgien oder sogar Spanien. In diesen Ländern spricht man, je nachdem, wo man geboren ist, die eine oder die andere Sprache. Es gibt auch viele Einwohner, die zweisprachig sind und zwei Muttersprachen haben.

Hay países que tienen más de una lengua oficial, como Suiza, Bélgica o incluso España. En estos países, la gente habla una lengua u otra dependiendo de dónde haya nacido. También hay muchos habitantes que son bilingües y tienen dos lenguas maternas.



¿Nos permite cada idioma ver una perspectiva diferente del mundo?

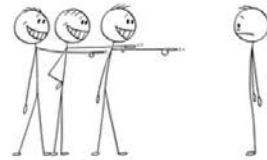
Lässt uns jede Sprache die Welt aus einer anderen Perspektive sehen?



FRIOLERO (Spanisch)
Jemand, der immer schnell friert



SOBREMESA (Spanisch)
„Nach dem Essen“: Zeit, die man mit der Familie oder mit Freunden nach dem Essen verbringt, während man noch am Tisch sitzt.



Schadenfreude (Alemán)
«El sentimiento de alegría cuando presencias la desgracia de otra persona».

Siempre siento schadenfreude cuando veo que a alguien que no me cae bien se le cae la comida o pierde el tren. Es cruel, pero también es difícil no reírse.

Wanderlust (Alemán)
«Un fuerte deseo de viajar»
Wanderlust describe el deseo de abandonar las comodidades de tu hogar y multiplicar los viajes en tu pasaporte. Conocer gente nueva, ver nuevas ciudades y descubrir otras culturas.



Sprachen geben uns eine ganz bestimmte Sicht auf die Welt. Jede Sprache reflektiert die Realität, in der man lebt, deshalb hilft uns das Sprechen anderer Sprachen, andere Kulturen und Realitäten zu verstehen!



Las lenguas nos dan una visión muy concreta del mundo. Cada lengua refleja la realidad en la que vivimos, por eso hablar otros idiomas nos ayuda a comprender otras culturas y realidades.



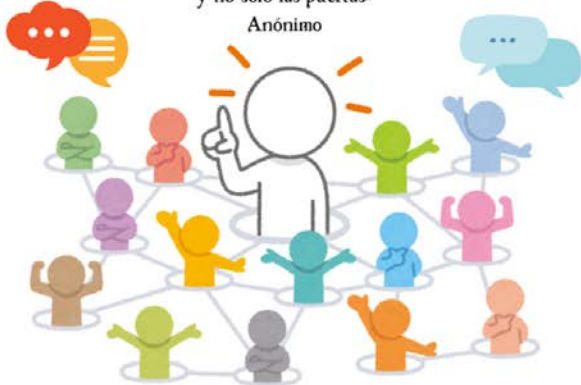
Las personas que tienen más de una lengua materna se llaman bilingües o multilingües. Sus cerebros funcionan de forma diferente a los de los demás y, por lo general, son más creativos.



Menschen, die mehr als eine Muttersprache haben, werden als bilingual oder auch mehrsprachig bezeichnet. Ihre Gehirne arbeiten anders als die anderer Menschen und sie sind in der Regel kreativer!



«Por encima de todo, un nuevo idioma te abre los ojos,
y no sólo las puertas»
Anónimo



„Eine neue Sprache öffnet Dir vor allem die Augen,
und nicht nur Türen“
Anonym





Die 10 Meistgesprochenen Sprachen der Welt



Las 10 lenguas más habladas del mundo



„Die Grenzen meiner Sprache(n) sind die Grenzen meiner Welt“
L. Wittgenstein



„Los límites de mi(s) lengua(s) son los límites de mi mundo“
L. Wittgenstein



Wie viele Ländern gibt es in die Europäische Union?



¿Cuántos países hay en la Unión Europea?



27 Ländern



27 Países



Wie viele offizielle Sprachen gibt es in die Europäische Union?



¿Cuántas lenguas oficiales hay en la Unión Europea?



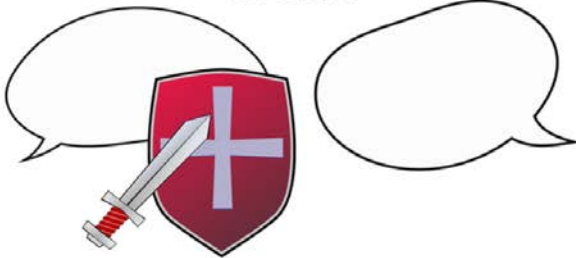
Amtssprachen?



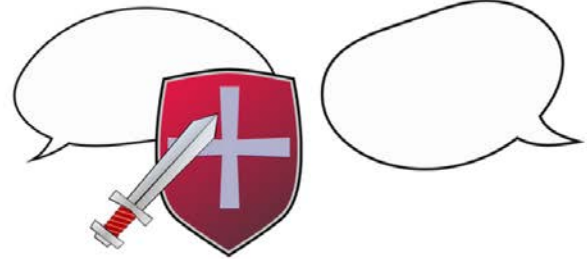
¿Lenguas oficiales?



„Eine Sprache ist ein Dialekt mit
einer Armee und einer Marine“
Max Weinreich



«Una lengua es un dialecto con un
ejército y una armada»
Max Weinreich



Nachdem, was wir gelernt haben...
Warum brauchen wir dann so viele Sprachen?
Warum sind Sprachen wichtig?

Después de lo que hemos aprendido...
Entonces, ¿por qué necesitamos tantas lenguas?
¿Por qué son importantes las lenguas?

Wie viele gibt es?
7/100

Warum gibt es mehrere Sprachen?
weil jede Muttersprache unterschiedlich ist

Warum ist es wichtig, Sprachen zu lernen?
Denn! man ^{ist} ^{ein} ^{Verständigen} kann und das man Kommunikation lernen

Sind alle Sprachen gleich?
Nein! jeder Mensch eine eigene Sprache hat

Warum ist es von Bedeutung, Sprachen zu beherrschen?
Denn! man sie immer erlernen kann

Gibt es in jedem Land eine eigene Sprache?
Nein! viele mutterländer die gleichen sprachen haben

Sprachen

Wie viele gibt es?
7/100

Warum gibt es mehrere Sprachen?
weil jede Muttersprache unterschiedlich ist

Warum ist es wichtig, Sprachen zu lernen?
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Gibt es in jedem Land eine eigene Sprache?
Nein! viele mutterländer die gleichen sprachen haben

Sprachen

Wie viele gibt es?
7/100

Warum gibt es mehrere Sprachen?
Jede Sprache ist verschieden miteinander

Warum ist es wichtig, Sprachen zu lernen?
weil man sie immer erlernen kann

Sind alle Sprachen gleich?
NEIN

Warum ist es von Bedeutung, Sprachen zu beherrschen?
Denn! man sie immer erlernen kann

Gibt es in jedem Land eine eigene Sprache?
Nein! gibt es nicht

Sprachen

Wie viele gibt es?
7/100 SPRACHEN
gibt es auf der Welt

Warum gibt es mehrere Sprachen?
Sprachen geben uns eine ganz bestimmte richt auf die Welt und jede Sprache reflektiert die welt in der man lebt deshalb hilft uns das sprachen anderer sprachen, kulturen und traditionen zu verstehen

Warum ist es wichtig, Sprachen zu lernen?
Denn! man in anderen ländern Kommunikation zu haben und anderen Menschen die man nicht lernen k.

Sind alle Sprachen gleich?
jede sprache hat eine eigene hintergrundkultur.

Warum ist es von Bedeutung, Sprachen zu beherrschen?
zB wenn ich in einem anderen land bin und alle sprachen nicht kenne kann ich zB mit nichts zurecht kommen

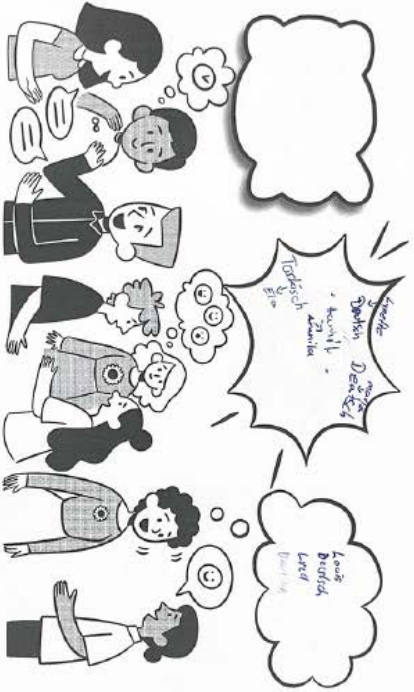
Gibt es in jedem Land eine eigene Sprache?
Nein weil es in zB Amerika Englisch gesprochen wird auch im meisten land der Welt wird auch Millionen sprachen

Sprachen

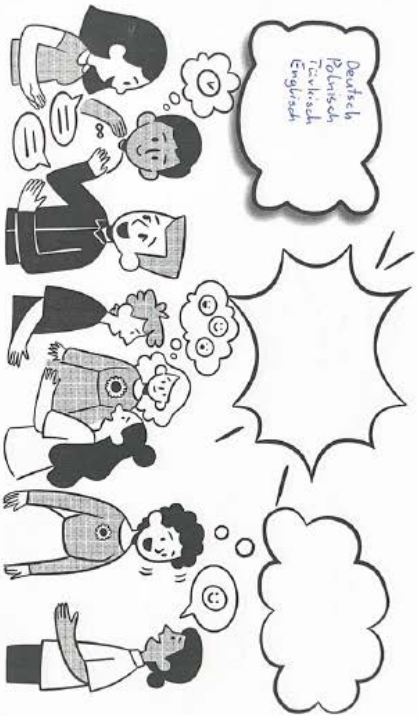
Wie viele Sprachen gibt es in die unserem Team?



Wie viele Sprachen gibt es in die unserem Team?



Wie viele Sprachen gibt es in die unserem Team?

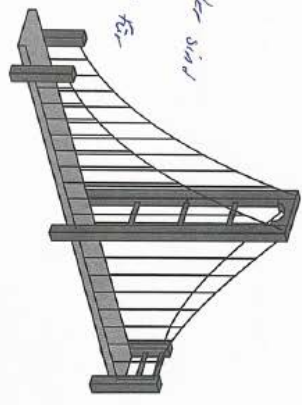


Wie viele Sprachen gibt es in die unserem Team?



Vor dem Lernen

Europa
Karke
Spachen
was für ländel sind
dos?
was sind dus für
spachen?



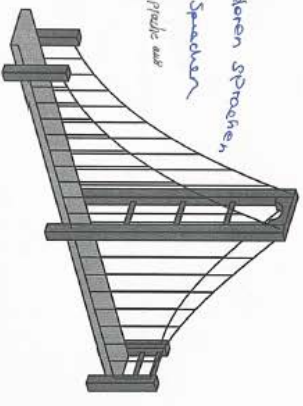
3 2 1

Nach dem Lernen

3 Ideen * 2 Fragen * 1 Vermutung über das, was wir lernen werden

Vor dem Lernen

Spachen
Hallo auf anderen Sprachen
Europäische Spachen
welche sprach ist das
in e sprach nach d. sprache aus



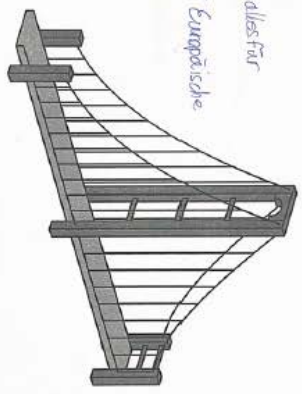
3 2 1

Nach dem Lernen

3 Ideen * 2 Fragen * 1 Vermutung über das, was wir lernen werden

Vor dem Lernen

Verschiedene sprachen
carke
hallo
was sind das alles für
sprachen?
sind das nur Europäische
länder?



3 2 1

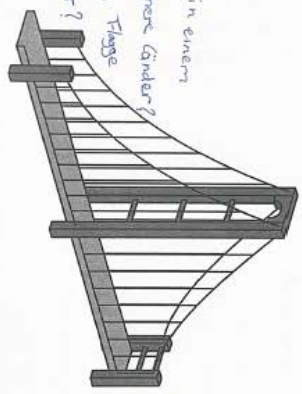
Nach dem Lernen

3 Ideen * 2 Fragen * 1 Vermutung über das, was wir lernen werden

Orange Gruppe

Vor dem Lernen

fragen:
warum gibt es
mehrere sprachen in einem
land?
warum gibt es mehrere länder?
kiese gibt es eine frage
für mehrere länder?



3 2 1

Nach dem Lernen

4 Ideen:
Europa
länder
sprachen
hätte von einem
weltspachen karte
hätt

3 Ideen * 2 Fragen * 1 Vermutung über das, was wir lernen werden



Wie wirkt es sich aus...

In meinem inneren Kreis (Freunde, Familie, Menschen, die ich kenne)?

es ist wichtig für mich weil
ich andere kulturen lerne

In meiner Gemeinschaft (meiner Schule, meiner Nachbarschaft)?

weil ich andere bei situationen gibt

In der Welt (über mein unmittelbares Umfeld hinaus)?

Das ich andere Sachen erfahre



Wie wirkt es sich aus...

In meinem inneren Kreis (Freunde, Familie, Menschen, die ich kenne)?

Damit man miteinander reden kann

In meiner Gemeinschaft (meiner Schule, meiner Nachbarschaft)?

damit wir andere Gemeinschaften kann

In der Welt (über mein unmittelbares Umfeld hinaus)?

damit wir Kommunikation zuif



Wie wirkt es sich aus...

In meinem inneren Kreis (Freunde, Familie, Menschen, die ich kenne)?

es ist toll andere Sprachen zu lernen

Die kann man lernen

In meiner Gemeinschaft (meiner Schule, meiner Nachbarschaft)?

Es ist gut zum Verstärken von kulturellen Personen

In der Welt (über mein unmittelbares Umfeld hinaus)?

Es ist gut das es sprachen gibt den so lernt man was neues



Wie wirkt es sich aus...

In meinem inneren Kreis (Freunde, Familie, Menschen, die ich kenne)?

Weil es uns gut tut andere sprachen zu lernen

In meiner Gemeinschaft (meiner Schule, meiner Nachbarschaft)?

Wir können alle gut mit jeder sprache klar weil wir uns jeweils anpassen

In der Welt (über mein unmittelbares Umfeld hinaus)?

Weil sie dann rich viel lernen können

¿Cuántos hay?
7.100 Idiomas

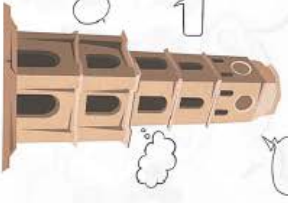
¿Por qué hay más de uno?

porque cada país se ha ido desarrollando de forma diferente

¿Por qué es importante conocer varios idiomas?

Para poder comunicarse con otros países y para comprender otros idiomas

Idiomas



¿Son todos iguales?

No

¿Hay uno diferente en cada país?

No

¿Cuántos hay?
7.100 idiomas

¿Por qué hay más de uno?

Porque cada lengua es diferente y cada cultura con una variedad

¿Por qué es importante conocer varios idiomas?

Porque así conoces las culturas de los demás y puedes comunicarte con más personas.

Idiomas



¿Son todos iguales?

No

¿Hay uno diferente en cada país?

No, hay países que tienen los mismos lenguajes o dos lenguajes...

¿Cuántos hay?
7.100

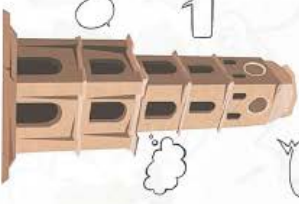
¿Por qué hay más de uno?

Porque en el mundo de hoy es diferente

¿Por qué es importante conocer varios idiomas?

Para ir de viaje a un país

Idiomas



¿Son todos iguales?

No

¿Hay uno diferente en cada país?

No, hay países que tienen más

¿Cuántos hay?
7.100 Idiomas

¿Por qué hay más de uno?

Porque la gente cuando llegan por primera vez se comunican en su propio idioma

¿Por qué es importante conocer varios idiomas?

Para comunicarse con personas de otros países

Idiomas



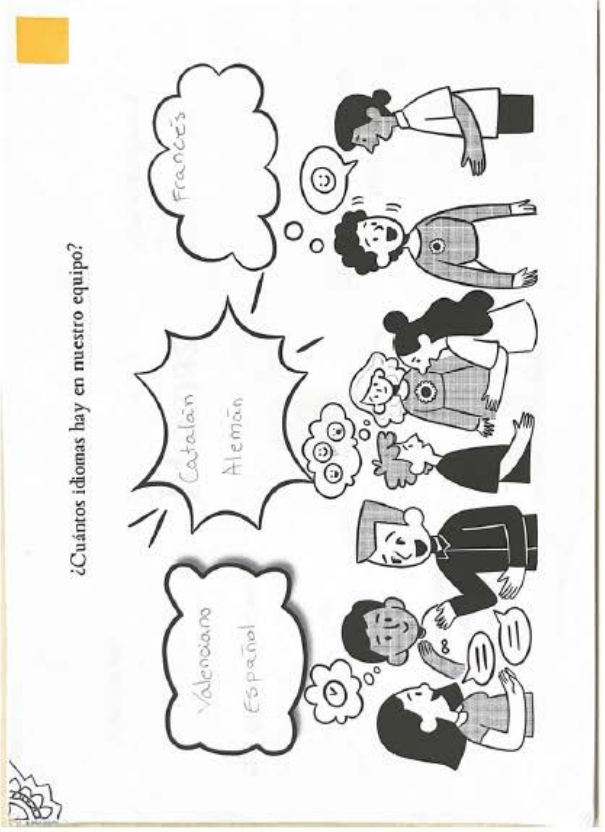
¿Son todos iguales?

No, todos son diferentes

¿Hay uno diferente en cada país?

No

folleto



¿Cuántos idiomas hay en nuestro equipo?

¿Cuántos idiomas hay en nuestro equipo?



¿Cuántos idiomas hay en nuestro equipo?

¿Cuántos hay?
Muchísimos.
(7.100)

¿Por qué hay más de uno?
Porque en cada
habitat y país
se son necesarias
unas palabras
que otros idiomas no
necesitan.

¿Por qué es importante
conocer varios idiomas?
Para comunicarte

Idiomas

¿Son todos iguales?
No, no todos
son iguales.

¿Hay uno diferente en cada
país?
Hay más de uno
en cada país.

¿Cuántos idiomas hay en nuestro equipo?

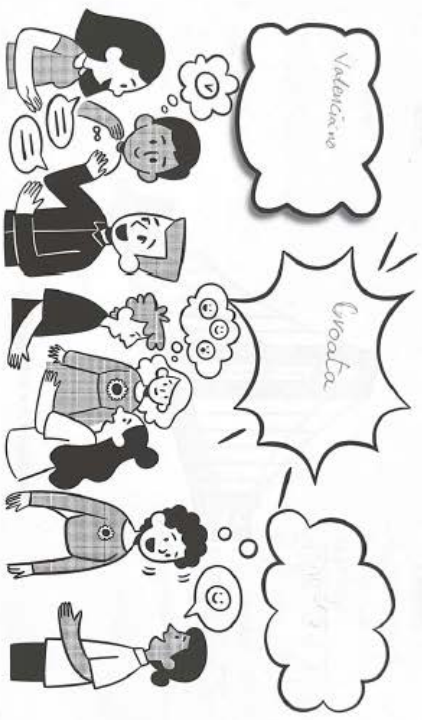
Castellano, andaluz,
catalán, inglés

Español,
Alemán

¿Cuántos idiomas hay en nuestro equipo?



¿Cuántos idiomas hay en nuestro equipo?



3 2 1

Antes
Español, Francés y Alemán.

¿Cuántos idiomas hay en el mundo?

¿Por que en algunos países hay muchos idiomas y en otros pocos?

Vamos ha apren.

3 Ideas * 2 Preguntas * 1 Suposición

Después
Culturas, Aprendizaje y Idiomas.
¿Cuántas culturas hay?
¿Cuántas culturas hay aproximadamente por país?
¿Hemos aprendido que los idiomas proporcionan conocimiento

3 2 1

Antes

¿Porque no sabemos hablar Alemán?
Vamos a aprender que necesitamos aprender distintos Idiomas

¿Porque en Es. no hay de países existe una falta de idiomas?
Por que el español no es el idioma universal?
Español, francés, italiano.

3 Ideas * 2 Preguntas * 1 Suposición

Después

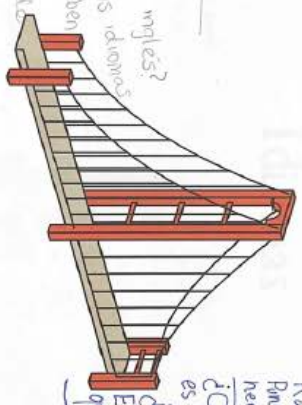
Porque en Es. no sabemos hablar Alemán.
¿Porque no sabemos hablar Alemán?
Suizo, Holandés.

3 2 1

Antes

- Inglés
- Italiano
- Español

¿Por qué se habla inglés?
 ¿Por qué en muchos idiomas los palabras se escriben de una manera y se pronuncia de otra?



3 Ideas * 2 Preguntas * 1 Suposición

Después

- Rotomadriceo
- Panjabí
- Lahnda
- neerlandés

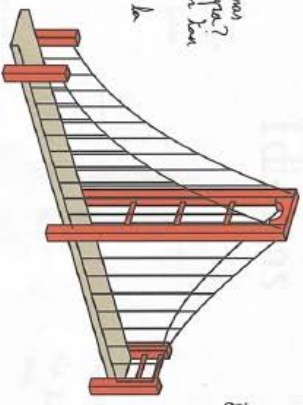
¿Qué clase de idioma es Punjabí Lahnda?
 ¿Es verdad que el Español es más abuldo que el Inglés?

3 2 1

Antes

- Italiano
- Español
- Ruso

¿Cuántos idiomas hay en Europa?
 ¿Por qué son tan diferentes?
 Historia de la lengua



3 Ideas * 2 Preguntas * 1 Suposición

Después

- Italiano
- Español
- Ruso

¿Por qué hay idiomas que son casi iguales?
 ¿Por qué otros idiomas no aparecen?
 Historia de la lengua

¿Cómo afecta esta situación...



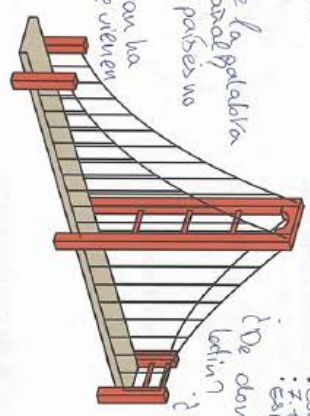
en mi círculo cercano (familia, amigos...)
 En mi casa, hablamos Alemán, y eso influye en el colegio, en la calle y para socializar con la gente.
 en mi comunidad (mi colegio, mi barrio...)
 Es bueno porque podemos conocer su idioma y cultura.
 en mi mundo (mis allá de mis conocidos)
 Para desovivir los diferentes realidades, y hay un problema de comunicación.

3 2 1

Antes

- Portugués
- Español
- Inglés

¿De dónde viene la palabra "idioma" en español?
 ¿Por qué en otros países no existe la "lida"?
 Cuéntenos que vas you la cuseñor de donde vienen las idiomas.



3 Ideas * 2 Preguntas * 1 Suposición

Después

- Comunicación mundo
- 7-100 lenguas mundo
- Español

¿De donde viene el latín?
 ¿Cuáles personas hay en Europa?

¿Cómo afecta esta situación...



en mi círculo cercano (familia, amigos...)?

es buena porque aprendes
más idiomas.

en mi comunidad (mi colegio, mi barrio...)?

al principio sería difícil pero
con el tiempo sería buena

en mi mundo (más allá de mis conocidos)?

que hay un problema de comunicación

¿Cómo afecta esta situación...



en mi círculo cercano (familia, amigos...)?

Esta bien porque aprendes más
idiomas.

en mi comunidad (mi colegio, mi barrio...)?

Porque se aprende más sobre culturas y
reglas.

en mi mundo (más allá de mis conocidos)?

Afecta bien y mal: bien porque aprendes
más culturas y mal porque hay un
problema con la comunicación.

¿Cómo afecta esta situación...



en mi círculo cercano (familia, amigos...)?

Ayuda positivamente a aprender
otros idiomas.

en mi comunidad (mi colegio, mi barrio...)?

Complica la comunicación pero
sin embargo se aprende más.

en mi mundo (más allá de mis conocidos)?

Es difícil comunicarnos para
es bueno tener varias culturas

¿Cómo afecta esta situación...



en mi círculo cercano (familia, amigos...)?

Es que se más idiomas

en mi comunidad (mi colegio, mi barrio...)?

Entonces los países de habla italiana

en mi mundo (más allá de mis conocidos)?

Afecta en la comunicación y también es
bueno conocer la cultura.

Student Well-Being and Participation in School in Finland, Germany and Japan

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Ruhr-University Bochum

Wintersemester 2024/2025

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Abstract

Student well-being and participation are crucial aspects of education but are often studied separately. While many frameworks define well-being, they mostly focus on adults, leaving student well-being underexplored. This study examines student subjective well-being and participation in Finland, Germany, and Japan, focusing on the relationship between the two. A total of 1,437 students from grades 7-9 (or 7-10 in Germany) participated in an online survey using the KIDSCREEN-27 scale for well-being and the Student Participation Scale (SPS) for participation. The results show significant differences across countries and genders. Finnish students reported the highest participation levels, followed by Japan and Germany. Boys across all three countries reported higher levels of both well-being and participation than girls. Correlation analyses suggest that student participation is positively linked to physical and psychological well-being but negatively related to social well-being, particularly in Finland and Germany. These findings highlight the importance of fostering student participation while being mindful of its potential social costs.

Key words: well-being, student well-being, student participation, democratic education

Introduction

The concept of well-being is widely studied, with the World Health Organization (WHO) defining health as a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being (WHO, 2006). Well-being is shaped by various social, economic, and environmental factors (WHO, 2021) and is commonly examined through both objective and subjective measures (OECD, 2024). Subjective well-being, in particular, is often framed as life satisfaction and emotional balance (Diener, 1984; OECD, 2024). Other models, such as Allardt's (1976), categorize well-being into having (material resources), loving (social connections), and being (personal growth and social recognition).

Although well-being research is extensive, most studies focus on adults. Student well-being is often overlooked despite its importance for learning and development. Recognizing this, the OECD (2017) outlines five dimensions of student well-being: cognitive, psychological, physical, social, and material. Other frameworks, such as those by Konu and Rimpelä (2002)

and Fattore et al. (2007, 2009), emphasize self-fulfilment, relationships, emotions, and agency as key elements.

At the same time, student participation has gained attention, especially following the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC, 1989). Participation is understood as students actively taking part in decision-making and having their voices heard (Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2009; Lloyd & Emerson, 2017).

However, the extent to which participation is realized in schools differs across countries and education systems.

Given these perspectives, this study explores the relationship between student well-being and participation in Finland, Germany, and Japan. The research aims to answer the following questions:

1. How do student perceptions of their well-being differ among Finland, Germany, and Japan?
2. To what extent do students experience participation, and how do these experiences vary across countries?
3. What is the relationship between student well-being and participation in each country?

To investigate these questions, an online survey was conducted with students in grades 7-9 (or 7-10 in Germany).

The results highlight similarities as well as differences of each nation, followed by challenges and needs for further research.

Aim of the study

The concept of well-being, though longstanding, has gained global attention, particularly with its inclusion in the WHO Constitution in 1946, defining health as complete physical, mental, and social well-being (WHO, 2006). WHO further describes well-being as a positive state influenced by social, economic, and environmental conditions (WHO, 2021). Similarly, the OECD identifies 11 domains of well-being, including income, housing, health, and social connections (OECD, 2024), reflecting its multidimensional nature that includes objective and subjective well-being.

Diener (1984) conceptualised subjective well-being with cognitive (life satisfaction) and affective (balance of emotions) components, while the OECD defines it as mental states encompassing life satisfaction and emotions (OECD, 2024). Allardt (1976) offered another model, classifying well-being into *having* (material resources), *loving* (social ties), and *being* (personal growth and social respect).

However, despite numerous frameworks, most well-being studies focus on adults, while some studies point out differences of the perception of well-being between adults and children. As a result, increasing research explores student well-being. The OECD (2017) defines student well-being across five domains: cognitive (academic skills), psychological (life satisfaction, engagement, aspirations), physical (health, exercise), social (relationships with peers, family, teachers), and material (financial resources) (Borgonovi & Pál, 2016). Psychological and cognitive well-being were later refined in the PISA 2018 survey to include self-efficacy and growth mindset (OECD, 2019). On the other hand, Konu and Rimpelä (2002) adapted Allardt's model to school settings, defining 'having' as school conditions (facilities, curriculum, services), 'loving' as relationships (teacher-student, peer, school-home cooperation), and 'being' as self-fulfilment (participation, recognition). They excluded health from 'having,' recognising its external influences, while Allardt includes it in *having*. Other conceptualisations of student well-being include Fattore et al. (2007, 2009), who emphasize positive emotions, balanced relationships, moral behaviour, self-perception, security, and agency. Furthermore, the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2012) defines social and emotional well-being as how individuals perceive themselves and their interactions, including resilience in facing life challenges.

By reviewing these definitions and conceptualisations, it can be said that student well-being has the following dimensions:

1. Physical well-being (student's health and lifestyle);
2. Psychological well-being (emotions and life satisfaction);
3. Autonomy (the feeling of having control over own decisions and actions);
4. Social well-being (relationships with family, peers and teachers); and
5. Material wellbeing (material resources such as financial resources).

Children's participation is also gaining an internationally increasing interest. One of the reasons which cannot be ignored is the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC, 1989), especially the article 12. Based on this article, the term 'participation' in general is conceptualised as a process involving mutually respectful information exchange and dialogue between children and adults, offering children opportunities to learn how their views and those of adults are considered and form the outcome of these processes (Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2009, p. 3). It is, hence, important to know the extent to and the way in which children's views are asked for on matters concerning them; how their autonomy in expressing their opinions is supported by adults; and the extent to which their views are taken into consideration seriously and put into action (Llyod & Emerson, 2017, p. 596). Considering the children's right of participation, the participation is realised when students get opportunities to actively involve decision-making within their schools, whereas their genuine participation must engage in choices which might be effective (de Róiste et al., 2012, pp. 89-90). However, there are, despite some elements in common, various models of its conceptualisation such as three elements of the 'pyramid of voice' by Mitra, four elements of participation by Lundy, five pathways to participation by Shier, six rungs of student participation ladders by Holdsworth and eight rungs of participation by Hart. The common dimensions of these models are notions of children and young people having a voice, being listened to and heard, influencing decisions, working collaboratively and sharing leadership or power with adults (Anderson et al., 2019).

In order to investigate the relationship between student's subjective well-being and participation in Finland, Germany and Japan, this paper focuses on the following three research questions:

- Q1. How do student perceptions of their well-being differ among Finland, Germany and Japan?
- Q2. To what extent do students experience and perceive their participation, and how do these perception levels differ among the three nations?
- Q3. What are the relationships between student well-being and participation in each country?

To address these questions, students in Finland, Germany and Japan were asked to fulfil an online survey.

Methodology

Participants

Participating school recruitment was conducted through purposive sampling. Due to the cooperation with the university of Oulu in Finland, the sampling in Finland was to take place in the city of Oulu. For Germany, North Rhine-Westphalia was chosen for the sampling and for Japan, Prefecture Osaka. In order to secure the demographic background of the samples of these countries, sampling locations in Japan and Germany were selected according to the population of the cities. As the city of Oulu has approximately 200.000 inhabitants, the search criterion for cities in North Rhine-Westphalia in Germany as well as in Osaka Prefecture in Japan was set for the cities with population of $200.000 \pm 15\%$. The decision of the deviation of 15% is made in order to widen the city options while keeping the city size similar. Given the different school systems in those three nations⁸ and demographic and academic level of students, the target group was set for students in grade 7-9 (or 7-10 only in Germany). An extra criterion was applied for schools in Germany, i.e. the school social index (*Schulsozialindex*) which identifies the current social challenges in the scale from 1 to 9. Schools with less *Schulsozialindex* encounter fewer social challenges while those with higher *Schulsozialindex* experience more social challenges. Given that both Finland and Japan have less students with migration background than Germany, only schools scoring 1 to 3 in *Schulsozialindex 2020* were chosen for the sampling. Schools fulfilling these criteria were invited to the survey.

In total, two schools in Oulu, Finland, one school in Mülheim an der Ruhr, Germany and four schools in Izumi and Kishiwada, Osaka, Japan, participated in the study and 1437 students

⁸ Finland applies 6-3-3 model, i.e. 6 years of primary, 3 years of lower secondary, and 3 years of upper secondary education; North Rhine-Westphalia in Germany applies 4-6-3 model, i.e. 4 years of primary, 6 years of lower secondary and 3 years of upper secondary education; and Japan applies 6-3-3 model like Finland.

aged between 12 and 17 participated in the survey. Table A in the appendix shows the frequencies and percentages of the participants in demographic categories except for age.

Materials

The questionnaire consists of 70 survey items, including self-reported demographic items (see: Appendix, Table A), items for well-being and those for student participation. The survey was conducted online, using EvaSys software. Survey items are categorised by the relevant dimensions, gender and country, and evaluated, respectively. The higher the score is, the greater the well-being and student participation is, respectively.

KIDSCREEN-27

KIDSCREEN was developed in EU and subjective health-related qualities of children. Three types of questionnaires of KIDSCREEN are available with different number of items: 10, 27 and 52. In German, English and Japanese, there are the translated questionnaires with 10, 27 and 52 items, whereas Finnish version has only questionnaires with 10 and 27 items. Thus, KIDSCREEN-27 was used in this research. This evaluates five dimensions which cover the dimensions of student subjective well-being defined above:

1. Physical Well-Being (5 items) — PHY;
2. Psychological Well-Being (7 items) — PWB;
3. Autonomy and Parent Relations (7 items) — PAR;
4. Peers and Social Support (4 items) — SOC; and
5. School Environment (4 items) — SCH.

Students were asked to respond to items reflecting the past 7 days. All items use 5-point Likert-scales. Higher scores mean more positive perception with four exceptions, which requires an adjustment during the data analysis. Relevant scale items are summed and converted to T-Value norms in each dimension.

Student Participation Scale (SPS)

SPS was developed in Australia within a large project, specifically designed for Australian context and measures six dimensions of participation with 38 questions:

1. Having a voice about schooling (9 items) — VS;
2. Having a voice about school activities outside of the class room (7 items) — VA;
3. Having influence on decisions made at school (3 items) — HI;
4. Having a say with influential people at school (5 items) — SP;
5. Having choice (5 items) — HC; and
6. Working together with peers and school staff (9 items) — WT.

However, SPS is available only in English. As a result, items were translated into Finnish, German and Japanese in corporation with native speakers including university researchers and education stakeholders.

All items use 5-point Likert-scales, with 1 indicating 'strongly disagree'; 2 indicating 'disagree'; 3 indicating 'neither agree nor disagree'; 4 indicating 'agree'; and 5 indicating 'strongly agree'. Relevant scale items are summed and averaged in order to shape mean scores both in each dimension and overall.

Results

Student Well-Being

The well-being scale measured with KIDSCREEN-27 items are converted to T-values and interpreted using the European Norm Data by the KIDSCREEN Group. Table 1 shows the mean and standard deviations for all well-being dimensions by gender and country as well as those from European norm data. There are 1399 participants who have responded to all questions of KIDSCREEN items. The incomplete responses, 38 of 1437 responses, are disregarded in the data evaluation as the analyse of KIDSCREEN items requires a complete response to all the survey items.

Finnish boys report relatively high well-being in the PHY and PAR domains, but lower well-being in PWB and SOC. On the other hand, girls report significantly lower well-being across all dimensions compared to boys, with PWB being particularly low. Compared to the European norm data, Finnish students evaluate their well-being as lower, while the gap of PHY, PAR and SCH between Finnish and European boys is modest.

In Germany, boys score relatively high in PHY, PAR, SOC and SCH but lower in PWB, while girls score lower than boys in all areas. However, the gender gap is not as drastic as that of the Finnish students. Compared to the European norm data, German students score higher in PAR in both genders. Furthermore, SOC is assessed higher by German boys than the European average. In other domains, German students evaluate their well-being as slightly lower, with the exception in PWB.

Japanese boys evaluated SOC relatively high, but low in PWB. The score in SCH is moderate compared to the European average, while PHY and PAR are assessed lower than in Europe. The scores of girls compared to boys look somewhat different to that of Finland or Germany. For example, Japanese girls score higher in PAR than boys and the same in SOC and SCH. However, PHY and PWB are perceived lower by girls than boys. Compared to the European average, Japanese students generally perceive the well-being dimensions as lower, with a clear exception in PAR by girls.

Table 1: T-values and standard deviations for all well-being dimensions by gender and country and European Norm Data for adolescent 12-18

			PHY	PWB	PAR	SOC	SCH
Finland	Male	M	49,63	46,53	49,47	46,93	48,09
		SD	9,73	11,14	13,32	11,62	9,77
	Female	M	44,73	39,10	46,53	46,93	45,38
		SD	8,26	11,08	11,59	10,51	10,24
Germany	Male	M	49,63	46,53	51,21	49,79	48,09
		SD	10,49	9,08	9,92	9,25	8,73
	Female	M	44,73	41,75	49,47	49,79	45,38
		SD	8,68	9,21	9,72	9,15	8,60
Japan	Male	M	47,08	44,80	47,93	49,79	48,09
		SD	11,50	9,08	11,65	10,62	9,43
	Female	M	44,73	43,21	51,21	49,79	48,09
		SD	10,01	9,42	10,24	10,56	9,43
Europe	Male	M	50,54	50,57	50,40	49,10	48,32

	SD	9,81	9,70	9,79	9,93	9,68
Female	M	46,83	47,30	48,53	50,07	48,54
	SD	9,15	9,58	9,75	9,97	9,15

Note: All values are rounded off to the second decimal place, resulting in the identical value across countries in some of the data points.

Across all three countries, a gender gap can be observed with boys tending to report higher well-being scores than girls. This gap is the largest in Finland and the smallest in Japan. Physical well-being is evaluated higher by Finnish and German boys than Japanese boys, while Japanese girls scored the highest in PAR. In terms of SOC, German and Japanese boys scored highest. School environment is perceived equally across all three countries, with girls consistently reporting lower scores than boys.

Student Participation

Student participation scales measured with SPS are summed by sub-scales to form sub-scale mean as well as overall mean scores. Table 2 shows the mean scores for six dimensions of student participation and overall student participation as well as standard deviation by gender and country. There are 1304 participants who have responded to all questions of SPS items. The incomplete responses, 133 of 1437 responses, are disregarded in the data evaluation as the analyse of SPS items requires a complete response to all the survey items.

In Finland, boys see that they are rather able to realise their participation in school. This is observed by the fact that both the overall mean and the sub-scale mean are higher than 3, which is 'neither agree nor disagree'. They report the highest participation in SP, followed by HC and VS. Girls, on the other hand, score lower across all participation dimensions compared to boys, especially in VS and WT. Their highest score is in HC, followed by SP, while their score in WT is the lowest. The overall mean of 3,18 means that girls perceive fewer opportunities of participation.

German students, both male and female, perceive their participation opportunities neutrally, as shown by their above-average mean of 3,00. While boys report moderate participation levels in SP and HC, they think that their participation in VS, VA, HI and WT are not realised

sufficiently. The perception of girls seems similar to boys, although they report neutral participation levels in HI as well.

Japanese boys report moderate to high levels of participation, which is characterised by the overall mean of 3,33. However, their score in SP suggest that they do not sufficiently have a say with influential people in school. This is analogous to girls, although they report slightly lower participation levels in all dimensions.

Table 2: Sub-scale mean scores and overall mean score as well as standard deviation by gender and country

			VS	VA	HI	SP	HC	WT	Total
Finland	Male	M	3,64	3,61	3,63	3,74	3,68	3,36	3,59
		SD	0,90	0,96	0,91	0,80	0,75	0,79	0,70
	Female	M	3,17	3,12	3,15	3,38	3,46	2,95	3,18
		SD	0,88	1,10	0,99	0,94	0,79	0,83	0,75
Germany	Male	M	2,91	2,96	2,96	3,21	3,47	2,76	3,00
		SD	0,95	1,07	0,90	0,95	0,75	0,85	0,72
	Female	M	2,82	2,95	3,00	3,13	3,51	2,86	3,00
		SD	0,93	1,03	0,87	1,00	0,67	0,85	0,72
Japan	Male	M	3,33	3,41	3,54	2,96	3,38	3,32	3,33
		SD	1,01	1,11	0,91	1,14	0,90	0,91	0,82
	Female	M	3,17	3,29	3,40	2,73	3,37	3,07	3,17
		SD	0,95	1,10	0,91	1,10	0,92	0,89	0,78

Overall, Finnish students report the highest levels of participation, followed by Japan and then by Germany. Across all three countries, a gender gap can be observed, while Finnish students show the largest gender difference and German students the lowest. In all countries, students feel that they have choices. Furthermore, Finnish and German students are more likely to experience their having a say with influential people more, this is less so experienced in Japan. Similarly, Finnish and Japanese students report higher levels of participation in VS and VA, while German students experience these less.

Relationship between well-being and student participation

In order to explore the relationship between student well-being and student participation, correlations between dimensions of both well-being and student participation are calculated. Table B in appendix presents the correlations by nation and gender.

Among Finnish boys, higher levels of participation are associated with better well-being in all areas, especially in physical and psychological well-being. This is still true for Finnish girls, but weaker in most dimensions. Negative correlation between 'autonomy and parent relations'/'peers and social support' and participation can be observed, indicating higher levels of participation may decrease parental relationship and social integration.

Like Finland, all dimensions of student participation correlate positively with all well-being dimensions in Germany, except for parent relations and social support. Other German trends can be also observed in Finland. However, correlations in Germany are slightly weaker than in Finland.

Analogously, Japanese boys and girls show similar trends to Finnish and German students. However, their correlations are even weaker than those of Germany. The correlations of Japanese girls are the weakest among all genders and countries, indicating participation has less influences on well-being for Japanese girls.

Across all three countries, physical well-being and psychological well-being are positively correlated with participation, suggesting that physical and psychological well-being can be promoted through participation. This positive correlation is the strongest in Finland. On the other hand, social well-being has a strong negative correlation with all areas of student participation, suggesting that increased engagement in school does not necessarily lead to better social well-being.

Overall, Finnish students show the strongest correlation between participation and well-being, followed by Germany and Japan. A gender gap is also observed in the correlations, indicating that boys show stronger correlations between participation and well-being than girls. This means that in all three countries, boys benefit more from participation in school than girls.

Conclusion

This study examined the well-being and participation of students in Finland, Germany, and Japan, revealing significant cross-national and gender differences. Finnish students reported the highest levels of participation, followed by Japan and Germany, while boys generally reported higher levels of well-being and participation than girls. The results show a strong positive correlation between participation and physical and psychological well-being, suggesting that involving students in school decision-making may enhance their overall well-being. However, a negative correlation between participation and social well-being was also observed, particularly in Finland and Germany, indicating that higher participation levels may sometimes come at the cost of social integration.

These findings emphasise the need for educational policies that support student participation while considering potential social challenges. Schools should create environments where students feel empowered to express their opinions and actively engage in decision-making. Further research is needed to understand why participation and social well-being show a negative correlation and how both can be promoted together. By prioritising student well-being and participation, schools can foster a more engaging and supportive learning environment. Additionally, the number of sample locations as well as collected samples is not large enough to represent the whole population of each country. Therefore, the results of this study need to be verified in a larger research project.

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Appendix

Table A: Frequencies of the samples in demographic categories and percentages by county

Country	Grade	Gender	N=1437 (1399/1304)	% of sample by country
Finland				
	7th	Male	40 (40/36)	18,3 (18,7/18,4)
		Female	40 (38/35)	18,3 (17,8/17,9)
		Diverse	2 (2/1)	0,9 (0,9/0,5)
		Prefer not to say	6 (6/5)	2,8 (2,8/2,6)
		Total	88 (86/77)	40,4 (40,2/39,3)
	8th	Male	22 (22/21)	10,1 (10,3/10,7)
		Female	33 (32/29)	15,1 (15,0/14,8)
		Diverse	2 (2/2)	0,9 (0,9/1,0)
		Prefer not to say	1 (1/1)	0,5 (0,5/0,5)
		Total	58 (57/53)	26,6 (26,6/27,0)
	9th	Male	34 (33/31)	15,6 (15,4/15,8)
		Female	35 (35/32)	16,1 (16,4/16,3)
		Diverse	1 (1/1)	0,5 (0,5/0,5)
		Prefer not to say	2 (2/2)	0,9 (0,9/1,0)
		Total	72 (71/66)	33,0 (33,2/33,7)
	All	Male	96 (95/88)	44,0 (44,4/44,9)
		Female	108 (105/96)	49,5 (49,1/49,0)
		Diverse	5 (5/4)	2,3 (2,3/2,0)
		Prefer not to say	9 (9/8)	4,1 (4,2/4,1)
		Total	218 (214/196)	
Germany				
	7th	Male	54 (54/47)	17,5 (17,8/17,4)
		Female	66 (63/60)	21,4 (20,7/22,2)

	Diverse	2 (2/2)	0,6 (0,7/0,7)
	Prefer not to say	2 (2/1)	0,6 (0,7/0,4)
	Total	124 (121/110)	40,3 (39,8/40,7)
8th	Male	12 (12/11)	3,9 (3,9/4,1)
	Female	29 (29/26)	9,4 (9,5/9,6)
	Diverse	0	
	Prefer not to say	3 (3/3)	1,0 (1,0/1,1)
	Total	44 (44/40)	14,3 (14,5/14,8)
9th	Male	20 (20/17)	6,5 (6,6/6,3)
	Female	35 (34/31)	11,4 (11,2/11,5)
	Diverse	1 (1/1)	0,3 (0,3/0,4)
	Prefer not to say	1 (1/1)	0,3 (0,3/0,4)
	Total	57 (56/50)	18,5 (18,4/18,5)
10th	Male	29 (29/25)	9,4 (9,5/9,3)
	Female	53 (53/44)	17,2 (17,4/16,3)
	Diverse	0	
	Prefer not to say	1 (1/1)	0,3 (0,3/0,4)
	Total	83 (83/70)	26,9 (27,3/25,9)
All	Male	115 (115/110)	37,3 (37,8/40,7)
	Female	183 (179/161)	59,4 (58,9/59,6)
	Diverse	3 (3/3)	1,0 (1,0/1,1)
	Prefer not to say	7 (7/6)	2,3 (2,3/2,2)
	Total	308 (304/270)	
Japan			
7th	Male	77 (74/71)	8,5 (8,4/8,5)
	Female	83 (81/74)	9,1 (9,2/8,8)
	Diverse	6 (6/4)	0,7 (0,7/0,5)

	Prefer not to say	7 (7/6)	0,8 (0,8/0,7)
	Total	173 (168/155)	19,0 (19,1/18,5)
8th	Male	200 (195/193)	22,0 (22,1/23,0)
	Female	265 (255/236)	29,1 (28,9/28,2)
	Diverse	10 (9/10)	1,1 (1,0/1,2)
	Prefer not to say	3 (2/3)	0,3 (0,2/0,4)
	Total	478 (461/442)	52,5 (52,3/52,7)
9th	Male	120 (120/109)	13,2 (13,6/13,0)
	Female	128 (120/123)	14,1 (13,6/14,7)
	Diverse	5 (5/4)	0,5 (0,6/0,5)
	Prefer not to say	6 (6/5)	0,7 (0,7/0,6)
	Total	259 (251/241)	28,4 (28,5/28,8)
All	Male	397 (389/373)	43,6 (44,2/44,5)
	Female	477 (457/433)	52,4 (51,9/51,7)
	Diverse	21 (20/18)	2,3 (2,3/2,1)
	Prefer not to say	16 (15/14)	1,8 (1,7/1,7)
	Total	911 (881/838)	

Note: These numbers include participants having not completely responded to all the survey items as long as they completely responded to either KIDSCREEN items or SPS items. The left number in the brackets presents the number of students who have completely responded to KIDSCREEN items, while the right one refers to the number of students having responded to SPS items completely.

Table B: Correlation between Student Well-Being and Participation

Country & Gender		PHY	PWB	PAR	SOC	SCH
Finland						
Male						
	VS	0.541	0.502	-0.201	-0.551	0.519
	VA	0.558	0.484	-0.223	-0.583	0.498
	HI	0.476	0.417	-0.224	-0.546	0.451
	SP	0.502	0.395	-0.238	-0.545	0.423
	HC	0.463	0.391	-0.213	-0.531	0.402
	WT	0.497	0.423	-0.229	-0.553	0.418
	Overall	0.512	0.457	-0.233	-0.561	0.479
Female						
	VS	0.461	0.423	-0.218	-0.575	0.454
	VA	0.484	0.401	-0.239	-0.601	0.443
	HI	0.396	0.351	-0.243	-0.582	0.388
	SP	0.417	0.332	-0.258	-0.564	0.374
	HC	0.392	0.308	-0.215	-0.549	0.361
	WT	0.418	0.344	-0.236	-0.579	0.369
	Overall	0.437	0.378	-0.241	-0.590	0.415
Germany						
Male						
	VS	0.507	0.472	-0.219	-0.518	0.501
	VA	0.531	0.461	-0.243	-0.545	0.482
	HI	0.462	0.403	-0.235	-0.550	0.426
	SP	0.476	0.392	-0.253	-0.531	0.412
	HC	0.439	0.367	-0.230	-0.515	0.398
	WT	0.479	0.412	-0.246	-0.548	0.414

	Overall	0.493	0.437	-0.242	-0.540	0.462
Female						
	VS	0.438	0.404	-0.238	-0.553	0.419
	VA	0.459	0.389	-0.259	-0.573	0.401
	HI	0.385	0.349	-0.263	-0.564	0.374
	SP	0.404	0.330	-0.271	-0.540	0.358
	HC	0.369	0.313	-0.248	-0.515	0.343
	WT	0.403	0.347	-0.269	-0.549	0.354
	Overall	0.419	0.372	-0.261	-0.560	0.397
<hr/>						
Japan						
Male						
	VS	0.493	0.452	-0.205	-0.496	0.479
	VA	0.514	0.438	-0.227	-0.531	0.461
	HI	0.442	0.378	-0.226	-0.528	0.403
	SP	0.458	0.368	-0.240	-0.510	0.394
	HC	0.429	0.350	-0.220	-0.498	0.376
	WT	0.461	0.392	-0.237	-0.525	0.392
	Overall	0.478	0.427	-0.234	-0.532	0.451
Female						
	VS	0.424	0.382	-0.228	-0.529	0.403
	VA	0.440	0.368	-0.250	-0.552	0.387
	HI	0.374	0.312	-0.247	-0.540	0.362
	SP	0.390	0.300	-0.259	-0.523	0.350
	HC	0.351	0.281	-0.235	-0.497	0.339
	WT	0.392	0.318	-0.257	-0.529	0.347
	Overall	0.409	0.358	-0.252	-0.540	0.389

Autonomy in the multilingual context: a case study in the second language classroom in a school in Witten, Germany

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Abstract

Learner autonomy is a fundamental aspect of the teaching-learning process. As it is a characteristic that evolves over time, i.e. it is not a steady state achieved (Little, 1991), it is interesting to investigate its development in different contexts. German classrooms are spaces where different mother tongues converge because of the high levels of immigration in the country. It is in this context that the following research is set, analyzing how students and teachers perceive autonomy in multilingual classrooms. To answer this question, classroom observation and questionnaires were used as the main methods of data collection. The study first addresses the key concepts of autonomy and multilingualism and the current situation in German classrooms in this respect. This is followed by a description of the main points of classroom observation and the responses of students and teachers. Finally, the study offers conclusions drawn from the findings, alongside practical recommendations for fostering autonomy in multilingual second-language classrooms. This research aims to contribute to the discussion on the importance of developing learner autonomy in diverse educational environments.

Keywords: multilingualism, second language classroom, autonomy, immigration.

Resumen

La autonomía del aprendiz es un aspecto fundamental del proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje. Al ser una característica que evoluciona en el tiempo, es decir, no un estado fijo que se alcanza (Little, 1991), es interesante investigar su desarrollo en diferentes contextos. Las salas de clases alemanas son espacios en los que diferentes lenguas maternas convergen debido a los altos niveles de inmigración en el país. En este contexto se enmarca la presente investigación, analizando como estudiantes y profesores tratan la autonomía en el aula multilingüe. Para responder a esta interrogante, se han recogido información a través de observación de clases y cuestionarios. El estudio aborda en primer lugar los conceptos claves de la autonomía y el multilingüismo y la situación actual de las aulas alemanas en este sentido. A esto le sigue una descripción de los puntos principales obtenidos a través de la observación y las respuestas de estudiantes y profesores. Finalmente, el estudio ofrece conclusiones a partir del análisis de los datos, además de recomendaciones prácticas para potenciar la autonomía en el aula

multilingüe de aprendizaje de segundas lenguas. Este estudio apunta a contribuir a la discusión de la importancia de desarrollar la autonomía del estudiante en contextos educativos diversos.

Palabras clave: multilingüismo, aula de lengua extranjera, autonomía, inmigración.

Introduction

Migratory processes occurring around the world have transformed the composition of classrooms—it is no longer unusual to find several mother tongues within the same space. This phenomenon has led to the emergence of multilingual classrooms, meaning that more than one language is present in the class, each with its own context, level, and function. This also implies that students have varied prior experiences with language learning and can draw on diverse language repertoires. In the foreign language classroom, this situation should lead to changes both in the way lessons are conducted and in how linguistic content is presented. Among the many aspects that can be analyzed in a multilingual language-learning classroom, learner autonomy in second language acquisition is particularly intriguing. This is because it involves, on one hand, students acquiring a foreign language through another foreign language, and, on the other side, students sharing this process with peers who have had to face the challenge of learning a language different from their mother tongue to be able to understand the majority language of the school and society, further complicating the language-learning process.

The questions this research seeks to investigate are:

- How do upper secondary students perceive their own autonomy in the multilingual foreign language learning classroom?
- How do teachers perceive and respond to the challenges of promoting learner autonomy in multilingual classrooms?

Data was collected over the course of a month in two *Spanish as a Foreign Language* classes through teacher and student questionnaires and systematic classroom observations.

The objectives pursued in this study are:

- To determine whether—and how—student autonomy develops in multilingual classrooms.

- To identify effective teaching strategies that support student autonomy in multilingual classrooms.
- To propose strategies to enhance autonomy in multilingual classrooms.

Theoretical Framework: Student autonomy and multilingualism

Student autonomy has become a key aspect of the learning process (Erdocia, 2014), with its principal definition developed by Holec in the context of foreign language learning. In his book *Autonomy and Foreign Language Learning* (1981) Holec echoes Schwartz and defines autonomy as “the ability to take charge of one’s own learning” (p. 3). He further explains that autonomy is “a potential capacity to act in a given situation (...) and not the actual behavior of an individual in that situation” (p. 3). The author identifies five aspects of the learning process that are relevant to evaluate students’ autonomy: (1) fixing of objectives, (2) definition of the contents and progressions, (3) selection of methods and techniques, (4) monitoring the acquisition procedure, and (5) the evaluation of what has been acquired. To be considered autonomous, students are expected to take responsibility for making decisions in each aspect.

However, it is also important to clarify some misconceptions about what autonomy is. Little (1991) identifies five mistaken beliefs:

[i] that autonomy is synonym with self-instruction; that it is essentially a matter of deciding to learn without a teacher (...) [ii] that in the classroom context learner autonomy somehow requires the teacher to relinquish all initiative and control (...) [iii] that autonomy is something teachers do to their learners (...) [iv] that autonomy is a single, easily described behaviour (...) [v] that autonomy is a steady state achieved by certain learners. (pp. 3-4)

The findings of this research will be analyzed considering these definitions of what student autonomy is—and what it is not.

Multilingualism in Germany

According to the German Federal Statistical Office (2022), German schools have a proportion of about 40% of students with immigration experiences (as cited by Göbel et al., 2024) and “in Germany, about one in three students grows up with at least one other language besides German” (Olfert, 2019, as cited by Göbel et al., 2024, p. 2). In the Ruhr Area, the data shows

that “the percentage is considerably higher in urban areas such as the Ruhr Valley. In cities like Gelsenkirchen and Duisburg, nearly 50% of preschool children aged three to six primarily speak a non-German language at home” (Bohr-Feld, 2023, p. 1). It is undeniable that multilingual students are a huge percentage of the classrooms in Germany,

Thus, **multilingualism is the norm rather than the exception** in schools meaning that in-service teachers need to acknowledge and incorporate their students’ multilingualism in class due to its many benefits. In fact, several studies show that multilingualism itself is beneficial and associated with many positive, cognitive advantages, such as metalinguistic awareness and attentional control. (Cruz Neri et al., 2024, p. 1).

These authors have researched **multilingualism** in the German context, relating it to primary schools, secondary schools and attitudes towards it (see references at the end). However, there is yet a need to study multilingualism in relation to autonomy, this is why I propose this research.

Methodology: Sample and Data Collection

The research was conducted in an open public grammar school in Witten, North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany. Observations were conducted in two grades (10th and 12th) during Spanish classes over the course of one month, twice a week per grade, totaling six lessons per grade. From the outset, a classroom with a variety of mother tongues was requested, and in this case, each class included approximately five different mother tongues.

Data was collected through two questionnaires, one for the teachers, with 18 items, and the other for the students, with 12 items. Both questionnaires primarily consisted of open-ended questions, allowing participants to provide comprehensive answers. The only exception was a background question in the student questionnaire, which asked them to indicate their grade (10th or 12th). The questionnaires were available in three languages: Spanish, as it was the observed class; English, used as *lingua franca* between the students and me when they did not understand Spanish; and German, the official language of the school. Students were encouraged to respond in Spanish, as part of the classroom context and to practice the language, but they were also informed that using English and/or German was entirely accepted.

To facilitate the collection of responses, the questionnaires were administered via Microsoft Forms, allowing teachers and students to answer online. Since most of the students were minors at the time of participation, their parents received a letter of consent outlining the objectives and procedures of the research. They were required to sign it to authorize their children's participation.

Data was also collected through classroom observations. Students were informed in advance that I would be present throughout the month and that they could ask me for help, as I am a Spanish teacher. I was able to observe the Spanish classes mainly from the back of the classroom, where I had a clear view of both the students and the teacher. I kept an observation journal, documenting the activities, students' general attitude, the language used, and the overall interactions.

The 10th-grade class focused on grammatical content throughout the month: the past indefinite and past imperfect, comparative and superlative, and lastly subjunctive. The 12th-grade class, on the other hand, worked with a thematical approach: the indigenous people of Latin America. In both grades the students primarily used iPads for classwork, and the 10th grade also used a Spanish textbook and workbook. Throughout the month, classroom activities included reading, oral presentations, and grammar exercises in various formats, such as sentence writing, gap-filling, and multiple-choice tasks.

Analysis

Students' responses will be analyzed based on the following topics:

- Number of languages spoken in the classroom (summary of responses from both students and teachers).
- Decisions made when studying languages (objectives, contents, methods), according to Holec's criteria for autonomy.
- Perception of the use of foreign languages (different from German) in the classroom, in terms of preference and collaboration.

As for the teachers, the main topics will be:

- Teachers' perspectives on multilingualism in the classroom.

- Their perception of the students' autonomy and strategies used to promote it.

Students' and teachers' answers will be summarized using qualitative content analysis, this means that "the object of the analysis is to reduce the material in such a way that the essential contents remain, in order to create through abstraction a comprehensive overview of the base material which is nevertheless still an image of it" (Mayring, 2014, p. 64).

Results

Students

Twelve students answered the questionnaire, six from each class. According to their answers, we find five different mother tongues and eleven languages spoken (with different levels of proficiency). On average, each student declares to speak 3 languages; English and German are mentioned by all the students, and the other languages vary. They describe their proficiency of German, English and their first language (if different from German) as 'very good', while for the other languages it fluctuates.

Most students answered that they feel comfortable using different languages at school, but only if German, or to a lesser extent English, is used as well. Students who reported that they did not feel comfortable using more than one language mentioned difficulties with understanding the other languages and concerns in regards of being corrected.

When asked about the goals they set for themselves in language learning, most students provided positive responses, answering that they do set personal goals. Most students aim to achieve something through their language learning process: they want to communicate with others, expand their vocabulary, and use the language independently. Three of the twelve students reported not setting personal goals in language learning.

Following Holec's principles about students' autonomy and ability to make decisions about their learning, students were asked if they felt they had the opportunity to choose how they learn in class and their responses were divided: there is a group who think that they do have the opportunity to choose, mainly from the variety of tasks they receive from the teacher; a few students mention that they do not feel that they have a choice in the classroom but they do outside of it. And the other group answer they do not have the opportunity to choose

because the tasks were determined by the teacher. Responses to this question showed a clear division between grade levels: most 12th-grade students responded positively, while 10th-grade students responded negatively.

Students were also asked whether they could choose their learning materials. Four students stated that they could not, especially in class, where they had to use their iPads and materials provided by their teacher. On the other hand, eight students gave examples of using materials and techniques chosen by themselves *outside* the classroom, mostly to study vocabulary with flashcards, mobile apps (such as Duolingo), watching movies, etc.

In the questionnaire, students also shared their perspectives on being part of a multilingual language learning environment. Do they enjoy working with classmates who speak different languages? Nine answered affirmatively, providing reasons such as it helps them further their education, it helps them understand things differently, to learn more and to appreciate other cultural experiences. The three remaining students answered that they do not care or that it does not matter to them.

And what do they think about their language learning in quantity when collaborating with classmates with a different native language? Do they feel they learn more or less? Six students believe they learn more by finding different solutions through different perspectives. Two students think that speaking different languages is irrelevant, and that proficiency is the main factor to consider. Lastly, four students indicated that there is no difference compared to studying with classmates who speak the same language.

Teachers

When asked about autonomy in the context of a classroom with multiple native languages, both teachers provided different responses. While one of them (12th grade teacher) said that this term meant that students had different methods and tools to practice and learn in and outside the classroom with little intervention of the teacher, the other teacher (10th grade) answered that, for her, autonomy is related to the deduction of vocabulary through other language skills.

Regarding strategies to encourage students' autonomy, the 12th grade teacher implements 'reflection time' a space where students can learn and discover the best way to learn

independently. She also mentions other techniques to learn vocabulary and practice communication, such as Tandem. Additionally, she comments on the tools (digital and physical) she uses to promote autonomy: Taskcards, digital books (with audios and videos) and other apps (not mentioned specifically). The 10th grade teacher states that she uses the strategy of recognizing and forming words by themselves; she mentions using digital tools such as Artificial Intelligences.

How do they assess students' development? The 12th grade teacher believes that their students have less autonomy than expected, considering they have more than a decade of formal education, this carries out problems later in university if they choose to go there. The 10th grade teacher did not respond to this question.

Finally, they were asked about the challenges they have encountered trying to foster autonomy in a multilingual classroom. The 12th grade teacher discussed motivation, she considers it is harder for students to work autonomously because they need to read and think independently. She also mentions time management, an issue that students are reluctant to address. The 10th grade teacher identifies it as a challenge and mentions a grammatical deficit in German.

Discussion and Proposals for Educational Practice

Autonomy, understood as the concept that has been around in the field of second language learning research in the last decades —as defined in Theoretical Framework—, is not well understood in these classrooms and, thus, its development is difficult. This study focused on students' autonomy in the multilingual language learning classroom. It was clear from the observations that a traditional dynamic prevailed, i.e. the teacher made the decisions, and the students were expected to carry them out; this is relevant because “the heart of the concern is decision-making in the learning process” (Crabbe, 1999, p. 3). This requires a change regarding the teachers' and students' role, starting with a negotiation regarding the decision-making process, since it is understood that it cannot be swapped from one to the other immediately. Eventually, students should take responsibility for deciding the main aspects of their language learning process, with the teacher assessing and guiding this process.

From the summarized responses of the students, it is evident that Holec's principles for evaluating autonomy are not well developed in these two classrooms. Students do not have much say in the decisions about their learning process, because there is a curriculum to follow, and a lesson plan drawn up by the teachers. A group does feel like they make their own decisions but *outside* the classroom; this space is only a part of their learning process, so they cannot become fully autonomous if this is the only time they can make decisions.

In this research, multilingualism was also studied as a factor in the development of students' autonomy; but, according to the answers of teachers and students, it is not a factor of great relevance. A possible explanation could be the language use in the classroom: students are multilingual, with most speaking at least three languages with different levels of proficiency, but these multiple languages are not utilized in the classroom. Students primarily communicate in German, using English if necessary, and Spanish (the language they were learning) when required, reluctantly in most cases, as it was possible to observe during my stay and mentioned by the teachers as well. Considering this, future research could compare different classrooms: with students who are mostly monolingual, with multilingual students, and multilingual classrooms (understanding this last one as a classroom where different languages are actually **used** in the class).

Based on the data obtained, two main proposals for educational practice that could promote students' autonomy in any classroom are:

- **Learning journals**: to plan and track their learning, students keep a journal in which they document their process, recording their progress, difficulties, strategies used, and how they assess them. Beginning with the establishment of their own learning objectives, guided by the teacher in understanding the proposed curriculum for the language class, students propose their own learning objectives as the first step on this learning journal. From there, they document their activities, thoughts, difficulties and opinions about the classes. To fit in with a multilingual classroom, these learning journals should also give them space to include their mother-tongue and/or other languages they are learning, making it possible to enhance their language acquisition with the use of other languages. This activity is mainly done and structured by the students themselves, but it needs to be guided by the teacher at the beginning, to

make them see the purpose and advantages of doing it: becoming aware of their learning process.

- **Student's teaching capsules**: every session, for each class/topic/unit (according to the teacher's planification), a student explains the similarities or differences between their mother language, the meta-language, and German (if it's not their mother language), focusing on the specific aspect they are studying in class. In this way, they need to autonomously research linguistics aspects in different languages and draw conclusions to share with their classmates. At the same time, they have the opportunity to do so through their native language, explicitly incorporating it into the classroom. In this case, I also recommend including the German language, as it is the *lingua franca* (thus, any language fulfilling this role could be used).

These proposals can be implemented in various types of classrooms, as they are sufficiently adaptable. The main objective is to allow students to be responsible for making decisions about their learning process and to encourage reflection on it as well. In this way, autonomy can be developed step-by-step, starting with group work, supported by peers and teachers, until it is developed individually.

This study was limited by its sample size and duration. Future research should include a broader range of classrooms and compare multilingual and monolingual settings to assess the influence of multilingualism on autonomy development. Additionally, longitudinal studies tracking students' autonomy development over several years could provide deeper insights into the long-term impact of multilingual education on learner autonomy. Further investigation into how digital tools and technological resources could support autonomy in language learning is also recommended, as digital literacy increasingly plays a role in modern education.

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Annex

Student questionnaire

1. How many languages do you speak, and what are they? Which is your native language?
2. How do you feel about your proficiency in the languages you are learning? (Consider all the languages you speak at school and at home, including your mother tongue).
3. Do you feel comfortable using different languages at school? In which language(s) do you feel most comfortable?
4. Do you feel you have the opportunity to choose how you learn in class? In what way?
5. Can you use your own languages (if different from German), learning preferences and/or prior experiences studying languages to learn at school? How?
6. Do you set personal goals when learning languages? Give an example of a goal you have with Spanish.
7. What are your strengths and weaknesses when studying another language?
8. Can you choose your own materials for language study? How you do it? Which materials do you prefer?
9. Do you enjoy working with classmates who speak different languages? Why?
10. Do you think you learn more or less when working with classmates who speak other languages? Why?
11. Would you like to have more opportunities to use your languages at school? Give examples.
12. Describe the process of learning languages (in class with your teacher and what you study on your own).

Teacher questionnaire

1. What languages are taught in school? Why these languages?
2. On average, how many students are there per classroom?
3. How many different languages do your students speak? On average.
4. Does your institution have specific policies or programs to support learners with mother languages different than German?

5. Have you received specific training to work in multilingual classrooms or with students from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds?
6. How do you define autonomy in language acquisition in the context of your classroom with multiple heritage languages?
7. How does the cultural and linguistic context of the school (in this case, German) influence your approach to promoting learning autonomy in language acquisition?
8. What resources (human or material) do the school provide to support teaching in a multilingual environment?
9. Is there a collaborative program with parents to support multilingual learning and/or student autonomy in language learning?
10. Do you consider multilingualism in your classroom to be a resource or a challenge? Explain why.
11. Do you believe that multilingual students have an advantage in learning foreign languages autonomously? Why?
12. Do you think that a positive attitude toward linguistic and cultural diversity benefits the promotion of student autonomy when learning languages? How?
13. What teaching strategies do you use to encourage students to study languages autonomously?
14. What tools (digital and physical) do you use to enhance students' autonomy?
15. Do you think that interactions among students who speak different languages influence their ability to work independently and make autonomous decisions regarding language studying and learning? How?
16. How do you assess the development of autonomy in your students?
17. What challenges have you encountered in trying to foster autonomy in a multilingual classroom?
18. Additional comments.



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