Teachers' viewpoints about an educational reform concerning multilingualism in German-speaking Switzerland

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ABSTRACT

Multilingualism is ubiquitous in European mainstream education and has increasingly found its way into educational policy documents. Teachers interpret these documents and make pedagogical decisions based on their experiences and beliefs in order to manage their classrooms. The overtly multilingual polity of Switzerland underwent a paradigmatic shift in language teaching in line with a multilingual turn and provides a particularly useful context to investigate the covert educational language policy by exploring sixty-seven primary teachers' subjective viewpoints about multilingualism. The qualitative interpretation of the inverted factor analytical result uncovers a gap between the common understanding of the nature of multilingualism and the fragmented intentions of pedagogically reacting to linguistic diversity in the classroom. In conclusion, the current study shows the need for a continuation of professional development and establishment of supportive school conditions for the implementation of this large-scale innovation endeavour in the context under scrutiny.

1. Introduction

The current research project investigates teachers' viewpoints about multilingualism[1] and multilingual students in the context of mainstream multilingual education. In a time of a large-scale innovation programme based on regenerated theories of teaching and learning of second and additional languages and against the backdrop of increased international migration, multilingualism is of prime relevance for a wide range of educational settings.

This paper reports about the situation in Switzerland, which has self-constructed a political identity that differs from most other European states (Stotz, 2006). Switzerland has experienced the co-existence of four linguistically distinct communities and has applied the principles of territoriality and subsidiarity to consolidate national cohesion. The pride in linguistic pluralism and regional diversity is described as the essence of Swiss cultural identity and resonates largely with the advice by Lo Bianco (2017) that 'multilingualism should be centrally associated with shared communication, social cohesion and economic and civic betterment' (p. 45–46). It is often assumed that if a polity of a state such as Switzerland is multilingual, the population is also multilingual (Schiffman, 1996). That is not the case *per se*, but multilingualism, with varying proficiencies in the registers of different

linguistic codes, is a key element of the Swiss national culture (Schwab, 2014) and deep-seated in the national education system on an overt policy level. In fact, people's individual multilingualism is one of the main objectives in current Swiss curricula for primary and secondary schooling, mainly achieved via foreign language teaching and learning. Since 'language policy is never developed and implemented in a historical, social, or political vacuum' (May, 2015, p. 45), the language policy landscape of the particular setting, in the present case German-speaking Switzerland, needs to be explored.

1.1. Educational language policy and planning in Switzerland

Due to the decentralised and federalist structure of Switzerland, the organisation of schools falls within the remit of the cantons and a large amount of autonomy is assigned to the municipalities. The Swiss Conference of Cantonal Ministers of Education (EDK) coordinates the work of the cantons through intercantonal agreements and recommendations. Prior to *HarmoS* (EDK, 2007), the large-scale innovation and harmonisation process in national education, which came into effect on 1 August 2009, Switzerland knew 26 different curricula, one for each canton. Currently, there are three different curricula; *Le plan d'études romand* for western, French-speaking Switzerland, *Il piano di*

studio for southern, Italian-speaking Switzerland and *Lehrplan 21* for central and eastern, German-speaking Switzerland. In terms of the number of languages taught and the age of onset, all of these curricula follow the EDK's Strategy of Language Teaching (EDK, 2004). In addition to the local dominant official language, all children in Switzerland learn an additional official language of the country and English. While the word *additional* would imply an additive approach (Spolsky, 2009), the Swiss education system applies the term *foreign* languages when referring to any language other than the regionally dominant official language, including other Swiss national languages. Hence, the first foreign language is generally learned from 5th school year[2] onwards and the second foreign language is learned from the 7th school year onwards. All curricula thereby respect the European Union's policy objective of 'mother tongue plus two other languages' (European Commission, 2004, p. 16) and present the basic condition to become multilinguals, which 'is a prerogative and duty of the citizens of this multilingual state' (Stotz, 2006, p. 252) from a confederate discourse perspective, where cultural diversity and mutual understanding are of prime importance. Representing a more federalist discourse, popular initiatives are still pending in certain cantons to limit the teaching and learning to only one foreign language in primary school, and focusing rather on English than a second official language of Switzerland. The third discourse described by Stotz (2006) is connected to globalisation and 'is a bottom up, populist discourse [to serve] the need for transnational integration and opportunities for wealth creation' (p. 257). The second and third discourses have led to the fact that English is taught as a first foreign language in cantons in Eastern Switzerland. Because of this failure to have a harmonised policy, the six cantons along the French-German language boarder agreed to a common project curriculum for foreign language learning in 2006, which was named *Passepartout* and later integrated into process-oriented *Lehrplan 21*. Since the current study focuses on the canton of Berne, the *Passepartout* curriculum (Bertschy, Egli Cuenat, & Stotz, 2015) is described in more detail.

1.2. A pluralistic curriculum in a monolingual context

The *Passepartout* curriculum is highly prescriptive in terms of teaching methods and desired outcomes and represents a paradigmatic shift from a rather monolingual to a multilingual approach in language teaching and learning in Swiss primary and secondary schools. The sum of new approaches and methods involved clearly meets the definition of complex and multilevel innovations provided by Century and Cassata (2016).

Moreover, the curriculum is based on current research about third language acquisition and is in many ways in line with the multilingual turn in language teaching and learning described by May (2014), including the acknowledgment of multilingual speakers' fluid language practices in their full complexity (García, 2009). As an example, even though the term *translanguaging* is not mentioned in the curriculum, characteristics of pedagogical translanguaging, especially its spontaneous application referring 'to the reality of bi/multilingual usage in naturally occurring contexts' (Cenoz & Gorter, 2017) are clearly recognisable. In summary, *Passepartout* represents a language as a resource orientation (Hult & Hornberger, 2016; Ruíz, 1984) and showcases an affinity to multilingualism described as part of the Swiss national identity (Giudici & Grizelj, 2017). In the curriculum, language learning is considered a lifelong process and teachers are encouraged to see potential challenges due to migration induced multilingualism as beneficial for students' academic success (Maluch, Kempert, Neumann,

& Stanat, 2015). However, as stated by Spolsky (2009), 'the school as an institution normally works towards uniformity and monolingualism' (p. 91), which has traditionally also been the case in Switzerland and still is true, when regarding the organisation of language education. Even though the curriculum suggests different ways of connecting the teaching and learning of German, French, English and students' mother tongues, all languages are represented as separate units in planning and schedules, indicating a monolingual norm at school (Jonsson, 2013) as opposed to a more heteroglossic and combined use of linguistic resources in the classroom. Maintaining boundaries between languages can also be seen as representing an entrenched monolingual nationalist ideology (Musk, 2010). Another example can be drawn from the misalignment between the new curriculum and the traditional way of assessing language competence in the canton, where the native speaker of the target language is the reference. Teachers find themselves in the midst of the tension between long standing codes, norms and conventions they have relied upon (Kramsch, 2014) and new educational language policy fostering a more fluid understanding of language use. In other words, the context and conditions, which 'can affect innovation enactment in legitimate ways' (Century & Cassata, 2016, p. 172), are not ideal for a prompt enactment of new policies according to their intentions, especially because they involve a rather high level of self-doubt and uncertainty (Geijsel, Sleegers, van den Berg, & Kelchtermans, 2001) among the teachers.

1.3. Teacher cognition and teacher education

Within language education policy, decisions about languages and their uses in educational contexts (Shohamy, 2006), are understood as multidimensional, involving scales of social organization (Hult, 2018). In the current implementation research article, the focus is put on teachers as 'active, thinking decision-makers' (Borg, 2003, p. 81) and 'policy arbiters' (Johnson, 2013; Menken & García, 2010). The importance of their role in making educational reforms successful is generally accepted (Dori & Herscovitz, 2005) and particularly their subjective perceptions based on what Borg (2015) describes as teacher cognition when he refers to 'the complex, practically-oriented, personalized and context-sensitive networks of knowledge, thoughts and beliefs' (p. 321) play a pivotal role in the potential enactment of policies (Coburn & Talbert, 2006). In the results section, the label *teacher viewpoint* will be used to describe the collectivity of their beliefs, including cognitions of different consciousness levels and objective truth that potentially explain their classroom decision-making (e.g. Nespor, 1987; Pajares, 1992) and pedagogical practices (Richardson, 1996) in connection with multilingualism.

Concurrently, a number of studies have reported on a discrepancy between theoretical multilingual pedagogies and current classroom practice (e.g. Cenoz & Gorter, 2011; Cummins, 2007; Daryai-Hansen et al., 2015). Reasons for teachers' resistance to implement research based curricular reformation are diverse. General teacher education often does not devote a sufficient amount of time to teachers' knowledge development about multilingualism and multilingual pedagogy (De Angelis, 2011; Lundberg, 2019; Otwinowska, 2014), despite the fact that professional development activities are regarded 'as important for fostering the implementation of large-scale innovations by teachers' (Geijsel et al., 2001, p. 132). On the one hand, teacher education is supposed to help interpret and negotiate (Menken & García, 2010) and on the other hand critically reflect on and engage with policy to avoid educators merely acting as servants of the system that follow top-down initiatives unquestioningly (Hult, 2018; Shohamy, 2006). Providing teachers with multiple opportunities of reflection about culturally diverse schools and classrooms is shown to confront their biases (Kumar & Lauermann, 2018). Furthermore, if language teachers do not recognise an increased efficiency of language learning, they are reported to be resistant to implementing a new approach (Egli Cuenat, 2011; Jakisch, 2014).

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[2] With *HarmoS*, two years of kindergarten are counted as the first two years of schooling. This new way of counting years of school is applied in this article to ensure continuity with the new curriculum in the context. Example: 5th school year equals two years of pre-school and third year of primary school.

As outlined by Haukås (2016) in her study about teachers' beliefs about multilingualism and a multilingual pedagogical approach, changes in teachers' beliefs and pedagogical approaches take time and only happen if the teachers are convinced that the modifications are for the better. In order to '[persuade] the educational establishment to consider the possible value of multilingualism' as described as the first level of conflict by Spolsky (2009, p. 91), a further education course of 72 contact hours was made compulsory as a implementation support strategy (Century & Cassata, 2016) for all in-service primary school teachers of French and English in the *Passepartout* region and was organised in several meetings over a time span of 18 months. These courses addressed teachers' language competences, teachers' methodological didactical competences and introduced new textbooks for French and English in a sustained way consisting of a multitude of feedback cycles and collaborative learning opportunities. During numerous sessions in the course, the teachers were asked to carefully analyse the highly prescriptive curriculum and become 'critical, culturally responsive and potentially transformative' (Arias, 2012, p. 17). During the *Passepartout* professional development courses, which measure up to many structural and core features of effective in-service education (Bell & Gilbert, 1996; Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman, & Yoon, 2001), teachers often found themselves navigating between new policies and best practices communicated during the course on the one hand side and their own experience and beliefs on the other hand side. Pre-service teacher education in the context under scrutiny was also adapted by adding didactics of multilingualism and the presentation of the new textbooks to the syllabi of relevant subjects. In the remainder of this paper the term *Passepartout* course will be used for both, pre- and in-service education settings.

The present educational language policy implementation study tackles hardly observable teachers' subjective viewpoints about multilingualism and multilingual students on a conceptual level and about potential pedagogical actions, which serve as language management tools in their content classroom. Considering the policy-practice gap reported in the several studies mentioned above and the difficulty to change beliefs (Pajares, 1992) a range of different viewpoints, showcasing different degrees of acceptance of the current curriculum for language learning as a by-product, can be expected.

2. Methodology

The purpose of this investigation is to de- and reconstruct underlying linguistic ideologies in predominant teachers' viewpoints without imposing researcher-defined categories onto them in order to investigate covert educational language policies in Swiss primary schools with regard to the adapted overt educational policy situation in multilingual Switzerland.

2.1. Research design

Q methodology (henceforth Q) is regarded as particularly well suited to investigate subjective phenomena that are not entirely consciously accessible (Irie, Ryan, & Mercer, 2018). This is partly because the participants are provided with the necessary language to describe and label their beliefs (Ernest, 2001).

Psychologist William Stephenson invented Q in the 1930s to locate shared viewpoints in a purposely-selected group of people about an issue by combining the qualitative Q sorting technique and the inverted, by-person Q factor analysis as opposed to the more traditional by-variable factor analysis known as R methodology (Watts & Stenner, 2005). The resulting abductive approach with great exploratory and theory-generating potential is an interactive, dynamic and operant methodology (Brown, 1980). In the field of language policy, Lo Bianco (2015) advocates Q as a valuable research method to investigate 'the nature and complexity of communication problems' (p. 70) by delineating underlying discourses in the debates about multilingualism.

Constructing the set of cards, called Q sample, is achieved by collecting, evaluating, culling and reformulating statements with the aim of approaching individuals 'in terms of their own priorities, values, beliefs and opinions' (Ernest, 2011, p. 234) in a language the participants are familiar with (Dryzek & Holmes, 2002) but represent the nuanced thoughts of the participating educators. The statements in the present study were initially compiled with an unstructured approach (Watts & Stenner, 2012) using a variety of sources, such as academic literature, popular science magazines, educational policy documents and discussions with teachers. Four domain experts, whereas two from the Swiss context, and two experienced Q researchers evaluated each statement in terms of simplicity, clarity, wording, breadth and depth (Paige & Morin, 2016; Watts & Stenner, 2012) in order to reach a balanced and well-formulated Q set with a good coverage of the issue in question.

To align the methodology with this study's theoretical foundation drawing on teacher cognition and language education policy, the statements were separated into two sets of cards. While the statements on the cards in the first study component (henceforth called *understanding*) aimed to reveal the teachers' underlying understanding of and belief about central concepts in linguistically diverse school settings, the second one (called *pedagogy*) focused on potential pedagogical practices regarding multilingualism and multilingual students. The two final Q samples were piloted with twelve teachers and teacher trainers and again slightly adjusted.

2.2. Research setting

As Q methodology represents an inversion of more traditional R methodological research techniques, each participant in this study was purposefully selected and treated as a variable. The main sampling criterion was the expectation of the participants to have a defined viewpoint that matters in relation to multilingualism in education. To achieve a heterogenous group of teachers in a city, which can be seen as a distinguished proving ground for 'understanding social diversity and complexity' (King & Carson, 2017, p. 3), three primary schools in the metropolitan area of Berne were selected to illustrate a range of schools with regard to size and linguistic composition. Since all teachers meet students of diverse linguistic background and all students in mainstream classrooms learn several languages, all teachers at these three schools were invited to participate. Sixty-seven of them, representing a participation rate of 55%, agreed to share their viewpoint on a voluntary basis.

School A is the smallest school with around 150 students of almost exclusively (Swiss-)German language background. Seven teachers participated from the school and all except for one teacher had attended a *Passepartout* course. From School B with its 250 students of mixed linguistic origin, only 3 out of the 25 participating teachers had attended a *Passepartout* course. School C has about 350 students and a migration background was common among these children. Thirty-five teachers from this school participated in the current study and 14 of them had attended a *Passepartout* course. The differences in the percentage of teachers' participation in *Passepartout* is due to their distribution of French and English lessons among the teaching staff and the low support for the innovative curriculum reform by School B's principal, resulting in an unfavourable condition for this school's improvement (Dori & Herscovitz, 2005; Thoonen, Sleegers, Oort, Peetsma, & Geijsel, 2011) In addition to the compulsory subjects, all participating schools provide lessons in German as a second language and offer mother tongue instruction programmes upon request.

2.3. Data collection

All participating schools were visited in 2017 and the researcher was present during the face-to-face collection of the empirical data. Before completing a short demographic questionnaire, including their

← most disagree							most agree →	
-4	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4
30	21	25	17	27	28	9	32	20
	22	7	6	26	11	2	23	
[1]	29	1	10	31	15	3	18	[1]
		8	12	4	16	14		
	[3]		5	19	13		[3]	
		[4]		24		[4]		
			[5]		[5]			
				[6]				

Fig. 1. Factor array for consensus viewpoint 1 in the second study component on *pedagogy*.

self-assessment of their foreign language skills, the participants were briefed about the research project and signed a consent form. The participants were then asked to physically sort the 39 statements on *understanding* according to a set pattern determined by a sorting grid (see Fig. 1 for a completed sorting grid on *pedagogy*). Items they disagreed with more strongly had to be put closer to the left pole (−4), while the statements with the most agreement were located towards the right pole (+4). The aim of this forced choice procedure for each participant was a single and holistic configuration of all the statements, called a Q sort, taking into account the connections and relations between the statements. The participants were asked to add comments about their choice of items at +4/-4 as well as, according to them, missing items by writing on the back of the page. The procedure was repeated with the 32 statements for second component about *pedagogy*.

2.4. Data analysis

The empirical data for the 67 participants was quantitatively analysed using the dedicated software PQMethod (Schmolck, 2014), applying a by-person factor analysis as a data-reduction technique. By engaging with the processes of principal components analysis and varimax rotation in an investigatory fashion (Watts & Stenner, 2012), the most informative solution for each component was selected. For each viewpoint, a factor array, that is a single ideal-typical Q sort according to a procedure of weighted averaging of all significantly loading Q sorts, was created. The consensus factor in the second component is illustrated in Fig. 1. The values are shown in the top line, while the numbers in brackets indicate the number of items per value. The crib sheet method by Watts and Stenner (2012) was used to carefully and holistically inspect the patterning of items in the factor arrays and prevented the oversight of items ranked zero (indifferent) in a particular factor for description of its viewpoint if they were given extreme scores in other factors.

3. Results

The results section is divided into the two study components starting with *understanding*, followed by *pedagogy*.

3.1. Component 1: What do multilingualism and multilingual students mean to you?

After the elimination of factors with insufficient statistical strength, two factors could be kept for the first component. A total of 51 respondents loaded significantly (at ± 0.41 at the p < 0.01 level) on only one of the factors and an additional 14 were confounded with significant loadings on both factors, indicating that they are not mutually exclusive, but rather two manifestations of one consensus viewpoint called A. Together they explain 52% of the variance and share a rather high intercorrelation (0.55). Viewpoint A is presented in a narrative fashion below. Since there are relevant differences between the two manifestations with regard to the sorting of specific statements, they are then described separately, using distinguishing statements and called A+ and A–.

3.1.1. Viewpoint A: the broad consensus

Sixty-five out of 67 participating teachers significantly loaded on Viewpoint A and show a general agreement of multilingualism as a resource, where students can draw on knowledge in different language while learning new languages, regardless of their first language. They believe that multilingualism has no negative influence on their school environment and the communication of social skills. On the contrary, coping with multilingualism is experienced to broaden the teachers' professional horizon. They are certain not to regard students with mother-tongue-like skills in the local dominant language as monolingual, but respect these students' full linguistic repertoire. At the same time, multilingual students do not need to speak all of their languages fluently to be considered multilingual. The consensus viewpoint is generally unsure about cognitive aspects of multilingualism.

3.1.2. Viewpoint A+: foreign language teachers

This viewpoint explains 33% of the study variance and had a total of 37 respondents loading significantly on this factor without a second significant loading on A–. Nineteen out of these 37 teach at least one foreign language (French or English) and almost all of them have received *Passepartout* pre- or in-service education about a multilingual pedagogical approach.

Respondents adhering to Viewpoint A+ believe that monolinguals can become multilinguals and that they do not necessarily have another mother tongue than (Swiss-)German. Moreover, they are sure that multilingualism is not a consequence of mass migration, but a result of their teaching. Not seeing any particular problems with (Swiss-)German or general problems in school is therefore in line with their understanding of multilingualism.

3.1.3. Viewpoint A–: other teachers, including German teachers

The 14 significant loadings on this viewpoint explain 19% of the study variance. Except for two, whereas one with *Passepartout* course participation, Viewpoint A– adherents do not teach foreign languages. Since none of the participating schools was a bilingual school, it can be concluded that a vast majority of teachers loading on this viewpoint teach in German. They regard their students' parents' (Swiss-)German skills as crucial for the educational success of their children and consider it a fact that multilingual students do not have a bigger vocabulary than their monolingual peers. Moreover, they can see a potential frustration coupled with multilingualism.

3.2. Component 2: How should multilingualism and multilingual students be handled according to you?

Six accounts, which together explain 73% of the variance were identified for the second component about the suggested pedagogical actions of teachers. They are displayed in Fig. 2, where the size of the shape roughly represents the explained study variance of each factor. 47 of the 67 Q sorts loaded significantly on one of these six factors. Factor loadings of at least ± 0.45 were significant at the p < 0.01 level and the number of significant loadings per factor is as well visible in Fig. 2.

From a purely statistical point of view, the case for only two separate factors could be made due to high factor intercorrelations among five of the six viewpoints. Viewpoints 1 to 5 are visually represented on the left-hand side and connected with arrows to illustrate their interconnection. Viewpoint 1 serves as the consensus and is in line with national policy documents about multilingualism and a professional stance. The other four viewpoints below Viewpoint 1 are a result of a certain level of insecurity in connection with linguistic diversity and can be distinguished by their approach to overcome their lack of knowledge about the topic. Viewpoint 2 shows a positively evolving stance, while the remaining three viewpoints are much more traditional and less open-minded. A further distinction can be made between Viewpoints 4 and 5, which both show aspects of a nationalist ideology. Viewpoint 4 agrees with potential policies to secure a monolingual
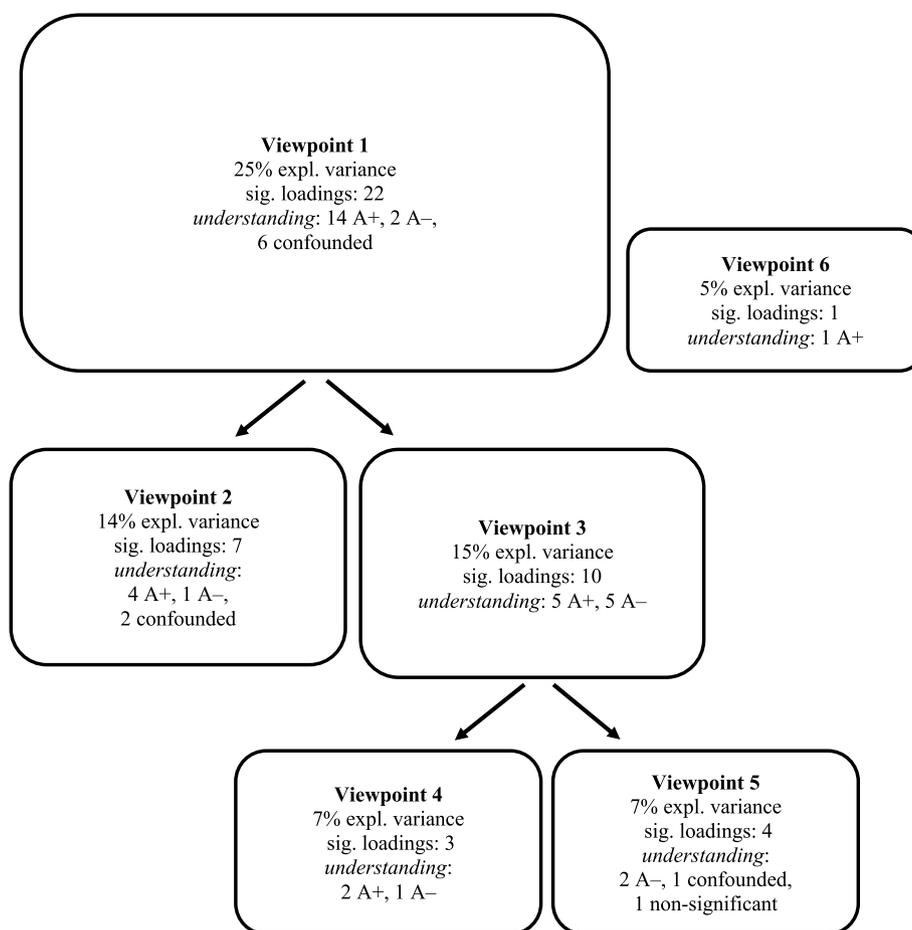
Fig. 2. Quantitative summary and visual representation of all viewpoints in the second component.

norm, whereas Viewpoint 5 applies a more self-centred approach in overcoming linguistic diversity. Viewpoint 6 has no significant inter-correlation with other viewpoints. While Viewpoint 1 could be considered the most favourable one due to its sound agreement with current research about multilingual pedagogy, the other viewpoints are equally interesting as they pinpoint critical issues in the teachers' socio-cultural reality and allow a vital discussion about multilingualism in education. Fig. 2 also lists the distribution of loadings in the first component (*understanding*) per viewpoint in the second component to illustrate the connection between the two questions posed.

This quantitative summary of all viewpoints is followed by the qualitative interpretation and description of single viewpoints, named to evoke their interpretation, using as many items from the Q sample as possible. The numbers in brackets show factor item values. Taking Viewpoint 1 as an example, (20: 4) indicates that item 20 was ranked in the 4 (most agree) position by the merged average of all participants significantly loading on this factor. The possibility of adding comments about the reasons for the sorting was used often and integrated into the viewpoint descriptions. Comments adding a further layer of interpretation or improved clarity of the viewpoints are quoted in the interpretations, followed by the number of the Q sort in parentheses. The viewpoints' names are enriched with a symbolic and mnemonic statement formulated by the researcher.

3.2.1. The consensus Viewpoint 1 – Multilingualism is good for all of us!

Twenty-two respondents load significantly on Viewpoint 1, explaining 25% of the opinion variance. Additional seven out of eight respondents not loading significantly on a single factor had a high loading on Viewpoint 1, indicating an even stronger consensus.

The teachers loading on this viewpoint consider multilingualism to be an important topic at school (2: 2), beneficial for everybody (Q sort 59) and a right of every student (9: 2). They treat everybody the same (20: 4), which is understood as a non-discriminating act and to provide the same rules for all students (Q sort 50). Moreover, students with migration background should not be excluded from foreign language learning (22: −3).

They consider the students' individual multilingualism as the norm (21: −3) and want to support them develop their multilingual self-perception (32: 3). At the same time they believe it is quite important to have a common language (3: 2) for a functioning communication (Q sort 60), but a 'German-only policy' is not requested (29: −3). Q sort 7 underlines his viewpoint about the importance of a common language with functioning communication and a feeling of togetherness.

Translanguaging strategies are allowed by the teachers loading on this factor (30: −4, 28: 1) and are also used to develop the students' self-perception (Q sort 42). They even encourage their students to use their full linguistic repertoire (18: 3). Evaluating multilingual students in their mother tongue is however considered to be difficult (10: −1) or impossible due to lacking language skills of the teacher (Q sort 60).

While multilingualism should be part of teachers' education (23: 3) and included in teaching materials (14: 2), information to hand out to parents is not requested (27: 0). Schools should however adapt to the society's increase multilingualism (16: 1).

3.2.2. The evolving Viewpoint 2 – With some more information, we can do it together!

The teachers loading on this factor want more collaboration, for example with multilingual students' parents (13: 4), who highly influence their children's success with their attitude (Q sort 58) or among language teachers (31: 3) who should promote a common attitude about multilingualism (15: 2). They also see massive advantages in

receiving multilingual teaching materials (11: 3) to increase the students' joy of learning languages (Q sort 64) and the inclusion of multilingualism in textbooks (14: 2). They believe multilingualism is an important topic at school (2: 2) and should be part of teacher education (23: 2). On the whole, this factor shows quite some willingness to change, even in the teachers' professional practices (16: 1).

These teachers highlight the importance of a common language (3: 3) and the non-necessity of a 'German-only policy' (29: −3), while they still see German as the norm (21: 1). At the same time, they are unsure about multilingualism as a right at school (9: 0), if multilingual students should receive individual support in their mother tongue (26: 1) or to learn German (4: 0) and if they should treat every student the same (20: 0).

All students, regardless of their linguistic background and competence, should learn German together (8: −3) in order to benefit from positive consequences of peer learning (Q sort 64). No students should be allowed to withdraw from language subjects due to low motivation (1: −4) or be excluded because of another mother tongue (5: −2). However, one foreign language is considered being enough (12: −2) and the teachers loading on this factor are unsure about the concept of translanguaging (18: 1, 28: 0, 30: −1, 10; −1).

3.2.3. The traditionalist Viewpoint 3 – That's just the way it is! We're not going to change!

Multilingualism is important (2: 3) and should be part of teachers' education (23: 3), partly because of insecurity among teachers (Q sort 40). Nevertheless, schools don't necessarily need to change their practices due to the society's increased multilingualism (16: −1). Even though the teachers loading on this factor are unsure about the need of being trilingual (6: 0), they see the benefits of learning additional languages (12: −3) by all students (1: −4, 5: −3, 22: −2). Moreover, they feel it is the reality of school and life in general to be forced to do things you don't like (Q sorts 39; 55; 65).

The evaluation of students in their mother tongue is unthinkable for these teachers (10: −3). Generally, translanguaging is not considered to be a beneficial concept (30: 1, 18: 1, 28: 0). In addition, using other languages would allow students to make fun of peers and teachers would not realise it (Q sort 55). Students with other mother tongues should rather go to preparatory classes (24: 2) to learn German, because a common language is important (3: 3) and then come back to these teachers' classes.

Every student is treated the same, regardless of linguistic background (20: 4). The teachers loading significantly on this factor have however experienced the need for additional support for multilingual students (4: 2). This is accompanied with the belief that neither individual support for these students (26: −1) nor multilingualism as a whole is a right (9: 0).

3.2.4. The policy Viewpoint 4 – A monolingual policy could make our job easier!

The teachers loading on this factor consider multilingualism to be an important topic at school (2: 3), as it is challenging German as the uncontested norm (21: 3) and because a common language is important (3: 4) for vital and fast communication during the lessons (Q sort 46). Even a 'German-only policy' is not entirely opposed (29: 0).

There exists a strong attitude against the objective of what Q sort 38 calls forced trilingualism for every student (6: −4, 12: 2) and the use of translanguaging strategies (18: −3, 10: −2, 28: −1, 30: 1). Language subjects should not be merged (17: 2) and multilingualism does not need to be included in teaching materials (14: 0).

Multilingual students are not in need of special education support (7: −3) or reduced learning objectives (25: −3). Nor should they necessarily go to preparatory classes (24: −1) or expect individual support in their mother tongue (26: −1).

While schools don't need to change their practices (16: 0), the teachers desire to receive information material about multilingualism to hand out to parents of multilingual students (27: 3). At the same time, the cooperation with these parents is not considered to be vital (13: 0).

3.2.5. The self-centred Viewpoint 5 – We have more work because of multilingualism even though we have nothing to do with it!

The teachers loading on this factor consider multilingualism being an important topic (2: 3) because it is challenging German as the uncontested norm (21: 4). At the same time, no 'German-only policy' is regarded necessary (29: −4) and schools do not need to adapt to the increased diversity (16: −1). All students are entitled to receive the same treatment (20: 3). Multilingual students however need additional support and thereby increase the teachers' workload by creating reduced learning objectives (25: 2) or organising additional German classes (4: 2).

Theses teachers request more concrete guidelines about multilingualism (19: 1) and a discussion about the topic within the teaching staff to present a common attitude (15: 1). An intensified collaboration between language teachers is however not considered to be beneficial (31: −1), as language subjects should be taught separately (17: 2).

Multilingualism shouldn't be included in teacher education (23: −2), as it is not the teachers' task to support the multilingual self-perception of the students (32: −1). Translanguaging strategies are opposed by the teachers representing this factor (30: −3, 10: −2, 28: 0, 18: 0) and trilingualism is not a responsible learning objective for all students (6: −3, 12: −2). Multilingual students should not be excluded from foreign language learning (1: −3), considering the fact that the common language at school (German) is a foreign language for these students.

3.2.6. The minimalist Viewpoint 6 – I don't do more than necessary to make it work!

Although the single teacher loading significantly on this factor believes multilingualism is right at school (9: 3), he considers a common language, especially among peers, to be important (3: 4) and therefore suggests additional support for multilingual students to learn German (4: 3) in order to facilitate learning in other subjects and for the integration into normal classes. They should at the same time be excluded from other language subjects (22: 3) to let them focus on the languages they already know or need to know (5: 2). Generally, learning one foreign language is considered being sufficient (12: 2, 6: −1). While German could also be taught separately to L1 and L2 students (8: 0), probably due to the different pre-conditions, other language subjects could be merged (17: −3). In terms of translanguaging, this teacher shows a rather inconsistent account. While he seems to be aware of the benefits of using all languages in classes (28: 1), he does not think multilingual students should be encouraged to use their full linguistic repertoire (18: −1). If they do it however, he accepts it (30: −2). An evaluation in the students' mother tongues is considered to be an overkill (10: −3).

Multilingualism is not considered being an important topic at school (2: −1) and teaching materials do not need to cover it (14: −1). The teacher loading on this factor does not request more concrete guidelines about the topic (19: −2) and sees no benefit in a common attitude about it within the teaching staff (15: −2). A 'German-only policy' is clearly opposed (29: −4).

Multilingual students neither need special education support (7: −3) nor reduced learning objectives (25: −2). Cooperation with their parents is however vital for the educational success (13: 2).

4. Discussion

The objective of the present curriculum implementation study is to investigate shared subjective teachers' viewpoints about multilingualism and potential pedagogical language management practices in connection with a large-scale innovation in increasingly linguistically diverse settings.

4.1. The professional consensus

Both of these study components display viewpoints in favour of a language as resource orientation (Ruíz, 1984), adapted by the current

foreign language curriculum. Due to the intense undertaking of a mandatory further education which is largely in line with literature about effective professional development for teachers (Garet et al., 2001), the implementation of the new curriculum affected all teachers and involved them in discussions about changes or even paradigmatic shifts in the teaching and learning of foreign languages and the handling of multilingualism in educational contexts. It can be assumed that a resulting common disciplinary socialisation was a vastly influential factor resulting in a large consensus among the participants of the study. However, the results also suggest a relationship between discourses of a Swiss national identity, where multilingualism is a key element, and the understanding of the subject matter. After all, all teachers considered themselves capable of communicating in more than one language. It is telling that even the traditionalist Viewpoint 2 in the second study component is in line with a confederate discourse perspective (Stotz, 2006).

4.2. The personal stance

Apart from the striking consensus, a distinction between foreign language teachers, who consider their own teaching as an important component of the students' multilingualism, and all other teachers, who teach in the dominant school language German, could be drawn in the first study component. Due to their intense and sustained examination of the new curriculum and its didactic principals based on pluralistic approaches, it is hardly surprising that foreign language teachers seem to be better at navigating new language policies to cater their students' needs (Hult, 2014) as policy arbiters (Menken & García, 2010). Furthermore, the aim of their teaching is the development of the students' multilingualism, where teachers of other subjects use language as a means and potentially see more difficulties with linguistic diversity in their classes.

While the professional development course *Passepartout* seemed to have had a larger influence on what multilingualism means to the teachers (study component 1), their reactions to pedagogical actions (study component 2) are rather rooted in their personal stance, where previous classroom experience as students and teachers are a strong influence and difficult to ignore. On an institutional scale, this result on teachers' viewpoints can be interpreted as in line with the schools' effort towards uniformity and monolingualism (Spolsky, 2009).

The most intriguing viewpoints in the second component are arguably the ones that indicate a certain level of uncertainty, which is an expected source of concern for teachers in 'a turbulent policy environment' (Geijsel et al., 2001, p. 134) during the introduction of a large-scale innovation like *HarmoS*. Especially viewpoints 3, 4 and 5 base their reactions to pedagogical actions on long standing traditions in their teaching context, which is in line with research on uncertain teachers (Thoonen et al., 2011). The discrepancy between new policies and routines, including the organisation of (separate language) subjects and expectations concerning forms of assessment, is still too substantial to allow teachers to fully implement a paradigmatic change concerning multilingualism as the norm. The rather moderate readiness to encourage students' use of translanguaging capacities, which enjoy a growing acceptance in literature (Cenoz & Gorter, 2017), serves as an illustrative example of the teachers' current dilemma. Especially teachers of other subjects than foreign languages seem to lack expertise in how to make use of their students' full linguistic repertoire. This result would suggest that professional development courses on topics of multilingualism should be offered to all educators and not be limited to foreign language teachers.

4.3. The importance of context

Participants of this study are teachers from schools of different size and with different student populations. Contrary to the expectation to be able to trace back specific viewpoints to particular school settings, results in this study indicate a neglectable role assigned to local context. The understanding of multilingualism and its management in the classroom was rather influenced by the characteristics of the professional consensus described above, the broader regional context and the Swiss cultural identity. This result stands in clear contrast to a similar study in the Swedish nation state context (Lundberg, 2019), where no professional development endeavour about multilingualism was organised. There, three different viewpoints, each consisting of an *understanding* and a *pedagogy* component, could clearly be assigned to local contexts with varied degree of student diversity.

4.4. Limitations and further directions

Even though the present study contributes to the existing literature about teacher cognition, the results only describe shared viewpoints in three schools. While Q methodology does not aim to make generalisations in the sense of pertaining statistical inference, factors discovered with this research methodology serve to contradict established preconceptions about a particular category of people. Against the backdrop of the faint or even absent importance of the local context, the results of this study clearly show that neither school size, nor their student composition or school leadership are decisive in terms of their understanding of multilingualism. Nevertheless, similar research in other schools, especially in other linguistic areas of Switzerland, where a more product-oriented curriculum is applied, would indicate if there exist significant differences among representatives from different linguistic communities or if there is a common, language and curriculum independent, understanding of multilingualism in Switzerland.

The study's results suggest that teachers have not yet fully shifted their preference and beliefs in favour of a pluralistic pedagogical approach. However, without a similar study prior to the undertaking of the professional development courses, it is impossible to assign clear value to *Passepartout*. Nevertheless, similar research in a few years will show if teachers are able to accept new practices and draw on new and positive experiences, as adapting to new paradigms is a slow process (Pajares, 1992). Providing motivational conditions in line with the current curriculum to experiment with new pedagogical approaches and reflect upon them will support the teachers' further development (Thoonen et al., 2011). In accordance with this, more research about teachers' language practices, the observable behaviours and choices (Spolsky, 2009) is suggested, as the current project only discusses the teachers' intended practical actions in the classroom. Methodologically, classroom observations could be one way of connecting the described teachers' viewpoints with their practical representations. Moreover, in-depth interviews with teachers from different viewpoints, but also with participants showing confounded results, could lead to a better-informed understanding of the underlying ideologies about multilingualism in the studied Swiss primary schools.

5. Conclusions

To summarise, adapting beliefs about practical language management is incomparably more challenging than about the theoretical understanding of the concept. Neither the teachers' personal and professional experience, nor *Passepartout* seem to be enough to equip all educators with pedagogical strategies to tap all students' linguistic potential and facilitate the formation of multilingual identities. Desirably, especially teachers of other subjects than foreign languages are involved in awareness raising and knowledge development concerning multilingualism and critical teacher agency in (language) policy implementation processes in order to establish proactive school climates that welcome the increasingly heteroglossic classroom reality due to international migration and challenge monolingual ideologies in teaching and learning.

Appendix A. Supplementary data

Supplementary data to this article can be found online at https://doi.org/10.1016/j.learninstruc.2019.101244.

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