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Final conference of the project "Developing Multilingual Pedagogies in Early Childhood"

Multilingualism in early childhood

Wednesday, 27 November 2019

University of Luxembourg, Campus Belval
Maison du Savoir, Room 2.380

PROGRAMME

- 09:00-09:15 **Welcome to the conference**
Claudine Kirsch, Luxembourg
- 09:15-09:30 **Introduction**
Adelheid Hu, Luxembourg
- 09:30-10:30 **Developing multilingual pedagogies in early childhood: a review of the project MuLiPEC**
Claudine Kirsch, Gabrijela Aleksić, Katja Andersen, Simone Mortini and Laurence Di Letizia, Luxembourg
- 10:30-11:00 **Coffee break**
- 11:00-11:30 **Children's multilingual agency through translanguaging practices**
Simone Mortini, Luxembourg
- 11:30-12:00 **Language policies in early childhood education in Luxembourg: an overview of recent developments**
Claudia Seele, Germany
- 12:00-13:00 **Lunch**

PROGRAMME

- 13:00-13:30 **A professional development course in translanguaging: challenges and opportunities**
Gabrijela Aleksić and Džoen Bebić-Crestany, Luxembourg
- 13:30-14:00 **Dynamics in participant and language roles in bilingual team teaching in Finnish preschool classroom**
Karita Mård-Miettinen and Åsa Palviainen, Finland
- 14:00-14:15 **Coffee break**
- 14:15-14:45 **Challenges and issues for language, literacy and multilingualism in early childhood teacher education**
Gunhild Tomter Alstad, Norway
- 14:45-15:15 **Multilingual interpretations: implications for mediating picturebook read alouds**
Sandie Mourão, Portugal
- 15:15-15:45 **Coffee break**
- 15:45-16:15 **The role of parents in the sustainability of bi/plurilingualism from home to ECEC contexts: are language awareness activities the answer?**
Christine Hélot, France
- 16:15-17:00 **Panel discussion**
- 17:00 **Vin d'honneur**

Developing Multilingual Pedagogies in Early Childhood: a review of the project

Claudine Kirsch, Gabrijela Aleksić, Katja Andersen, Simone Mortini & Laurence Di Letizia, University of Luxembourg

The project MuLiPEC (2016-2019) addresses the need for multilingual pedagogies in early childhood education in Luxembourg. It offered a professional development (PD) course to develop the practitioners' knowledge and skills in relation to multilingualism and effective pedagogies as well as their practices, and analysed the effects of the PD on the practitioners and the children's languaging. We offered a first 15-hour course to 46 practitioners from formal and non-formal education settings. Of these, seven continued during one academic year. They were coached and took part in six network meetings where we discussed their practices. To analyse the results, we drew on observations of the PD and in the research settings, video-recorded activities, and interviews. The results show that all 46 participants opened up to multilingual education and deepened their understanding of multilingualism, language development and multilingual pedagogies. Furthermore, the seven focus practitioners implemented activities in multiple languages and deployed effective language supportive strategies. Five of them developed holistic and child-centred multilingual pedagogies. This paper presents these positive findings and raises questions related to the sustainability of PD course and the need to continue the implementation of these effective pedagogies.

Children's multilingual agency through translanguaging practices

Simone Mortini, University of Luxembourg

My doctoral thesis focuses on eight children's multilingual practices in the four institutions participating in the MuLiPEC research project, more precisely on their (trans)languaging and agency in interaction with peers and practitioners. Guided by a sociocultural perspective on language learning and child agency and inspired by the methodology of linguistic ethnography, I drew on multidimensional qualitative research methods to understand the relationship between multilingual pedagogies, language learning, translanguaging and child agency. The data resulted in 65 days of participant observations (including fieldnotes and discussions), 473 video-recordings and 16 semi-structured interviews with the practitioners. The findings show that the children engaged in translanguaging practices for various purposes (e.g. communication, meaning making) and showed an agentive behaviour that went beyond active participation (e.g. influencing adults' language practices). I argue that the practitioners' multilingual practices and other sociocultural factors enabled the children's agency and flexible language use.

Language policies in early childhood education in Luxembourg: an overview of recent developments

Claudia Seele, RAA-Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Germany

Although, or maybe because, Luxembourg is a multilingual country with a highly diverse population, language policies in early childhood education tended to focus mainly on Luxembourgish. The persistent inequalities in the Luxembourgish education system as well as the growing recognition of multilingual pedagogies worldwide, recently led to a paradigm shift. New laws were voted in autumn 2017 which call for multilingual education in both formal and non-formal early years settings. They aim to develop individual and social skills, raise educational achievement and improve equal opportunities. They imply a shift towards a more inclusive and multilingual language policy. The present contribution will address these changes and give some insights into their implementation in practice. The important role of the educators as active agents involved in negotiating and appropriating the language education policies will thereby be stressed.

A professional development course in translanguaging: Challenges and opportunities

Gabrijela Aleksić & Džoen Bebić-Crestany, University of Luxembourg

In Luxembourg, a new law in 2017 made early multilingual education mandatory. Teachers do not only need to help children develop their Luxembourgish, but they also familiarize them with French and value their home languages. In order to support preschool teachers in this endeavour, our project aims to offer a professional development (PD) course in translanguaging; involve children's families to reinforce home-school collaboration, and foster children's cognitive, linguistic, and socio-emotional engagement in the classroom. We use a panoply of measures to reach our aims: focus groups, teacher questionnaires, parent questionnaires, interviews, a test in early literacy and numeracy in school and home languages, teacher assessment of children's socio-emotional development, and video observations with children. Translanguaging, the main topic of our 22-hour PD course (June – December 2019), is the use of a full linguistic repertoire to make meaning. We will present the preliminary findings of the focus groups interviews and the tests and explore challenges and opportunities that emerged during the course.

Dynamics in participant and language roles in bilingual team teaching in Finnish preschool classroom

Karita Mård-Miettinen & Åsa Palviainen, University of Jyväskylä, Finland

This presentation explores how team teaching is implemented in a preschool classroom instructed by two teachers. The video-recorded data were collected during two circle times in a preschool implementing bilingual pedagogy. Both the participant roles and language roles were predefined for the circle time: one of the teachers was assigned as leader and the other one as co-leader. Furthermore, the leading teacher had a predefined monolingual role in the classroom whereas the co-leading teacher had a predefined bilingual role. The findings were analysed against the predefined participant and language roles of the teachers. The results showed extensive dynamics in how the roles were put in practice. In this presentation, examples are given of smooth collaboration between the teachers to support each other academically and linguistically by altering the leadership flexibly in the different circle time activities and by flexibly using the two languages of instruction in the activities.

Challenges and issues for language, literacy and multilingualism in early childhood teacher education

Gunhild Tomter Alstad, Inland Norway University of Applied Sciences, Norway

Preparing teachers for early language education is crucial for the quality of ECEC education. In the recent decades, the role of teachers and consequently, the education of teachers, has been a major concern both politically and in research. Worldwide, there are huge variations of the ways in which early childhood teachers are prepared for the complexity of language education in relation to language, literacy and multilingualism.

In this presentation, I focus on studies in teacher education related to the knowledge base in preservice and in-service teacher education. Based on these findings, I discuss some challenges for ECEC teacher education and language-related issues. One concern is the vague and unarticulated knowledge base of teacher education, a second one the scientific level of the language knowledge base. The younger the language learners, the lesser seem the requirements of this knowledge base. I will end with suggestions for further research, including the scientific and theoretical knowledge base of language in ECEC teacher education and more knowledge about the teacher educators – who are they?

Multilingual interpretations: Implications for mediating picturebook read alouds

Sandie Mourão, CETAPS, Nova University Lisbon, Portugal

This paper begins with a brief discussion around the picture-word dynamic in picturebooks followed by the presentation of a categorization of response to picture books adapted from a grounded theory of literary understanding. This categorisation recognises that children engage with a picturebook in a transactional sense and use their linguistic repertoire as a bridge to access a particular target language. This is especially relevant when the mediator values the picturebook as a compound object where both pictures and words afford opportunities for children's interpretation. An approach to mediation which actively recognises and acknowledges that response to picturebooks can be multi-faceted and multilingual, requires multiple mediation skills. Based on research into mediating picturebooks in a foreign language context this session will suggest how such an approach might be applicable in multilingual contexts.

The role of parents in the sustainability of bi/plurilingualism from home to ECEC contexts: are language awareness activities the answer?

Christine Hélot, LILPA, University of Strasbourg, France

The latest language policy for early childhood education in Luxembourg (2017) focuses on a new approach to language education based on the notion of plurilingualism, as well as on the implementation of pedagogical partnerships with parents. The presentation will try to articulate these two dimensions, starting with the development of bi/plurilingualism in the family context and then addressing the issue of its sustainability in ECEC settings. Two notions will be discussed, language transmission and identity, and the way they operate in both contexts with regards to the declared language policy in Luxembourg, specifically the point stressing the valuing and integration of home languages as linguistic and identity resources. Then I will turn to the respective roles of parents and professionals in ECEC settings regarding the sustainability of home languages outside of the family context and will ask whether the language awareness (LA) approach is the most appropriate model to support children's plurilingualism. In other words, the following two questions will be addressed: 1) can LA lead to the development of a dynamic plurilingual repertoire ensuring young children's linguistic security and 2) is LA the best model to give parents the necessary agency for them to engage in an educational partnership with ECEC professionals focused on multilingualism and interculturality?

VENUE

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