"We shouldn't stay in our little bubble… we need to go and swim a bit in other bubbles"

An exploration of the theoretical, pedagogical and social dimensions of *Functional Multilingual Learning* in a Brussels primary school.

Nell Foster

GHENT UNIVERSITY

UNIVERSITY *of the* WESTERN CAPE

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Abbreviations:

CR	Conversation rubric
DBR	Design-based research
EaL	Éveil aux Langues
FML	Functional Multilingual Learning
FWB	Fédération Wallonie Bruxelles
LA	Language awareness
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OLC	Ouverture aux langues et cultures d'origine
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment

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I Introduction

1. Introduction

1.1 Preamble

> *"Il faut pas non plus rester dans sa petite bulle…. il faut quand même aller un peu nager dans les autres bulles… je dois pas tout le temps rester dans mon amharique… il faut aussi que je vais un peu dans le lingala, le Portugal, l'espagnol..."*

> *"We shouldn't stay in our little bubble either…. we need to go and swim a bit in other bubbles…. I shouldn't stay the whole time in my Amharic…I also need to go a bit into Lingala, Portugal, Spanish…."*

I begin this thesis by completing the original quotation that lends itself to the title. It came from Myriam (a pseudonym), a ten-year-old girl born in Brussels to Ethiopian parents. She used a mix of French, Amharic and Tigrinya with her parents and three siblings at home, although her preferred and strongest language was French, the language she used everyday at school. Her statement was in response to my question about whether it was more important for her to share her languages with her peers or to learn and find out about theirs; her answer is emblematic of many of the questions I seek to address in this research.

Firstly, her metaphor of 'bubbles' speaks to the ideologies of language separation which underpin the monolingual orientation of many urban schools in the global north. An axiomatic scission between 'home' and 'school' languages has come to define how many policy makers, teachers and children conceive of how plurilingual pupils from migration backgrounds become successful learners. Indeed, Myriam states that she shouldn't spend "the whole time" in her Amharic, but this glosses over the fact that in her school, officially, she could spend *no* time in Amharic, even to speak to her brother. French was the only language to be used. Furthermore, Myriam expresses the desire, and perhaps moral imperative, to reach out to explore others, thus standing in direct contrast to her Headteacher, who was convinced that school and wider cohesion was best served by the exclusive use of one shared language. Her choices of Lingala, Portuese and Spanish reflect the languages with currency in *her* life i.e. those used by her friends, and not necessarily those accorded instrumental prestige by the school system. Finally, she describes herself as 'swimming' within 'other' languages, made possible in school by her teachers' adoption of a multilingual approach as part of this study. Her choice of word possibly suggests a fluid, immersive engagement, but her condition of 'a bit' indicates she might not be sure about how much 'interlingual' swimming she should do or how far she could or should go. This relationship is perhaps indicative of the consequences of a monolingual policy which has given plurilingual children few opportunities to understand themselves and their peers as plurilingual learners and citizens of their multilingual school community.

1.2 Research rationale

The dynamics of Myriam's situation are relatively common in Belgium but are pertinent when we consider that children from migration backgrounds systematically achieve lower academic results than their so-called 'native' peers (Bricteux et al., 2019). The reasons for this are multifaceted and the subject of much debate, but there is little evidence to back up the widespread 'common-sense' support for an exclusive monolingual approach. Indeed, to the contrary, there is much to suggest that it prompts deficit discourses and engenders "asymmetric relations of knowing" (McKinney, 2011) which require plurilingual children to behave and learn as though they were monolingual (Van Avermaet, 2020). My research investigates an alternative, multilingual, paradigm, one which has been gaining force in the last two decades in research but still remains fringe practice in many mainstream settings, both in Belgium and elsewhere.

This linguistic-ethnographic intervention study explores the implementation of *Functional Multilingual Learning* (*FML*) (Sierens & Van Avermaet, 2014) in Myriam's class and three others, in her mainstream primary school in Brussels. *FML* is emblematic of "the multilingual turn" in education (Conteh & Meier, 2014; May, 2014) and encourages the teacher to adopt a multilingual lens throughout the entire curriculum and to stimulate the dynamic and inclusive use of translingual learning strategies in order to promote deeper learning and affirm a collective multilingual identity. In a school like Myriam's, which had long been functioning on a monolingual paradigm, this was a complex process, requiring both teachers and pupils to collectively re-imagine home languages as meaningful capital for learning and engagement in classroom life. In this study, I describe and analyse how *FML* played out in these classrooms, and how these dynamics aligned (or otherwise) with the theoretical model of *FML* and similar approaches. I pose the following global research question:

What kinds of dynamics, opportunities and constraints does Functional Multilingual Learning (FML) *present in a mainstream linguistically diverse primary classroom?*

This is supported by three sub-questions:

1. *What are the epistemological and empirical foundations of* FML *and what does it aim to achieve? How is it situated in terms of other multilingual pedagogical approaches?*

2. *What kinds of opportunities for multilingual participation and learning do teachers construct when they begin to implement* FML*? What factors underpin their decisions?*

3. *How do the pupils participate in an* FML*-inspired classroom? How do they characterise their own linguistic practice and that of others? How do these dynamics recursively shape individual and collective understandings of multilingual classroom life?*

The global research question seeks to contribute to both the empirical and theoretical scholarship and sets out three interrelated areas of focus.

Firstly, the literature on multilingual teaching approaches exhorts a range of *opportunities* to enhance learning and well-being in linguistically diverse classrooms, yet we still lack research in terms of how these can be realised in global-north mainstream classrooms (Afitska, 2020; Bonacina-Pugh et al., 2021; Duarte, 2019; Leung & Valdés, 2019).

Secondly, whilst the literature often exemplifies successful practice as a means of demonstrating alternatives to the dominant monolingual paradigm, nonetheless, studies also hint at limited application by teachers, or reluctance and resistance by some pupils (Peyer et al., 2020; Sierens & Ramaut, 2018; Ticheloven et al., 2019), suggesting certain *constraints* to these opportunities. This is complex terrain, drawing across macro-, meso- and micro level structural, contextual and ideological factors, but it suggests the need for further investigation into the *dynamics* and processes of multilingual learning (G. Lewis et al., 2012; Ticheloven et al., 2019). Are some language ideologies more malleable than others? How do pupils and teachers adapt existing pedagogical and sociolinguistic norms when beginning to work multilingually?

Finally, few studies on multilingual pedagogies concurrently examine both teachers and pupils (Prilutskaya, 2021), a lacuna previously identified in *FML* research (Slembrouck et al., 2018). Yet this is key to developing an understanding of how classroom actors see, perceive, interpret, present and represent themselves and others in a classroom multilingual paradigm, and how this impacts on the co-construction of a classroom "translanguaging space" (García & Li, 2014). The concurrent analysis of dynamics, opportunities and constraints of this study thus forms the basis for a deeper understanding of the strategies and implementational pathways that constitute effective and locally appropriate multilingual pedagogical practice.

1.3 Terminology

The multiplicity of overlapping terms in the field of multilingual education requires some clarification of my choices. In this thesis, I follow the distinction made by the Council of Europe (2010) and use the term 'multilingual' to denote the presence of different languages in a particular context. I use 'plurilingual' in relation to the pupil participants when I am referring to the dynamic, integrated nature of their linguistic repertoire but 'multilingual' if I am making a broad comparison with 'monolingual'. I also use the term 'multilingual' in relation to pedagogical approaches and techniques i.e. to denote the use of multiple linguistic codes and practices in classroom life. The term 'translanguaging' is multifaceted, and I use it in relation to the specific linguistic-ontological perspective which is currently heavily dominant in the literature (i.e. in relation to the scholarship of, amongst others, Ofelia García and Li Wei) and refer to its articulation in the

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classroom as 'translanguaging as pedagogy'. Finally, I use the term 'home language' as a heuristic tool to describe the language(s) 'other' than French used by the pupils; this does not preclude an understanding that children engage in fluid linguistic practice across languages, codes and registers, both at home and in school, thus rendering the boundaries of named languages fuzzy and situationally determined.

1.4 Overview of the thesis

I begin the main body of this thesis with a brief linguistic overview of Belgium and Brussels and situate the research in terms of the wider situation and discourses pertaining to children from migration backgrounds in the education system. This is followed by an elaboration of the principles of *FML* and a review of the literature in terms of its effectiveness and that of similar pedagogies. I then outline the conceptual framework of the study, showing how language ideologies, notions of functional multilingualism and school norms create the conditions for the implementation of *FML* and the way in which I analyse it. Following this, I describe the linguistic-ethnography/design-based intervention foundation of the study and detail the participants, and methods of data collection and analysis. The introduction concludes with an overview of the four sub-studies and how they relate to the research questions. Each sub-study is then presented in its entirety, and I conclude with a global discussion of the findings, highlighting the specific contributions to the field, implications for practice, limitations and areas for future research.

II Background

2. Background: Belgium, Brussels and language-in-education

2.1 Brussels: mobility and linguistic diversity as statistical norms

In Belgium, languages have a high symbolic value and are a sensitive, complex subject, intertwining social, economic, cultural and political threads that sometimes date back centuries (Mettewie & Housen, 2012). The country has three national languages: French, Dutch and German but historically, French was long dominant, associated with prestige, the nobility and diplomacy. Upon independence in 1830, French was the declared national language, yet Flemish leaders fought to have Dutch, used in Flanders, recognised and accepted as equal to French. This 'language struggle' resulted in the establishment of language frontiers in 1963, dividing the country into three administrative regions based on majority language use: French in Wallonia (with recognition of the German-speaking communities in the east of the country), Dutch in Flanders and the Brussels region designated as dual French-Dutch. Nonetheless, the Brussels region today leans heavily towards French; in a 2018 survey, 87% of the city's population reported having good or excellent mastery of French, with only 16% saying the same for Dutch (Janssens, 2018). Although there is a certain amount of shared governance in the city, the official functions pertaining to language, culture and education remain separate, more or less monolingual, entities.

Blommaert (2011) notes that this linguistic division of Belgium represents "an ethnic and territorial view of language-related identities" (p. 7) and asserts that it is evidence of a deep and enduring adherence to a Herderian, monolingual ideal in the country, threads of which are still in evidence today. This stands in stark contrast to the modern socio-linguistic reality of Brussels. As with many European cities, it is highly, and increasingly, ethnically and linguistically diverse. The inhabitants come from over 180 nationalities and the use of over one hundred languages have been identified (Janssens, 2018). The city is host to numerous European and international institutions and organisations, entailing a large population of 'elite migrants', often with high levels of English, rather than French or Dutch. Significantly, these figures do not correspond to exclusive language groups: a recent study found that over half of the children in francophone day-care centres are being raised in households in which two (46%) or more (3%) languages are spoken, and 17% do not use French at home (Robert et al., 2020).

Historically, Brussels has not taken administrative account of this linguistic diversity, yet this is beginning to change. In 2019, Sven Gatz was nominated to be the Minster for Multilingualism for the Brussels region (the first post of its kind in the world). His mandate thematically covers education (although he has limited power in terms of policy or implementation), the workplace and language learning initiatives. His primary focus is generally on the triumvirate of French/Dutch/English; however he nonetheless explicitly states the importance of recognising other languages, particularly in relation to children. His policy note of 2019 states that "a multilingual society does not function exclusively on the

basis of a lingua franca, but on the basis of the combination of languages which will enable people to function within different social domains" (Gatz, 2019, p. 15). He references research on the role played by the first language when learning a second, as well as in the expression of emotions and notes that the self-evident multilingual future of Brussels needs to be underpinned by positive attitudes towards multilingualism and language learning in general.

Indeed, surveys and studies have successively shown that for many Brussels citizens, multilingualism is a sine qua non, and is regarded as enriching and proof of its cosmopolitan nature (De Rynck, 2018; Janssens, 2008, 2018). But beyond French/Dutch/English, the picture is more complex; the languages of migration are more often associated with sociolinguistic complexity, particularly in relation to low socio-economic neighbourhoods. A recent report on citizens' perceptions of social cohesion in the city drew a picture of an "urban mosaic", with a tendency for residents to live in "bubbles" characterised by strong local connections and socio-economically (and to a lesser extent, culturally) homogenous social networks (De Rynck, 2018). People reported feeling 'out of place' or 'like an outsider' in areas of town that were socio-economically, linguistically, ethnically or urbanistically different to theirs (Ibid.). Notably, young people from immigrant backgrounds have testified to an absence of recognition, noting discrimination, and a certain tacit pressure to only use official languages in public spaces, with explicit pressure to do so in schools (El Karouni & Lucchini, 2014; Hambye, 2009; Sacco et al., 2016).

2.2 Children from migration backgrounds in the education system

More or less in line with the geographical divisions, the Belgian education system is run separately by the three language communities: Dutch-, French- and to a lesser degree German-speaking (Geyer, 2009). These systems have a great deal of autonomy, each defining its own curricula, drawing on different ideological and pedagogical schools of thought, and with strict regulations pertaining to language instruction. Brussels and its periphery are the only places in Belgium where the two main language communities (French and Dutch) run their schools side by side, but principally as two distinct monolingual systems. The French-speaking education authority, the Fédération Wallonie Bruxelles (*FWB*) thus covers French-medium schools in Brussels as well as in Wallonia.

Around 23% of the pupils in French-speaking schools come from an immigrant background (Bricteux et al., 2019, p.25), yet this is higher in the Brussels region given that nearly half of newly arrived migrants settle there (Meunier & Gloesner, 2023). If they meet certain conditions, newcomer pupils, or 'primo-arrivants', can attend special 'transition' classes for up to 18 months; these deliver intensive French language tuition and assist with socio-cultural and educational integration (Geyer, 2009). However, particularly at primary level, many newcomers attend ordinary classes in mainstream schools, and those who do not have sufficient

mastery of the French language can attend supplementary language lessons, delivered by teachers already working in the school.

In terms of their general language policy, many schools adhere to monolingual policies and practices, based in great part on assumptions of the value of full linguistic immersion to support the learning of French, the language of instruction (Meunier & Gloesner, 2020). Studies have identified a tendency for individual plurilingualism to be stigmatised and regarded as a potential source of academic failure, particularly in schools with a low socio-economic profile (Hambye, 2009). In a 2018 survey of *FWB* teachers and headteachers, over half of the respondents considered that pupils should *only* speak French when on school grounds, with only 20% being actively in favour of allowing home languages (André et al., 2018). This position is doubtless based in part on interpretations of the performance of *FWB* pupils in international *PISA* evaluations. These indicate a considerable gap between 'native' students and those from a first-and second- generation immigration background (see *Figure 1* for 2018 data regarding the results of the reading, maths and science tests at age 15), and a lesser gap between those who do or don't speak the language of instruction at home.
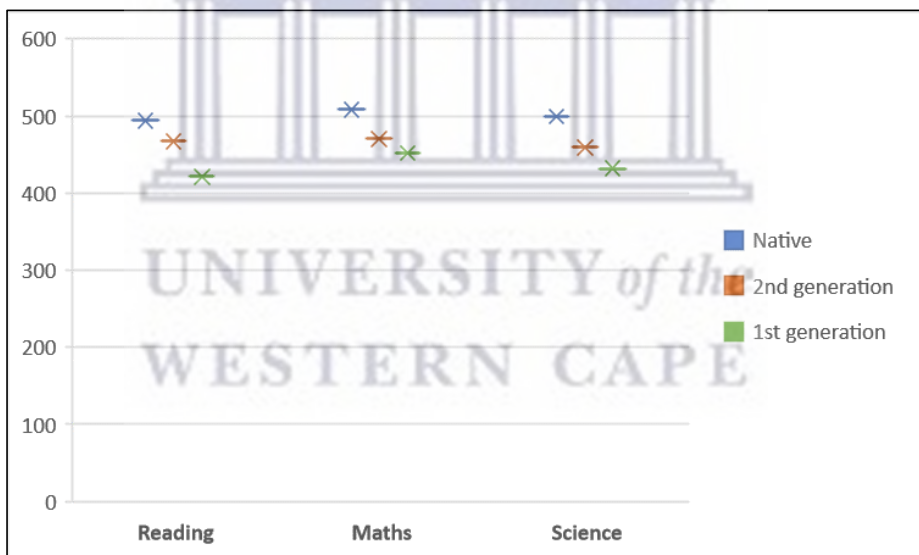
Figure 1: Average scores for 15-year-old students in the Fédération Wallonie Bruxelles education system in the PISA 2018 tests for reading, maths and science. Source (Bricteux et al., 2019)

Similar gaps in other countries have been explained by some scholars as a consequence of pupils not speaking the language of schooling at home (e.g. Christensen & Stanat, 2007; Nusche, 2009). However, this initial analysis has been refuted, by, amongst others, Cummins (2018), who posits a relationship of

association, rather than causation, and concludes that the speaking of an additional language acts as a proxy for more powerful factors such as immigration status, parental education and occupation, and the age a pupil arrived in their new country. Indeed, the scholars analysing the *FWB* data note that socio-economic background (both for native and immigrant pupils) is a significant contributing factor in terms of the performance variance and that immigrant pupils are more likely to come from low socio-economic backgrounds (Bricteux et al., 2019). However, even when the 2018 *FWB* data is controlled for equivalent competence in reading and socio-economic background, immigrant pupils were still nearly twice as likely to have repeated a school year than their native peers (note also that the general rates for repeating a school year for Belgium far exceed those of any other *OECD* country, see Dachet & Baye, 2021). There are a number of structural factors at play, including a quasi-market model for access to schools, resulting in high levels of socio-economic and ethnic segregation, and an early separation into high prestige 'general' tracks and lesser valued technical, and vocational tracks (Duaut, 2020). Nonetheless, analysts of the *FWB* data conclude that "these results confirm the hypothesis that financial, linguistic and cultural gaps mean that pupils from immigrant backgrounds are in a less favourable position to meet the demands of school and are more susceptible to repeating; they do not bring with them the cultural and linguistic codes which are legitimised by the school establishment" (Bricteux et al., 2019, p. 34).

The final sentence reveals a telling dichotomy: the school establishment is understood to define which cultural and linguistic codes are regarded as relevant and legitimate and the pupils are viewed from a deficit perspective in relation to these codes. There is no mention of whether the school establishment has any obligation to include, develop or exploit the cultural and linguistic codes that the pupils bring with them to school, nor whether doing so might have an impact on educational outcomes. Indeed, the researchers analysing the 2018 *Barometer of Diversity* survey concluded that the education system in Fédération Wallonie Bruxelles globally proposes "an assimilationist model predicated on ethno-cultural integration, and with a principal focus on learning the language of schooling" (André et al., 2018, p. 46). Indeed, school policy documents and curricula have historically made minimal, if any, reference to languages other than the language of schooling or prestige languages perceived to have high instrumental value. The recent *Pact for Excellence* reform programme identifies a series of (monolingual) evidence-based measures to address the "problems caused by a lack of proficiency in the language of instruction" (Fédération Wallonie Bruxelles, 2017a, p. 287). Linguistic plurality (as opposed to cultural) is not included in the citizenship curriculum as a feature that is constitutive of harmonious inter-group relations in a diverse society (Fédération Wallonie Bruxelles, 2017b). This perspective is underlined by Meunier and Gloesner (2020) in their review of provision for non-francophone pupils in *FWB* schools. They note that on the whole, "the plurilingualism of the pupils [is] rarely, if at all, valorised in teaching and learning. The other languages of the pupils are not seen as resources for learning and follow a subtractive vision of bilingualism" (p. 45).

Nonetheless, a number of initiatives do explicitly address linguistic diversity. Official guidelines on the support of newcomer and multilingual pupils do recommend that a pupil's linguistic repertoire should be recognised and valorised, noting that it can potentially function as a "springboard for learning" (Fédération Wallonie Bruxelles, 2014, p.8), however the document offers few concrete strategies to teachers. Since the 1970s, the French-speaking community has run an *Ouverture aux langues et cultures d'origine* (Openness to Home Languages and Cultures programme (*OLC*)). This entails collaborative partnerships with ten countries to facilitate language courses after school and prepares teachers and a bilingual partner to deliver lessons focused on intercultural openness (Fédération Wallonie Bruxelles, n.d.). However, the *OLC* programme is optional, and take-up is relatively low; in 2017 only around 15% of Brussels schools had opted to participate. A more recent innovation has the advantage of being part of the compulsory curriculum. In 2020, the authorities for the French-speaking education system relaunched its own 'Awakening to Languages', *Éveil Aux Langues,* programme, with obligatory weekly sessions for pupils aged 3 to 8 (Fédération Wallonie Bruxelles, 2020). The teachers follow structured lesson sequences to enable pupils to "discover, explore and compare a variety of languages" (Ibid., p. 4). The languages in question are generally pre-defined and the sessions are primarily aimed at opening the terrain for the learning of Dutch, although the activities also aim to valorise individual and societal linguistic diversity. However, particularly given that the programme stops in the second grade of primary school, it would seem to suggest that this intention is tangential; indeed, critics express regret at the instrumentalisation of multilingualism in the service of the education market and high prestige languages (Doneux et al., 2022).

This monolingual orientation has doubtless been reinforced by the fact that initial teacher training historically did not, and still does not, include compulsory modules on multilingualism, second language acquisition nor the teaching of French as a second language (i.e. as the language of schooling). Although the possibilities for training are improving, in their review about the provision for non-francophone pupils in *FWB* schools, Meunier and Gloesner (2020) conclude that "teachers lack the appropriate tools and methods, in particular in terms of initial assessments and ongoing evaluation, in order to deal with the complexity of the trajectories of the pupils, with their plurilingualism and with the delicate transition from the newcomers to the mainstream class" (p.3). The teachers themselves often deplore this position, lamenting a lack of resources and training, and an ill-adapted curriculum that imposes a top-down map of the progression of learning (e.g. Quineux, 2015).

Thus, the empirical part of this study, which explores the implementation of *FML* in a French-speaking primary school in Brussels, represents a significant departure from the monolingual orthodoxy and goes beyond the official provisions of *Éveil Aux Langues* in terms of age, linguistic and pedagogical range. But it is one which offers alternative linguistic paradigms and practices, and which, according to research, potentially stands to reframe longstanding deficit positionings of multilingual pupils and to engender inclusive classroom practice.

In the next section, I outline the research framework of the study in order to demonstrate the theoretical underpinnings of my analysis of the dynamics, opportunities and constraints of *FML*, both empirically in the four classrooms in this study, and in terms of how this relates to theoretical perspectives on *FML* and other multilingual approaches.

III

Research and conceptual frameworks

3. Research framework

The research and conceptual framework of this study is summarised at *Figure 2*. This serves as a roadmap for the literature review and the elaboration of conceptual frameworks and analytical lenses used.
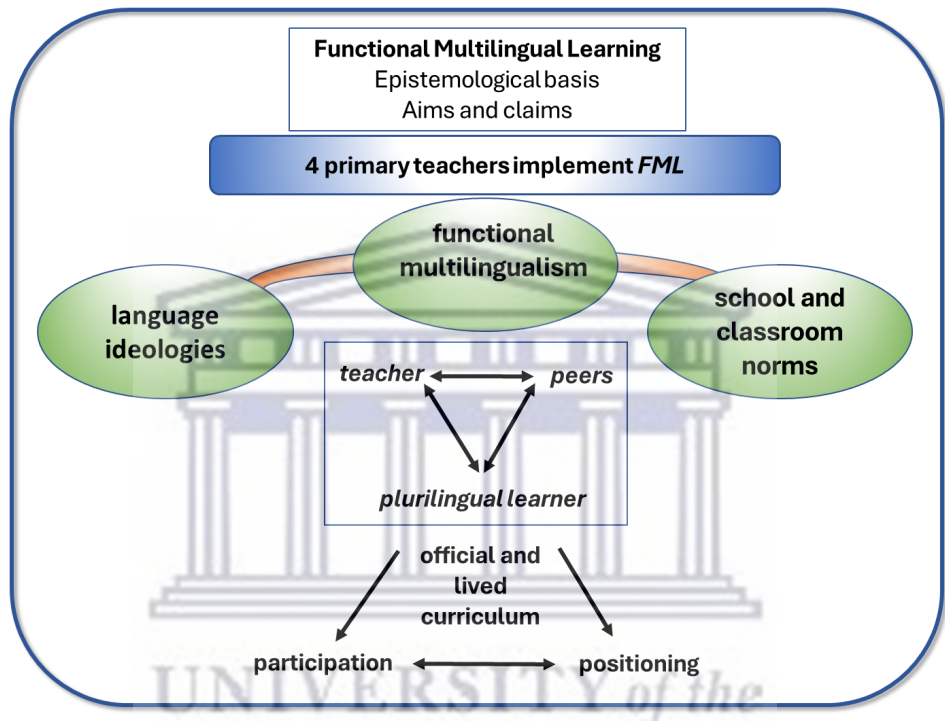
Figure 2: Research and conceptual framework

At the heart of the study lies the multilingual pedagogical approach of *Functional Multilingual Learning* (*FML*). Accordingly, I begin the literature review by outlining its epistemological and empirical foundations, its relationship to other multilingual pedagogies, and then follow with a review of the evidence for their effectiveness. The theoretical foundations and assumptions of this study are explored through three interrelated notions: language ideologies, including those which underpin the current monolingual orientation at a macro level, and those in evidence at the meso level of the multilingual classroom (Bauman & Briggs, 2000; Woolard, 1992); functional multilingualism, i.e. conceptualisations of language which frame multilingual approaches and the relationship between 'horizontal' and 'vertical' practices (Heugh, 2015); and school and classroom norms, the way ideologies of language and conceptualisations of learning are enacted, indexed and reproduced in the classroom (Green & Castanheira, 2012). Classroom life is understood as, in part, co-constructed between the teacher and the pupils and is

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examined in this study through a three part conceptual lenses encompassing: the official and lived curricula (what the teacher intends and delivers, against how the pupils interpret this and their uptake of the teacher's propositions) (Green & Castanheira, 2012); participation (engagement with 'texts' and the normative practices in a community of practice) (Wenger, 2010); and positioning (the way in which social interaction indexes certain moral or personal attributes which are validated by the community, thus enacting and creating patterns of narratives and meaning) (K. T. Anderson, 2009; Harré & Lagenhove, 1999; Martin-Beltrán, 2010).

This framework enables an understanding of how the teachers' pedagogical design created openings for home languages and how the pupils responded. It allows me to examine the ways in which multilingual participation and positioning practices established orders of speaking and enacted the local value of a multilingual repertoire, and how this dynamic interplay shaped what pupils and teachers were seen as being able or allowed to do and how this impacted on what it meant to be 'a pupil' or 'a teacher' in these experimental *FML* classrooms (Rampton, 2009).

4. Literature review

4.1 *Functional Multilingual Learning* (FML)

As described above, in Brussels schools, there is a considerable gap between the sociolinguistic reality of pupils' lives and the normative, monoglossic orientation of the education system. This is characteristic of many mainstream classrooms in global north settings. However, recent decades have seen the advent of a range of critical, bottom up, syncretic multilingual approaches which seek to challenge the hegemony of the dominant language paradigm and invite teachers to enable pupils to draw on their full linguistic repertoire across the curriculum in order to promote deeper learning and well-being. These might be elaborations of principles and practices (e.g. Auger & Le Pichon-Vorstman, 2021) or 'named' approaches such as the *Literacy Expertise Framework* (Cummins, 2000); *Linguistically Appropriate Practice* (Chumak Horbatsch, 2011), *holistic multilingual education* (Duarte & Günther-van der Meij, 2018); and *pedagogical translanguaging* (Cenoz & Gorter, 2021; García et al., 2016; Probyn, 2015). *Functional Multilingual Learning* (*FML*) was designed specifically for the *mainstream* linguistically diverse classrooms i.e. where the teacher doesn't know the languages used by pupils, whose repertoires are invariably asymmetric and comprise of languages and registers which are often conceived by schools and policy makers as barriers to academic achievement and as potentially compromising school and broader social cohesion (Sierens & Van Avermaet, 2014).

When facilitating *FML*, the teacher adopts a multilingual lens throughout the entire curriculum and aims to stimulate the dynamic and inclusive use of translingual learning strategies. These strategies aim to contribute to a powerful, multilingual

learning environment (Verhelst, 2006) and include: spontaneous actions (e.g. inviting pupils to participate in the language of their choice; oral translations between peers); classroom routines (e.g. the use of tablets to translate instructions); pedagogical organisation (e.g. grouping pupils by language to complete a task); and more complex linguistic scaffolding and planned integrated use of multiple languages in specific tasks (e.g. the creation of multilingual word walls or projects in multiple languages) (Foster et al., 2021; Sierens & Ramaut, 2018; Vanherf, 2022). This is informed by a foundation of language awareness, both on the part of the teacher and the pupils, and an open language policy, which actively exploits home languages (as distinct from merely tolerating or exploring). The pupil-led, teacher-mediated "translanguaging space" (García & Li, 2014) opened up by *FML* aims to positively position the languages and varieties in the pupils' linguistic repertoires as resources for academic learning and social functioning, thereby enhancing individual self-confidence, and well-being. The recognition and affirmation of each individual's linguistic identity feeds into a wider school valorisation of its multilingual community. Globally, *FML* entails a critical perspective on local and global language hierarchies and the consequences of sedimented monolingual practices for plurilingual learners.

4.2 Review of the effectiveness of multilingual pedagogies

The critical question here is whether *FML*, and similar pedagogies, actually achieve their intended beneficial outcomes. In this review, I consider research from 'transversal' multilingual pedagogies (e.g. those which are implemented across the curriculum such as translanguaging as pedagogy) as well as studies on approaches with a narrower focus (e.g. language awareness).

Firstly, there is ample evidence for a range of non-cognitive benefits of a multilingual approach at class and school level. Studies show that working multilingually can enhance children's self confidence, well-being and feelings of agency (Kirsch & Mortini, 2021; Peyer et al., 2020; Sierens, 2009; Van Praag et al., 2016). Back and colleagues (2020) found that translanguaging strategies act as scaffolds to help emergent bilingual primary school pupils to more successfully navigate socio-emotional difficulties. A linguistically open classroom has also been found to generate trust and reciprocity (Duarte, 2019) and schools with positive multilingualism policies have been found to encourage more inter-ethnic friendships, and to engender feelings of belonging and a more positive atmosphere in the playground (Sierens & Ramaut, 2018; Van Der Wildt et al., 2017). Yet these benefits are not necessarily universal nor to be assumed. Some pupils express shame when using their home language in school (Choi, 2003; Sierens, 2009), whilst others struggle to transform lower levels of home language proficiency into useful capital for learning (Peyer et al., 2020; Ticheloven et al., 2019; Van Laere et al., 2016). Allard (2017) found that rather than being a transformative practice, teachers' translanguaging practices in fact frustrated pupils and diminished their investment in language learning. However, she and others point to the importance of *appropriate* multilingual classroom practices which respond to local

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circumstances, suggesting that this is a delicate pedagogical and linguistic balancing act (Daniel et al. 2019; Peyer et al., 2020).

In terms of the cognitive and learning benefits of multilingual approaches, there is evidence to suggest that translingual practices and pedagogies can improve learning outcomes in a range of domains, including: conceptual understanding (Meyer & Prediger, 2011; Probyn, 2015); vocabulary acquisition (Auger et al., 2005; Galante, 2020; Makalela, 2015; Poza, 2018); metalinguistic inference (Auger et al., 2005; Carbonara et al., 2023; Leonet et al., 2020); reading comprehension (Poza, 2018); narrative abilities (Carbonara et al., 2023); oral expression (Martin-Beltrán, 2014); and text complexity in writing (Ascenzi-Moreno & Espinosa, 2018). Meta-studies suggest that over time, programmes which concurrently stimulate both the home language and language of instruction are more effective than monolingual programmes with only transitional support (e.g. Collier & Thomas, 2017; G. Lewis et al., 2012; Reljić et al., 2015; Rolstad et al., 2005; Thomas & Collier, 2002). Globally, research points to the fact that multilingual practice will be the most effective if it is structurally embedded in a whole- school policy (Allard, 2017; Van Avermaet, 2020). One such example in a mainstream primary-school setting is the Scoil Bhríde in Dublin, which facilitated wide-ranging multilingual literacy practices throughout the school, based on principles of active, autonomous learning, starting from pupils' existing 'action knowledge'. The pupils were found to be consistently achieving at or above the national average, with the scores of pupils from immigrant backgrounds often in the upper quartiles (Kirwan, 2020).

However, in general, the strongest examples of practice and evidence for their influence on learning outcomes tend to come from settings where pupils receive *instruction* in their home language or are working in dual language settings. Indeed, some researchers note that in order to fully exploit the epistemological function of translanguaging (i.e. when the different languages are actively used to enhance both content and language knowledge) the teacher needs to know the home language of the pupils (Afitska, 2020; Duarte, 2018), meaning that outcomes from dual-language settings may not be generalisable to mainstream classrooms. Indeed, it is harder to point to concrete, empirical evidence for the long-term academic benefits of mainstream multilingual classroom practice (as opposed to dual language settings). This is in part because of a lack of longitudinal experimental or quasi-experimental research which in itself poses significant methodological challenges. The research field is characterised by small-scale, qualitative, linguistic ethnographic, case-studies (see Prilutskaya, 2021) which tend to focus at the practice level, analysing successful translingual classroom interaction and participation, and how these are understood to translate into enhanced (opportunities for) learning. Furthermore, the transformative, social justice lens that informs much translanguaging research sometimes gives rise to unbridled pedagogical optimism. Some researchers hold that studies assert presupposed causality effects which may actually fail to occur or prove to be overstated (Jaspers, 2018; Leung & Valdés, 2019) or do not sufficiently account for wider material, linguistic and economic inequalities (Block, 2018; Duchêne, 2020;

Meier, 2014). The absence of long-term quantitative data is sometimes exploited by policy makers, looking for unequivocal evidence of advances in learning, but this glosses over the fact that there also is no evidence to suggest that a *monolingual* approach is in fact the most effective, nor that a multilingual approach is detrimental to the learning of language and content. Indeed, in the four-year *Home Language in Education* project in Ghent, bilingual pupils were taught concurrently in Turkish alongside instruction in the main school language of Dutch. The results did not show improvements in Dutch, but they did show that giving over some time in the week to Turkish had no negative effect on achievement in Dutch (Ramaut et al., 2013).

In reality, making a distinction between cognitive and non-cognitive benefits is somewhat artificial as the two are intertwined. For example, Galante (2020) noted that translingual practice resulted in improved academic vocabulary scores in second language learner university students. She concluded that this was in part because it enabled students to effectively deploy metalinguistic strategies, but also because the practice 'normalised' their translanguaging practices and made them feel more agentive. Such a safe space would seem to be both the condition and outcome for Duarte's (2019) conclusion that translingual interaction served to scaffold meaning and to "reinforce the creative process of knowledge building, by mediating the emergence of higher-order thinking" (p.62). In a similar vein, Seals (2021) reported that a multilingual approach prompted more pupils to engage in classroom interaction, and in deeper and more productive ways (see also Allard, 2017) and some have concluded that a more open approach enables pupils to more easily conceive of their multilingualism as a part of their school identity (Welply, 2010). Finally, multilingual practice has been found to change teachers' beliefs and perceptions about multilingualism and about their own multilingual pupils, particularly when it is supported by professional development (Cunningham & Little, 2022; Gorter & Arocena, 2020; Ramaut et al., 2013). This more positive view can in turn result more nuanced classroom practice, based on critical language awareness which scaffolds learning through multilingual and multimodal transfer and a culture of high expectations (Axelrod & Cole, 2018; Gynne, 2019).

In conclusion, critical multilingual pedagogies such as *FML* seek to engender more linguistically equitable pedagogical practice but the methods and outcomes in mainstream settings still require understanding and investigation. The complexities lie in part in the way in which they challenge prevailing monoglossic language ideologies, and potentially reframe ideas of what language itself is. These are visible in the existing school and classroom norms, which must be adapted and renegotiated by classroom actors upon the introduction of a new linguistic regime. These themes form the basis of the conceptual framework of this study.

5. Conceptual framework

5.1 Language ideologies

Whenever teachers and pupils communicate in a classroom, they are making linguistic choices which are partly based on the affordances of their specific repertoire, but also in relation to language ideologies i.e. their individual sense of what is possible, what is appropriate, and what is effective for that particular situation in that particular context. Language ideologies are conceptualizations or representations about languages, speakers, and discursive practices, in different contexts, within a given society (Bauman & Briggs, 2000; Blackledge & Pavlenko, 2001; Wortham, 2001). They are embedded dialogically in cultural ways of being and are both revealed and reproduced through cultural practices at multiple levels (macro-meso-micro). These positions might be explicitly articulated, but they are also visible in the "the implicit, unwritten, de facto, grassroots and unofficial ideas and assumptions" about language in a particular setting (Schiffman, 2006, p. 11). Implicit language ideologies are often indicative of naturalised, dominant ideas which go uncontested, even if they lack empirical evidence, as they represent 'common sense' beliefs.

For the purposes of this study, one of the most significant is the widespread belief in the 'common-sense' monoglossic orientation of many European education systems, including Belgium. This has its roots in Herderian ideals of the 'imagined community' (B. Anderson, 1991) of the nation state, comprising an alleged homogenous population, speaking one language, which is the vehicle for one shared culture. Brussels is at the heart of European Union policy making, which places plurilingualism as a condition and constituent dimension of democratic citizenship. Nonetheless, on the ground this is generally in favour of high-status, officially ratified languages and non-European languages, or varieties regarded as extraneous or without prestige in the local language ecology are still often disregarded or viewed as "bad multilingualism… a threat to social cohesion, an obstacle to full 'integration' of migrants, a barrier to upward social mobility and academic achievement" (Blommaert, 2011, p.10). Van Avermaet (2020) asserts that this leads to a false dichotomy for multilingual children from immigrant backgrounds: it presents language as both the problem i.e. individual plurilingualism as the principal cause of school failure, and language as the solution i.e. mastery of the dominant societal language as the solution to social inequality. The 'management' of languages is also emblematic of the role of schools to teach and model citizenship principles and appropriate behaviours. Politeness sometimes becomes equated with functioning monolingually in the language of schooling (Rojo, 2013) and the school language rule becomes "not simply a way to maintain control in the classroom in order to teach, but rather in itself an instrument of moral education, central to the educational project" (Mampaey & Zanoni 2013, p.19).

This shows how beliefs about language in education are implicitly also beliefs about the nature of learning, literacy, identity, citizenship, social cohesion,

morality etc. (Schiffman, 2006). It also shows how the notion of language ideologies constructs a link between social structures, power relations and language use. Drawing on Foucault's notion of discourse as systems of power and knowledge, Kress (1989) asserts that language ideologies are constructed through discourses which "define, describe and delimit what is possible to say and not possible to say" (p.7); Makoe and McKinney (2014) extend this to add "as well as how and by whom it should be said, and whether it can be heard" (p.659). Bourdieu (2009) identified the significant place of the school language regime in the imposition of linguistic norms, leading him to identify schooling as one of the most important sites for social reproduction and by association, social inequality.

The debate is characterised by binary positions. On the one hand, a certain mastery of the standard language of instruction is constituent of academic success, and economic and civic participation and so in some senses, embodies a certain emancipatory potential. Yet, as can be seen in many schools in Belgium, the language of schooling is often treated as unitary and monolithic, framed as distinct and in opposition to the plurilingualism of the student population (El Karouni & Lucchini, 2014; Van Avermaet, 2020). This 'unilingualism' tends to value linguistic purism and separation, and is guided by the structural pillars of grammars and dictionaries; it privileges those who know and can exploit the norms of the code, potentially giving rise to a certain 'glottophobia' (Anis, 2002) where 'home' languages or non-standard dialects are deemed to lack sufficient 'quality' for school or are simply not recognised, particularly if they are non-written (Auger, 2023). Indeed, although policy makers are apt to frame this debate as a binary between 'school' and 'home' languages, in reality it is as much a question of the presence or absence of a certain repertoire i.e. that of the academic discourse of school that is more prevalent in middle-class, high-SES homes, regardless of the 'language' used (Van Avermaet, 2020).

Cummins (2001) has long posited a link between societal power relations and the interpersonal space of the classroom, maintaining that the former impacts the way a teacher understands their role and the resulting interpersonal space they create in the classroom: this can reinforce either coercive or collaborative relationships of power. Indeed, whilst macro-level beliefs about legitimate language are transmitted through mechanisms such as teacher education, curricula, textbooks etc., classroom practice is crafted by teachers who are selectively enacting, refracting and challenging these positions through the prism of their own beliefs, knowledge and pedagogical orientations (e.g. Alisaari & Heikkola, 2020; Ascenzi-Moreno, 2017; Bailey & Marsden, 2017; Ganuza & Hedman, 2017; Higgins & Ponte, 2017).

Some studies of mainstream teachers in European classrooms have identified monolingual bias (Meunier & Gloesner, 2020; Young, 2014). For example, Pulinx and colleagues (2015) found a correlation between Flemish teachers' monolingual beliefs and low confidence in their pupils and suggest this contributes to cycles of low expectations and lower academic outcomes. Advocates of 'strong' translanguaging maintain that it is incumbent on teachers to "transform

themselves" in order to reframe such deficit positions and practices (Aleksić & García, 2022), yet others consider that this mispresents the bounds of teacher agency and the fact that, as Jaspers (2020) points out, the classroom is a site of "chronic ambivalence" between competing institutional, pedagogical and language ideological imperatives. Indeed, it is more common to find studies which record relatively positive orientations towards multilingualism, yet which may remain moderate or inconsistent in terms of classroom application (e.g. Costley & Leung, 2020; Cunningham & Little 2022; Gorter & Arocena, 2020; Haukås, 2016; Sierens & Ramaut, 2018). One such example is Goossens' (2022) study of a 'multilingually open' Dutch-speaking secondary school in Brussels. She documented a range of multilingual practices serving didactical and informal purposes but found that the teachers' concerns about the pupils' limited proficiency in Dutch contributed to them placing certain constraints around fully flexible language use. Indeed, these ambivalent positions are often underpinned by a latent belief in language separation and maximum 'time on task' (Cunningham & Little, 2022; Gorter & Arocena, 2020; Young, 2014) i.e. that submersion in the language of instruction is the most effective model to support second language learners. Whilst exposure and high-quality engagement with the language of schooling are clearly important factors, there is little evidence to support an exclusionary position (Cummins, 2019).

Finally, children and young people from migration backgrounds navigate multi-layered language-ideological tensions which extend across time and context, across generations and peer groups, and traverse hierarchical relationships within families and schools. Some declare a strong affiliation with the 'home' language, others less so (Preece, 2009), but there is often tacit support for the axiomatic spatial separation of languages into 'home' and 'school' (Jordens, 2016; Showstack, 2017). Nonetheless, studies have shown how young people draw across their own repertoires and those of their peers to stage multi-faceted linguistic and social identities which both respect and transgress boundaries, demonstrating both acceptance and disregard for school monolingual norms (Cekaite & Evaldsson, 2008; Rampton, 2017). Rydland and Kucherenko (2013) point out that "linguistic differences become meaningful to children to the extent that they perceive them to be meaningful in their social world" and that they "engage in complex regulatory processes in which they monitor and shape their own and others' behaviour" (p.45). This is often related to local social identity work e.g. friendships, 'being a good student' (Cekaite & Evaldsson, 2008; Rosiers, 2017; Rydland & Kucherenko, 2013), with the monolingual norm often acting as a guiding lodestone, sometimes in extreme ways. Auger (2008) notes assimilationist orientations in playground interactions in France in which pupils exhort others to 'go and get integrated' (i.e. to speak French) and Mehmedbegovic (2008) describes how monolingual school practices marginalised bilingual students in London, leading some of them to self identify as monolingual. Nonetheless, although these processes reach far into life outside of school, the institutional language policy and active, inclusive valorisation of multilingualism can have a positive impact on the way a child values their own linguistic repertoire (Dagenais, 2003; Prasad & Lory, 2020).

Language ideologies thus link macro-level and circulating ideas about legitimate language to language practice in the classroom and underpin the conditions that can result in linguistically inclusive or exclusive practice. However, this also encompasses understandings of the ontological nature of language, and in turn, the nature of the transformation multilingual pedagogies seek to engender, and how it is best achieved.

5.2 Functional multilingualism

A multilingual model such as *FML* turns away from the "fractional view of bilingualism" (Grosjean, 2008, p. 10) inherent in monoglossic school systems. Rather, it reposes on the concept of each individual having a linguistic repertoire of codes, genres, styles, registers and linguistic and semiotic tools (Gumperz, 1964; Sierens & Van Avermaet, 2014). This perspective acknowledges that a plurilingual repertoire is invariably asymmetric, characterised by various and varying competences, which are often "partial" yet exist in a relation of interplay and complementarity. These form the basis of a complex, composite plurilingual competence, i.e. the ability to selectively use 'languages' and linguistic features for the purposes of communication (Coste et al., 2006). Busch (2017) maintains that the use of a repertoire should be considered as an interactional achievement, in part socially constructed through discursive practices and acts of positioning. Thus, each idiosyncratic plurilingual repertoire echoes the social experiences and trajectories of lived lives; it is constructed within and by local and distant speech communities, comprised of nested and overlapping groups, in which locally situated practice is constantly in flux and plays a key part in constituting networks and affiliations and localised norms and rules of speaking (García & Bartlett, 2007; Hymes, 1972).

A repertoire perspective also entails the notion that speakers are always engaging in 'plurilanguaging', a "dynamic, never-ending process to make meaning using different linguistic and semiotic resources" (Piccardo, 2018b, p. 216). The emphasis on the verb 'languaging' over the noun 'language' belies a central tension between a Saussurean structuralist tradition which perceives language as a relatively static, self-contained and bounded *system* of different linguistic forms and codes, against sociocultural and sociohistorical perspectives which hold that 'languages' are unsolidified codes that are framed within social practices (García, 2009, p. 32). 'Languaging' emphasises the fluidity of "human-beings' way with words" (Heath, 1983), and refers to language users whose acts "call languages into being" (Makoni & Pennycook, 2007, p. 10). This focus on language-in-use as the process of meaning-making and shaping knowledge and experience moves towards more hybrid perspectives, and have generated a multiplicity of terms, including plurilingualism (Moore & Gajo, 2009), polylingualism (Jørgensen, 2008), translanguaging (García & Li, 2014) and heteroglossia as practice (Blackledge & Creese, 2014).

Recent scholarship on translanguaging extends this idea to posit a unitary linguistic system, giving primacy to the idiolect, i.e. the unique collection of linguistic 'features' that an individual draws upon in acts of communication, without regard for the named languages these linguistic features might be associated with (García & Li, 2014; Otheguy et al., 2015). Named languages are deemed to be socio-political constructs, rooted in 19th century nationalist ideologies, and which are misaligned with the reality of the fluid, hybrid practices of speakers on the ground which are constantly reassessing, breaking and adjusting "boundaries between languages, between languages and other communicative means, and the relationship between language and the nation-state" (Li, 2018, p. 7). This has prompted some translanguaging scholars to conclude that "named languages, imposed and regulated by schools, have nothing to do with speakers and the linguistic repertoire they use" (García & Kleyn, 2016, p. 19). The monolingual, standard language bias in educational systems and pedagogical models are seen to embody 'racio-linguistic ideologies' and teachers are charged with disrupting socio-constructed linguistic categories by adopting and enacting a hybrid vision of language (Flores & Rosa, 2015; Vogel & García, 2017).

This 'unitary linguistic system' position is not without its detractors, some of whom question its validity from a neurolinguistic point of view (Cummins, 2021a; Grin, 2018; MacSwan, 2017). Others question whether giving primacy to hybridity does in fact empower learners, particularly given that it is predicated on an assumed transformation of wider societal norms which privilege monolingual, standardised production (Heugh, 2015, 2018; Jaspers, 2018, 2019b; Leung & Valdés, 2019). Busch (2012) maintains that whilst named languages clearly lack strict 'objective' linguistic reality, there nonetheless continue to be distinctions between named codes (and varieties within them) in many aspects of society and that these distinctions inexorably entail material, psychological and affective consequences for plurilingual individuals. Heugh (2018) advocates a 'functional' approach which makes a distinction between the vertical and horizontal dimensions of language practice. The horizontal axis is home to fluid, porous, local practices, emblematic of the idiolect; interaction is possibly both informal and translingual (but not necessarily), as interlocutors negotiate choices in terms of language, form, and style. The vertical axis comprises the language practices that exist in the normative, standardised, global, homogeneous, often textual nature of institutions, as well as cultural products such as books and films. These tend to function monolingually, and interlocutors are often not given a choice about language, form and style (perhaps for ideological reasons, but also for pragmatic purposes). Whilst neither dimension is considered superior to the other, there can be little doubt that the capacity of an individual to move across these different registers entails opportunities for empowerment and inclusion and that "failure to deliver access to academic varieties of language that open doors to future advancement is failure to deliver equity and social justice" (Heugh, 2018, p. 358). Krause-Alzaidi's (2022) research in a South African township school articulates the classroom processes at work in such a paradigm, as teachers and learners engage in 'relanguaging', moving between the categorising, homogenous frame of

'state' understood languages, and the dissolving of those boundaries in fluid, idiolectal practice. Yet, as she herself acknowledges, this is more challenging when there is minimal overlap in the teachers and pupils' 'non-school' repertoires, as is the case in the classrooms in this study.

The 'functional' nature of *FML* aligns with these perspectives and seeks to engender more equitable learning conditions in schools by strategically combining horizontal and vertical repertoires, underpinned by a critical interpretation of linguistic choice, separation and blending, and the long- and short-term consequences these have for learners. This position is summed up by Jaspers (2018) when he states that "teachers (in Western schools) are not faced with a choice between two unrelated ideologies (monolingualism versus translanguaging) but have to navigate a single ideology that values the opposing themes of transparent communication and emancipation through a collective standard variety on the one hand, and respect for individual difference, freedom of expression and equality (of languages, among other things) on the other" (p.10).

Although these considerations might seem like esoteric abstractions for a teacher on the ground, their conceptualisation of language(s) and where the (fuzzy) boundaries lie nonetheless have an impact on the norms which define interpersonal space of their classroom (Auger, 2020; Donley, 2022).

5.3 School and classroom norms

Dixon and Green (2005) observe that in a classroom "language is of the group, and it shapes the collective thinking of the group and the way an individual is able to contribute to that group" (p.9). Indeed, the daily functioning of a school and classroom will be characterised by multi-layered traces of ideologies which express the local understanding and negotiation of what constitutes valid and legitimate language, and by association who is positioned as a legitimated speaker, and the ways in which they are granted or denied access to participation practices.

Classrooms can be understood as cultural systems, comprised of norms and expectations and sets of social relationships. The 'micro-culture' of a class is established through reference to discourses which make clear *who* we are and *what* we are doing i.e. according to the accustomed ways of perceiving, believing, evaluation and acting, including everyday activities, ways of talking and interacting and the use of resources and tools (Wenger, 2010). Classroom language life is influenced both by explicit pressure from classroom actors in relation to that norm, as well as by the implicit disciplining pressure of discourses or cultural models (Py, 1993). Through interaction, pupils and teachers index, reproduce and challenge dominant language ideologies (e.g. Jaffe, 2009; Showstack, 2017), expressing positions of: similarity and difference; genuineness and artifice; and authority and delegitimacy (Bucholtz, 2005). These contribute to multiple overlapping definitions of *ideal* linguistic forms i.e. norms related to the language of schooling, and other languages, varieties and registers. Studies have

shown how this process constructs and enacts ideas about the role of language in educational outcomes and the social world of the school, for example, in relation to notions of: success (Michael et al., 2007); failure (Mick, 2011); literacy (Portante, 2011) and linguistic proficiency (Martin-Beltrán, 2010).

The local understanding of 'legitimate language' is thus constitutive of the classroom regime of competence and the resulting frameworks of participation (De Korne, 2012). Classrooms based on heteroglossic ideologies such as *FML* understand plurilingual pupils through the prism of their evolving repertoire, thus positioning newcomers as emergent bilinguals rather than through the lens of what they cannot yet do in the language of schooling. Translanguaging practices are not seen as interference, but rather as potential didactic capital and a resource for participation; this places emphasis on knowledge as co-constructed, resulting in a certain shift in the expert-novice relationship. Successful *FML* is held to be "pupil-led, yet teacher-mediated" (Sierens & Van Avermaet, 2014) meaning that the teacher navigates the linguistic 'corriente' or 'flow' (García & Kleyn, 2016) of classroom action, strategically shifting their practice in response to the pupils' needs. This understands classroom participation as a "multiparty accomplishment... a collective, rather than an individual process" (Schultz, 2009, p. 11). Situating the locus of control on the pupils' active use of language expands the collective understanding of the community linguistic repertoire, thereby also questioning assimilationist (i.e. monolingual) models of civic participation. This entails an understanding of 'classroom citizenship' as governed by a cosmopolitan ideal, where the focus lies not on consensus but on co-responsibility, the acknowledgement of 'otherness', and communicative interaction as the building blocks for 'active citizenship' (Jansen et al., 2006).

The introduction of a multilingual pedagogy is necessarily embedded in the existing pedagogical and classroom norms, and research suggests that this is the most successful when teachers are already functioning under a socio-constructivist paradigm (e.g. Audras & Leclaire, 2013). Studies also show that it can take time for translingual practice to become a new classroom norm; implementation might be partial and depends in part on the teacher developing and implementing appropriate strategies and tasks (Daniel et al., 2019; Sierens & Ramaut, 2018) and in part on how the pupils embrace the new linguistic paradigm and how they individually and collective (re) imagine what constitutes legitimate cultural capital in the classroom.

6. Three-part conceptual lens for understanding classroom action

6.1 The official and lived curricula

When a teacher is implementing a multilingual pedagogy for the first time, they engage in a 'sense-making' act of interpretation as they operationalise the principles in their classroom practice (Flynn & Curdt-Christiansen, 2018). This encompasses their decisions regarding language policy, and the way their procedures, tasks, classroom management strategies and interactional patterns position home languages as resources for learning and social interaction. This can be defined as the '*official curriculum'* i.e. what the teachers want the pupils to experience in order to develop particular knowledge, skills and attitudes and how they (endeavour to) deliver this in the classroom" (Blaise & Nuttall, 2011, p. 82).

However, as the previous section relating to classroom norms made clear, classroom practice can be viewed in part as a transactional, co-constructed process between teachers and pupils, each of whom bring to bear their own social, linguistic, economic and historical reality (Bouck, 2008; Gutiérrez, 2008). Thus an analysis of classroom life must also take account of the '*lived curriculum'* i.e. not just what is envisaged in a plan, but how the plan is lived out, and specifically the multiple ways in which the pupils understand, interpret and act on the teacher's proposals and how collectively, they negotiate presuppositions about duties, what counts as knowledge and legitimate forms of participation (Aoki, 1993; Green & Castanheira, 2012). The 'official' and 'lived' curricula intersect and overlap and may contradict one another, i.e. there is invariably a gap between 'what is taught' and 'what is learned', between 'what is intended' and 'what in fact transpires'. In particular, the pupils' actions will inexorably embrace behaviours, positionings and priorities that have nothing to do with the stated or official curriculum, but which emanate from their personal, social and affective priorities. Lemke (2000) maintains that "whatever we offer in the classroom becomes an opportunity to pursue [the] longer-term agenda of identity building; our primary affective engagement is with this agenda, with becoming who we want to be, not with learning this or that bit of curriculum" (p.286). As such the 'lived curriculum' is imbued with multiplicity and straddles the interdependence between the individual-within-the collective and the collective, as the pupils (re)formulate ways of knowing, being and doing life in this classroom.

6.2 Participation

Accordingly, participation can be understood to comprise of "multiple, layered and conflicting activity systems with many interconnections" (Gutiérrez, 2008, p. 152), and as co-constructed dynamically between a pupil, their peers and their teacher. This perspective embraces the socio-constructivist premise that, to a considerable extent, learning takes place through interaction i.e. it is the "interplay between social competence and personal experience. It is a dynamic, two-way relationship

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between people and social learning systems in which they participate" (Wenger, 2000, p. 227). According to the situated learning perspective, learning occurs as individuals participate in communities of practice, and this is constructed through cycles of identification and co-participation with other members (Wenger, 2010). Manyak (2001) observes that it is "through participation in the social practices of the classroom, [that] children develop a sense of the order of the academic world and their place within it, their status relative to teachers and peers, the nature of the tasks they face, and the relative legitimacy ascribed to their cultural and linguistic resources" (p.427). As such, it is crucial to consider how individuals function in the "micro-politics of classroom interaction" (Bloome & Willet, 1991), and how they negotiate and achieve access to activities, discourses, community members and what this means for them in terms of the development of their knowledge, skills and identities. Understanding this access to participation is central to the context of a study such as this, where a multilingual turn in classroom practice takes place against the backdrop of deep-rooted, long-standing monolingual language ideologies and practices.

As such, this is not merely about academic knowledge but about knowing processes and practices and the way such knowledge is learned and developed as classroom actors (re)formulate ways of knowing, being and doing life in this classroom (Green & Castanheira, 2012). Drawing on the work of Bakhtin, Hymes, Gumperz and others, Bloome and Egan-Robertson (1993) use the term 'proposed intertextuality' to describe events that classroom actors signal in and through their discourse as socially significant and culturally relevant, and how the language and learning culture of a classroom is constructed intertextually within and across the moment by-moment interactions:

> *"As people act and react to each other, they use language and other semiotic systems to make meaning, to constitute social relationships, and to take social action. Intertextual relationships are constructed by people as part of how they act and react to each other. In order for intertextuality to be established in reading and writing events, a proposed intertextuality must be recognized, be acknowledged, and have social significance."* (p.459)

By examining what classroom actors propose, and what is then taken up, we can identify opportunities for pupils to individually and collectively explore themselves through classroom spoken, written and graphic texts (who they are in a particular event and how they share this publicly) and others (those with whom they were asked to or chose to interact with, in what ways and for what purposes) (Green & Castanheira, 2012). This perspective offers a means to understand how the value and meaning of multilingual participation is socially constructed by the collective.

6.3 Positioning

A classroom thus effectively represents "collective work [by students and teachers] to construct, maintain, or alter the cultural and historical practices of their classroom community" (Yamakawa et al., 2009, p. 4). According to positioning theorists, these community norms, and the tensions and dilemmas they engender, emerge in jointly produced 'storylines', enacted through discursive practice (Harré & Davies, 1999). Based on the study of face-to-face interaction, positioning theory holds that a conversation has three mutually constitutive and interactive elements: a position; the social force of the speech-act; and storyline (Van Langenhove & Harré, 1999). A 'position' can be considered as a metaphorical concept which expresses "a cluster of rights and duties to perform certain actions with certain significance as acts, but which also may include prohibitions or denials of access to some of the local repertoire of meaningful acts" (Harré and Moghaddam, 2003, p.6). These positions can be understood in the way they are 'hearable' in the conversation i.e. with overt or tacit reference to the expectations, rights and responsibilities associated with character or role. But the same speech act can be 'hearable' in different ways: for example, the same request for help from a pupil to the teacher might be heard alternatively as 'autonomous', 'passive' or 'attention-seeking' behaviour. Thus the social force of an act and the position of an actor interact and are mutually determining, creating the 'storyline' of the conversation, i.e. the way talk or actions cast patterns of narratives and expected ways of speaking or behaving, giving meaning and accountability to speech acts (Harré & Lagenhove, 1999). As such, individuals are not simply packaged, end-products of these discourses, but they are regarded as active participants of those that they help to construct, and they exercise agency to mediate the individual/social axis in the joint construction of the local moral order.

The notion of positioning provides an analytic means of understanding participation through interactional patterns and practices i.e. who says and does what, to and with whom, to what purpose and what outcome? In the context of this study, this means unravelling how pupils with different kinds of repertoires make a bid for identity positions of plurilingual competence, the way their peers and teacher 'hear' that bid and how and whether it is ratified, reframed or resisted. My use of positioning theory departs from traditional approaches which posit that micro moments of interaction and wider macro-scale constructs can be considered as emerging simultaneously (see K.T. Anderson, 2009 for a discussion). Instead, I look across multiple interactions over time at the level of a whole class and across four classes, in order to explore how acts of positioning and discourse practices create intertextual narratives which interweave and coalesce, thus constructing locally authorised, sedimented practices, and what counts as valuable or recognisable ways of being. This leads to local narratives of 'kinds' of pupils, and reified forms of participation, constructed across time, contexts and scales (K.T. Anderson, 2009; Martin-Beltrán, 2010). Anderson (2009) locates this dynamic within trajectories of knowing and being, and as situated to past, present and imagined others, and says that "in order to behave in a way that others can recognize as a person of kind X who knows Y in context Z, one must first gain

access to resources for speaking and acting in those ways and then be effectively seen to 'seem' like kind X by others" (p.293).

In a nutshell, my research seeks to understand what X, Y and Z might mean for *FML* practice in a mainstream, linguistically diverse classroom; what options are available, both for pupils and teachers, which are selected and how are they are they taken up and by whom?

IV

Methodology and study design

7. Methodology

The empirical part of this research seeks to obtain a picture of how children and teachers participate and discursively position themselves as they begin to implement *FML* for the first time in their classrooms. Adopting a qualitative approach, it aims to generate 'thick description' (Geertz, 1973) i.e. research which comprises firstly of facts and commentary about the patterns of cultural and social relationships in their field of study. Secondly, it presents my interpretations of these patterns and puts them in context, taking account of the fact that structures of meaning are complex systems of interrelated and nested relationships, and each fact might be subject to varied, possibly, intersecting or contradictory interpretations (Schwandt, 2001). Thus, the interpretative practice of making sense of one's findings is "both artful and political" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008, p. 30), requiring ongoing critical reflexivity in terms of my epistemic engagement with the site of study i.e. in terms of who I give voice to, my methods of ethnographic knowledge-production, and the inferences I make.

The research design of this study draws extensively on the tradition of linguistic ethnography, an empirical, bottom-up orientation, which holds that language and social life are mutually shaping, and that analysis of situated language use can provide both fundamental and distinctive insights into the relevance of signs and language. I adopt "ethnography as a logic of enquiry" (Green & Castanheira, 2012) in order to explore "the local and immediate actions of actors from their point of view and [consider] how these interactions are embedded in wider social contexts and structures" (Copland & Creese, 2015, p. 13). I inquire into the workings of a specific, situated social group i.e. of four teachers and their pupils, in their classrooms, and seek to understand the impact of *FML* on "what members need to know, produce, predict and act to participate in socially appropriate ways" (Dixon & Green, 2005). Peréz-Milans (2015) states that a situated approach to language and identity makes linguistic ethnography as a pertinent framework through which to explore "the increasing destabilisation of bounded, stable and consensual communities and identities" (p.5). By changing the class language policy and practice, the participants in this study were creating new spaces and options with which to participate in the customary business of the classroom, potentially giving rise to reconfigured norms of 'how to be' a teacher or pupil in that space.

Generally speaking, linguistic ethnography involves no intentional intervention from the researcher, however, in this study, I purposefully introduced the principles and practices of *FML* to the participating classrooms. Accordingly, my research design also draws on certain principles of Design-Based Research in education (*DBR*). *DBR* aims to develop knowledge that improves educational practices by employing iterative cycles of design, evaluation and revision (Collins 1990) i.e. the 'systematic engineering' of particular types of learning is coupled with the 'systematic study' of those forms of learning in context (Barab & Squire, 2004). Research is conducted in collaboration with the participants, thus enabling the researcher to explore the in-situ workings of particular theories in specific learning ecologies; it may challenge the status quo and engages with the

complexities of 'real-world practice' where that the intended design might be different to what is enacted. This underpins its aim to generate 'useable knowledge' and authentic, tangible, implementable outcomes such as educational tools or models (Akkerman et al., 2011; Armstrong et al., 2020; Collins, 1990). *DBR* accords agency to both participants and researchers and also seeks to advance theory, thus positioning researchers as "curriculum designers, and implicitly, curriculum theorists" (Barab & Squire, 2004, p. 2). This dimension is evident in the blend of theoretical and empirical studies presented in this thesis.

In conclusion, this blend of linguistic ethnography and a design-based approach can be considered as part of a commitment to collaborative, engaged practice, which potentially fosters societal transformation at the local level, i.e. providing a framework for teachers and pupils to develop the skills and knowledge necessary to co-construct multilingual classroom practices. This aims to provide insight that is contextually grounded but may be generalisable to other mainstream, highly linguistically diverse settings. It further ensures that the voices of teachers and pupils are embedded in the ensuing theoretical reflections on *FML*.

8. Context and participants

8.1 Recruiting participants

The data collection took place in the academic year 2017/18. Only one school fully responded to my email looking for research participants but fortunately it corresponded to my criteria, i.e. a state-run, French-speaking primary school with a highly multilingual pupil population and with no previous experience of multilingual pedagogies. It was sufficiently similar in construct to other schools to be a suitable setting to consider the general issues of how plurilingual children (and their teachers) in Belgian, and other, mainstream schools experience an evolution towards multilingual classroom practice. The school transpired to be an "information-rich" case (Patton, 2005) and an excellent "test bed for understanding social diversity and complexity" (King & Carson, 2017, p. 3). I was specifically interested in upper primary-aged pupils, who are "at the point of negotiating the transition between childhood and adolescence and are starting to explore new kinds of knowledge, relationships and identities" (Maybin, 2006, p. 6). Furthermore, they are beginning to develop the reflexive maturity to be aware of and to express their views, and to understand themselves as actors in wider social systems, including that of school.

8.2 The school

There were 603 pupils attending the school, aged between three to twelve years old, with three parallel classes in each year group. The school was situated in an area of the city with a relatively mixed socio-economic demographic, yet according to government calculations, the pupil population was in the lowest quartile. As

such, the school had been receiving additional funding as a means of addressing issues related to deprivation, in particular to pay for extra teaching periods and to support pedagogical projects. It stood in contrast to a prestigious neighbouring school, which attracted pupils from more wealthy backgrounds, and was often full.

The school did not collate data on home languages, but my data indicates that around thirty languages were used by the pupils on a daily basis. The most common were Arabic, Spanish, Turkish, Lingala and Romanian. Around 30% of the pupils were non-Belgian and around 20% had the right to receive additional language support classes (i.e. they had arrived in Belgium in the previous 3 years). These sessions were delivered by a teacher who was also running the school library; he took the pupils in small groups several times a week, designing tasks which focused principally on oral skills and vocabulary for integration into daily school life. The newcomer population was clearly growing, perhaps because, as the Heads noted, they had a reputation for "dealing with them well". Indeed, during the academic year 2017/18, five newcomers joined the four classes in my study, including three Spanish-speakers from South and Central America, a Brazilian and a Croat.

The teaching team often articulated their vision of the school as innovative and dynamic, and proudly referenced celebrations of its multiculturality (e.g. the autumn supper where families brought food to share). However, this 'diversity as a strength' position was also seen by the two Headteachers to serve as a barrier against the 'ghettoisation' of language communities. One of them noted that:

> "… you hear about schools where there is only a majority of pupils who are Turkish or Moroccan or whatever…. They just stick together and even though they need to speak French at school, they are not immersed in the language because automatically in the playground they automatically speak their language…the parents don't make an effort either because there are always people to translate. They stay in their communities and in terms of openness to others, I don't think its great."

In general, multiculturality was acknowledged, and recognised as a relevant dimension for home, family and cultural life, but not particularly as a shared resource in the space of school. As the quotation above indicates, this dichotomy was even more marked with the question of multilingualism. Despite assertions that they were lucky to have multiple languages represented across the teaching staff, and that pupils could use each other to translate, the school had a very clear language policy, printed in the school diary:

> The language spoken in school.
> Our school is French-speaking, and the language of instruction is French.
> We ask our pupils to immerse themselves in this language and to use it.

This policy is emblematic of a 'monolingual habitus' (Gogolin, 2013) and was based on both Headteachers' firm belief in the value of linguistic immersion as a means to learn French, as well as a key foundation for building a cohesive, open school community. The rule was enforced in an uneven way by teachers, midday supervisors and the pupils themselves, but more strictly by the Heads. I often heard reminders to "speak French" or to "stop speaking Spanish" and although newcomers *could* theoretically use their home languages as an initial bridge, it was made clear by the Primary Head that this was a temporary privilege. Although I saw moments where the collective multilingual resources of the school team were indeed proactively deployed in support of a pupil or family, this was generally rare, and invariably bottom-up (i.e. teacher or pupil initiated) rather than top-down or planned. Some pupils considered the language policy to be 'unfair'; indeed, despite the rule, the regular covert use of home languages was discernible, particularly by newcomers, and especially in the playground, where some pupils deliberately took themselves off to the far corners to avoid reprimands.

Despite this broadly monolingual outlook, the Primary Headteacher accepted to host my study, in part to recognise the initiative taken by four of his teachers, but also because he believed that the practices I was seeking to explore would contribute to raising motivation in terms of language.

8.3 The teachers

M. Jean had responded to my initial email describing my research intentions and search for a teacher-collaborator. He brought along three other interested colleagues. All four were born in Belgium and used French as their dominant language. They had all learned Dutch in school. All names are pseudonyms.

<u>**Class A:**</u> **5th grade: M. Jean:** in his first year of teaching, having made a career change after 15 years working in finance. He had studied English and Russian at university and had previously worked in English. He also knew some Spanish.

<u>**Class B:**</u> **5th grade: Mme. Luisa:** in her second year of teaching, after a year of running the language support classes for a year. She grew up speaking French and Portuguese at home but noted that her Portuguese was now rather rusty.

<u>**Class C:**</u> **6th grade: Mme. Caroline:** in her fourth year of teaching. She had grown up speaking French at home, but regretted not having learned the Dutch from her parents who were bilingual Flemish francophones. She had intensively learned Spanish for an Erasmus project in Spain working with Roma children.

<u>**Class D:**</u> **6th grade: Mme. Khadija:** in her sixth year of teaching. She grew up speaking French and Arabic at home with her parents who were originally from Morocco. She regretted the fact that she now only spoke in French to her own children.

None of the four teachers were aware of *FML* at the start of the study but were keen to participate because they wanted to valorise the home languages present in their classes. Both Mme. Luisa and Mme. Khadija had suffered linguistic discrimination as children and were determined that their pupils should not experience the same. All had made an active choice to work in a school with a low socio-economic population and were committed to ensuring their pupils could achieve the same results as their peers in more financially or linguistically comfortable situations. They also reported feeling "at a loss" as to how to adequately support emergent bilinguals, having received virtually no training on the subject and hoped that their participation in the study would help to upskill their practice in this domain. As such, these four teachers are probably representative of the wider teaching community in Fédération Wallonie Bruxelles in terms of their training, but their positive position in relation to home languages puts them in a minority in the wider teaching population and represented a departure from the 'French only' policy of the school. Indeed, efforts by Mme. Khadija a few years earlier to implement some 'language awareness' activities in her class had been forbidden by the Headteacher. She noted that my status as a white, non-Belgian, along with the cachet of a university study, would open doors that were shut to her, as she would be seen to be merely acting in the interests of 'her community' (i.e. those of Moroccan descent living in Belgium).

8.4 The pupils

There were 92 pupils (aged between ten and twelve years old) in the four participating classes, between them using twenty-six different languages, aside from French. *Table 1* shows an overview of the populations in each class.

	Class A: M. Jean 5th grade 24 pupils	Class B: Mme. Luisa 5th grade 22 pupils	Class C: Mme. Caroline 6th grade 23 pupils	Class D: Mme. Khadija 6th grade 23 pupils
Number of home languages used	13	10	10	9
'Sole speakers' of a language	5	6	5	5
Long-term dual-language learners	17	20	22	19
Newcomers	2	2	0	1
'Ex-newcomers'	2	0	1	1
Monolinguals	3	0	0	2

Table 1: Linguistic profile of the four participating classes

The classes comprised a mix of pupils: long-term dual-language learners (including those born in Brussels to immigrant parents; those who had moved to the city when they were young; those who were the second generation of established, large communities (e.g. Turkish or Moroccan)); newcomers (arrived in Belgium within the last year) or 'ex-newcomers' (arrived in the two years preceding the study). There were also a small number of monolingual French-speakers, most of whom were from 'native' Belgian families. Each class contained a number of 'sole speakers' of their language (i.e. they were the only person in the class who used that language). The pupils exhibited a wide variety of identifications with 'being Belgian' – some clearly had strong identity attachments to another 'place', others navigated more hybrid identities, and some claimed a 'fully Belgian' identity for themselves.

In the early days of the study, all of the pupil participants completed a self-assessment questionnaire (translated where necessary) about their perceived proficiency in any number of languages they chose to cite. They gave a score of 0-4 for pairs of 'can do' statements describing acts of reading, writing, speaking and listening; in each case, one of the statements described a relatively low-demand scenario and the other an academic situation, e.g. writing a note to a friend vs writing a science report. The pupils' aggregate scores for their proficiency in French were compared to those given by their teacher and for the most part, they were very close. Accordingly, the pupil self-evaluations were taken as a rough proxy for the reliability of their self-evaluation in their home language. The graph at *Figure 3* shows the aggregate scores for all 92 pupils, indicating their respective proficiencies between French and the main other language they used. The pupils are classified into four broad groups: home language (HL) proficiency as stronger than French (FR); home language as equal to French; French dominant; and monolingual.

18% of the pupils indicated that they were globally stronger in their home language than in French (indicated by ♦). This group generally included newcomer pupils or 'ex-newcomers' who had all been educated for several years in another language. 28% of pupils (●) indicated that they felt their competence was more or less balanced; sometimes this was because they attended complementary school in their home language. The 49% of pupils (▲) who felt that French was their dominant language was very diverse, ranging from pupils who said they were conversationally fluent but couldn't read or write, to those who stated they had passive understanding of a language used by their parents at home. Finally, 5% of pupils (■) indicated that they did not use another language in daily life. These boundaries are of course only indicative and to a certain extent must be considered context dependent; furthermore, the individual language passports revealed fluid translingual practice as common, particularly in family life for second generation pupils.
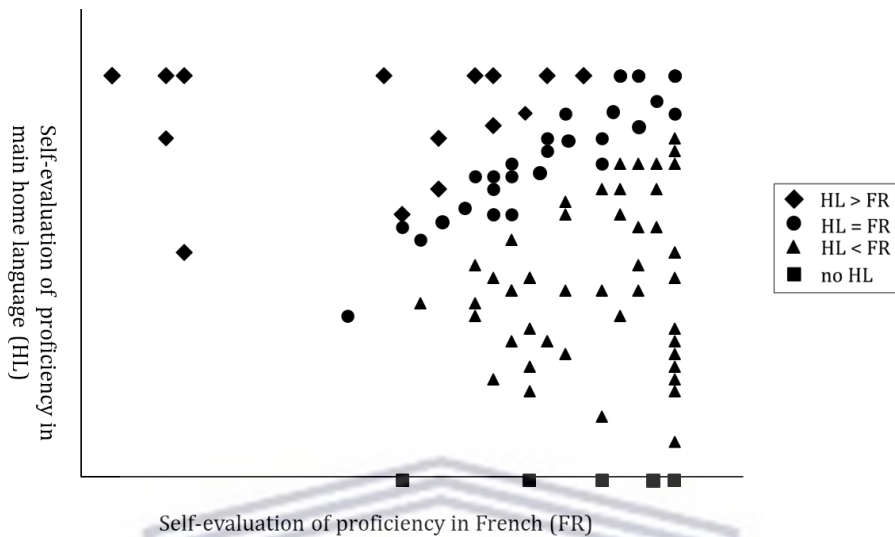
Figure 3: Pupils' self-evaluation of their proficiency in French (FR) and their main home language (HL)

This portrait was central to my purposeful selection of six pupils in each class to be in a focus-group. Although each class-based group was slightly different in balance, globally, I sought to build groups which represented the wider pupil population in terms of gender, home languages, and reported home language proficiency. The only group not represented in the focus groups is newcomers who had very recently arrived. A summary of the four focus groups is at *Appendix A*.

9. Data collection and analysis

9.1 Principles

Studies adopting a linguistic ethnographic approach tend to draw from a range of data sources in order to shed light on the complexity of social events (Copland & Creese, 2015). In this study, methodological triangulation involved a combination of: ethnographic observation; semi-structured and informal interviews; and sociolinguistic analysis of classroom interaction and patterns of participation. This enabled me to take account of emic perspectives and to identify the pupils' and teachers' interpretive frames as they began to implement *FML*. It supported my evolving understanding of patterns of participation and how recognisable 'multilingual ways of being' were locally organised and came to coalesce and solidify over time (K.T. Anderson, 2009). It also enabled me to detect traces of alignment and resistance to broader meso and macro level language policies and ideologies (Saxena & Martin-Jones, 2013).

Emic validity was further enhanced by data triangulation i.e. collecting data iteratively across:

- *time* (two to three days a week spent in the school, over a period of eight months);
- *space* (in the classroom, playground, staffroom, by the school gates, off-site); and
- *people* (with pupils, teachers, Headteachers, language support teacher, speech and language therapist, educational co-ordinator, cleaning staff, parents etc.).

Prolonged, extensive engagement is critical in ethnographic research in order to be able to make sense of the complexity of social events, which "are not linear, not perfectly logical, not clearly sequential, not dominated by rational decisions" (Blommaert & Dong, 2020, p. 27). It also allowed me to develop a certain familiarity and rapport with the teachers, pupils and staff in the school and potentially reduced the 'Hawthorne effect' whereby the mere presence of the researcher prompts participants to perform as 'the best version of themselves' (Cohen et al., 2007).

9.2 Stages

The data collection can be grouped into three periods of time. **Phase One** related to understanding the school and the participants (*Table 2*).

Phase 1: Understanding the school and participants					
Date	**Data**	**Class A: M. Jean**	**Class B: Mme. Luisa**	**Class C: Mme. Caroline**	**Class D: Mme. Khadija**
Nov 2017 -Jun 18	**School & classroom context:** Field notes: handwritten in situ, typed up later. Artefacts: e.g. photos of pupil work, classroom displays, blackboards, teachers' notes, pages from textbooks Documentation: e.g. school diary, curricula, policies				
Nov-Dec 17	**School personnel:** Background interviews and conversations	Notes or audio recordings			
	Teachers: Language passport & individual semi-structured interview	4 x language passports; 4 x 1 hour audio			
	Pupils: Language passport & language self-evaluation	92 x language passports 92 x self-evaluation charts			

Table 2: Phase One of data collection

I spent most of my time in the four participant classrooms, where my role oscillated between that of an observer and a participant-observer. My global focus was on noticing configurations of space, people and activity, the ways the participants used and spoke about language(s) and how this was articulated in the business of classroom life (Dyson & Genishi, 2005). I used a range of tools to gain an initial, and emic picture of the participants' language repertoires, including *language passports* (De Backer et al., 2019a); *self-evaluation proficiency questionnaires* with the pupils; and *semi-structured interviews* with the teachers, covering: their language biography; their attitudes, experiences and practices in relation to multilingualism, both in wider society and in the classroom; and their perspectives in terms of their current class.

Phase Two of the data collection related to training and the implementation of *FML* (*Table 3*).

Phase 2: Training and implementing *FML*					
Date	Data	Class A:	Class B:	Class C:	Class D:
Jan 18	**Teachers:** Group training on *FML*	5 x 1 hour audio recording; field notes			
Jan 18 - Jun 18	Video from multilingual teaching sessions	6 x ± 1 hour video	5 x ± 1 hour video		
	Notes and artefacts from multilingual teaching sessions	6 lessons	5 lessons	6 lessons	6 lessons
	Teachers: Written or oral feedback	6 (mostly written)	5 (mostly oral)	6 (mostly oral)	6 (mostly oral)
	Pupils: Focus-group 'conversation rubric' (CR) feedback sessions	6 x ± 50 mins audio + CR sheet	5 x ± 50 mins audio + CR sheet	6 x ± 50 mins audio + CR sheet	6 x ± 50 mins audio + CR sheet

Table 3: Phase Two of data collection

The intervention part of this study aimed to enable the teachers to create a powerful multilingual learning environment in their classroom by addressing three core dimensions (Sierens, 2009):

- Enabling interactional support in the pupils' home languages;
- The creation of meaningful, multilingual activities as a means of reaching a real-life goal;
- The creation of a safe classroom environment in which pupils feel confident and competent.

Drawing on research about effective ways to train teachers to adopt multilingual practices (e.g. Gorter & Arocena, 2020; Higgins & Ponte, 2017; Lourenço et al., 2018), the training had two main pillars: *group training sessions* and a 40-page *written guide*, both comprising of a mix of:

- *theoretical* material covering a range of topics (e.g. historical perspectives of bi- and plurilingualism; language repertoires; translanguaging as linguistic practice; language acquisition in second language learners; language ideologies; language awareness; spontaneous and planned translanguaging); and
- *pedagogical* material (e.g. implementation strategies, concrete activities, examples from other settings).

Both the training and written guide drew heavily on published, evidence-based, teacher-guides to multilingual classroom practice, notably:

- *"Activities to support multilingualism at school. How to motivate children to use languages"* (Społeczna Akademia Nauk, 2015);
- *"Linguistically Appropriate Practice"* (Chumak Horbatsch, 2011);
- *"Romtels: A pedagogy for bi/plurilingual pupils: translanguaging. Teachers' guidance"* (Smith et al., 2017);
- *"Translanguaging: a CUNY-NYSIEB guide for educators"* (Celic & Seltzer, 2013).

Other sources included: *Critical Connections: Multilingual Digital Storytelling Project* (J. Anderson et al., 2014); *Comparons Nos Langues* (Auger et al., 2005); *EOLE (Éducation et Ouverture Aux Langues A l'École)* (IRDP, 2014); *I Am Plurilingual* (Prasad, 2015); *Identity Texts* (Cummins et al., 2011); *Marille* (Boeckmann et al., 2011); and *Translators in Schools* (Stephen Spender Trust, 2013). The material, tasks and examples were informed by the data collected in *Stage 1* and were selected according to whether they seemed appropriate and 'implementable' in this setting.

The group training sessions took place at lunchtimes and were designed to prompt critical reflection and debate e.g. watching short films of translanguaging practices and discussing their relevance to learning; classifying statements about bi-, pluri- and multilingualism according to whether they were 'true' or 'false'; or commenting on statements by politicians. This established the teachers as a reflective professional learning group (D. Lotherington et al., 2013) as they collaboratively explored their past experiences and ongoing classroom experimentation. As such, the training sessions functioned as an additional data source, deepening my understanding of their attitudes, practices and priorities. From mid-January onwards, the teachers used the guide, supplemented by their own research and ideas, and developed their own 'meaningful multilingual tasks' and general classroom practices. They sometimes discussed their ideas with me in advance and I occasionally functioned as an assistant, in particular for time-consuming tasks (e.g. researching translations of keywords). In general, I

endeavoured to adopt a position as a slightly distanced reflective partner as I wanted the decisions the teachers made to correspond to their own pedagogical framework and understanding of their pupils.

When they were ready, the teachers arranged a convenient time for me to film or observe five or six *multilingual teaching sessions*. *Table 4* gives an example of the observed lessons, other practices and language policy of one of the teachers, M. Jean.

	Lesson theme and aim	Grouping, participation structures and sequence
1	*The negative:* language comparison; creating social links	Translation in language groups; whole class sharing.
2	*Phrases of greeting:* language awareness; creating social links	Mixed language group teaching each other phrases; collecting data in the whole school; whole class sharing
3	*Words linked to defining geographical spaces:* higher level engagement with concepts	Mixed language groups classifying terms in Romanian, Arabic, Spanish, French.
4	*Metaphors and idiomatic expressions:* language awareness and comparison; higher level engagement with concepts	Homework in preparation. Mixed language group, teaching each other metaphors from other languages; individual work.
5	*Oral recordings for school science fair:* language identity; social links; engagement with parents	Writing report in French first; individual or mixed language group recording on a tablet; shared at science fair.
6	*Multilingual geometry phrases:* language awareness; creating social links; higher level engagement with concepts	Homework in preparation. Mixed language groups with 1 pupil as language teacher: Arabic, Romanian, Spanish, Polish, Georgian. Whole class sharing
Other practices: translation of tests, projects and input for newcomers; polyglots corner in the class newspaper; repeating instructions in other languages; regular use of tablets for translations; multilingual poetry; presentations of language identity/repertoire; pupils translating between themselves; multilingual maths posters. Open language policy (i.e. relatively free choice by the pupils)		

Table 4: Summary of tasks, practices and policies (M. Jean)

I filmed 11 sessions in M. Jean and Mme. Luisa's classes, using a video camera (also the audio-source) on a tripod at the back of the class, in combination with a small, wide-lens Go-pro camera, mounted on the blackboard at the front. In contrast to my general posture as participant-observer, during these sessions I did not interact with teachers or pupils but observed from the back of the room. Three focus-group pupils wore lapel microphones but for reasons of time, the resulting data was not extensively analysed. For Mme. Caroline and Mme. Khadija's classes, I simply observed their multilingual sessions, making an audio recording to support detailed notes of the stages of the lesson afterwards.

My observer's gaze was principally, but not exclusively, on the pupils in the focus groups; my *field notes* were unstructured, but chronological, and were framed around identifying the general interaction patterns, routines, norms of practice, and participant relationships (Tsui, 2012). This entailed documenting specific moves and behaviours and the ways in which the pupils and teachers interacted, paying attention to decision-making, collaboration and conflicts. I also included reflexive and personal questions, identifying similarities to another event, or something that seemed emblematic of a particular theoretical concept. I also noted where I was uncertain of my interpretation of a particular moment. These 'observational notes' were followed up with more analytical 'auto-ethnographic' notes, also providing a platform for reflexive consideration of my own partialities and emotions and untangling the complexities of my role as a participant observer (Copland & Creese, 2015).

Immediately after each teaching session, I took the class focus-group to a small room for a *feedback session*. The choice of a grouped interview follows similar studies (Lory, 2015; Welply, 2010) which found children were more responsive and more likely to produce a wider range of answers, including negative positions (Cohen et al., 2007). These feedback sessions were guided by a 'conversation rubric' (*CR*) (K. T. Anderson, 2009) (translated example at *Appendix B*), where the pupils discussed and rated their own experience, followed by their perception of the experiences of other pupils in the class and the teacher. This covered five dimensions about the role of using home languages in tasks: a) the contribution to learning; b) emotions; c) connections between pupils; d) home-school links; and e) perceptions of the teacher. I used individual name cards as a talking prompt and the group made individual and collective decisions about where to place stickers on a Likert scale for each category; as such, the conversation rubric chart functioned as a mediating tool, prompting descriptions, explicit characterisations and commentary on multilingual practice in the classroom. The group often settled on multiple ratings for the same category in order to record the fact that different pupils had had different experiences. The teachers used the same rubric to give oral or written feedback on their perceptions of the lesson.

Aiming to avoid answers that were framed to please an adult perspective (Hill, 2005), I endeavoured to adopt a position that enabled a maximum of interaction and negotiation between the pupils themselves. This wasn't always possible as the groups were sometimes fractious, off-task or needed help with task management.

Furthermore, whilst the *CR* provided a jumping off point for conversations, my follow-up questions added clarity and enabled me to check my understandings of the pupils' perspectives.

Phase Three of the data collection related to a final evaluation of the multilingual practices adopted in each class (*Table 5*). The interview protocol and questionnaires were designed to address specific dimensions and tensions that seemed significant during *Phase Two*.

Phase 3: Reviewing *FML*					
Date	**Data**	**Class A:**	**Class B:**	**Class C:**	**Class D:**
Jun 18	**Teachers:** online questionnaire	4 x semi-structured questionnaires			
	Teachers: semi-structured group interview	2 hours, audio			
	Pupils: friendship statements	92 x friendship statements			
	Pupils: written questionnaire	92 x semi-structured questionnaires			
	Pupils: Semi-structured focus-group sessions	1 x ± 1 hour audio	1 x ± 1 hour audio	1 x ± 1 hour audio	1 x ± 1 hour audio

Table 5: Phase Three of data collection

The *teacher and pupil questionnaires* asked the participants to rate their perceptions and appreciation of different types of multilingual activity and to describe the language policy for the classroom. The *semi-structured interviews/focus-group sessions* asked both groups to evaluate the usefulness of *FML* for pupils with different kinds of language repertoires (e.g. newcomers, balanced bilinguals, French-dominant, monolinguals) and the desirability of different forms of grouping (language-based groups, mixed groups or free choice). I also presented anonymous statements for comment: these came from the data collected during the study and related to areas that had seemed significant or contentious e.g. a comment from the Headteacher that multilingual practice must always return to French as its baseline and raison d'être. In the final stages of the data collection, I had come to realise that friendship was a significant dimension and so asked the pupils to name the five people in school they considered to be their closest friends, and five people in their class they enjoyed working with, in order to analyse friendship networks.

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http://etd.uwc.ac.za/

9.3 Data analysis

Data collection and analysis were iterative and recursive, combining inductive and deductive methods (Maxwell, 2013) in order to explore the data at the levels of moment-to-moment practices, patterns across time and contexts, alongside the participants' characterisation of that practice (K. T. Anderson, 2009). I focused my analysis on the two filmed classes (i.e. M. Jean and Mme. Luisa) but used data from the other two to explore, compare and confirm emerging themes. I purposefully crossed sources of data in order to identify "rich points" (Agar, 2006) of alignment and dissonance in terms who could (and did) participate in multilingual classroom practice and what the conditions were that seemed to affect this.

The interviews and focus-group sessions were transcribed in full and subjected to an initial analysis to identify Language Related Episodes i.e. "any part of the dialogue where learners talk about the language they produced and reflect on their language use" (Swain & Lapkin, 2002, p. 292). Subsequently, the interview and focus-group interviews and conversation rubrics were iteratively analysed in combination with field notes, analytical memos, photographs of pupil work etc. in order to develop open and focused coding schemes using NVivo (Merriam, 2009). I also built social network maps of the pupils' friendships (Iqbal et al., 2017) and used the conversation rubrics and questionnaire data to develop graphical representations to explore themes e.g. graphs to compare the teachers' and pupils' preferred activity types. From fairly early on, a disjunct was discernible between the Headteacher's vision of the social benefits of a monolingual rule and the pupils' desire to investigate, share and use other languages in the classroom. Yet from the outset, certain polarities were expressed: joy and stress were intertwined and certain 'types' of pupils expressed greater hesitations, pointing to the role of home language proficiency in participation, and how it was socially positioned.

I used the video data to draw up 'event-maps' of the eleven filmed multilingual lessons (Green & Castanheira, 2012; Martin-Beltrán, 2010), in order to trace: the pupils' and teachers' actions, moves, patterns of uptake; the outcomes of that uptake; and how these events were continuous or discontinuous over events and differed between individuals of groups. They were used to develop an understanding of the features, patterns and expectations of the 'official' and 'lived' curricula, where they aligned and disaligned. The event maps focused initially on the whole-class action and then successively examined the focus group pupils, identifying patterns in their participation, as well as salient personal and interpersonal positioning practices which framed individual affordances and reified practices and positions sanctioned across the group. An example extract from M. Jean's first lesson is given at *Appendix C* (adapted for clarity) where my secondary focus was particularly on the notion of linguistic proficiency, and in particular that of Karim, one of the focus pupils.

The 'event maps' were then synthesised into diachronic 'practice maps' covering the whole period of the study. Drawing on Green and Castanheira (2012), these traced the evolving 'opportunities for exploring self and others through text'

(spoken, written and graphic) and 'disruption or uneven access to those opportunities'. This led to seven categories of 'multilingual practice' which could be either teacher-centred (*TC*) or pupil-centred (*PC*). These are shown in *Table 6,* along with emblematic examples.

Categories of multilingual practice	Example
Structuring: discourse communities, grouping and language choice.	**Teacher-centred (TC):** Offering a choice of working in 'any language', including mixed use.
Understanding and establishing the language landscape.	**Pupil-centred (PC):** Asking a peer about their language background or use.
Establishing rules and norms.	**TC:** Explicitly situating home language as a legitimate part of the curriculum.
Pupils' use of their own home language.	**PC:** Avoiding/declining to participate with home language because it is difficult.
Pupils' use of other languages in the classroom.	**TC:** Introducing concepts through words in unknown languages.
Use of French in the classroom.	**TC:** Instructing pupils to work in French first, then other languages.
Defining the pupil-teacher relationship.	**TC:** Acting as a filter for pupils' language knowledge, reducing their autonomy and expertise.

Table 6: Categories of multilingual practices and emblematic examples

These 'practice maps' were used to trace cycles of activity across time, participants, and theme and to deepen the perspectives shared in the feedback sessions. For example, they helped to identify the fact that grouping by language became less common over time in some of the classes, and the pupils actually preferred it. The maps were used to develop specific analytical frameworks, in particular to analyse the positioning of home language proficiency (see *Study 3*). Finally, emblematic interactional moments related to emerging themes of interest were selected for transcription and focused analysis.

This multi-layered approach allowed me to examine the discursively constructed patterns of language-in-use by the pupils and teachers and their perspectives thereof. This provided a base to identify the salient processes and practices of the class, specifically how different languages were co-constructed as material resources for developing the lifeworld of the class (Gee & Green, 1998).

10. Positionality, reflexivity and ethics

10.1 Researcher positionality

This study assumes an interpretivist stance, requiring me to consider myself as both insider and outsider in the research setting and to engage in transparent critical reflexivity on how my positionality will impact all stages of the research process.

As a former primary school teacher who has taught in many multilingual classrooms, I approached my research setting with a certain degree of 'insider knowledge'; this doubtless helped me to read the 'grammar' of classroom dynamics and to understand the priorities of primary-school children. In the eyes of my teacher participants, it potentially reduced the authority gap (Copland & Creese, 2015) and indeed our communication was generally warm and characterised by a certain kind of professional camaraderie. However, Rampton (2003) notes that ex- teachers may have a tendency to pedagogical optimism in ethnographic research, over-privileging success in teaching and learning, obscuring the logic and rationality of failure. This certainly characterised my early engagement in this study but over time, my perspective changed considerably to place absence/refusal/failure as key dimensions in the analysis.

My background, nationality and general pedagogical orientation were also important factors to consider. I grew up in a white, middle-class, monolingual English-speaking household in the UK and came to Belgium to teach in a European School in 2007. On the one hand, my 'otherness' as a non-Belgian seemed to strengthen the teachers' sense of engaging in innovative, international practice. Nonetheless, there were differences in the pedagogical traditions from which we emanated. My teacher training in the UK in 2005 was heavily dominated by socio-constructivist models of learning, formative assessment and the mindset and skills needed for differentiation, and indeed, these were the prevailing models in the schools I taught in the UK, Sri Lanka and Belgium. However, in French-speaking Belgium, the tradition has been more characterised by transmission-style teaching, with greater use of textbooks and summative assessment. This was evident in the classrooms in this study, requiring an awareness of where my own values and conceptualisations of teaching and learning might be colouring my observations. Yet this distance perhaps also meant that I didn't glide over norms but paused and asked myself 'first order' questions. My field notes record some of these dilemmas, for example one noted my musings on the daily practice of the pupils copying down the timetable in their school diary:

> *"What's the goal here? All the teachers do it. Seems a bit of a waste of time. J. said it was his handwriting practice. Maybe for the parents? (check this) but maybe to set a clear plan for the day. Could be useful(ish) for newcomers – anchors them & repeated use of same school vocab."*

One final point must recognise the fact that my first and dominant language is English, but my data collection was conducted in French, occasionally also drawing on my knowledge of Spanish. This entailed the additional responsibility of acting as translator, in particular for English-language publications, situating translation as part of the analysis and not merely a technical stage of the research (Holmes et al., 2013). Despite virtually no issues with communication, there are doubtless nuances of language that I missed, particularly with some of the slang used by the pupils. I was also aware that I sometimes misunderstood cultural references. For example, I was bothered by the wording of a large poster at the entrance to the school stating "Ensemble, même si on est différent" (Together, even if we are different). It felt to me that 'difference' was positioned as a potentially compromising category of 'togetherness', however Belgian friends heard it more positively, more as a catchphrase. In fact, it comes from a well-known song from the 1990s, and was used for a long-time in the media in campaigns to raise money for diversity projects.

10.2 Ethical considerations

To a certain extent, this study was constructed under a critical ethnographic research framework in that it sought to describe, understand and analyse the transformative potential of an intervention which challenges dominant discourses. As such, it was not value neutral and embodied a particular vision on multilingual classroom practice, potentially entailing complex or contentious positions. Accordingly, throughout the study I sought to maintain a balance between my research needs, the professional identity of the teacher participants and the well-being of the pupils.

The research design placed the teachers at the heart of creating the tasks and practices for their classes. This helped to ensure I was meeting the first three conditions of Finkelstein and Ducros' (1993) model for introducing and researching new pedagogies in a school, namely: respect for the complex and unique identity of the teacher-participants; an appreciation of the specific ecology of an individual classroom; and a regard for the professional knowledge of each teacher. Their final condition is that the research should be acceptable to the wider school community. This was more complex, mostly because of the rather polarised views on multilingualism across the wider teaching team. Some teachers were curious, but others were outright hostile, however, these negative positions seemed to generate a position of empowerment and resistance on the part of the four teacher-participants; the cachet of a 'university' project clearly lent legitimacy to their experimentation and they positioned themselves as being in the vanguard of change.

Ensuring ethically respectful practices when researching with children is a significantly more complex undertaking. Firstly, all pupils (and their parents) were asked to give their written, informed consent for participation, via a child friendly explanation of my research aims, translated where necessary, followed by

a classroom Q&A session. The pupils were free to not participate or to withdraw at any time; a few initially hesitated, particularly about the idea of being filmed, and we agreed that they could be seated out of range of the camera. All changed their minds after early practice filming sessions.

Secondly, for the duration of the study, although I couldn't deny my 'adult' authority, I aimed to soften this position by helping out with classroom tasks, and spending breaktimes on the playground, chatting with different groups of pupils. Nonetheless, there were still moments when I slipped into 'teacher-mode', managing disputes in the focus-groups or on one occasion, intervening in playground violence. Globally, the pupils were invariably friendly, open and engaging with me and, given some of their frank, often critical answers, it seems that they accepted my assertions that our conversations were private and would not be shared (except anonymously in the context of my research). This openness was also facilitated by the construct of the conversation rubric in the focus groups: the Likert scales explicitly included options that framed disruption, neutrality and agreement all as possible positions (Ponizovsky-Bergelson et al., 2019).

The final area for reflection relates to whether my research caused any harm or distress, in particular to the pupils. As the empirical studies document, the implementation of *FML* was sometimes contentious and certain pupils felt excluded or diminished at times, in particular those with low home language proficiency and monolinguals. The teachers were sometimes aware of these tensions and invariably took the lead in addressing them, however, if this didn't seem to be the case, with the pupils' agreement, I would share their hesitations with the teachers, and we reflected on solutions together. To a certain extent, these dynamics thread through my analysis of *FML*, and feed into my reflections on best practice; however, they remained a delicate, ongoing balancing act that needed to underpin all decisions whilst collecting data.

10.3 Finding order in disorder in ethnographic research

Blommaert and Dong (2020) assert that the ethnographic 'field' is a "chaotic, hugely complex place" (p.3) and I conclude this section with a few thoughts on how events over the course of my study impacted my research questions, methods and the granularity of my analysis.

I had originally intended to work with one teacher and six pupils but ended up in four classes with 24 focus-group pupils. This shift was a gesture of professional respect and reciprocity towards the teachers who had asked to participate, but I have no doubt that working in a group rather than solo prompted greater and deeper engagement with the principles and practices of *FML*. This expansion to four classes also led me to adapt my initial research questions and conceptual framework which were originally focused exclusively on the pupils. I added consideration of the teachers' practices and perceptions and worked at a more meso-level of discourse and participation, rather than micro-ethnographic

discourse analysis. Nonetheless, this move strengthened my analysis of how *FML* is imagined and integrated into classroom practice, and the complexities it entails.

Furthermore, the feeling of 'chaos' relates also to researching in the context of the busy reality of classroom life. Plurilingual lessons were sometimes meticulously planned, but at other times, were hasty, last-minute affairs. Key pupils were sometimes absent from filmed lessons and at one point, a serious argument between Karim and Adem, two Arabic-speaking focus-group pupils, resulted in them refusing to sit in the same room together. This ebb and flow felt stressful at first, but I endeavoured to be flexible and to integrate my responses as part of a reflexive posture (Costley & Reilly, 2021). I adapted to the teachers' timetables as much as I could and tried to compensate the time they gave me by completing some of their school duties (e.g. playground supervision). Events that felt disruptive to the research cycle could also potentially be reframed as contributing to my understanding of multilingual classroom life. Indeed, last-minute lessons are an utterly normal phenomenon in teaching and the argument cited above confirmed my impression that language-based groupings could be artificial or potentially disruptive.
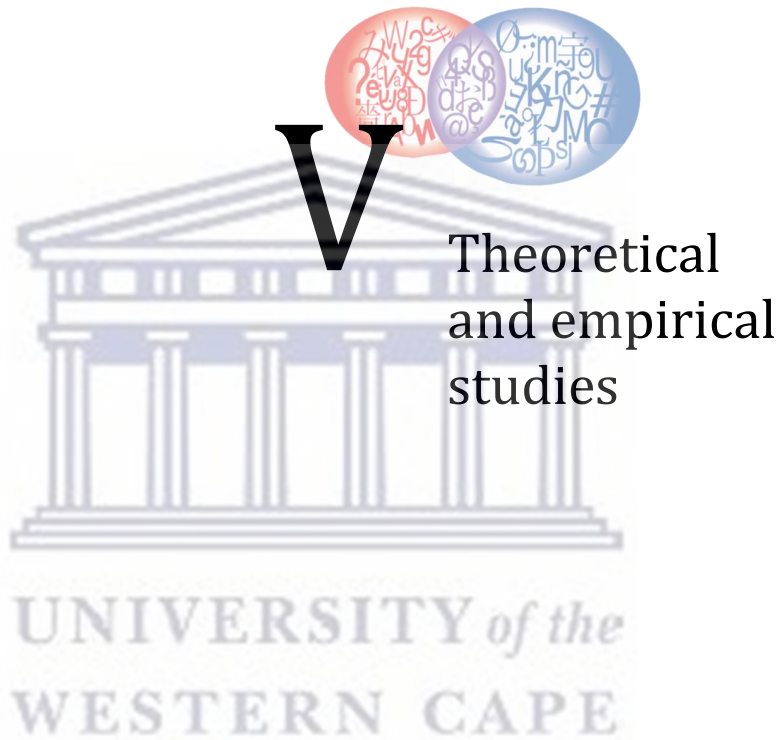
V Theoretical and empirical studies

11. Presentation of the four studies

The global research question of this study pertains to the *kinds of dynamics, opportunities and constraints inherent in the implementation of FML in a mainstream, linguistically diverse primary school*.

The four studies that comprise the main body of this thesis traverse theoretical and empirical considerations and draw selectively across the conceptual framework and lenses and the data sets in order to address this global question. In the following section, I introduce each of the studies, their pertinence in terms of the research question, the data sources used, along with the analytical lens and foci. The structure of a thesis by articles inevitably means that there is cross-over and a certain amount of repetition, both in relation to the introduction, literature and conceptual framework, and between the sub-studies.
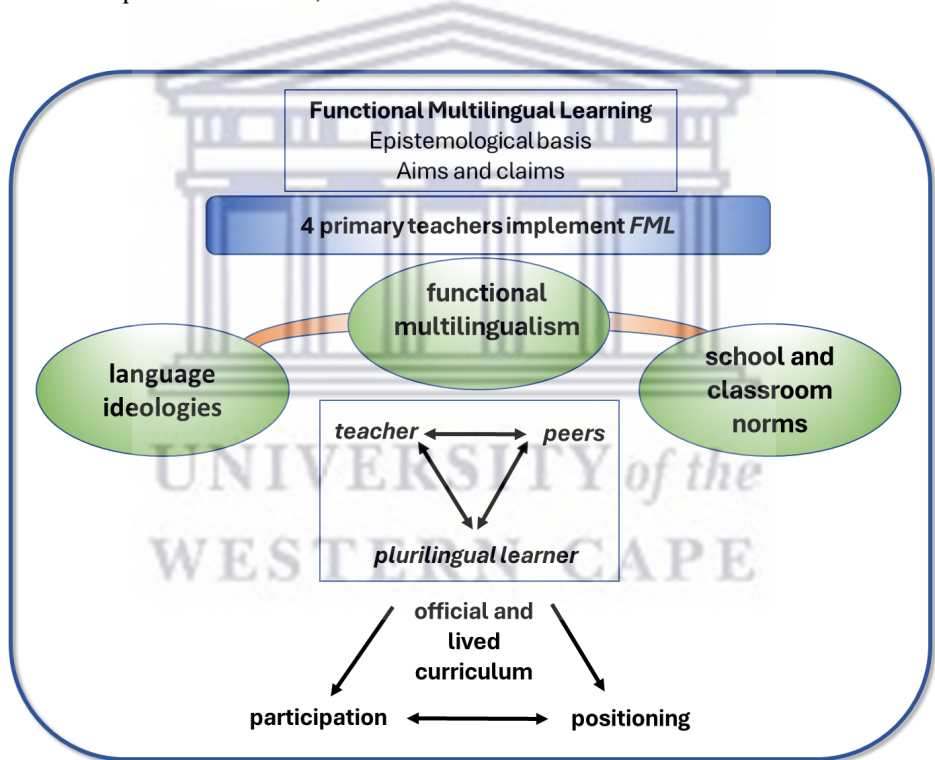
Figure 2: Research structure and conceptual framework

Study 1: **Functional Multilingual Learning***: Traversing the vertical and horizontal dimensions of language repertoires.*

This book chapter addresses the first research sub-question:

> *1. What are the epistemological and empirical foundations of FML and what does it aim to achieve? How is it situated in terms of other multilingual pedagogical approaches?*

I approach this through an analytical comparison of *FML* with two other multilingual approaches: firstly, 'translanguaging-as-pedagogy', as it is currently a heavily dominant concept in the anglophone literature; and secondly, 'language awareness', specifically *Éveil Aux Langues*, as it is part of the official language curriculum for French-speaking schools in Belgium and is based in great part on francophone scholarship. I examine the history and main principles of each model by drawing on theoretical and empirical academic literature as well as teacher guides. I analyse the areas of difference and crossover in terms of three main domains: the linguistic ontological foundations of each model; its associated pedagogical objectives; and the nature of the transformation each seeks to engender. This transversal analysis serves to highlight the specificities of *FML*, particularly in terms of its application in the mainstream classroom and supports reflection on whether principles and practices from one model can be applied across settings. This sub-study also reflects on transversal questions on the structures that are likely to engender transformation and the role of teacher agency when considering whether a pedagogical model is sustainable in a specific local context. Although this study was in fact the final of the four to be written, I place it first in this thesis in order to situate the readers and to contextualise the later empirical studies. However, it also inevitably includes reflections elaborated during the data collection and analysis stages.

Study 2: *Multilingual tasks as a springboard for transversal practice: teachers' decisions and dilemmas in a* **Functional Multilingual Learning** *approach.*

The moment of transition away from a monoglossic approach represents a veritable paradigm shift, reframing long-standing ideologies of the role of home languages in school and interactional and pedagogical norms. This requires the teacher to think differently about how learning can happen, and to create new procedures, tasks, learning material and assessments. This teacher 'sense-making' is the focus of my second sub-question:

> *2. What kinds of opportunities for multilingual participation and learning do teachers construct when they begin to implement FML? What factors underpin their decisions?*

In essence, this journal article examines the 'official curriculum' i.e. the way *FML* was understood, imagined, enacted and implemented by each teacher and how they created alternative opportunities for multilingual participation. I draw on the video data of the 11 filmed lessons in M. Jean and M. Luisa's classes, observation notes from all 23 lessons, as well as the post-lesson and final interviews with all four teachers and use these to create a typology of the ways in which they conceptualised their pupils' home languages as didactic capital in 'meaningful multilingual tasks'. I also explore the pedagogical motivations behind their decisions and how these reflected or disrupted curricular and classroom interactional norms, in particular where multilingual tasks could concurrently produce inclusive and exclusionary outcomes. I show how the teachers' decisions were sometimes influenced by the practical limitations of the diversity of repertoires across the class and how their tasks, policies and interactional practices embodied their conceptualisation of their pupils' language repertoire.

<u>Study 3:</u> *Hierarchies of home language proficiency in the linguistically diverse primary school classroom: personal, social and contextual positioning.*

This journal article turns to the 'lived curriculum' and addresses my third sub-question:

> *3. How do the pupils participate in an FML inspired classroom? How do they characterise their own linguistic practice and that of others? How do these dynamics recursively shape individual and collective understandings of multilingual classroom life?*

The question of home language proficiency was a highly emotive preoccupation in the pupil focus groups, and often the source of stress. This was confirmed by my observations which indicated that certain pupils participated frequently and actively in multilingual interaction whilst others sometimes held back. This study draws on the video data from the 11 filmed lessons, observation notes from all 23 lessons, close analysis of key moments of interaction, and the focus-group feedback sessions. I use the lens of "perceived proficiency" (Martin-Beltrán, 2010) to show how the pupils participated in multilingual classroom action, and how they situated themselves and others in hierarchies of proficiency through acts of positioning. I examine the mutually constitutive dynamics of the perceptions and enactment of proficiency and how these were socially and intersubjectively ratified by the classroom community and then how this fed into recursive patterns of participation, which in turn created differing affordances and constraints for learning. By focusing on interactions between the pupils, as well as with the teachers, this article is also situated at the interface between the 'official' and 'lived' curriculum and in particular, where the teachers' objectives for learning and participation, and their formulations thereof, sometimes varied considerably with the pupils' interactions and interpretations (K. T. Anderson, 2009).

Study 4: **_Negotiating and navigating plurilingual classroom citizenship: social_** **_cohesion and_** **Functional Multilingual Learning.**

The final study is a book chapter, and also addresses the third research question, outlined above. The significance of the 'school citizenship' dimension of *FML* became apparent as my data collection progressed; there seemed to be a gap between the Headteacher's assertion that exclusive use of one language was essential for school cohesion and the many positive perceptions and practices cited and enacted by the pupils. At the same time, they regularly referenced social/linguistic disorder, as an almost assumed characteristic of a multilingual community, in particular the risk of insults. This study draws on the video data from the 11 filmed lessons, observation notes from all 23 lessons, the focus-group feedback and the final feedback surveys from all 92 pupils. The conceptual framing of social cohesion is unusual both in terms of the age of the pupils in question, the micro-scale of the classroom lens and the qualitative methodology of the study. However, following Meier (2014), I use it to concurrently explore horizontal relationships between peers and vertical relationships with the authority of school, and to explore the attitudes and norms underpinning participation practices, mutual trust and feelings of belonging. This lens also enabled me to draw a link between broader assimilationist language policies, how these are embodied in school language policies, and how they can stand in dissonance to the reality of pupils' lives, their priorities and understandings. As such, this chapter looks across the class as a social unit and explores how children monitor and shape their own and others' behaviour in relation to linguistic differences. It offers a perspective on how multilingual pedagogies such as *FML* need to embrace potentially disruptive elements of collective multilingualism, and to frame pupils as meaningful plurilingual citizens and social actors in the domain of school.

12. Study 1: *Functional Multilingual Learning*: Traversing the Vertical and Horizontal Dimensions of Language Repertoires
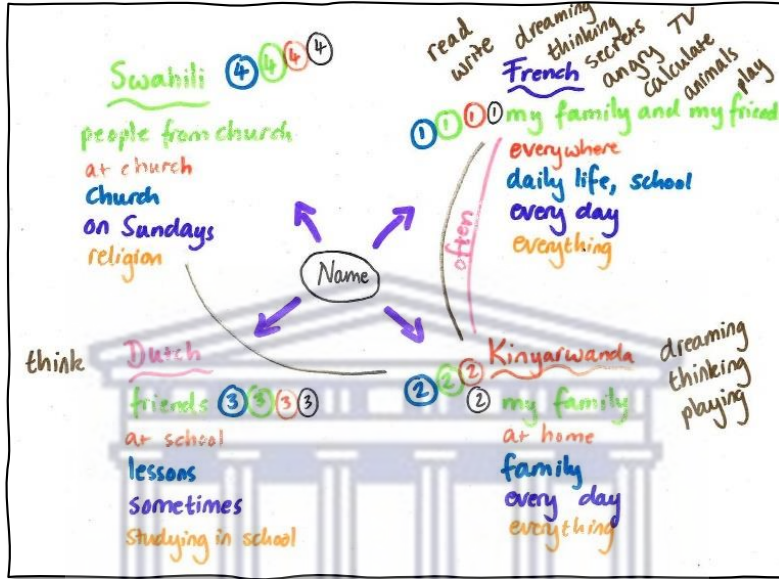
Image 1: Translation of a pupil's language passport. (Mme. Khadija)

Image 2: The school language rule, printed in the school diary

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12.1 Abstract

This chapter explores the theoretical and empirical foundations of *Functional Multilingual Learning* (*FML*), a pedagogical framework whereby the full range of pupils' evolving plurilingual repertoire is positioned as didactic capital, and home languages are strategically exploited across the curriculum as mediating, facilitating tools for learning. *FML* is designed specifically for the mainstream, linguistically diverse classroom where the teacher does not speak the pupils' additional languages. Whilst acknowledging translanguaging practices as agentive reality, it seeks to purposefully combine horizontal and vertical language practices (Heugh, 2015) thereby creating powerful learning environments which promote self-regulated learning. The specificities of *FML* are examined here through a comparative exploration with *translanguaging as pedagogy* (e.g. García & Kleyn, 2016) and *language awareness* (e.g. Candelier, 2003). Although often similar in their aims, each model places emphasis on different dimensions, as appropriate to local contexts and pedagogical traditions. The comparison encompasses the linguistic ontological foundations of each model and its associated pedagogical objectives, as well as reflection on the nature of the transformation they seek to engender. This informs transversal reflection on how scholars can render multilingual pedagogies realistic yet ambitious, taking account of the interlaced dynamics of individual pedagogical practice, curriculum goals and wider ideological and linguistic dimensions.

12.2 Introduction: The challenge

Linguistic diversity presents a paradigmatic challenge to the prevalent monoglossic tradition in education. Longstanding beliefs in the efficacy of exclusive submersion in the language of instruction continue to pervade practice and policy, despite the fact that they rarely stand up to empirical analysis (Van Avermaet, 2020). This is the case in Belgium where education at most levels is characterised by 'common sense' notions that the 'language bath' is the best way to ensure that pupils from non-dominant language backgrounds master the language of schooling (André et al., 2018; Pulinx et al., 2015). However, Pisa data for both the Dutch-speaking and the French-speaking education systems in Belgium indicate persistent and sometimes considerable gaps between so-called 'native' pupils and those from first- and second-generation immigrant backgrounds (Jacobs & Rea, 2011; Lafontaine et al., 2019). Policymakers position 'language' dually as both the solution to these inequitable outcomes, but also the problem. Mastery of the dominant social language is seen as the key to academic success and social and economic integration, but at the same time, 'home' languages are conceived to be the principal barrier to academic achievement for pupils from immigrant backgrounds. Rarely is the debate complexified to encompass socio-economic inequalities (generally agreed to be a far more significant factor) or the impact of wider ideologies or the way the school systems and (often ill-adapted) pedagogical methods indirectly side-line pupils from minority backgrounds (Cummins, 2021b; Van Avermaet, 2020).

In recent years, the 'multilingual turn' has given rise to pedagogical approaches which seek to bridge the gap between the diverse linguistic repertoires of pupils and the normative monolingual models of schooling and wider society. In this chapter, we present the theoretical foundations of one such model, *Functional Multilingual Learning (FML)* (Sierens & Van Avermaet, 2014), and draw on comparisons with a number of others, namely, pedagogical translanguaging (e.g. García & Kleyn, 2016), (critical) *language awareness* (e.g. Hélot et al., 2018), and *Éveil Aux Langues* (Awakening to Languages) (e.g. Candelier, 2003). Each model articulates differing objectives, drawing on its own constellation of theories on the ontological nature of language, linguistic diversity and learning. However, they also demonstrate multiple overlaps both in terms of theory and pedagogical practice. Each questions static conceptualisations of language and essentialist ideologies of national, standard languages, albeit in different ways and to different degrees. All are committed to challenging the way language practices are understood, made visible, valued, and taught in schools and to challenging the exclusive monolingual functioning that has long been regarded as the norm in many global north school settings. These models were also specifically selected because of their relevance to the local educational context of Belgium: *FML* has been principally developed by scholars at Ghent University and explored in schools in the Dutch speaking region of Flanders; an *Éveil Aux Langues* programme has recently been introduced for French-speaking Belgium. Given the huge worldwide prevalence of the concept of 'translanguaging' in reflections on multilingual pedagogies, this combination permits us to elaborate the foundations

of *FML*, whilst also traversing international and local debates and educational traditions.

After a short overview of the linguistic context of Belgium, we outline the history of each model and briefly describe its aims and methods. We then explore the theoretical foundations of *FML* and examine how it is informed by dimensions of pedagogical translanguaging and *language awareness*, yet also how it is distinct. We then explore the explicit and implicit ontological concepts of language that each model is founded on and how these frame their pedagogical methods. Finally, we consider how this informs the scope of their transformative vision, in particular their understanding of what is 'possible' for teachers and schools to undertake, given their local linguistic ecologies and policy contexts.

12.3 Context

There are three national languages in Belgium: Dutch (used in Flanders and Brussels), French (used in Wallonia and Brussels) and German (used in the eastern provinces of Wallonia). Each language community runs its own education system, setting its own curriculum and regulations pertaining to language instruction. Most mainstream schools function monolingually in one of the national languages and teach the other(s) as foreign languages from mid-primary onwards. At the same time, schools are becoming increasingly linguistically diverse, particularly in urban centres. Depending on the system and their age, newly arrived immigrant pupils might attend full-time standalone classes for one year, yet many attend mainstream classes from the outset, with additional language support classes. Many mainstream teachers in Belgium have insufficient training when it comes to dealing with this increasing multilingualism and that they often report low self-efficacy (Meunier & Gloesner, 2020; UNIA, 2018). Despite open language policies for 'foreign' languages, and policy documents which encourage respect for plurilingualism, schools rarely position home languages as genuine resources for learning (Meunier & Gloesner, 2020; Pulinx & Van Avermaet, 2014). In Flanders, the tendency has been towards the active suppression of pupils' home languages and schools sometimes display signs exhorting parents and pupils to only use Dutch, whereas in Wallonia, policies tend more towards benign neglect. Aside from the assumed benefits for learning described above, these policies are invariably motivated by notions of egalitarianism and social cohesion.

12.4 Three multilingual approaches

12.4.1 *Functional Multilingual Learning* (*FML*)

The term *Functional Multilingual Learning* (*FML*) was first coined by researchers in Ghent University in 2010 (Van Avermaet & Sierens, 2010) and has been developed since in: theoretical publications (Foster & Van Avermaet, 2021; Sierens & Van Avermaet, 2014; Slembrouck et al., 2018; Slembrouck & Rosiers,

2018); as a guiding pillar in two large-scale, longitudinal, quasi-experimental studies (*Home Language in Education* (2009-2012) (Ramaut et al., 2013; Sierens & Ramaut, 2018) and *Validiv* (2012-2015) (Van Praag et al., 2016) as well as in various ethnographic interventions and observational studies (e.g. Foster et al., 2021; Jordens, 2016; Rosiers, 2016). *FML* has been adopted as a policy model for Ghent schools, and pedagogical support has been developed by local education authorities and teacher training institutes in both Ghent and Brussels (e.g. Onderwijscentrum Gent, 2018; Vanherf, 2022).

FML can be defined as the strategic and integrated use of multilingual learners' language resources in the mainstream, linguistically diverse classroom. These resources function as a mediating, facilitating tool in powerful learning environments to support the learning of both the language of schooling and curricular content. *FML* helps to facilitate classroom interaction and to enhance learners' participation through the joint construction of knowledge. It is specifically conceived for classrooms where the teacher does not speak the 'home' languages used by pupils, some of whom are learning through their 'second' language (Sierens & Van Avermaet, 2014).

When facilitating *FML*, the teacher adopts a multilingual lens throughout the entire curriculum and aims to stimulate the dynamic and inclusive use of translingual learning strategies (with considerable cross-over with translanguaging, see below). These strategies range across spontaneous actions (e.g. inviting pupils to participate in the language of their choice), to classroom routines (e.g. the use of tablets to translate instructions), to pedagogical organisation (e.g. grouping pupils by language to complete a task), to more complex linguistic scaffolding and planned integrated use of multiple languages in specific tasks (e.g. the creation of multilingual word walls or projects in multiple languages) (Foster et al., 2021; Sierens & Ramaut, 2018; Vanherf, 2022). This is informed by a foundation of language awareness (see below), both on the part of the teacher and the pupils, and an open language policy, which actively exploits home languages (as distinct from merely tolerating or exploring), thereby more accurately representing the socio-linguistic lives of pupils. The 'translanguaging space' (García & Li, 2014) opened up by *FML* aims to position the languages and varieties in the pupils' linguistic repertoires as positive resources for academic learning and social functioning, thereby enhancing individual self-confidence, and well-being. The recognition and affirmation of each individual's linguistic identity feeds into a wider school valorisation of its multilingual community.

12.4.2 Pedagogical translanguaging

Growing out of the work of Cen Williams in Wales in the 1990s (Williams, 1996), translanguaging has become "a multifaceted and multi-layered polysemic term" (Leung & Valdés, 2019, p. 359), and one which continues to evolve (see Bonacina-Pugh et al., 2021). Of the multitude of definitions, we select the following from García and Li (2014), whose work has been instrumental in reframing the

conceptualisation of language in education: "Translanguaging is an approach to the use of language, bilingualism and the education of bilinguals that considers the language practices of bilinguals not as two autonomous language systems as has been traditionally the case, but as one linguistic repertoire with features that have been societally constructed as belonging to two separate languages"(p. 2).

Similar to *FML*, a teacher implementing 'pedagogical translanguaging' adopts a translingual stance which influences their pedagogical design and actions across the curriculum (García & Kleyn, 2016). Numerous classroom guides have been drawn up (e.g. Celic & Seltzer, 2013; García et al., 2016; Smith et al., 2017). In the mainstream classroom, Duarte (2018) classifies translanguaging practices as potentially fulfilling either: a *symbolic* function; a *scaffolding* function to build bridges between languages or an *epistemological* function where the aim is to secure and enhance knowledge of both content and language. It is pertinent to note that much of the research in the global north has been conducted in bilingual educational settings or in complementary schools, with still relatively little known about its use in mainstream, linguistically diverse settings where the teacher does not speak the pupils' home languages (Duarte, 2018; Prilutskaya, 2021).

12.4.3 Language awareness and *Éveil Aux Langues*

Language awareness (LA) has its roots in the work of Hawkins (1984) in the UK in the 1980s. It aims to enable pupils to develop knowledge about language(s) and dialects as semiotic systems and cultural practices. This is seen to enhance metalinguistic skills, which facilitate the learning of additional languages. Programmes aim to engender positive representations of linguistic and cultural diversity, on the part of both teachers and pupils. Some actively seek to empower disenfranchised individuals or groups and explicitly encompass a critical dimension i.e. addressing the relationships of power between languages and their speakers (Fairclough, 1994; García, 2008; Hélot et al., 2018).

The Flemish education authorities broadly support *language awareness* in schools as a means of fostering positive attitudes towards linguistic diversity. The use of home languages is regarded as 'possible' particularly when it is in the service of developing proficiency in Dutch or other high-status languages (Frijns et al., 2018). Drawing on the strong traditions from francophone Europe and European research projects (e.g. Candelier, 2003), the authorities for the French-speaking education system has recently relaunched its own 'Awakening to Languages', *Éveil Aux Langues (EaL)* programme[1], with compulsory weekly sessions for pupils aged 3 to 8 (Fédération Wallonie Bruxelles, 2020). The teachers follow structured lesson sequences to enable pupils to "discover, explore and compare a variety of languages" (Ibid., p. 4). Tasks include comparing animal sounds and scripts or

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[1] We use the acronym *LA* to refer the *language awareness* approach in general and *EaL (Éveil Aux Langues*) to refer specifically to structured programmes of language comparison activities.

listening to a nursery rhyme in different languages, and each activity is supported by text and audio resources in multiple languages. Although its aims include the valorisation of individual and societal linguistic diversity, this sits alongside a focus on preparation for the learning of foreign languages, indeed the programme stops when pupils begin to learn Dutch at the age of 8.

12.5 Comparative discussion

12.5.1 Linguistic dimensions

FML reposes on the concept of each individual having a linguistic repertoire of codes, genres, styles, registers and linguistic tools (Sierens & Van Avermaet, 2014). This encompasses the notion of named languages as relatively bounded autonomous systems, with certain formal differences and similarities but also recognises that these codes have fuzzy, permeable boundaries, which materialise or dissolve, according to the context, requirements and intentions of a communicative act. As such, this position holds back to a certain degree on some of the post-modern, post-structuralist thinking that informs recent scholarship on translanguaging. Whilst early articulations espoused the notion of languages as separate, distinct codes (e.g. 'Welsh' and 'English' in Williams' work), recent theories tend to posit a unitary linguistic system and to give primacy to the idiolect, that is the unique collection of linguistic features that an individual draws upon in acts of communication (e.g. Otheguy et al., 2015). This perspective leads some translanguaging scholars to conclude that "named languages, imposed and regulated by schools, have nothing to do with speakers and the linguistic repertoire they use" (García & Kleyn, 2016, p. 19). This position is somewhat controversial regarding both psycholinguistic dimensions and the concept of named languages as constructed through use (see Cummins, 2021; Jaspers, 2019; MacSwan, 2017). Nonetheless, although translanguaging scholars do recognise the importance of the standard versions of dominant societal languages, they anchor their understanding of language at the level of the individual, whose language competence is seen to be "always and at every stage complete" (García & Otheguy, 2019, p. 12).

Whilst we agree that named languages lack strict 'objective' linguistic reality, particularly when considering individual languaging practices, we nonetheless argue that there continue to be clear distinctions between named codes (and varieties within them) in many aspects of society and that these distinctions inexorably entail material, psychological and affective consequences for plurilingual individuals (Busch, 2012). We draw on the distinction made by Heugh (2015) between the vertical and horizontal dimensions of language practice. On the horizontal axis, we find fluid, porous, everyday practices, emblematic of the idiolect. This form of language practice is possibly both informal and translingual (but not necessarily), as interlocutors negotiate choices in terms of language, form, and style. On the vertical axis we find the language practices that exist in the normative, standard, homogeneous, often written textual nature of institutions, as

well as cultural products such as books and films. These tend to function monolingually, and interlocutors are often not given a choice about language, form and style (perhaps for ideological reasons, but also for pragmatic purposes). Whilst neither dimension is superior to the other, there can be little doubt that the capacity of an individual to move across these different registers entails opportunities for empowerment and inclusion and we consider that we cannot ignore the polycentric, hierarchic order of linguistic markets.

The vertical/horizontal distinction is visible in a limited way in *Éveil Aux Langues* activities; many explore oral and textual dimensions of named languages, drawing extensively on ideas of language as culture, as embodied through texts, songs and cultural practices. However, this tends to be understood through a more structuralist position whereby named languages and dialects are treated as separate semiotic entities, albeit sometimes with common roots and typological similarities. This perhaps belies the origins of *EaL* in foreign language teaching and research, making it ontologically more predisposed to considering codified dimensions of lexis and syntax. Indeed, the Belgian programme for *EaL* states that "language(s) can and should be considered as objects of study in and of themselves" (Fédération Wallonie Bruxelles, 2020, p. 4). In more critical approaches, *LA* (in common with *FML* and translanguaging) also recognises that named languages exist in an ideologically loaded social context and linguistic market, which gives rise to varying individual and shared representations, both emancipatory and discriminatory (Dagenais et al., 2007). This can be seen in the inclusion in *EaL* programmes of material specific to the local language ecology (e.g. the inclusion of Lingala in the Belgian programme, acknowledging the Congolese diaspora, as well as non-standard varieties such as dialects). So, whilst *EaL* approaches do rely on notions of the unique plurilingual repertoire of each individual, this is centred less on notions of hybridity and seen more as a tool for developing linguistic and metalinguistic knowledge and to generally affirm diversity as a fundamental dimension of society (Fédération Wallonie Bruxelles, 2020, p. 4). *FML* very much recognises this potential, but advocates for this 'tool' to be exploited across the full spectrum of learning, thus also capitalising on the diversity of learning strategies at an individual level.

These different positions highlight a critical tension in the debate around whether language is a bounded, codified system, or is fluid practice and the product of human intersubjectivity (see Jaspaert, 2015). We argue that the concept of translanguaging signifies more a paradigm shift in the way we look at language, rather than a shift in reality, and that it is still legitimate to make a distinction between named languages in certain contexts and for certain purposes. The act of naming languages gives an entry point to exploring structural differences and normative positionings; when describing the aims of language comparison activities, Doneux and Hennay (2021) position linguistic diversity as "a resource, fertile soil upon which to build knowledge and skills" (p.11). But this must not preclude consideration of the reality of hybrid, heteroglossic repertoires and practices, including non-academic registers which are often 'unnameable' and invariably deemed as inappropriate as classroom discourse. As such, *FML* seeks to

functionally combine horizontal and vertical dimensions of language practice; it sees an individual's repertoire as continuously evolving in response to their personal desires and circumstances, all the while navigating broader needs and contexts. It is not inextricably bound up with linguistic hybridity, and therefore does not exclude the pedagogically effective use of two or more *named* languages side by side. In short, we posit that a theory of language in education needs to not only represent the present state of the learner and their idiolect, but also needs to take account of their future needs and aspirations, which almost invariably include competence in the powerful vertical practices in the standard national languages.

12.5.2 Pedagogical model

These theories of the nature of language form key understandings for the different pedagogical aims and methods of *FML*, translanguaging and *Éveil Aux Langues*. *FML* seeks to contribute to reversing patterns of underachievement by language minoritised pupils by strategically traversing the fluid, individual horizontal dimensions of linguistic practice and the more static, school-normative vertical dimensions. As such, it aims to transcend the predominant binary between monolingual education (i.e. exclusive submersion in the language of instruction) and multilingual education (i.e. dual language and structured immersion models) (Van Avermaet, 2020). In line with Cummins (2017), it advocates an approach that privileges an active form of additive bilingualism which "endorses the legitimacy of dynamic, heteroglossic conceptions of bi/multilingualism, or the understanding that languages are intertwined in complex ways in the minds of multilingual individuals, in ways that reinforce the importance of teaching for two-way transfer across languages" (Ibid. p 406). This recognises the need for schools to challenge the operation of societal power relations, linguistic ideologies, and the way these fuel deficit positionings and ill-adapted pedagogical methods. Indeed, there is a considerable gap between the highest and lowest achieving pupils in Belgium (OECD, 2017), suggesting that the system and teaching methods in both regions are geared towards high achieving, 'normative' pupils, and are not sufficiently nuanced to embrace diversity.

FML is posited on the foundation of a powerful multilingual learning environment (Sierens & Van Avermaet, 2014) in which teachers engage in rich, strategic use of the language of instruction, whilst also stimulating the dynamic and functional use of translingual learning strategies, including the explicit teaching for cross-lingual transfer, and the use of scaffolding and bridging discourses (Gibbons, 2006). A first step requires the teacher to be 'language aware' i.e. to have a nuanced picture of the multi-dimensional nature of the linguistic repertoires of their pupils. This was underlined in the MARS research project in Flanders (Van Avermaet et al., 2016) which used 'language passports', (De Backer et al., 2019a), a form of mind map, which portrayed the dynamic, heteroglossic practices that characterised pupils' language lives, thus helping teachers and pupils to go beyond the binary naming of a 'home' and 'school' language.

FML can contribute to the development of skills in a variety of domains, including *cognitive* (understanding curricular content) and *linguistic* (learning academic language, developing metalinguistic awareness). Drawing on a distinction between 'official' and 'natural' translanguaging (Williams, 2012), Vanherf (2022) identifies three 'layers' of strategy in a pyramid. At the top is the most complex: planned multilingual tasks which link to curriculum objectives. Foster et al. (2021) document how four primary teachers implementing *FML* designed class-level tasks, including: science presentations in several languages; cross-lingual comparisons of metaphors or the negative form; and multilingual group poems. The teachers reported greater participation for certain pupils and deeper learning (particularly in linguistic domains). The next layer relates to scaffolding strategies and instructional design. This might be the grouping of pupils by language to create a mind map (seen by the teachers in Foster et al.'s study as particularly useful for emergent bilinguals) or working across multiple languages in mixed groups (regarded by one teacher in the same study as deepening engagement with the content). Vanherf (2022) describes a teacher using the parents as resources in order to make a multilingual word wall on spatial vocabulary (e.g. front/middle/back). Finally, the bottom layer of the pyramid relies on exploiting 'natural' translanguaging practices, and involves more spontaneous, individualised strategies (for example oral translations). These arise in a classroom with an open language policy that supports self-regulated learning (see Rosiers et al., 2016). Indeed, in Foster et al.'s study cited above, the most powerful practices were often initiated by the pupils themselves, highlighting the fact that effective *FML* is often *pupil-led* but *teacher-mediated*. Powerful translingual practice in *FML* is contingent on a mind-set that positions both teacher and pupil as resources; this involves the teacher creating translanguaging spaces that can be exploited agentively by the pupils, whilst also actively scaffolding the co-construction of knowledge and learning.

To a certain extent this is similar to *EaL* activities. Candelier (2014, p. 77) describes how the teacher must create situations so pupils can 'discover' languages and semiotic systems for themselves, acting as 'linguistic detectives'; then, using the pupils' understandings and representations of language, they facilitate metalinguistic understanding that will support the memorisation of rules. However, in *FML*, this is more of a dialogic process, negotiated between the teacher and their pupils, and indeed, necessarily so, because the teacher invariably cannot speak the home languages of their pupils and is not working from fixed multilingual audio and text resources. This can give rise to deeper engagement, firstly by enabling pupils to interact in the language(s) they wish, but then by encouraging them to paraphrase their ideas in the language they share with the teacher. In this way, in *FML* the teacher facilitates and stimulates interaction, reflection and production in multiple languages, in the service of learning goals which go wider than knowledge about language (Rosiers et al., 2016).

Yet as Jordens (2016) notes in another *FML*-inspired study, this process also relies on a relationship of trust between teacher and pupils, one which positions pupils as legitimate plurilingual classroom citizens, able to make certain autonomous

decisions about their language use. Indeed, *FML* can also contribute to *psycho-social* skills (well-being, self-efficacy, autonomy); and *socio-cultural* skills (citizenship, identities of competence, learning to function as a bilingual). The *Home Language in Education* project reported that the implementation of *FML* resulted in higher levels of pupil self-confidence and well-being and more positive attitudes on the part of the teachers (Ramaut et al., 2013). In Foster et al.'s study (2022), the *FML* classes which implemented the most flexible, open language policies were also those where pupils were the most aware of their rights and responsibilities in terms of language use.

Given its partial recognition of traditional language boundaries and standard forms, *FML* contrasts with the models of translanguaging which derive from a unitary model of language (e.g. Vogel & García, 2017). These privilege the idiolect and conceive of learning as functioning primarily on the horizontal continuum in the learners' linguistic repertoire. *FML* does not situate multilingual competence in itself as a goal, in contrast to early models of translanguaging which promoted individual bilingualism in school settings, perhaps reflective of the fact that much early research took place in dual language contexts. However more recently, some advocates of unitary translanguaging have also maintained that 'additive' models of bilingualism i.e. those which place value on literacy skills and standard language forms, implicitly still adhere to monoglossic, racio-linguistic ideologies (e.g. Flores & Rosa, 2015). Whilst we consider that it is critical to identify the sources and consequences of linguistic bias in education, *FML* nonetheless positions itself *within* the material, psychological and affective reality of horizontal and vertical (standard) language practices. We see pupils' multilingual repertoires as forming "a scaffold for supporting the learning of and learning in a second language, as well as learning more generally" (Slembrouck et al., 2018, p. 19).

In reality, an *FML* and *translanguaging* classroom will have much in common, most notably the way a teacher adopts a multilingual lens and fluidly navigates the multilingual 'corriente' (current) of classroom interaction (García & Kleyn, 2016). *FML* also potentially includes a strong *language awareness* dimension whereby the planned and spontaneous exploration of linguistic structure can serve as a stimulus to reflection, potentially raising metalinguistic awareness which may help learners to draw more effectively on the linguistic resources in their repertoire (Auger, 2013). Indeed, researchers have concluded that *FML* and *LA* in combination provided a more inclusive and integrated perspective on language and language practices in school, potentially bridging the divide between language proficiency, knowledge and attitudes (Van Gorp & Verheyen, 2018). This 'integrated' approach to *language awareness* contrasts with the standalone sessions prescribed in *EaL* programmes, which position pupils as linguistic detectives, who engage in the 'discovery' of languages and semiotic systems. There is a focus on phonological discrimination, with an eye to enabling emergent bilingual pupils to learn language of schooling more effectively. Nonetheless, it should be noted that a recent meta-study of *LA* activities and programmes revealed no consistent evidence for the positive effect of *LA* programmes on language performance (Sierens et al., 2018).

All of the models discussed here stress the importance of the classroom as a site of purposeful multilingual interaction, and one which reframes opportunities for participation and learning, particularly for emergent bilingual pupils. Dagenais et al. (2007) describe the "instructional conversations" that go on during *LA* problem-solving, positioning such pupils as having valid knowledge to contribute to tasks, thus enabling them to participate on a more equal footing than in a monolingual functioning. Hélot (2018) argues that this helps newcomers to experience the learning of the language of instruction as an additive and dynamic process. There is little doubt that *LA* activities create a space to valorise and critically discuss linguistic repertoires and diversity, however, *FML* and translanguaging advocate for this 'space' to be enacted across the entire curriculum and beyond 'planned' activities. So, whilst *EaL* envisages the teacher as a scaffolder of linguistic knowledge and skills, *FML* also considers the teacher to be a scaffolder of (multilingual) learning strategies.

12.5.3 Transformation, context and agency

FML adopts a critical stance and aims to challenge monoglossic ideologies that permeate school policies and practices. However, we consider that socially constructed linguistic categories are unlikely to make significant shifts, and in any case, not in ways that will *substantially* improve educational outcomes for minoritised populations. It is thus incumbent on schools to prioritise learning goals, and ensure that their pupils are enabled to access and exploit powerful vertical language practices in the dominant societal language, but in a way that draws on, valorises and potentially expands the multitude of currently under-used horizontal resources in their linguistic repertoire (see Bonacina-Pugh et al., 2021; Jaspers, 2018; Leung & Valdés, 2019; Van Avermaet, 2020).

This contrasts with unitary visions of pedagogical translanguaging which promote wholesale reform of the prevalent linguistic paradigm in society and describe it as "a moral and political act that links the production of alternative meanings to transformative social action" (García & Li, 2014, p. 57). However, Cummins (2021, p.11) maintains that there is little to be gained pedagogically by insisting that teachers adopt a unitary perspective of the language repertoire. Indeed, Poza (2017) notes that classroom guides on translanguaging rarely focus on the political dimensions of upending broader societal language norms (in contrast to academic papers). One can interpret this as an assumption of ideological resistance on the part of teachers, but we would suggest that it indicates a certain incompatibility with their core mission to deliver educational outcomes. Thus, the moral mission of *FML* is balanced with a sense of strategic compromise and understands the teacher as having a certain amount of interpretative agency but that this capacity is constrained by the social structures of which they are part. As Jaspers (2019b) notes, teachers "prioritise, ignore and combine information… depending on purpose and context," and have to "balance opposing institutional, pedagogical and ideological interests" (p. 11). *FML* was conceived from the outset to exploit the pedagogical opportunities available in the linguistically diverse

classroom where the teacher generally does not speak the languages used by their pupils. As such, it proposes a *realistic* focus on the transformative agency that we can accord to teachers and schools, placing emphasis on acts of resistance against coercive structures and on forms of collaborative practice that arise from possibilities that the ruptures and conflicts in the social structure enable. The teacher is seen as an agent of change, but also as a mediator between learners and the social and professional fields beyond school.

EaL programmes also position themselves as pedagogies of 'detour' away from the monolingual tradition; indeed, they give a meaningful place to the full linguistic repertoire in the curriculum, yet they remain within institutionally sanctioned frameworks, bounded in time, linguistic and pedagogical scope, and potentially running the risk of a certain tokenistic attention to diversity. Nonetheless, the empowerment dimension of *FML* aligns perhaps more with that of *critical* language awareness, which aims to "work with all pupils, examining and working through, linguistic and cultural diversity, thus ensuring greater recognition and legitimacy and thereby facilitating the integration of the pupils who themselves are to a certain extent, the bearers of this diversity" (de Pietro, 2007, p. 24). Indeed, studies have shown that *LA* can lead to more positive representations of linguistic diversity on the part of teachers and pupils (Candelier, 2003; Lory, 2015) and can result in newcomers being repositioned from the margins of interaction (Dagenais et al., 2007). However, i.e. as Hélot (2018) states, "it is [also] about transforming the knowledge of those who have no power into a resource" (p. 378), meaning that educational practice should aim to transform these shifts in representation and participation practices into enhanced learning outcomes for language minority pupils.

12.6 Conclusion

This chapter presents *Functional Multilingual Learning*, a pedagogical approach in which multilingualism is instrumental in teaching and learning and the pupils' full linguistic repertoire is conceived to contribute in a functional way to the construction, transmission and use of knowledge. Teaching and learning draw strategically across horizontal (i.e. fluid, local, hybrid) and vertical (i.e. more fixed, standard, separate) language practices. It is but one answer to the question of how to exploit pupils' language repertoires in school, and to varying degrees, it is informed by and overlaps with pedagogical translanguaging and *language awareness*. *FML* occupies a holistic, flexible, dynamic space on the continuum of monolingual to multilingual education, and one which is realistic, yet ambitious for the highly linguistically diverse classrooms that characterise Belgian and European urban schools. It is a sustainable pedagogical approach that requires minimal additional resources, in contrast to, say dual language immersion systems (Collier & Thomas, 2017; Thomas & Collier, 2002) which require significant funding and political will, particularly if they are to serve low socio-economic populations. Nonetheless, the implementation of *FML* should in no way preclude such ambitions for pupils from language minority backgrounds. Quite the

contrary, *FML* would constitute an essential foundation to dual language instruction, perhaps in similar ways to much translanguaging research in dual language settings.

This chapter raises the question of the structures that are likely to engender transformation. Top-down pedagogies such as *EaL* provide guidance and clear links to the official curriculum but they potentially also instrumentalise multilingualism, and do not reflect the diversity or needs of a specific class. Bottom-up approaches such as *FML* and translanguaging potentially engender more powerful, organic, individualised practices, but they rely on a teacher creating their own interpretation. Indeed, *FML* can be both top-down and bottom-up but above all, needs to be conceived as a sustainable pedagogical model that can be grafted onto and enrich a teacher's existing practice, ideally supported by a supportive school-wide language policy. Teachers beginning with *FML* express similar concerns to those working with other integrated multilingual approaches e.g. of feeling out of their depth; anxious about losing control and unsure about how to translate into effective classroom practice (Sierens & Ramaut, 2018; Vanherf, 2022). These dynamics were clear in the *Home Language in Education* project in which four primary schools in Flanders implemented *FML* over a period of two years. Many of the teachers made changes to their classroom language policy, allowing pupils to interact in their L1 and they showed more positive attitudes towards the pupils' language repertoires (Sierens & Ramaut, 2018). Yet this multilingual space was tentative and often 'contained' in scope and time, with minimal stimulation of task performance in home languages. In Foster et al.'s (2021) study, there was considerable variation between the teachers in terms of the amount and nature of *FML* practices implemented, despite all of them having a positive attitude towards home languages in the classroom. Research suggests that multilingual pedagogies are most likely to be implemented by teachers who are already more inclined towards a (moderate) socio-constructivist approach (Audras & Leclaire, 2013; Foster et al., 2021) and we have to bear in mind that interventions are often conducted with willing volunteers, perhaps giving a distorted picture that doesn't adequately address wider reticence that quantitative research indicates (e.g. Pulinx et al., 2015).

This serves as a reminder that a multilingual pedagogical approach has to be *possible*, both in terms of the local legal, linguistic and ideological context, as well as remaining within the bounds of a teacher's pedagogical beliefs and practices. Research suggests that whether, and how, a teacher implements any form of multilingual practice involves a complex web of factors, filtering attitudes, knowledge of second language acquisition, pedagogical style, experience, training, and school climate. This is underpinned by their support for or resistance to broader societal language ideologies, and how national and local language policies enable or constrain multilingual classroom practice (Audras & Leclaire, 2013; Bailey & Marsden, 2017). To this end, we might consider whether the use of structured, resourced teaching sequences might provide an *FML* gateway for more hesitant teachers or those favouring a more transmission style. However, it is unclear whether this would actually achieve these goals. Herbinaux et al.'s (2021)

small-scale review of the new *EaL* programme in Belgium suggests that implementation faces considerable challenges, with limited autonomous application, although it did flag up a lack of training and support as key factors.

In terms of future directions for *FML*, more research is needed in terms of assessing its long-term impact on learning for different kinds of linguistic profiles; pupil and parent perspectives; and the social dynamics of the classroom (see Foster et al., 2022). As with many multilingual pedagogies, secondary settings are still very under-represented in the research, perhaps belying a false equivalence between a holistic pedagogical approach and the full-curriculum teaching that is the business of nursery and primary teachers. Finally, this requires consideration of how we create training programmes for pre-and in-service teachers that adequately bridge the dynamics of a teacher's personal pedagogical style, their curriculum specialisation, the ideological and school context, whilst also giving sufficient structure and exemplification to enable local and school level transformation.

13. Study 2: Multilingual Tasks as a Springboard for Transversal Practice: Teachers' Decisions and Dilemmas in a *Functional Multilingual Learning* Approach
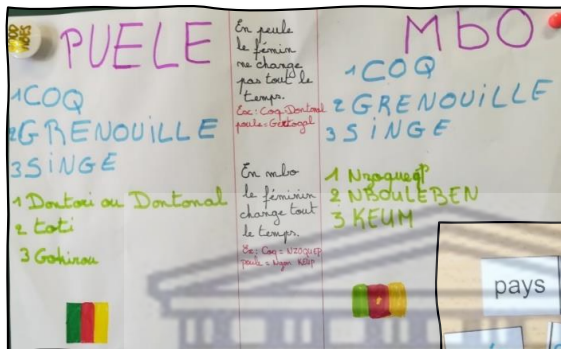
Image 3: Poster by Kadiatou and Dimena, comparing the gendering of animals, Pulaar, Mbo and French. (Mme. Luisa)
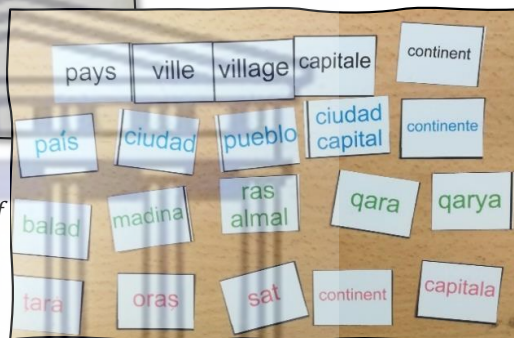
Image 4: Multilingual matching to define geography terms: country, town, village, capital, continent (French, Spanish, Arabic, Romanian). (M. Jean)
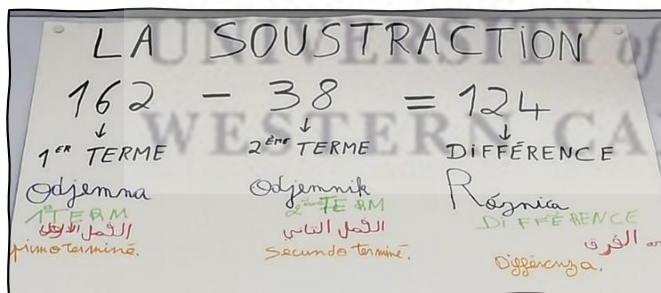
Image 5: Maths poster in French, Polish, English, Arabic and Spanish. (M. Jean)

Nell Foster, Nathalie Auger & Piet Van Avermaet

13.1 Abstract

Functional Multilingual Learning (*FML*) aims to leverage pupils' full language repertoire in a strategic and transversal way across the curriculum in order to enhance access to conceptual understanding and improve skills in the language of schooling (Sierens & Van Avermaet, 2014). This linguistic-ethnographic study explores the pedagogical decisions of four teachers in a French–speaking primary school in Brussels, Belgium as they create 'meaningful multilingual tasks' for their linguistically diverse classrooms. Findings indicate that tasks serving symbolic and linguistic functions were the easiest for teachers to conceptualise, and that class-level learning objectives often took precedence over individual objectives. Multilingual scaffolding only occurred in classrooms already functioning extensively within a socio-constructivist paradigm and needed to be supported by a free classroom language policy to be the most effective. Whole-class tasks generated a new sense of linguistic capital but entailed a reframing of the notion of inclusion as they sometimes generated feelings of linguistic insecurity or resulted in limited participation.
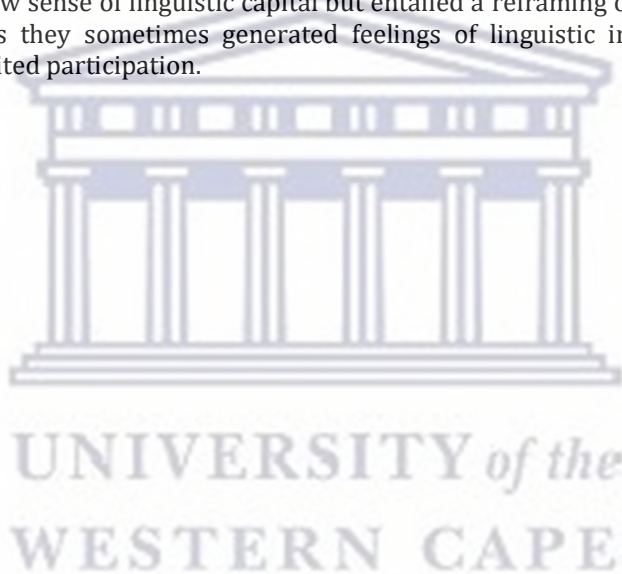
13.2 Introduction

Considerable research over recent decades has pointed to the benefits of implementing inclusive multilingual pedagogies which systematically encourage and enable pupils to draw from their full language repertoire and to use it as didactic capital (Auger 2007; Duarte 2018; Sierens and Van Avermaet 2014). An *inclusive* approach maximises learning for bilingual students and entails moving away from assimilative, monolingual instructional assumptions and practices. It also goes beyond *supportive* pedagogies which, whilst functioning interculturally, still remain monolingual and mono-literate, often 'celebrating' home languages without necessarily positioning them as individual and collective tools for learning (Auger, 2007; Chumak Horbatsch, 2011).

This 'multilingual turn' in educational theory and classroom practice seeks to generate "new configurations of language practices and education" which challenge mainstream values and ideologies (García and Li, 2014, p.3). Yet this ambition belies a critical tension between the 'imagined' potential of the multilingual classroom and its actualisation in specific linguistic and sociocultural spaces. In French-speaking Belgium, whilst the education authorities do promote the valorisation of plurilingualism in the school curriculum (Fédération Wallonie Bruxelles 2014, 22), transversal multilingual practice remains at the fringes of mainstream teaching. Official guidance notes that the skills and knowledge embedded in a pupil's plurilingual repertoire can constitute "a veritable springboard for learning" (Ibid. p.8), yet there is widespread support for the 'bain linguistique' (a monolingual immersion 'language bath') for pupils from immigrant backgrounds. Those mainstream classroom teachers who do seek to go beyond a monolingual, immersion approach enter complex territory in which they are required to push back against these longstanding ideologies of immersion whilst at the same time develop innovative classroom practice to reframe the linguistic space of their classroom.

This study seeks to understand the decisions and dilemmas of four such teachers in a French-speaking primary school in Brussels, Belgium. It explores their design of 'meaningful multilingual tasks' in a *Functional Multilingual Learning* approach and offers an emic perspective of their evolving vision and operationalisation of home languages as didactic resources.

13.3 Literature review

13.3.1 Home languages as resources for learning

Recent years have seen the development of multilingual pedagogical approaches for the mainstream primary classroom. All aim to valorise pupils' linguistic repertoires, yet the conceptualisations of how home languages can function as didactic capital vary considerably. In 'language awareness' approaches (e.g. *Éveil Aux Langues* (de Pietro & Matthey, 2001) languages and dialects are positioned as

the object of study; lessons focus on a pre-defined selection of languages and aim to develop metalinguistic awareness and a general appreciation of linguistic diversity. In 2021, the education authorities for French-speaking Belgium are reintroducing their own programme, providing teachers with detailed resources to engage in linguistic comparison in standalone lessons. More syncretic, transversal approaches such as the *Literacy Expertise Framework* (Cummins, Early and Stille 2011) and *Linguistically Appropriate Practice* (Chumak Horbatsch, 2011) take their start point from the language repertoires present in the classroom and the literacy learning needs of dual-language learners. They advocate for opportunities for pupils to move between their languages in terms of both input (e.g. researching a project in any language) and output (e.g. the production of dual language *identity texts* (Cummins, Early and Stille 2011). In contrast to 'language awareness' approaches, they seek to maximise engagement with learning across the whole curriculum and endeavour to balance the local realities of 'named' languages as social normativities (Spotti & Kroon, 2015) alongside the recognition of the multiplicity of languages, dialects and registers which are activated in classroom learning.

This study is based on *Functional Multilingual Learning (FML)* (Sierens and Van Avermaet 2014), an approach conceived for the linguistically diverse mainstream classroom, where the teacher does not speak the home languages of their pupils. This form of pedagogical translanguaging aims to leverage pupils' full linguistic repertoire in a strategic, integrated and transversal way across the curriculum. It entails a recognition of heteroglossic, translanguaging practices as natural and valid tools for meaning making, and actively enables peer interaction in additional languages. In *FML*, multilingual practice oscillates on a continuum between the acknowledgement of each pupil's linguistic repertoire at one end of the scale and the more powerful exploitation of that repertoire in the service of learning at the other (see Duarte and Günther-van der Meij, 2018). Although language awareness is an important dimension, this perspective encompasses a broader range of domains, whereby the teacher has the knowledge and skills to construct a powerful learning environment. Pupils' home languages are conceived as 'mediating, facilitating tools' and teaching aims to encourage self-regulated learning which traverses heteroglossic horizontal language practices in order to approach the monolingual vertical language requirements of much formal schooling (Heugh, 2018). In short, the development of pupils' L1 is not a pedagogical objective in itself, but rather its use in L2-settings is intended to serve as a cognitive and metacognitive tool, as a strategic organiser and as a scaffold for linguistic-cognitive development.

In practice, instruction based on such a transversal paradigm conceives of learning as pupil-directed, yet teacher mediated and is based on a dual recognition of the singularity of individual students who are learning within a classroom characterised by multiple languages and language practices. In order to navigate the translanguaging 'corriente' or undercurrent (García & Kleyn, 2016), a teacher first needs to take up a 'plurilingual stance' (Ollerhead, Choi and French 2018) i.e. beliefs and ideological understandings which consider pupils' language

repetoires from the perspective of the pupils themselves (García & Kleyn, 2016) and critically engage with questions of bilingualism and learning, and how these emerge as constructs of power in the education system. This implies a move away from seeing language as structure i.e. a fixed set of linguistic rules that is learned independent of its use, but to considering it from a perspective of 'languaging' i.e. language as social practice, a *process* rather than an object. It therefore entails capitalising on the 'natural' translanguaging practices (Williams, 2012) which spontaneously occur in classroom interaction in order to understand and adapt to how meaning-making and learning are taking place. Finally, teachers also need to engage in strategic instructional design which plans for the meaningful use of home languages, particularly as a scaffold for learning, and underpinned by interactional opportunities that enable pupils to collaborate and co-operate using their full linguistic repertoire (García et al., 2016; Probyn, 2015; Sierens & Van Avermaet, 2014).

Overall, this situates teachers as the "arbitrators of pedagogy" (Ascenzi-Moreno, 2017, p. 282), controlling the "who, when, where and how of student learning" (Barrett-Tatum and McMunn Dooley 2015, p. 280). Their decisions about the use of home languages in classroom discourse thereby inherently constitute acts of positioning (Martin-Beltrán, 2010; Palmer & Martínez, 2013) and of language policy (Varghese, 2008).

13.3.2 The implementation of multilingual practice in the mainstream classroom

In many contexts across the world, mainstream classroom teachers lack the training necessary to translate multilingual policies into practice (Gándara et al., 2005; Hooijer & Fourie, 2009; Mehmedbegovic, 2008) and often have inadequate knowledge about L2 acquisition (Auger, 2013). This leads to misconceptions, creating fertile ground for generalised 'common sense' perceptions around bilingualism, in particular the notion that use of the home language in school will have a negative impact on acquisition of the language of instruction (e.g. Agirdag, Jordens, and Van Houtte 2014; Pulinx, Van Avermaet, and Agirdag 2015). In French-speaking Belgium, the languages of immigration are often regarded as a barrier to school learning and social cohesion as a whole, and linguistic submersion is widely accepted as the most effective means to ensure academic success (Ervyn, 2012; Manço & Crutzen, 2003). Over half of the teacher and head-teacher respondents to the FWB *Barometer of Diversity* 2018 considered that pupils from an immigration background should *only* use French when they were in school (André, Jacobs and Alarcon-Henriquez 2018). This 'monolingual' mindset (Gogolin, 2013) is evident in literature around the support of emergent bilinguals which is often framed at 'solving' their language problem i.e. their lack of mastery of the language of schooling and does little to recognise other language skills.

The local language ecology also contributes to the framing of what constitutes 'legitimate' language in any given school community, privileging 'national' languages or those inherited from the colonial era over indigenous languages or those brought by recent and historical immigration. This underpins powerful language ideologies which, according to McKinney (2011), can result in 'asymmetric relations of knowing', embedded in power relations which determine the conditions and production of knowledge in a particular context.

Some scholars conclude that attitudes and beliefs are shaped, and can be shifted, by classroom experience (Gleeson and Davison, 2016; Lourenço, Andrade and Sá, 2018; Palmer and Martínez 2013). Yet others (Mehmedbegovic, 2008; Moore & Gajo, 2009) conclude that personal values and attitudes are more influential in determining whether and how teachers implement multilingual approaches. Other contributing factors include: the teachers' own experiences learning languages and their confidence in their own linguistic skills (Bailey and Marsden 2017; Lucas and Grinberg 2008); an entrenched identity as a monolingual (Lourenço, Andrade and Sá 2018); a fear of immigration and difference (Mehmedbegovic, 2008). In some contexts, teachers report finding it difficult to give equitable treatment to all of the languages present in their classroom (Jobo, 2013), whilst others are concerned about the challenge of addressing diversity without essentialising it (Conteh, 2012). These positions also reflect and refract broader questions of personal and professional identity, including a teacher's own ethnolinguistic heritage (Higgins & Ponte, 2017).

The teacher's capacity to innovate plays a critical role (Lourenço, Andrade and Sá 2018), alongside their perception of their ability (or otherwise) to develop the curriculum (Flores and Day 2006). Research in France indicates that plurilingually 'engaged' teachers tend to be reflexive by nature and demonstrate an "outcome-oriented" approach, whereby their practice is firmly situated in socio-constructivist paradigms (Audras and Leclaire 2013; Auger and Kervran 2013). In these studies, successful practice tended to emanate from teachers who conceived of learning as non-linear and who used home languages to scaffold learning, whereas more reluctant participants often positioned the teacher as expert and perceived learning as an act of the transmission of knowledge (see De Korne 2012). This indirectly echoes Strobbe et al.'s (2017) conclusions that openings for multilingually tolerant practices were more likely when teachers felt that they retained control of the learning process.

The literature tends to exhort the transformative potential of multilingual approaches, but the impact of contextual and practical factors cannot be underestimated in terms of whether and how teachers will implement them. Where there *is* policy guidance, it can be somewhat idealistic and abstract, often lacking in concrete exemplifications (O'Rourke, 2011). Aside from any ideological positions on the legitimacy of home languages in school, it may not be immediately clear to a teacher how a multilingual approach might address the core learning objectives, particularly when they do not speak the pupils' additional languages. Where mainstream teachers in Belgium have engaged in transversal multilingual

practice, the shift has been found to be somewhat hesitant, with multilingual tasks a 'tough challenge' and teachers tending to limit the pedagogical spaces available for multilingual interaction both in time and scope (Sierens and Ramaut 2018).

13.4 Research design

This paper arises from an eight-month long study carried out in 2018 within a linguistic ethnographic framework (Copland & Creese, 2015). It followed a design-based approach whereby four teacher participants created their own interventions but were supported by training and on-going discussions with the researcher and their peers (T. Anderson and Shattuck 2012).

At the beginning of the study, the teachers were interviewed in order to understand their attitudes and beliefs around home languages in education and were given a five-hour training course by the principal researcher about *FML* and recent research on multilingual approaches. They were provided with a guide containing examples of open, adaptable activities drawn from a variety of international sources including *Comparons Nos Langues* (Auger, Balois and Terrades 2005), *Translanguaging as Pedagogy* (Celic and Seltzer 2013), *Activities to Support Multilingualism in School* (Społeczna Akademia Nauk, 2015) and *Identity Texts* (Cummins & Early, 2011; Prasad, 2015). The teachers were asked to construct their own 'meaningful multilingual tasks' which valorised pupils' home languages and embedded them as tools for learning.

Over a period of seven months, a total of twenty-three lessons of around one hour were observed across the four classes (and also filmed in two of them). Each lesson was followed by a semi-structured reflective interview and /or written feedback exploring the objectives, learning, emotions, as well as social and home-school connections. The teachers completed a final written evaluation and participated in a semi-structured group interview. All data collection was conducted in French and translations in this paper are our own. During this time, the principal researcher spent around two days a week in the school, taking on the role of participant-observer (Schensul et al., 1999) for example, working with groups of pupils or accompanying trips. This served to deepen her understanding of the didactic norms in each class, as well as the pupils' language and participation practices.

During the study, emergent themes and patterns were explored through analytical memos, drawn from field and observation notes, which then fed back into the data collection tools, in particular the final evaluation. This allowed us to interactively reframe and refocus our analytical gaze and to verify the teachers' perspectives against emerging conclusions. Event maps (Green & Castanheira, 2012) were used to identify, describe and analyse patterns of actions and moves, both on the part of the teachers and the pupils. Following Merriam (2009), event maps, field notes, interview transcripts and documents (e.g. class textbooks) and photographs of worksheets, the blackboard during lessons and pupils' work were iteratively

analysed; open and focused coding was used to identify axial themes relating to individual teachers as well as the different lesson types. These were cross-referenced with scholarship on *FML* and other multilingual approaches.

13.5 Setting and participants

13.5.1 Setting

Brussels is a constitutionally bilingual region (French and Dutch) but in reality, is majority French-speaking. However, almost half of children use two languages on a daily basis (Robert et al., 2020). Official guidance on supporting pupils who do not have sufficient mastery of the language of schooling promotes language awareness and a general respect for linguistic diversity, all the while noting that "French is the cornerstone of all learning" (Fédération Wallonie Bruxelles 2014, 26). Analysis of recent PISA data for the Fédération Wallonie Bruxelles (Lafontaine et al., 2019), the education authority that regulates French-speaking schools in Brussels and Wallonia, indicates a considerable gap between the achievement of children from an immigrant background and so-called 'native' pupils.

13.5.2 Participants

The four teachers (all pseudonyms) were self-volunteered participants in the study, and all spoke French as their dominant language and had studied Dutch in school as children. They cited various elements in their language biographies as influential in their perspective on home languages in the classroom:

Primary 5: M. Jean (first year of teaching). He grew up in a French monolingual household, studied Spanish in school and English and Russian at university, and had previously worked in English.
Primary 5: Mme. Luisa (second year of teaching). She grew up speaking French and Portuguese at home, but rarely used her Portuguese as an adult.
Primary 6: Mme. Caroline (fourth year of teaching). She grew up speaking French with her French-Dutch bilingual parents. As a student, she had learned Spanish intensively in order to participate in a project in Spain working with Roma children.
Primary 6: Mme. Khadija (sixth year of teaching). She grew up speaking French and Arabic at home but had decided to speak to her own children in French.

There were around twenty-two pupils in each class, all of whom were between ten and twelve years old; they spent the majority of their school day with their teacher, who taught all core subjects except for sports and religion. The teachers generally planned their work collaboratively in year-group weekly meetings but often adapted lessons to suit their own pedagogical style. There were between nine and thirteen additional languages spoken in each class, encompassing a wide range of competences, ranging from recently arrived pupils still learning French, to pupils

with a passive understanding of another language, to those who were literate in two. Each class contained around six 'sole speakers' of a language and a very small minority of pupils were more or less monolingual in the sense that they were only exposed to French at home.

None of the four teachers were aware of *FML* at the start of the study but all supported the need to valorise home languages, particularly to support emergent bilinguals. They reported having received virtually no training and efforts by Mme. Khadija a few years earlier to include home languages in her classroom practice had been forbidden. Both Mme. Luisa and Mme. Khadija had suffered linguistic discrimination as children and were determined that their pupils should not experience the same. Nonetheless, these four teachers represented a departure from the clear 'French only' policy of the school which was based on the Head teacher's firm conviction that all pupils needed to be exposed to a maximum amount of French in order to progress in the language.

13.6 Results

In this section, we first describe the tasks that the teachers devised and then follow with a more transversal exploration of the function of home languages in learning and the most significant factors contributing to the teachers' decisions.

13.6.1 Home languages as resources for learning: task design and objectives

Table 7 shows the different kinds of tasks devised by the teachers and the number of lessons of each type they delivered. The categories were derived by examining the main focus of each lesson, as observed by the principal researcher and elucidated from the teachers' commentary in the feedback, and the way in which home languages were positioned as a resource.

Resource and examples of multilingual tasks	Class A: M. Jean	Class B: Mme. Luisa	Class C: Mme. Caroline	Class D: Mme. Khadija
A: Linguistic resource (Raising language and metalinguistic awareness) • Comparing negative forms • Translation of a pop song • Sharing metaphorical expressions	1 lesson	4	3	1
B: Own additional language as an academic resource (Enhancing epistemological access in non-language subjects) • Topic mind map: Maths • Science fair presentation in one/several additional language(s) (written/voice recording) • Pupil creation of a vocabulary list about 'division'	1	0	1	3
C: Other languages as an academic resource (Enhancing epistemological access in non-language subjects) • Classifying 5 key words for a geography topic given in 4 class languages • Teaching/learning phrases related to geometry in another language	2	0	0	0
D: Community building resource (Sharing experiences and languages) • Sharing words for social greetings • 'I am proud to be plurilingual because…' • Pupils teaching words in their language to the class	1	1	1	1
E: Creative resource (Creating open ended artistic products) • Group multilingual poems • Interlingual stories embedding several languages	1	0	1	1

Table 7: Examples of multilingual tasks and number of lessons per teacher

By far the most frequent construct for whole class tasks was the use of home languages as a linguistic tool, most often through language comparison tasks (*Type A*). The teachers' objectives were to enhance metalinguistic understanding and raise awareness of the structures of French. Mme. Khadija said:

> *"I realised that by using another language… I realised that I was really getting to their knowledge, do you see? What they needed for the French lesson…"*

They often felt that a multilingual approach was more effective than working monolingually, concluding that explicit comparison brought implicit knowledge to the surface and provoked a certain intensity of reflection, in part because learning was de-centred away from the teacher. For Mme. Luisa, these lessons also opened up alternatives to teacher-led explanations or situations where she might have otherwise used a worksheet:

> *"… so, in French… it would have just been … I've given you the rule…you've seen it and there you go… but here, I think they will remember it more because we have compared with their language… so they'll say to themselves 'oh it's the thing where in my language there is only one letter or there is only one word'."*

These sessions were also valued for opening up spaces for reviewing basic grammar questions in French.

The use of pupils' home languages as broader academic tools (*B*) was less frequent and often more challenging for the teachers to conceptualise. Tasks were framed around the teachers' desire to enable pupils to "use all their resources" for learning (Mme. Khadija), often grouping pupils by language to enhance participation by those with weaker home language competence. Mme. Khadija set up an activity whereby pupils reproduced a science report in their home language they had already completed in French. This would be displayed at the school science fair. M. Jean opted to produce the same kind of report, but the pupils recorded themselves on an iPad so that the science fair attendees could listen with headphones. Individual recordings often contained a mix of two or three languages, sometimes also including French. One interesting approach emerged from M. Jean who began to develop tasks in which all pupils engaged with a limited number of languages across the class (*C*). For example, five pupils were tasked with teaching a mixed-language group sentences about geometry in a new language. The added value of this cross-lingual approach for him lay in:

> *"… the change of channel from language A to language B, to strengthen the cognitive dimension…… basically, André will remember 'his' Spanish hexagon with 6 sides better, because he has had to explain it to other people, as well as Myriam's Ethiopian quadrilateral, which he has had to learn from Myriam."*

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He sought to encourage a more multi-dimensional, deeper level of discussion through collective linguistic and conceptual negotiation.

All four teachers placed considerable importance on positioning home languages as a community building resource, creating tasks to affirm pupils' linguistic identity and encourage empathy (*D*). The tasks were often embedded in citizenship lessons and provided a celebratory platform for the sharing of languages. They were popular with pupils and assumed considerable symbolic value, particularly given how they visibly challenged the monolingual school discourse and situated notions of citizenship in the 'here and now' rather than in a 'home country' elsewhere. Mme. Khadija remarked:

> *"I wouldn't have thought about languages [for citizenship education]…. I would have just talked about respect for others, respect for yourself… respecting other people's possessions and that kind of thing but in terms of tolerance for others, I maybe would have got them to do a presentation about their home country."*

Creative tasks such as group multilingual poems (*E*) were invariably mixed language group activities which bridged academic objectives of the production of texts, alongside goals to create social links between pupils through the collective use of multiple languages. This can be seen in Mme. Caroline's objectives for a multilingual Easter-themed story task. Her first goal was for pupils "to compare and recognise different languages, to share them with the class and small groups", but this was supplemented by her aim to foster "discussion, co-operation, interaction and finding solutions". These activities were often quite light-hearted, with Mme. Caroline describing them as "a moment away from functioning only in French".

13.6.2 Home languages as transversal resources for learning

Effective *Functional Multilingual Learning* cuts across the curriculum and serves an epistemological function, i.e. to secure and enhance knowledge of both content and language (Duarte, 2018). In this study, this function was most clearly established when language and content overlapped i.e. in language awareness activities. These tasks were deemed to create new access points for abstract linguistic concepts and the teachers comfortably established links to their French language programme, itself heavily focused on language-as-structure rather than skills.

A more transversal approach could be seen in tasks such as multilingual science reports, but in order to be meaningful, and indeed possible, across a class, they needed to include a multiplicity of participation frameworks, including moving flexibly between oral and written texts, using Dutch (a school–taught 'foreign' language) to ensure inclusion for monolingual pupils, and planning for support from parents for those pupils with lower competencies in their home language.

These tasks sometimes paved the way for more spontaneous micro-practices that enhanced epistemological access on an individual level. For example, the science reports enabled Mme. Khadija to identify the benefits of her emergent bilingual pupil working first in Portuguese and then in French, not least because the pupil produced a long, complex text, in line with class expectations. In Mme. Caroline's class, a pupil asked to use a Turkish newspaper article for his homework (there were no French newspapers in his home), suggesting that this more flexible approach legitimised existing heteroglossic literacy practices.

It must be acknowledged that it is inherently challenging to design meaningful multilingual tasks that enhance epistemological access across a class of pupils with highly diverse linguistic repertoires. However, the epistemological function of multilingual practice was significantly strengthened when it took on a scaffolding function, particularly when directed at emergent bilinguals. These "temporary but systematic bridges towards other languages" (Duarte, 2018, p. 13) included actions such as M. Jean using his limited Spanish for written and oral instructions to two emergent bilinguals, and his encouraging their use of translation software. Critically, the reorientation of the class monolingual norm gave rise to pupil-generated scaffolding practices which were often amongst the most powerful opportunities, opening up spaces for knowledge mediation that the teachers didn't themselves see. Mme. Khadija's emergent bilingual asked if she could participate in a group sketch in Portuguese alongside her classmates performing in French, thus positioning her as a competent participant and allowing the teacher to evaluate skills such as audience awareness. Pupils began to bring in work done at home in other languages and there was evidence that they felt freer about asking their L1 peers for help understanding words in French.

13.6.3 From planned tasks towards capitalising on interactional opportunities

At the end of the study all four teachers were enthusiastic about *FML*, citing varying benefits for learning, emotional well-being, class cohesion and the public valorisation of individual and community linguistic repertoires. Nonetheless the ways in which they interpreted the framework varied within the group. The most significant and systematic shifts towards more individualised scaffolding approaches were in M. Jean and Mme. Khadija's class, both of whom had installed a relatively free language policy whereby pupils could decide for themselves how they moved across their language repertoire. In contrast, Mme. Luisa and Mme. Caroline felt that the teacher should decide when home languages could be used, either during specific multilingual activities or when they identified that a child was struggling. Mme Luisa's perspective changed little over the course of the study; she remained convinced that immersion conditions were beneficial in the long run for emergent bilinguals and was concerned that the free use of home languages would lead to a certain 'ghettoisation' of friendships.

All four teachers were clear that the teacher-led, whole-class tasks were a key element in the construction of a plurilingually sensitive classroom; they were seen variously as providing momentum and a framework to ensure *appropriate* use of home languages as well as a platform for the teachers to develop an understanding of their pupils' plurilingual repertoire. However, M. Jean's perspective went much wider than the other teachers:

> *"So we get an activity going but at a certain moment, it's them who come and say, 'can I do this in my language?'... and so it creates all these opportunities... and I think it's that this we need to keep alive in the classroom... this openness to all these opportunities.... to go and grab the language of this pupil or that pupil and do something with it.... for me that's the most important because that is what learning is really about."*

His analyses of his evolving multilingual classroom practice were striking in the way they drew on a pupil-centred, non-linear, socio-constructivist model of learning which also recognised wider sociolinguistic inequalities embedded in the education system's exclusive (and to his mind excessive) valorisation of the mastery of the structural patterns of French. He focused more on learning processes than outcomes, drawing on a variety of metaphors to explain to himself how a child moved naturally across their language repertoire, for example that they instinctively "switched train tracks" or "opened up different suitcases". In contrast, the other teachers' accounts of the transversal benefits of multilingual practice were more general, focusing on enhancing well-being through the symbolic valorisation of home languages through presentation and sharing. The individual learning gains they identified were mostly in the field of language comparisons, as discussed above, and they cited the generic importance of 'not putting up barriers' rather than actively constructing openings for access to learning.

13.6.4 Reframing inclusion and managing repertoire diversity

When the study began, the teachers often didn't know the additional languages used by their pupils and their lesson design was influenced by their gradual familiarisation with their linguistic repertoires. Many of the whole-class activities were delicate balancing acts that sometimes struggled to include *all* pupils in an active way, particularly when they were a transposal of an academic activity normally conducted in French (e.g. writing a science report). These tasks in fact required considerable scaffolding *towards* the home language, particularly for pupils who did not regularly use that language to read or write. This challenge could be mitigated to a certain extent through language-group collaboration, whereby those with higher home-language competence could lead their less able peers. For example, Mme. Khadija noted that Zafirah, a strong Arabic speaker who could also write the script, "pulled her group up" and that "they trusted her", meaning that they could present to the class even though they were "a bit lost".

Mme. Luisa felt that language groups prompted certain pupils to "dare to do more" with their home language. However, around a quarter of the pupils in each class did not have language peers, and of those, some spoke languages that were not available on translation software. The preparation of activities at home went some way to widening participation opportunities but the teachers were sensitive to the fact that in some sessions, certain pupils, particularly monolinguals, ended up more or less excluded from full participation and keenly felt their lack of 'multilingual capital'. M. Jean described the uncomfortable identity position this left certain pupils in:

> "[I have] a slight reservation for some of the Arabic speakers, the ones who don't speak it as well as they think they do or as well as they would like: for example, I felt that Hassan and maybe Javier for Spanish, he was kind of between two poles, neither completely accepted by the Arabic speakers (who made him keenly feel his lack of Arabic), nor included (by his own choice) by the French [monolingual] speakers."

Some pupils found their new position uneasy and unwelcome, sometimes even refusing to participate. Ultimately, tasks with a strong symbolic function (e.g. pupils teaching each other words in their home language) transpired to be the most inclusive as they tended to be less demanding, both cognitively and linguistically. As they became more sensitive to these dynamics, the teachers' initial instincts to organise the pupils in language groups gave way to more mixed language groups and cross-lingual tasks. M. Jean in particular, gradually moved from prescriptive task organisation to giving pupils more agency in deciding the languages used to participate.

13.7 Discussion and conclusion

Functional Multilingual Learning entails teachers creating powerful learning environments underpinned by a single, yet complex, conceptualisation of home languages that goes beyond the system-level dichotomy of home vs school language and actualises the potential of individual and community linguistic repertoires to support content and language learning. This study set out to understand how four mainstream classroom teachers navigated this new pedagogical practice and the tasks and mechanisms they developed to deliver their vision of this goal. It supports research which indicates the importance of a pupil-centred approach as a key factor in a teacher's capacity to go beyond symbolic practices and towards effective scaffolding to enhance epistemological access (see Audras and Leclaire 2013; Auger and Kervran 2013; Palmer and Martínez 2013). Mme Luisa's more transmission-oriented teaching style led her to favour teacher-controlled, bounded tasks whereas flexible practice ran far deeper in M. Jean's class, where the new dimension of plurilingualism fitted logically into his existing practice, characterised as it was by extensive differentiation and discovery learning. In line with Menken, Funk and Kleyn (2011), this study also

underlines the potential for considerable diversity in teachers' conceptualisation of home languages as a resource, even when they are ideologically well-disposed towards implementing a multilingual approach.

The experiences of these teachers nonetheless highlight the challenge of equitable multilingual practice in the mainstream classroom which is characterised not only by linguistic diversity but also repertoire diversity. Multiple studies cite how teachers must draw on children's 'expertise' in their home language as though it is a unitary, unquestioned competence (for example, Duarte 2018), yet in reality this is complex, uneven terrain that must be navigated with great sensitivity, particularly if *all* plurilingual repertoires are to be positioned as potential sources of didactic capital. Chumak Hortbatsch (2011) maintains that multilingual classroom practices that are merely 'supportive' (i.e. not 'inclusive') risk short-changing immigrant children's language and literacy learning, and they should go beyond displays and celebrations. Whilst this is clearly a critical difference, which we fully support, we would argue that there is still a place for tasks and activities that fulfil a symbolic function in classrooms with wide repertoire diversity. Language awareness activities such as teaching words of greeting in multiple languages do not get to the heart of learning processes, and indeed risk embodying the 'part-time attention' to cultural and linguistic diversity that Chumak-Horbatsch critiques. Yet they potentially can contribute to a collective, and inclusive foundation and springboard for individual, flexible pedagogical actions that more closely addressed the scaffolding and epistemological needs of emergent bilingual pupils and long-term dual language learners. Nonetheless, this study indicates that further research is needed on how to ensure that *FML* adequately addresses diverse competences across a class, and in particular how to ensure that monolingual pupils are not excluded.

The teachers in this study tended to accord primacy to class-level objectives, which stands in interesting contrast to a study conducted by Rosiers et al. (2016) in which they found that primary school teachers in Flanders, Belgium who were implementing *FML* focused predominantly on learning gains for the individual. The teachers in their study rarely elaborated an understanding of the classroom as a collective multilingual space and did not embed multilingual practice in activity design. It is salient to consider that the start point for Rosiers et al.'s intervention was encouraging the teachers to enable pupils to freely use their home language to support learning, perhaps suggesting that a generic focus on pupil-led interaction prompts reflection on opportunities for the individual. Conversely, in this study, whole class activities required inclusive planning for all pupils and included the teacher to a greater extent in the translanguaging 'corriente' of the classroom. Whilst this enhances a teacher's sense of control, it can also run the risk of practice remaining at a more superficial level and limited to standalone activities. Considered in parallel, these two studies suggest that training and support materials for multilingual pedagogies need to clearly articulate the interface between whole-class and individual dimensions, enabling teachers to more purposefully navigate the opportunities each presents and blend them into powerful classroom practice.

To a considerable extent, the whole-class activities positioned home languages as separate structural systems rather than as part of an integrated repertoire. They often treated languages sequentially (complete an activity in French first, then another language) or in parallel (e.g. in language awareness and translation tasks) and whilst they explored and valorised collective plurilingualism, at an individual level could be considered as the "pluralization of monolingualism" (Makoni & Pennycook, 2007, p. 147). The potential metalinguistic benefits of multilingual practice were identified and operationalised by the teachers; however, when this remained confined to bounded language awareness activities, potential transversal and metacognitive opportunities remained untapped. Only in the classrooms which moved between official, teacher-led translanguaging towards natural languaging practices did scaffolding and epistemological functions begin to emerge as powerful practice. These teachers showed greater sensitivity towards the dynamic processes of language acquisition at an individual level and were more rooted in an empirical perspective of how children "do being bilingual" (Auer 1984). They conceptualised plurilingual competence not as simply the acquisition or sharing of new linguistic forms but as the 'use of language' in interactive practices (Llompart and Nussbaum 2018); they created opportunities for their pupils not only to participate in different kinds of tasks but also to engage in qualitatively different modes of participation.

The implementation of effective transversal multilingual teaching requires us to provide teachers with reflective mechanisms to conceptualise the interface between the reality of their pupils' linguistic repertoire and their understanding of learning. The Fédération Wallonie Bruxelles will make *Éveil Aux Langues* language awareness lessons compulsory in early primary classes as part of its 'Pact for Excellence' programme of school reforms (Wattiez, 2019). Whilst this will create welcome spaces to explore linguistic diversity and develop metalinguistic awareness, this study suggests that it is unlikely to lead to powerful learning environments which chip away at the unequal access to learning embedded in mainstream monolingual practice.

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14. <u>Study 3</u>: Hierarchies of Home Language Proficiency in the Linguistically Diverse Primary School Classroom: Personal, Social and Contextual Positioning
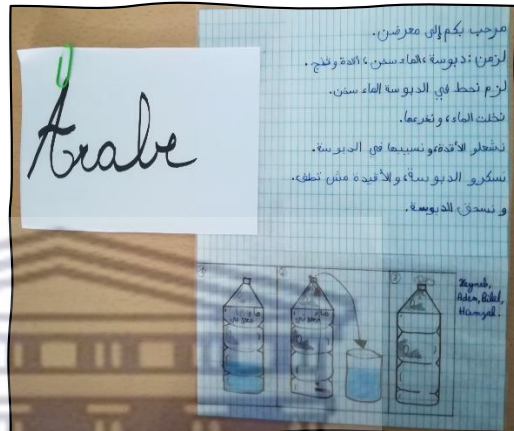
Image 6: Group science report in Arabic, lead by Zafirah. (Mme. Khadija)
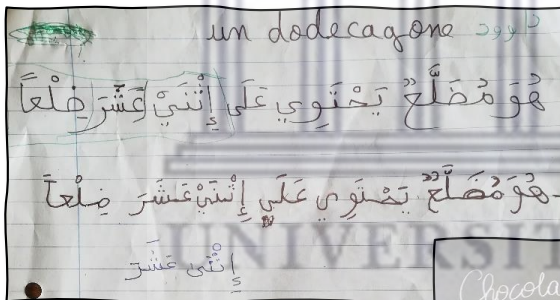
Image 7: Arabic preparation at home by Karim. (M. Jean)
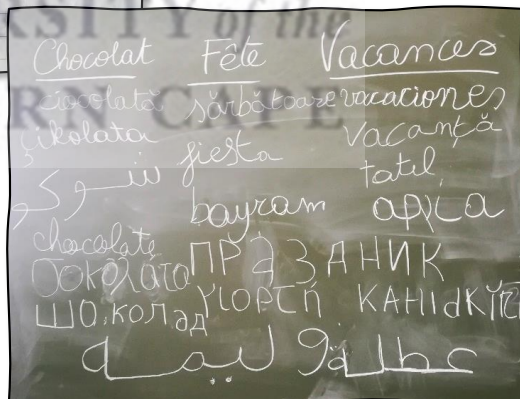
Image 8: Multilingual Easter vocabulary (Mme. Caroline)

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14.1 Abstract

This study explores the ways in which 24 pupils in a primary school in Brussels, Belgium, perceived and navigated the personal, social and contextual dimensions of home language proficiency, at the moment when their teachers enabled them to use their home languages in the classroom for the first time. Drawing on ethnographic data including classroom video recordings and pupil focus-group sessions, we examine the mutually constitutive dynamics of the perceptions and enactment of proficiency and how these were socially and intersubjectively ratified by the classroom community. Findings indicate that the pupils situated themselves and others in hierarchies of home language proficiency, even when they were not speakers of that language. Overt references to markers such as fluency and lexical and grammatical accuracy fed into recursive patterns of participation, which in turn created differing affordances and constraints for learning. We highlight the importance of contextual factors such as the linguistic composition of the class that contribute to the way notions of linguistic proficiency were encultured.
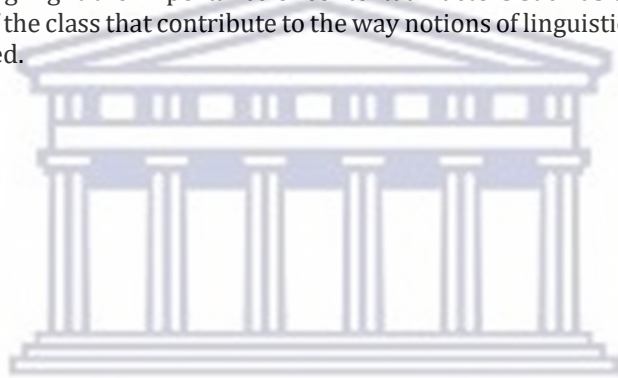
14.2 Introduction

Considerable research in recent years has pointed to the benefits of mainstream linguistically diverse schools moving away from monolingual frameworks and towards plurilingual models which take account of a pupil's full linguistic repertoire to support conceptual understanding and learning the language of schooling (Auger, 2013; García & Kleyn, 2016; Sierens & Van Avermaet, 2014). Such approaches need to consider not only the linguistic diversity present in a class but also the asymmetric nature of the linguistic repertoire of many learners and the way this variation dynamically interplays across a group. An individual's language practice is governed in part by their relative proficiencies across the various languages, varieties and codes in their linguistic repertoire, all the while being framed by the specific communicative imperatives of a situation, as well as the local social and ideological context. Busch (2017) maintains that the use of a repertoire should also be considered as an interactional achievement, in part socially constructed through discursive practices and acts of positioning. As such, in a classroom environment, pupils and their teachers co-construct perceptions and enactments of linguistic proficiency which in turn generate affordances and constraints for participation and learning (Martin-Beltrán, 2010).

Overall, research on multilingual pedagogies has tended to focus on successful translingual practice, based on a relatively unquestioning assumption of pupils' home language 'expertise', often because it is focused on newly arrived pupils who are learning the language of schooling. However, some studies with more mixed populations including second and third generation immigrant learners hint at moments of reluctance or an absence of participation in multilingual learning. Amongst other things, researchers note pupil anxieties around their proficiency in the home language, and the challenges of developing effective, nuanced, pedagogical techniques that can reframe longstanding monolingual ideologies and embrace the diverse types of home language expertise across a class (Peyer et al., 2020; Ticheloven et al., 2019).

This paper seeks to bridge this gap by exploring the personal, interpersonal and contextual positioning of home language proficiency in four classes in a primary school in Brussels, Belgium, at the sensitive moment when the pupils could use their home languages in the classroom for the first time. It focuses on the experiences of 24 pupils exhibiting a range of linguistic profiles and oral and written skills, including those who declared their home language dominant, and others who favoured the language of schooling. It examines the mutually constitutive dynamics of the perceptions and enactment of proficiency and how these were socially and intersubjectively ratified by the classroom community (Martin-Beltrán 2010).

It addresses two principal research questions:

- *How did pupils identify and describe home language(s) proficiency (their own and those of their peers)?*
- *How were notions of home language proficiency discursively constructed over time through personal, interpersonal and contextual positioning?*

14.3 Literature review

14.3.1 Defining linguistic proficiency

Linguistic proficiency is often described in terms of measurable productive output in standardised, named languages and is generally seen as the ability to use language accurately and appropriately in its oral and written forms (Cloud, Genesee, and Hamayan 2000). It can be considered as one of the constitutive elements of linguistic competence, which also includes sociolinguistic and discourse skills, and the knowledge and appropriation of language in a specific cultural context. Bilingual learners have historically often been understood through the prism of linguistic proficiency, i.e. through the separate evaluation of the languages in their repertoire, essentially positioning them as "two monolinguals in one body" (Grosjean, 2008, p. 10). From a theoretical perspective, this position is now giving way to more holistic notions of an individual's unique linguistic repertoire, positing a composite plurilingual competence, defined as "the ability to use languages for the purposes of communication" (Coste et al., 2006, p. 11). This asset-oriented position recognises the fact that languages have been acquired to different levels of proficiency, and have been learned in different ways (e.g. in the family, at school), comprising of different skills (e.g. reading, speaking etc.), and focuses more on 'plurilanguaging', defined by Piccardo (2018b) as "a dynamic, never-ending process to make meaning using different linguistic and semiotic resources" (p. 216).

14.3.2 The home language proficiency of plurilingual learners in monolingual school systems

It is commonly understood that the transmission and maintenance of home languages in children from immigrant backgrounds is often subject to language shift (e.g. Fishman, 1991), with the home language remaining dominant in members of the first generation, but gradually giving way to the shared societal language by the second and third generation, whilst still retaining symbolic value (Hayakawa et al., 2022; Van Avermaet, 2008). Actual and perceived linguistic proficiency can be influenced by an individual's perception of their languages and their relative legitimacy in different contexts; this shapes language behaviour, which in turn influences language maintenance and evolving competence (Billiez et al., 2002; Sevinç & Backus, 2019).

Learners' subjective understanding of their competence in their non-school language has been found to be often infused by linguistic insecurity (Muller, 2019; Sevinç & Backus, 2019). This arises in part from the weight of the 'idealised' language user, generally one who conforms to objective norms of correct and standard language use (Labov, 1966), as well as from essentialist ideologies linking membership of a community to visible language competence (Abtahian & Quinn, 2017). Sevinç and Backus (2019) conclude that linguistic insecurity is reinforced when a speaker hasn't been educated in a language and they identify a feedback loop linking self-perceived language competence, language use and language anxiety.

Children have been found to value their linguistic repertoire more when it is valorised through multilingual practice in school (Dagenais, 2003; Prasad & Lory, 2020) yet they also value high status languages which they see as potentially contributing to their future economic and social advancement (Gao, 2009; Shameem, 2007). Such representations often draw on normative values and stereotypes and might sidestep the local and immediate benefits of less 'prestigious' languages (Castellotti & Moore, 2010). This is doubtless in part a consequence of monolingual ideologies which posit national languages as imbued with 'quality', with dialectal varieties or non-written languages regarded as substandard. This underpins a commonly accepted monolingual framework in many schools which offers a single route to linguistic assimilation, giving rise to a uni-directional pressure to learn and exclusively use the dominant societal language(s) and in school, specifically the standard, academic form that constitutes the language of instruction.

14.3.3 *Functional Multilingual Learning* and the construct of linguistic expertise

However, in some settings, these monolingual perspectives are beginning to give way to approaches which recognise pupils' plurilingual competence and seek to develop it; scholars urge teachers to consider pupils as experts in their language, all the while recognising that *all* levels of proficiency can be valid and useful tools for learning (Auger & Le Pichon-Vorstman, 2021; Boeckmann et al., 2011; Duarte, 2018). A pupil's relative levels of proficiency across the various dimensions of their repertoire will have an impact on the pedagogical imperative to work through several languages: for newly arrived pupils, it is critical to enable the use of the home language, with multiple studies documenting the benefits, including access to age- and curriculum-appropriate content, and scaffolding learning of language and content (e.g. Auger, Balois, and Terrades 2005; Celic and Seltzer 2013; Ntelioglou et al. 2014). For other kinds of dual language learners, it is more nuanced; for example, in their study about bilingual German/Turkish instruction in Maths with second and third generation Turkish pupils in German schools, Schüler-Meyer et al. (2019) found that pupils with higher proficiency in formal Turkish showed greater learning gains than their peers with lower levels of formal Turkish, for whom working monolingually was more effective. Nonetheless, they

maintain that access to the subject-specific 'technical' register (in either language) is not necessary for effective bilingual learning. In their study, lower proficiency in formal language could still be deployed effectively to support conceptual understanding, for example through enhanced participation and as a means to elaborate real-life examples of mathematical concepts.

The four teacher participants in this study were implementing *Functional Multilingual Learning (FML)* (Sierens & Van Avermaet, 2014), a pedagogical approach conceived for the mainstream classroom i.e. where the teacher does not necessarily know the languages spoken by the pupils. It aims to position home languages as mediating, facilitating tools, thereby enabling new formulations of linguistic practice to support learning and social interaction. It posits benefits for the plurilingual individual in terms of drawing on hitherto disregarded linguistic knowledge and skills, as well as promoting the co-construction of knowledge between pupils who share a home language.

Numerous studies testify to the fact that many pupils welcome this kind of recognition of their home language expertise and embrace the possibility to work across their linguistic repertoire (Kirwan, 2016; Peyer et al., 2020). It has also been found to contribute to reframing deficit attitudes towards home languages (Le Pichon-Vorstman et al., 2020). Yet tensions can arise, particularly when there is a disjunct between the 'home' register and the formal, academic registers privileged by schools. Indeed, some scholars have identified a sense of shame around the home language (Choi, 2003; Sierens, 2009), perhaps arising from the pressure of normative discourses of 'correctness' which can fuel a sense of linguistic inadequacy, particularly in relation to writing and spelling (Dagenais et al., 2007; Peyer et al., 2020; Ticheloven et al., 2019). Some pupils express a preference for functioning monolingually in the language of schooling (Ticheloven et al., 2019) and find their lower home language proficiency in academic and technical language to be a barrier to multilingual learning (Peyer et al., 2020; Ticheloven et al., 2019; Van Laere et al., 2016). When studying the implementation of multilingual activities in a secondary school in Switzerland, Peyer and colleagues concluded that some pupils were "unable to fulfil the assigned role of expert in their home language and culture" (2020, p. 13) and observed deflection strategies such as asking others to answer, or pupils declaring that they had 'forgotten' a word in their home language. Furthermore, they found that certain tasks, in particular spontaneous oral translation, placed more pressure on this 'assumed expertise' than others, yet all the while concluding that superficial multilingual activities did little to influence children's attitudes regarding linguistic and cultural diversity. These pressures are particularly salient in the early days of implementation when teachers are adapting their practice, and, as Meyer and Prediger (2011) observe, children may not quickly change habitualised monolingual patterns of language.

In sum, an inclusive pedagogy should aim to embrace all forms of linguistic repertoire, yet it seems that this might be more easily achieved when pupils have 'school skills' in their home language (Papapavlou, 1999). As such, this study seeks

to deepen our understanding of how the pupils themselves navigate this paradigm, specifically, how they perceive and discursively negotiate their own linguistic proficiency and that of their peers.

14.4 Conceptual framework: the personal, social and contextual positioning of linguistic proficiency

An individual's linguistic competence, and their perception thereof, are influenced and moulded in the short-and long-term by a multitude of historical, ideological, pedagogical, personal and interactional factors. In order to understand how pupils describe their own linguistic proficiency and that of their peers, and in particular, how this is situated in the wider interactional space of the classroom, we draw on positioning theory. This is "the discursive process whereby people are located in conversations as observably and subjectively coherent participants in jointly produced storylines" (Harré & Davies, 1999, p. 37). Based on post-structuralist notions, positioning theory recognises that discourses, and in particular discursive practices, are constitutive forces in the construction of identities or 'selves', and social interaction is seen as key to the emergence of a sense of self. Individuals can engage in 'reflexive' positioning of themselves, as well as 'interactive' positioning of others; these positions can be understood in the way they are 'hearable' in the conversation i.e. with overt or tacit reference to the expectations, rights and responsibilities associated with character or role. But the same speech act can be 'hearable' in different ways: for example, the same request for help from a pupil to the teacher might be heard alternatively as 'autonomous', 'passive' or 'attention-seeking' behaviour. Thus, the social force of an act and the position of an actor interact and are mutually determining, creating the 'storyline' of the conversation, i.e. the way talk or actions cast patterns of narratives and expected ways of speaking or behaving, giving meaning and accountability to speech acts. As such individuals are not simply packaged, end-products of these discourses, but they are regarded as active participants of those that they help to construct, and they exercise agency to mediate the individual/social axis in the joint construction of the local moral order. Thus, we use positioning theory in order to unravel how pupils with different kinds of repertoires make a bid for identity positions of plurilingual competence, the way their peers and teacher 'hear' that bid and how and whether it is ratified, reframed or resisted.

Such an approach supports an understanding of linguistic proficiency as anchored in a dynamic context, whereby individual discourse practices interweave with wider patterns, norms and discourses. In her study in a dual-language school in the US, Martin-Beltrán (2010) noted the ways in which pupils and teachers indexed personal, interpersonal and institutional frames of reference when identifying their own or other's proficiency and how the pupils themselves participated by positioning themselves as more or less proficient, thus enacting "their own perceived (and consequently performative) proficiency in the company of and in collusion with others" (2010, p. 265). She posits proficiency as a dialogic construct and uses the term 'perceived proficiency' to identify the ways in which

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pupils and teachers evaluate and form judgements about each others' competence during interaction. These perceptions then feed iteratively into interactional norms and expectations, reifying and shifting certain language and participation practices, as well as categories of legitimate speakers. Patterns of participation, language choice and the social positioning of self and others are intersubjectively ratified and become entwined with evaluative discourse about abilities and performance. Following this logic, our use of positioning theory departs from traditional approaches which posit that micro moments of interaction and wider macro-scale constructs can be considered as emerging simultaneously (see K.T. Anderson, 2009 for a discussion). Instead, we look across multiple interactions over time, to explore how acts of positioning and discourse practices lead to sedimented perceptions of 'kinds' of pupils, constructed across time, contexts and scales (K. T. Anderson, 2009; Martin-Beltrán, 2010).

These 'kinds' have material consequences for individual learners in terms of the dynamic interplay between their subjective perception of their repertoire and the way in which they navigate affordances and constraints for learning. For example, in the context of dual language school settings, Watanabe and Swain (2008) found that learners' perceptions of each others' proficiency was more significant than actual proficiency in terms of peer co-operation. Inclusion in a community depends to a certain extent on a learner having, and effectively deploying, appropriate material and symbolic resources; social actors engage with available cultural resources, rituals and discourses, creating "realm[s] of interpretation in which a particular set of characters and actors are recognised, significance is assigned to certain acts, and particular outcomes are valued over others" (Holland et al., 1998, p. 52). For example, Bernstein (2014) found that teachers in a kindergarten took an attitude of involvement on the part of emergent bilingual pupils as a proxy for linguistic knowledge and skills in the language of schooling, sometimes resulting in them underestimating quieter pupils.

Beyond moments and patterns of interaction, we also consider broader *contextual* factors in our understanding of the positioning of home language proficiency in the mainstream classroom. Blommaert, Collins, and Slembrouck (2005, p. 200) point out that "movements across space involve movements across scales of social structure having indexical value and thus providing meaning to individual, situated acts". So, whilst proficiency in the home domain might be constructed around certain norms, when a language 'enters' the school domain for the first time, it must situate itself within a framework that values standardised language, often in written form, to explore abstract academic topics, as well as the practice of measuring the quality of that output and comparing across a group of peers. In short, the value of a repertoire changes according to context, and proficiency is made visible and relevant through social interactions. Blommaert, Collins, and Slembrouck (2005) further note that "multilingualism is not what individuals have and don't have, but what the environment, as structured determinations and interactional emergence, enables and disables" (p.213). In the linguistically diverse classroom, this environment is broadly composed of those who share and understand a pupil's additional language, but mostly of those who don't (generally

including the teacher). Each group entails differing affordances in terms of the social construction of notions of proficiency, with a significant proportion of the class only able to rely on surface level indicators of linguistic expertise.

In sum, this perspective entails a sociocultural view of learning as "making meaning with others in ways that are shaped by the cultural, political, historical and interpersonal details of the context" (K. T. Anderson & Zuiker, 2010). In terms of language learning, Py (1993) posits three interconnected notions: firstly, the construction of a *system* of linguistic knowledge, unique to each individual and dependent on their repertoire. Yet this system is subject to an ideal *norm* that learners should use in order to become legitimated speakers; explicit and implicit pressure is exerted by other speakers, indirectly referencing other discourse or cultural models. Finally, this linguistic knowledge and its approximation to norms are performed in specific *tasks* or social events. Through their participation, pupils enact, evoke and reflect positions both relative to each other and to the normative discourses associated with a particular activity or context. As such, they themselves are also acting as the sources of discourses, framing 'what counts' in the local context of 'doing school', potentially including a resistance to participate or a passive process of acceptance of marginalization by target community members (K. T. Anderson & Zuiker, 2010; Block, 2003; Blommaert et al., 2005).

14.5 Setting and participants

This study took place in four upper-primary classes in a large French-speaking mainstream primary school in Brussels, Belgium. Brussels is a dual language city (French/Dutch from an administrative point of view), but its schools tend to function exclusively in one or the other language. In the French-speaking system, formal language learning focuses predominantly on Dutch and English, yet the city is also highly multilingual, with over half of the city's children using at least two languages on a daily basis (Robert et al., 2020), the most common of which are Arabic, Spanish, and Italian. For some citizens, this is emblematic of the cosmopolitan vitality of the city, but for others, it is indicative of the failure of certain groups to 'integrate', with Arabic and Turkish often being highlighted as problematic.

There were 603 pupils in total in the school, aged between three to twelve years old. Around 30% of the pupils were non-Belgian and around 20% had the right to receive additional language support classes (i.e. they had arrived in Belgium in the previous 3 years). The school was situated in an area of the city with a relatively mixed socio-economic demographic, yet according to government calculations, the pupil population was classified as being in the lowest quartile. As such, the school had been receiving additional funding since 2009 as a means of addressing issues related to deprivation, in particular to pay for extra teaching periods and to support projects. It stood in contrast to a prestigious neighbouring school, which attracted pupils from more wealthy backgrounds, and was often full. The school

collected no specific data on home languages or their use, but our study indicates that around thirty languages were used by the pupil population on a daily basis.

The teacher participants were self-selected and had responded to an email invitation from the principal researcher, indicating their desire to upskill their classroom practice in terms of multilingualism. The Headteacher was supportive, broadly based on his concerns about the low levels of French (the language of instruction) of many of the students. Although this was not the explicit focus of the research, he was keen to engage with initiatives that would improve motivation and engagement in terms of language. There were 92 pupils in total in the four classes involved in the study, and in each, between 9 and 12 different home languages used, with varying (often context dependent) degrees of proficiency.

Six pupils from each class (total 24) were purposefully selected to make four mixed-language focus groups; although each group had a slightly different balance, they were globally representative of the four classes, with a cross-section in terms of gender, languages used and language profile (including: monolinguals, recently arrived pupils, pupils literate in their home language and those with mostly oral competence) (see *Appendix A* for more detail). The only group of pupils not included in the focus groups were those very recently arrived from abroad (i.e. in the few months preceding or during the study). This was for multiple reasons, including timetabling and the need to prioritise settling into their new school and country. All teachers, pupils and their parents gave their informed consent for participation.

Until this study, the school had had a very clear "French only" policy that was printed in the school diary and enforced (albeit in an uneven way) by teachers and sometimes the pupils. This absence of home languages in curricula or daily practice is fairly typical of mainstream classrooms in Belgium (André et al., 2018; Ervyn, 2012). Such policies are often motivated by a 'common sense' support for a monolingual framework, based on longstanding myths about the role of language in learning and although official documentation advocates the valorising of pupils' linguistic repertoires, there is little concrete exemplification on how to do this. Where it does exist, it is focused at lower primary pupils, is often confined to 'celebrations' of linguistic diversity and is considered as fostering preparatory skills to learn Dutch, the foreign language that all pupils study from age eight onwards.

14.6 Research design

14.6.1 Methods

This paper arises from an eight-month long linguistic ethnographic intervention study (Copland & Creese, 2015) conducted in 2017/18. All of the pupil participants completed a self-assessment questionnaire (translated where necessary) about their perceived competence in any number of languages they chose to cite. They gave a score of 0-4 for pairs of 'can do' statements describing

acts of reading, writing, speaking and listening; in each case, one of the statements describe a relatively low-demand scenario and the other an academic situation. e.g. writing a note to a friend vs writing a science report. The pupils' aggregate scores for their proficiency in French were compared to those given by their teacher and for the most part, they were very close. Accordingly, the pupil self-evaluations were taken as a rough proxy for the reliability of their self-evaluation in their home language, which was triangulated with researcher observations on their participation and their ongoing commentary in focus-group sessions. This led to the indicative designations of 'higher proficiency' and 'lower proficiency' pupils, all the while noting that this was context dependent and that some pupils seemed to have under- or over-estimated their home language competence.

The principal researcher spent two to three days a week in the school as a participant-observer (Schensul et al., 1999), often functioning as a classroom assistant. This enabled extensive informal interaction with the pupils and contributed to her understanding of the didactic norms and general participation practices in each class. She gave the four teacher participants a short training course on *Functional Multilingual Learning*, and they then designed their own 'meaningful multilingual tasks' and ad hoc classroom practices. A total of 23 hour-long multilingual lessons were observed (of which 11 were filmed in two of the classes, A and B). Six focus group pupils from the A and B classes also wore lapel microphones in order to enable an understanding of interaction between the pupils. The focus lessons included a variety of different types of tasks including: a) language comparison activities e.g. comparing grammatical structure in different languages; b) multilingual academic tasks e.g. creating a multilingual vocabulary list, writing a science report c) academic tasks using other languages e.g. sharing topic keywords d) community-building tasks e.g. learning words of greeting in another language; and e) creative tasks e.g. multilingual poems (see Foster et al., 2021). Given that this was the first time that teachers had worked with the pupils' home languages, the design of these tasks represented their early experimentation with this approach. They noted themselves that some activities were more successful than others and they refined and adapted their practice as time went on.

After each multilingual lesson, the teachers provided written and/or oral feedback and the 6 focus-group pupils from the class went to a small office for a semi-structured feedback session, which was audio-recorded. These sessions were guided by a 'conversation rubric' (K. T. Anderson, 2009), where the pupils discussed and rated their own experience, followed by their perception of the experiences of other pupils in the class. This covered five broad dimensions about the role of using home languages in tasks: the contribution to learning; emotions; connections between pupils; home-school links; and pupils' perceptions of the teacher (see *Appendix B*). The group made individual and collective decisions about where to place stickers on a Likert scale for each category; as such, the conversation rubric chart functioned as a mediating tool, prompting descriptions, explicit characterisations and commentary on multilingual practice in the classroom. The group often settled on multiple ratings for the same category in

order to record the fact that different pupils had had different experiences. During these discussions, the principal researcher managed the practical dimensions of the task (e.g. taking turns), but as much as possible, encouraged the pupils to discuss and negotiate amongst themselves, whilst also asking follow-up questions to clarify meaning. The mix of language profiles in each group generated an exchange of perspectives, which was at times contentious, and was often the site of acts of personal and interpersonal positioning in relation to proficiency e.g. a pupil joking that his friend's Spanish was bad, another comparing her own proficiency to that of a peer. Questions on perceptions and experiences of plurilingual competence were included in a final evaluation focus group session, which also served to enable the researcher to check whether the pupils agreed with emerging understandings. Data collection was conducted in French and translations here are our own.

14.6.2 Analysis

The study uses interactional ethnography as a 'logic of enquiry' and as a means of uncovering how pupils and teachers "socially construct opportunities for learning- and what opportunities they construct personally and collectively across times, interactions and events" (Green & Castanheira, 2012, p. 53). Data collection and analysis were iterative and recursive, combining inductive and deductive methods (Maxwell, 2013) to explore the data at the levels of moment-to-moment practices alongside participants' characterisation of that practice (K. T. Anderson, 2009). During the focus-group sessions, the question of home language proficiency emerged as a recurring preoccupation for the pupils, who repeatedly referenced their own and that of others when explaining their participation. The significance of the concept was borne out when examining the 'event maps' (Green and Castanheira, 2012) which were drawn up for the 11 filmed lessons. These were used to trace participants' actions, moves, patterns of uptake and the outcomes of that uptake, as well as how these events were continuous or discontinuous over events and differed between individuals and declared levels of linguistic proficiency. Interviews and focus-group sessions were transcribed in full and, in combination with field notes, analytical memos, photographs of pupil work, were iteratively analysed to develop open and focused coding schemes using NVivo (Merriam, 2009). Detailed analysis was focused on the two filmed classes (A and B), with data from the other two being used to explore, compare and confirm emerging themes.

Drawing on Martin-Beltrán (2010), the broader categories of the coding scheme were developed into an analytical framework (as summarised in *Table 8*) which identified the salient discursive and participation positioning practices at three levels.

Level	Discursive positioning practices	Participation positioning practices
Personal (self)	Overt statements about own HL proficiency. Explanations of language practice. Locating self in the HL hierarchy.	Patterns of oral/written participation in HL. Patterns of non-participation/avoidance strategies.
Interpersonal (towards others, and others towards self)	Overt statements about others' HL proficiency. Explanations of language practice. Locating others in the HL hierarchy.	'Teaching' HL to others (language peers, other classmates, the teacher). Receiving correction in HL. Management of the participation of others in L1 (e.g. nominating, blocking).
Contextual	Task design Linguistic composition of the class Pupil grouping	

Table 8: Analytical framework to identify the mechanisms underpinning the positioning of HL (Home Language) proficiency.

The video data from classes A and B was then reviewed through the lens of this framework to identify Language Related Episodes (LRE), defined by Swain and Lapkin (2002, p. 292) as "any part of the dialogue where learners talk about the language they produced, and reflect on their language use". Emblematic interactional moments related to the positioning of linguistic proficiency were selected for transcription and focused analysis.

14.7 Results

14.7.1 Describing and identifying hierarchies of subjective proficiency.

Our first research question pertains to the ways in which the pupils identified and described home language proficiency. As a start point to explore their subjective perceptions, the aggregated self-assessed scores of their proficiency in their main home language (HL) and French (FR) were plotted on a graph *(Figure 3)*.
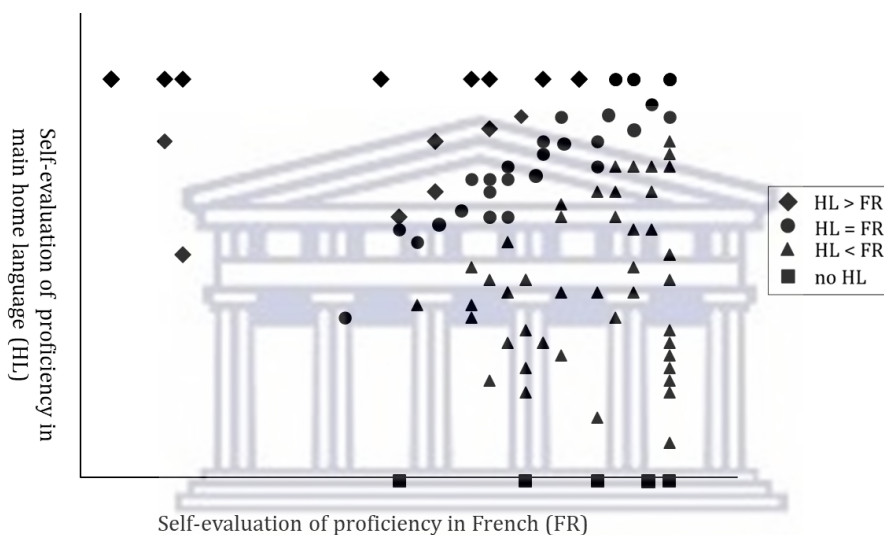
Figure 3: Pupils' self-evaluation of their proficiency in French (FR) and their main home language (HL)

18% of the pupils indicated that they were globally stronger in their home language than in French (indicated by ◆). This group generally included newcomer pupils or those who had arrived in recent years and had been educated for several years in another language. 28% of pupils (●) indicated that they felt their competence was more or less balanced; sometimes this was because they attended complementary school in their additional language. The 49% of pupils (▲) who felt that French was their dominant language was very diverse, ranging from pupils who said they were conversationally fluent but couldn't read or write, to those who stated they had passive understanding of a language used by their parents at home. Finally, 5% of pupils (■) indicated that they did not use another language in daily life. In general, the pupils made few references to wider societal perceptions of the value of their linguistic repertoire, focusing more on the dynamics of the immediate school community and the various affordances it offered.

The introduction of multilingual tasks prompted recurrent explicit characterisations of the pupils' own linguistic proficiency, echoed in the focus-group sessions afterwards. The comments were often centred around notions of visible performance and a certain ideology of effortlessness, as evidenced in *Excerpt 1*, which took place during small group work between Ari, a strong speaker of Georgian, and Kristof, a weaker Polish speaker (all names are pseudonyms). They were both the sole-speakers of their language and were working on the translation of a sentence. They have misunderstood the teacher's instructions to work orally, and Ari is going to collect some paper.

1. **Ari:** *(getting up and moving away from the table)* we have to write it down
2. **Kristof:** I don't know how to write in Polish
3. *Ari returning to the table with a sheet of paper.*
4. **Ari:** *(showing Kristof his paper where he has written some letters in Georgian script)* Kristof, look how we write in my country
5. **Kristof:** the letters look really weird
6. **Ari:** it's strange yeah
7. **Kristof:** *(in friendly mock admiration at how difficult they are to write)* oh la la
8. **Ari:** *(laughing)* it's not my fault
9. **Kristof:** I know

Excerpt 1: [Translated from the original French; original utterances at Appendix D]

From the outset at line 2, Kristof positions himself in terms of what he *can't* do in Polish. Ari doesn't acknowledge his concerns, but indirectly asserts their validity when he presents himself as a knowing, skilled user of Georgian, with exotic, impenetrable linguistic capital to share (lines 4 and 6). This bid is affirmed by Kristof in his admiring laugh at line 7, echoing a general class-wide valorisation of written skills. It is pertinent to contrast Kristof's use of 'I' (line 2), which conveys a certain personal responsibility for his perceived weakness in the language that he is supposed to be a speaker of, with Ari's use of 'we' in line 4, i.e. his ability to write the script as indexing his belonging to the wider community of 'Georgia'. Although this interaction was friendly and co-operative, it is indicative of the way in which sole speakers narrated their proficiency to non-language peers. It also shows how overt and covert acts of self and interpersonal positioning conveyed and legitimised the pupils' attempts to be positioned as authentic speakers of their language, and how this enacted and encultured the significance of written skills in indicating a competent plurilingual.

Admiring comments and assumptions of positive emotions also often settled on pupils who spoke quickly and confidently in their home language, even in the case of evaluations by non-language peers who were not able to make a judgement on accuracy or lexical knowledge, yet still made confident assertions about others' proficiency. Conversely, pupils with lower perceived home language proficiency

often went unremarked by their classmates or were described in comparison with a more able language peer. There was often a general assumption that coming from a language community automatically conferred expertise and that for those who seemed to have higher skills, using their home language was "normal" and they were "speaking like they are at home". Some made a distinction between those who were born "in the country" and those born in Belgium; for example, Mehmet had arrived in Brussels from Turkey at age 6, and regularly remarked on the spelling and lexical errors of the 'Brussels-Turkish' pupils in his class, attributing his superior knowledge to his origins.

Once the pupils started to use their languages in multilingual activities, it transpired that a number of them struggled to fulfil the vision they had of their own proficiency. Many noted feelings of joy and pride, but these were often accompanied by stress and anxiety about linguistic inadequacy, in particular in situations where they were using their home language in front of their classmates. Kadiatou, a Pulaar speaker said:

> *"It was stressful speaking in front of everyone because I don't know if I'm right or wrong and even if they don't understand what I say, well, if I say it several times, they'll learn mistakes and that me... so well, that scared me a bit...."*

This dynamic is evident in *Excerpt 2*, where the teacher, M. Jean wants different pupils to repeat one of three short instructions, and to translate them into their home language. He was aiming to normalise the translation of instructions for his newcomer pupils, as well as to deepen focus and engagement by encouraging all pupils to engage with the language repertoires present. He has finished with the first two instructions and asks for volunteers for the third. This moment involves Myriam, a speaker of Amharic and Tigrinya but who was heavily French-dominant, and Nadia, a confident pupil who spoke Berber and the Moroccan Arabic used in Brussels and could also write classical Arabic script.

1. **M. Jean**: *(looking across the class who are all listening)* ... [instruction] three... who wants to say it in their language?
2. **Myriam:** *(putting her hand up, looking at M. Jean)*
   Five other pupils also putting up their hands, including Nadia.
3. **M. Jean:** Myriam, what's three?
4. **Myriam:** *(looking at M. Jean)*
   (Pause 4 seconds)
5. **M. Jean:** What do you have to do? Three was with the words in other languages.
6. **Myriam:** eur *(looking away)*
   (Pause 3 seconds)
7. **M. Jean:** *(pointing at Nadia)* Okay, you go Nadia
8. **Nadia:** *(quickly, loudly)* I khassa à nini mantarna **[EN: we have to know what it is]**

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9. **M. Jean:** *(laughing, smiling)* I want to say 'okay'...? And that means? Just so I'm sure I've understood?
10. **Nadia:** Well, we have to have to know what it is
11. **M. Jean:** Okay exactly

Excerpt 2: [Translated from the original French, with the intervention in Berber left as spoken. Original utterances at Appendix D]

By volunteering to answer (line 2), Myriam follows the standard class practice of raising her hand and has thus positioned herself to her peers and teacher as being able to make a spontaneous translation in Amharic. M. Jean picks up her cue and grants her the opportunity to affirm this (line 3), yet she doesn't answer and seems not to know how to reply (lines 4 and 6), thus failing to fulfil the positioning she sought. She turns her gaze away from the interaction. The force of her silence is accentuated by Nadia's ensuing instinctive, confident translation (line 8), which in turn prompts further, positive, engagement with the teacher, affirming her skill (line 9). This immediate juxtaposition shows the social force of fluid interaction and how relationships of (non) participation dynamically constituted the 'performance' of plurilingual competence in the moment.

In common with other French-dominant pupils, Myriam was often highly self-critical and on one occasion described her work as "catastrophic". She often focused on partial knowledge ("I only know half the alphabet") or indicated that her inability to perform was temporary ("I forgot how to say it.... that's unusual"). She often suggested that the language itself was the problem ("the accent is difficult...it's in the throat"), perhaps as a means of preserving an identity of competence. These ideologies of 'correct language' emerged from both pupils with language peers as well as sole speakers, suggesting that they related to self-imposed expectations rather than simply because of the possibility of correction by peers.

14.7.2 Patterns of participation and the social positioning of proficiency hierarchies

Our second research question pertained to the ways in which notions of home language proficiency were discursively constructed over time through personal, interpersonal and contextual positioning. By examining patterns of participation and the pupils' characterisation of their practice, recursive cycles of the social positioning of proficiency became identifiable. From the outset, certain pupils participated more frequently, actively and agentively; for example, as outlined above, Nadia consistently and quickly volunteered answers in Berber and Arabic and asked to write on the board. She sought out roles to be the spokesperson for her group, to teach her peers how to write in Arabic script and regularly corrected their language, both in small group work and in front of the whole class. Pupils such as Myriam often didn't have spontaneous answers ready and after initially

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being very enthusiastic about multilingual activities, she began to strategically deflect away from participation, either by not volunteering, actively declining, offering someone else to answer, or pretending not to hear the question.

Over time these patterns of participation seemed to frame a visible and socially agreed position of expertise; the pupils such as Nadia who participated confidently in multi-directional ways, became points of reference and language arbiters and their linguistic knowledge became a collective resource. Nadia was described by her classmates as a "superstar"; non-language peers asked her to teach them words and the teacher often ended up settling on her judgement in language questions. Those with less visible competence in their home language were in a more fragile position. The tasks were not always adapted to those with lower home language literacy skills and their active participation in activities was conditional on a variety of contextual factors including the linguistic demands of the task and the availability of language support (i.e. language peers or translation technology). In one task, Freddy, the sole speaker of Lingala in his class gave up trying to write his science report in Lingala for the school science fair and threw his pen across the table in frustration. In the later focus-group discussion he repeated "I didn't feel comfortable", "I was all on my own", "I couldn't ask anyone else". His feeling of isolation was compounded by the fact that Lingala is not available on Google translate, added to which the exercise disrupted his general classroom identity which was of a hard-working pupil who completed tasks well. In general, pupils who were perceived to be less competent were not sought out for language commentary or support in the same way as their more confident peers, thus making it more difficult for them to find ways to enter into positive cycles of interactional affirmation of their plurilingual competence.

14.7.3 Language composition of the class

Indeed, the specific language composition of each class had an impact on the opportunities for pupils to be socially positioned as linguistically competent. A group of language peers provided the possibility to interact and to be seen to be using the home language. Commenting on a group of Arabic speakers, Dimena, the sole speaker of Mbo in her class, noted:

> "…because when they work together… but… because there are people who don't talk much and when they talk in their language, they were much more comfortable and they talked a lot, a lot, a lot…… so they were all much more together…when they were helping each other they were speaking their language."

Furthermore, where several speakers of one language were present in a class, designations of expertise tended to fall to one or several 'language anchors' i.e. pupils who were seen to have strong home language proficiency, particularly in writing. These pupils could act as group facilitators, scaffolding home language knowledge thereby mediating the participation of those with lower proficiency.

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Murat, a Turkish speaker, noted that his group's work on one occasion was lower quality when another pupil (Gizem) was absent: "It was annoying because… us, to know the words in Turkish… we needed Gizem". By their own admission, their collaborative effort was invariably led by her and represented her knowledge and skills more than theirs; but at the same time, this greatly increased opportunities for them to be seen to be visibly competent in their home language by the wider class community, for example through producing a long dual language vocabulary list or a complex science report. By association, it was impossible for a sole speaker of a language such as Freddy or Myriam to benefit from this collective pooling of linguistic opportunity.

Conversely, these group dynamics could also give rise to exclusionary practices, whereby discussions about the home language became disputes, with the teacher unable to mediate or offer a conclusive answer. These dilemmas are exemplified in the following *Excerpt 3*, involving principally three Arabic speaking pupils, one of whom was Nadia. All of the pupils were born in Brussels and spoke good French. Hassan had Moroccan roots but only minimal knowledge of Arabic. Karim was a strong Arabic speaker although he couldn't write the script. He was often socially isolated and had a reputation of being lazy; nonetheless he had enthusiastically seized the opportunity to use his Arabic in multilingual tasks. In this task, the teacher, M. Jean, had selected Karim to be one of five pupils to prepare a task at home: the translation of a sentence relating to their Maths topic of geometry that they will teach to other pupils in the class (in his case: "a dodecagon is a twelve-sided polygon"). He was sensitive to Karim's struggles to assert himself in the seven-strong Arabic speaking group in the class and had deliberately allocated him a supportive 'teaching group': Hassan; Benjamin, a French-monolingual pupil; and Sofia, a French-Italian speaker. The moment described below occurs when the teacher was asking the 'pupils' in Karim's group who would like to try to say the sentence in Arabic. Karim is standing by the blackboard with Sofia who has been designated to try.

1. **M. Jean:** *(to Benjamin and Sofia)* how do you at least…how do you say at least say the the number to show the number of sides…how do you say that? does one of you…
2. **Karim:** *(interrupting)* ithna ɛachara **[EN: twelve]**
3. **M. Jean:** you know how to say it but I want him *(points to Benjamin)*

4. **Nadia:** *(interrupting, loudly, from the back of the room)* I know how to say it
5. **M. Jean:** or Sofia to tell me
6. **Nadia**: *(pointing to Karim's 12 in Arabic written on the board)* sir, its written wrong what's there
7. **M. Jean:** *(to Nadia)* maybe you're right… that's something I can't tell…we'll talk about it later.
8. **Sofia:** *(hesitating and struggling to say the word in Arabic)*
9. **Karim:** *(crouched down under the blackboard)* sir can I say it?

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10. **Sofia:** *(still hesitating; Nadia is calling out pronunciation prompts)*
11. **M. Jean:** right okay Karim, you do it *(holds out the paper)*
12. **Nadia:** *(shouting)* sir sir can I do it?
13. **M. Jean**: *(to Nadia)* you can go after
14. **Karim**: *(hesitating, holds the paper out to Hassan)* Hassan… go on … please?
15. **M. Jean:** *(to Karim)* why does it bother you?
16. **Myriam:** because he's scared
17. **Hassan:** *(to Karim)* no! but you can read it really WELL
18. **Nadia:** sir can I say it? *(standing up, loudly)* ithna ɛachara **[EN: twelve]**
19. **Myriam:** *(to Karim)* go ON...say it
20. **Karim:** *(moving away from the teacher, indicating he doesn't want to read)*
21. **M. Jean:** who wants to have a go then?
22. **Nadia:** me! (*putting her hand up, moving to the front of the class*)
23. **M. Jean:** okay Nadia, no problem
24. **Karim:** (*moving backwards, back hunched, away from the teacher towards the corner of the classroom*)
25. **Nadia**: (*takes the paper from Karim as she walks past him and reads as she is walking along*).
26. **Nadia:** *(nonchalant but halting, reading to the whole class)* hwa mothal'laɛon yaḥtawi ḥay yaḥtawi ɛala ithna ɛachara thilaɛan. **[EN: It's a polygon consisting of twelve sides]**
27. **Nadia:** *(when barely finished she drops the paper on the desk and walks back to her seat)* goodbye.
28. **Karim:** *(picks up the paper and sits back down at his seat)*

Excerpt 3: [Translated from the original French, with the intervention in Arabic left as spoken. Original utterances at Appendix D]

In this excerpt, the task design constitutes a form of initial contextual positioning, defining who will use which language and for what purpose. Indeed, M. Jean had deliberately chosen Karim for this activity in order to enable him to assert his proficiency in Arabic, at least to non-language peers. Karim had fully occupied this leadership role in the small group, and initially, in lines 2 and 9, he continues to position himself to the whole class as a competent teacher. However, he progressively succumbs to Nadia's insistent assertions (lines 4, 12, 18, 22) and demonstrations (lines 10, 26) of her own proficiency and her overt reframing of his as inferior (line 6). He ultimately withdraws from the learning and leadership space created for him (physically so at lines 20 and 24, where he moves away from the blackboard) and Nadia takes over, somewhat disdainfully revoicing his text as being of little interest (line 27). These dynamics were also the enactment of certain established storylines regarding multilingual interaction; for example, Myriam's assertion at line 16 that Karim is "scared" to speak Arabic validates his hesitation, perhaps specifically in relation to Nadia, yet it also articulates and ratifies a commonly shared assumption that 'performing' your home language involved risk

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and potential humiliation at the hands of language peers. This extract also plays out established roles of the kinds of pupils Nadia and Karim were generally held to be. Nadia's dominant behaviour here was characteristic of her general patterns of interaction, regardless of language, and was probably supported by her socially ratified status of academic and plurilingual excellence. Here, Karim did not challenge her, and aligned himself with his own customary positioning as an inferior student; whilst he *could* carve out spaces for positive validation as an Arabic speaker, he could often be seen to be seeking validation by others, at times falling back on that of non-Arabic speakers or those clearly weaker than him (e.g. Hassan). In later discussions about the incident, Karim reverted to deficiency portrayals of his competence, saying, "I don't pronounce the accent very well", "I didn't dare say it in front of everybody" and noting that Nadia "said it really well".

14.7.4 Teacher discourse as an act of positioning

Thus, hierarchies of competence in multilingual work could be inclusive or exclusionary and as such, required navigation by the teacher who had to rely on the assertions of expertise coming from the pupils themselves. In the excerpt above (and also in *Excerpt 2*), the teacher indirectly acknowledges that he cannot state if Nadia is right or wrong, but he nonetheless tries to deflect her correction of Karim as inappropriate at that moment. Indeed, even when the teacher was prepared to accept work that was 'imperfect' in the eyes of the pupils, this did not always pass muster for them, yet the teacher still needed to orchestrate the framing of knowledge and accuracy in the context of school learning. At the same time, the teachers' discourse on accuracy and proficiency was often somewhat contradictory. On the one hand, M. Jean repeatedly stated that "spelling doesn't matter", or that "errors are a natural part of language". Yet on the other, in his efforts to reposition home language knowledge as valid, he would ask for "an expert" or a "mini teacher" to answer a question. He sometimes avoided calling on certain pupils in certain whole class activities in order to protect them from potentially humiliating situations, for example Kristof: "I think he thinks he is better at Polish than he actually is…so he jumps in but then can't finish, and from my knowledge of Russian I can sense that he is making it up". At the same time, he also acknowledged the importance of the strong home language 'referents', partly as a means of supporting his own lack of linguistic knowledge and he mused that maybe he should have designated Nadia to be the Arabic 'teacher' in the task described above. Nonetheless, it was clear that the teachers' ability to navigate the range of plurilingual competences across the class, and to integrate this into daily classroom learning, grew as they became more familiar with their pupils' linguistic profiles.

14.8 Discussion and conclusion

This study answers to and supports Vallejo and Dooley's (2019) call for more research about pupil perspectives on transformative practices in education, and in particular, the integration of what they might see as their 'out-of-school' practices. By adopting interactional ethnography as a logic of inquiry (Green & Castanheira, 2012) and triangulating with the pupils' characterisations of their own and others' participation practices, we identify interstices between the 'official curriculum', as planned by the teachers and the 'lived curriculum', that which is interpreted and enacted by and between the pupils (K. T. Anderson, 2009).

When reflecting on the subjective, social and contextual positioning of home language proficiency in this specific context, it is important to note that the designations of actual proficiency we use can only be considered indicative, as we were reliant on the pupils' self-evaluation rather than more objective measures. Furthermore, given that this study took place in the early stages of the implementation of *FML*, it must be understood as an exploration of transformation, rather than enduring classroom practice. *FML* represented a huge ideological and pedagogical shift for both teachers and pupils, and some of the rather polarised positions explored in this paper reflect what was a fairly sudden reframing of what was linguistically possible and desirable. Indeed, this sometimes resulted in a somewhat broad-brush conceptualisation of a language repertoire in school, doubtless influenced by years of deficit positioning. Nonetheless, by focusing on the moment of transition towards multilingual practice, this study indirectly offers a perspective on the consequences of a monolingual approach. The parallel emotions of delight/pride and fear/insecurity at the first opportunities to use home languages in a school setting indicate that a key element of the pupils' identity had long been excluded from the classroom practice and that monolingual practice had rendered the classroom a linguistically fossilised space, which had never enabled pupils to learn how to move effectively and agentively across their language repertoire. Whilst multilingual practice in school is perhaps unlikely to undo language shift over generations, one nonetheless wonders how the cycles of language behaviour, maintenance and evolving proficiency (Billiez et al., 2002; Sevinç & Backus, 2019) might have unfolded, had these pupils been in a school environment that had supported their plurilingual competence from the outset.

Multilingual pedagogies seek to validate all forms of proficiency, yet this study indicates a central tension in the dynamic between each unique 'system', the ideal 'norms' and the 'performance' of language competence (Py, 1993). It is clear that the designation of plurilingual pupils as de-facto 'experts' in their home language is complex, particularly in a mainstream urban classroom, where asymmetric repertoires are the norm. Their 'expertise' must be understood in relation to knowledge that the teacher does not have, yet is meaningful for their learning processes and their identity as learners and classroom citizens. Such a position sits awkwardly in the school canons of linguistic competence, measurement and

certification; these nonetheless act as distal, normative frames of reference and are used to draw boundaries to define legitimated speakers.

Indeed, the tasks in this study tended to favour those pupils with 'school-like' skills in their home language, but for some other pupils, they seemed to reinforce a sense of the domain-specific nature of the different elements of their repertoire, the opposite of what the teachers intended. Furthermore, it is important to recognise that the management of different proficiency levels across a repertoire in a school context involved strong socio-affective dimensions. As Lemke (2000) states: "whatever we offer in the classroom becomes an opportunity [for pupils] to pursue [a] longer-term agenda of identity building and that this is a pupil's primary affective engagement with school" (p. 286). This was particularly poignant in this context, given that pupils' participation in plurilingual classroom tasks offered new ways to be positioned as a legitimate member of the class, with associated consequences for their identity as a 'competent' or 'struggling' plurilingual individual.

Multilingual tasks allowed a new constellation of pupils to come to the fore, in particular those who were able to agentively deploy the new form of linguistic capital embodied by home languages, and to exploit the symbolic weight it carried. Yet we note that they also entailed the inadvertent creation of a new class of legitimate peripheral participants (Wenger, 2010). For Myriam, the tasks paradoxically resulted in her strategically limiting her multilingual participation, yet all the while trying to frame her withdrawal within a positive public identity of belonging to a home language community. For reasons of space, this paper does not address the positioning of newcomer pupils, whose repertoire tips in favour of their home language, nor monolinguals, who occupy a particularly delicate position in activities that mobilise home language knowledge. However, when considering the application of an inclusive multilingual pedagogy, both are positions that merit further research, as well as refracting the notion of proficiency through additional lenses, for example, to consider whether gender or parental perceptions might play a role.

This study supports Martin Beltrán's (2010) conclusions that to a certain degree, perceived proficiency is co-constructed in social interaction through the interplay of self and interpersonal positioning over time and context. However, it also offers a new perspective on how this emerges in the linguistically diverse mainstream classroom where the teacher and many of the pupils cannot reasonably evaluate proficiency. In the classrooms studied here, the pupils situated themselves and others in peer-language hierarchies, but these hierarchies were also identified and determined by non-language peers who relied on fluency and confidence as indicative markers of proficiency. Through their overt references to such markers and the recursive patterns of participation that reinforced them, the pupils (and teacher) acted as sources of discourse, echoing others' evaluations and enactments of their proficiency. When teachers are encouraged to reframe their notion of expertise away from themselves, this is often an attempt to promote a learner-centred perspective that recognises the socio-linguistic reality of their

pupils' lives. Yet this is not a neutral act that 'restores' balance; in fact, it transfers the locus of authority towards the pupils, who, for better or for worse, are required to position themselves independently without a teacher as an arbiter of 'correctness'.

The tensions identified in this study are emblematic of the act of redrawing linguistic boundaries and what counts as legitimate language in a particular space. Lüdi and Py (2009) posit a conceptualisation of a plurilingual speaker as a "free and active subject" (p.157), who activates their repertoire "according to his/her need, knowledge or whims, modifying or combining them where necessary" (Ibid.). Yet in these tasks, this can be constrained by the norms of 'school-ready' language and its framework of correctness, comparison and evaluation. Furthermore, as Blommaert et al. (2005) note, 'space' can be seen as both constitutive and agentive in organising patterns of multilingualism; we point to the significant role played by contextual factors, in particular the specific linguistic constellation of a class, which created affordances and constraints that impacted on opportunities to use and to be seen to use the home language, and accordingly the way that notions of perceived proficiency were encultured. This was further underpinned by task design, which often placed emphasis on the whole class sharing of home language 'production', in part in order to render home languages tangible and visible, but also to create a plurilingually open space. This focus on performance created opportunities to demonstrate confident linguistic production, which in turn acted as a platform for others (regardless of whether or not they were language peers) to construct notions of linguistic proficiency. However, in line with Peyer et al. (2020), we saw evidence that certain multilingual tasks could unwittingly entail "valorisation against students' will", particularly when pupils were required to perform their task in front of the class, to write or to spontaneously respond to closed questions.

By understanding more about the social construction of plurilingual competence, we are better placed to propose effective pedagogical models to enable pupils to use their linguistic repertoire in the service of learning and support positive self-identity. The competence diversity across a class presents a specific challenge for multilingual pedagogies such as *FML*, as they require the teacher to create inclusive spaces enable pupils to move from simply 'having' a repertoire towards developing plurilingual competence (see Piccardo 2018a) and that can frame even minimal proficiency in a constructive way. This can be a considerable challenge in the early days of implementation when planned activities might not be particularly nuanced. The dilemmas can be mitigated to a certain extent by pedagogical decisions such as varying task types to include high and low linguistic demand, as well as designing open and closed activities that offer alternatives to writing such as voice recording. Linguistic support needs to be carefully considered e.g. through the strategic grouping of pupils, the availability of translation technology or even sending tasks home in advance to prepare with the parents. Nonetheless, overall, this study suggests that considerable sensitivity is needed when setting up whole-class multilingual tasks and that they require a conceptualisation of language as an individual resource, as well as a community,

collaborative tool, and an understanding of the many varied expressions of linguistic 'expertise' that reaches across multiple domains. Perhaps more importantly, they need to be underpinned by bottom-up, pupil-led decisions about how and when they draw on different parts of their repertoire.

15. <u>Study 4</u>: Negotiating and Navigating Plurilingual Classroom Citizenship: Social Cohesion and *Functional Multilingual Learning*

Image 9: Multilingual 'words of politeness'
(Mme. Khadija)

Image 10: Poster made spontaneously at home by Luis, an Ecuadorian newcomer (M. Jean)

Image 11: Multilingual metaphor game (Mme. Luisa)

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15.1 Abstract

This chapter adopts the lens of social cohesion to explore the practices and perspectives of primary school pupils in Brussels, Belgium, when they were allowed to use their home languages in the classroom for the first time. Drawing on ethnographic data, the authors document how the pupils and teachers negotiated and navigated new sociolinguistic norms, generating novel forms of inclusive practice that reached across difference. Nonetheless, the introduction of a multilingual approach also destabilised feelings of class cohesion as the perceived benefits were unevenly spread across the group. The data highlights the complex terrain of multilingual insults, which fuelled pupil scepticism about an open language policy in the playground. This suggests that plurilingual classroom cohesion is best supported by approaches which openly embrace the potentially disruptive elements of a multilingual community, thereby enabling meaningful social learning.

15.2 Introduction

In common with many education systems across Europe, schools in Belgium often require pupils to *only* use the language-of-schooling when they are on school grounds (André et al., 2018; Pulinx et al., 2015). Many policy makers consider a monolingual school environment to be an essential condition to ensure that pupils from immigrant backgrounds master the dominant societal language, despite there being little empirical research to support such a position. It is furthermore conceived by some to be a key foundation of a harmonious and cohesive school community (Mampaey & Zanoni, 2013). However, increasingly, many scholars now advocate a multilingual teaching approach that allows pupils to use their home languages in mainstream classroom environments; such approaches have been found to promote more successful content and language learning (Auger, 2013; Sierens & Van Avermaet, 2014) and to bring benefits associated with individual well-being and cohesion within the classroom and school community (Meier, 2014).

Yet the introduction of a multilingual approach is not without its challenges; it entails teachers and pupils reframing their notions of valid language as well as negotiating new norms and expectations around what is means to be a plurilingual learner. This chapter describes the experiences and attitudes of late-primary pupils in a highly linguistically diverse school in Brussels, Belgium, when their teachers introduced *Functional Multilingual Learning (FML)* (Sierens & Van Avermaet, 2014) and they began to use their home language(s) in school for the first time. Using the lens of social cohesion, the authors seek to unravel how a multilingual approach impacted on the dynamics of socio-linguistic organisation, both horizontally (i.e. across peer groups), and vertically (i.e. in relation to the school hierarchy). The chapter addresses the following research questions:

- *How did the introduction of FML impact on feelings of social cohesion between peers?*
- *What kinds of language norms and restrictions emerged with the introduction of FML?*
- *How did the pupils frame the rules for this new linguistic functioning?*

These questions entail reflections on how the pupils perceived and enacted plurilingual classroom citizenship and how this needs to underpin school and classroom language policy. This chapter answers to Dooly and Vallejo's (2019) call for further research about pupil perspectives of transformative practices in education, whilst also deepening our understanding of children's perceptions of social cohesion, hitherto relatively understudied (UNICEF, 2019). It begins with an overview of how scholars have hitherto conceptualised social cohesion in general, and specifically how it can be applied as a heuristic at a micro/meso classroom level and adapted to reflect the perspectives of young children. This is followed by reflection on the disjunct between existing monolingual policies in schools and the multilingual realities of learners, and how new multilingual

approaches embody an alternative form of citizenship. The school setting and pupil participants are then presented, along with a description of the research methodology and analytical framework. This leads into an exploration of the *Findings* in order to show how the pupils experienced *FML* in different ways, and despite many positive dimensions, tensions remained around multilingual social interaction. Finally, in the *Conclusion*, the authors reflect on how the data presented can contribute to thinking on citizenship education and the implementation of multilingual pedagogies.

15.3 Literature review

15.3.1 Conceptualising children's experience of social cohesion in school contexts

The term 'social cohesion' is multi-faceted, often intertwining with concepts such as social inclusion/exclusion, social integration, community cohesion and social capital. However, it generally refers to a cluster of common values and purpose in a society, including a sense of belonging and solidarity for people from diverse backgrounds, leading to the development of a collective identity, grown out of community association (Cheong et al., 2007; Dubet et al., 2010). Chan et al. (2006) define social cohesion as:

> *"… a state of affairs concerning both the vertical and horizontal interactions among members of society as characterised by a set of attitudes and norms that include trust, a sense of belonging and the willingness to participate and help, as well as their behavioural manifestations."* (p. 290)

Research indicates that overall, a child will perceive their school community to be cohesive when they themselves feel safe, happy and comfortable (UNICEF, 2019); furthermore, when this is assured, they are more likely to be supportive to others (Osterman, 2016). Trust has been found to be a particularly significant dimension in children's perceptions of cohesion and entails respectful relationships with adults and positive peer interactions, characterised by an absence of violence and bullying (Robinson, 2014). A sense of belonging can be understood as the extent to which individuals feel personally accepted, respected, included and supported by others in their social environment (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). This entails pupils feeling consulted and listened to by teachers and being involved in decision making, as well as being able to access clear structures of help (Midgen et al., 2018). This sense of an individual's connection to the wider community has an impact on student motivation, learning outcomes and general well-being, and as such, is a necessary condition for inclusion and the creation of a powerful learning environment. Holland et al. (2007) maintain that inclusion is also tied to the strength of members' social networks and their social capital, the "resources embedded in a social structure that are accessed and/or mobilised in purposive actions" (Lin 2002, p. 29). Active and meaningful participation in the school and classroom community is associated with an equitable pedagogical approach which

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recognises structural barriers to learning, engenders a low sense of personal risk and enables peer support (Osterman, 2016; UNICEF, 2019).

Although the concept of social cohesion is most often used in quantitative analyses at macro-societal level, this study follows the practice of scholars who have applied it at more local levels in linguistically diverse schools (see Dagenais, Beynon, & Mathis, 2008; Meier, 2014). It allows us to traverse pupils' horizontal relationships with their peers and their vertical relationships with school authorities, and to explore the interplay between the objective dimensions of behaviour and the subjective experiences of individuals. We underpin this analysis with a consideration of school as a '*community of practice'* (Wenger, 2010) whereby pupils and teachers engage in activities and reflections in their personal participation in social life, collectively developing a regime of competence. This encompasses the possibility of ideological positionings, embedded in normative ideas and attitudes around social reality which in turn ground collective understandings on how community resources should be used appropriately and associated identity positions and possibilities (Meier 2014). More specifically, it offers an emic understanding of the pupils' understanding of their *speech community*, (García & Bartlett, 2007; Hymes, 1972), which is composed of nested and overlapping groups, in which locally situated practice is constantly in flux and plays a key part in constituting networks and affiliations and localised norms and rules of speaking.

15.3.2 The social cohesion motivation of monolingual policies in schools

Contemporary public discourse on the societal value of multilingualism in Europe is characterised by a striking paradox: on the one hand, individual plurilingualism is seen as a condition and a constituent of democratic citizenship in Europe and as enhancing openness towards other cultures and contributing to social cohesion (Beacco & Byram, 2007). On the other hand, this can also be accompanied by a disregard, denial or denigration of non-European languages, or those regarded as extraneous or without prestige in the local language ecology. These languages are seen to challenge traditional notions of the hegemony of national languages and as deflecting from "the social capital requisite for 'genuine' national belonging" (Crowley & Hickman, 2008, p. 1223).

Indeed, mastery of the dominant societal language functions as a signifier of affiliation and integration, and whilst it has been found to reduce barriers between groups and promote inclusion, this is not a guaranteed outcome (see Meier, Smala, & Lawson, 2017). When it comes to education, the functioning of a school is generally expected to provide an experience roughly consistent with citizenship principles (Heyneman, 2020), in line with its task of equipping pupils with the linguistic and cultural knowledge and skills to participate economically and socially in society, as well as ensuring the transmission of normative social values (De Rynck, 2018; Hambye & Richards, 2012; Meier, 2014). Schools often interpret this imperative as requiring the *exclusive* use of one language; the very act of using

home languages in a school space can be seen as a challenge to the idealised conceptualisation of the national language that schools embody (Varro, 2003) and as standing in direct contradiction to pupils' capacity to immerse themselves in the (often monolingual) vertical axis of the language (i.e. with institutions and indirectly, the rights and responsibilities associated with citizenship (Gajo 2001, cited in Auger and Romain 2015).

This reflects discourses at a wider societal level that give primacy to collective duty and create a sense of order and cohesion through codified (often traditional and unequal) hierarchies. For example, the citizenship curriculum for French-speaking Belgium aims to develop competencies that would promote harmonious co-existence in a diverse society, including being open to the plurality of cultures and beliefs (Fédération Wallonie Bruxelles, 2017b). Yet *linguistic* plurality is notably absent from the list of dimensions to be explored, echoing perhaps a latent belief that whilst "the melting pot can include diverse 'ingredients', certain elements - especially language - need to be melted down into a consistent mass" (Fond et al., 2017, p. 17). Democratic participation, and therefore social and political cohesion, are held to "demand one language, one meta discursive order, one voice" (Bauman & Briggs, 2000, p. 201). This kind of thinking provides further justification for schools to 'manage' the languages spoken by pupils. 'Politeness' becomes equated with functioning monolingually in the language of schooling (Rojo, 2013) and the school language rule becomes "not simply a way to maintain control in the classroom in order to teach, but rather in itself an instrument of moral education, central to the educational project" (Mampaey & Zanoni 2013, p.19). Yet this stands in stark contrast to the lived experiences of multilingual pupils and social complexities of the school environment.

15.3.3 The multilingual reality of urban schools

Indeed, many pupils in urban schools in Europe, be they monolingual or multilingual, are socialised in a multilingual environment. Although institutional language policies impose linguistic boundaries, we know that these are rarely watertight and that many plurilingual pupils regularly deviate from them both in the classroom and the playground (Agirdag, 2010; Cekaite & Evaldsson, 2008; Rosiers et al., 2016). Other pupils may subscribe to monolingual norms, strategically invoking or enacting them in order to seek social endorsement, and to be seen to participate in institutional shared values (Agirdag, 2010; Jaspers, 2011; Rydland & Kucherenko, 2013).

The literature suggests that primary-aged children tend to construct friendships across ethnic and linguistic groups and that whilst language may play a role in their choices, common interests and shared daily routines are of greater importance (Iqbal et al., 2017; Sime & Fox, 2015). Nonetheless, children are aware of differences and social divisions and their attitudes and behaviours towards other cultures can range from openness to defensiveness, possibly echoing assimilationist discourses, exhorting immigrant pupils to 'go integrate' (Auger,

2008; Harris, 2014). Auger and Le Pinchon-Vorstman (2021) note the communicative complexities inherent in a speech community where pupils not only have different home languages, but where they may also have unequal skills in terms of decoding the local pragmatic and linguistic norms. This can result in tensions, particularly around the area of swearing, which is generally discouraged in all forms in schools, all the more so in 'other' languages. Yet Dewaele (2021) points to the fact that for multilinguals, their dominant language tends to have greater emotional resonance, and feels more authentic and powerful, meaning that a home language insult delivered in school might simply be a natural and predictable form of emotional expression. It can also paradoxically protect interlocutors who do not understand, enabling them to 'save face', or alternatively can serve to signal a rejection of an alienating school culture, whereby the pupil actively adopts and exploits negative stereotypes (Auger & Romain, 2015). However, insults are not always about distancing or negative emotions; they can also be part of friendly banter, and, according to Dewaele (2021) constitute "a typical "in-group" activity that marks identity and belonging" (p. 8).

Thus, the pupils' language choice and instincts play an intrinsic role in the collective negotiation of classroom norms and the enactment of social inclusion and exclusion. Rydland and Kucherenko (2013) stress that:

> *"... children are not simply reproducing the language ideologies that are communicated to them by parents or teachers. Linguistic differences become meaningful to children to the extent that they perceive them to be significant in their social world. Thus, as social actors in preschool and school, children engage in complex regulatory processes in which they monitor and shape their own and others' behaviour in relation to linguistic differences."* (p. 145)

As such, it is critical that we examine the ways in which children engage with their own multilingual identity, practices and attitudes, and how these enmesh with those of their peers and wider school community. This positions them as generators of de facto language policy and embeds reflection on the 'lived curriculum' i.e. the pupils' interpretation and enactment of the curriculum as delivered by a teacher (Aoki, 1993). Such child-centred perspectives are notably absent from monolingual approaches, which claim to create a level playing field by anchoring interaction and learning exclusively in the language of schooling. However, this is beginning to change.

15.3.4 Social cohesion and classroom citizenship in multilingual teaching approaches

In recent years, multilingual pedagogies have begun to emerge which encourage teachers to actively reframe linguistic differences as valid cognitive and social tools and to engage critically with wider linguistic and intercultural questions. This study explores the early implementation of one such approach, that of

Functional Multilingual Learning (*FML*) (Sierens & Van Avermaet 2014). *FML* recognises fluid, heteroglossic language practices, and seeks to leverage pupils' full linguistic repertoire across the curriculum to enhance access to classroom instructions, academic language, and conceptual understanding. It is pupil-led, yet teacher mediated, seeking to engender a powerful multilingual learning environment that promotes autonomous learning. In practice, this involves the teacher establishing an open classroom language policy in collaboration with the pupils, in part as a means of creating a safe classroom environment. Adopting a multilingual lens across the curriculum, the teacher facilitates the use of home languages in support of functional objectives, through a combination of planned tasks, linguistic and content scaffolding, as well as spontaneous responses to the translanguaging 'corriente' or 'current' in the classroom (García & Kleyn, 2016).

By recognising individual plurilingual repertoires and situating the locus of control on the pupils' active use, the classroom community expands its collective understanding of the community linguistic repertoire, in particular the dimensions available for legitimate use, thus reframing relations of power both horizontally and vertically (Cummins, 2001). In such a paradigm, 'classroom citizenship' is governed by a cosmopolitan ideal, where the focus lies not on consensus but on co-responsibility, the acknowledgement of 'otherness', and communicative interaction as the building blocks for 'active citizenship' (Jansen et al., 2006). This is necessarily predicated on the establishment of expectations on the boundaries of socially acceptable behaviour, whilst also offering a place where pupils can openly address conflict (Arriaza & Rocha, 2016).

Based on the research conducted for this study, we note that there is little research that explores multilingual pedagogies explicitly from the perspective of social cohesion, although numerous studies address the individual dimensions of participation, trust and a sense of belonging. One exception to this is Gabriela Meier (2014) who found that social cohesion was enhanced in a two-way immersion system in Berlin where pupils learned in both of their dominant languages, suggesting that the curriculum is a powerful source of actual and symbolic linguistic validation and can engender genuine inclusion. This is clearly more complex in mainstream linguistically diverse schools, yet Van Der Wildt, Van Avermaet and Van Houtte (2017) still found that tolerant multilingual practices in schools in Flanders enhanced a sense of school belonging. Such practices have been found to expand participation possibilities, particularly for emergent bilingual pupils, and contribute to school cohesion by capitalising on the role that plurilingual children can play as language and social mediators in the process of learning (Angelova et al., 2006). This also supports tolerance and co-operative behaviour: De Backer et al. (2019b) found that when some pupils were offered multilingual assessment accommodations, their peers saw this as inclusive and fair, particularly if it supported learning. A linguistically open classroom has also been found to generate trust and reciprocity through the act of jointly using individual linguistic resources in order to achieve a task or to carry out classroom business (Duarte, 2019). This creates 'safe spaces' which enable non-standard voices to be heard, thus fostering trusting relationships underpinned by enhanced

intercultural competence (Cummins, 2001; Mary & Young, 2017). It also encompasses a more nuanced understanding of the emotional resonance of home languages (see Dewaele & Pavlenko, 2004) and the critical role they can play in friendships.

Nonetheless, when previously covert linguistic practices are legitimised, long standing rules are upended, and the locus of power for managing for 'good' linguistic behaviour shifts, potentially acting as a threat to the existing shared understanding of what constitutes classroom cohesion. Studies note that some pupils express feelings of shame at their home language (Sierens 2009), suggesting that they struggle to include it as a meaningful part of their school identity. This may be linked to a struggle to navigate disparities in their communicative capacity across their repertoire, and some pupils prefer not to draw attention to their 'differentness' (Peyer et al., 2020; Saffigna et al., 2011; Ticheloven et al., 2019). Finally, the enhanced feelings of school belonging cited above were also not universal across all types of learners; in Van Der Wildt, Van Avermaet and Van Houtte's study (2017), Dutch dominant (i.e. majority language) plurilingual pupils seemed to suffer from a tolerant multilingual approach; the authors speculate that this might be because their parents prioritised the language of schooling, thus creating a complex mismatch for the pupil to navigate.

15.4 Setting and participants

French is the dominant societal language in Brussels, although from an administrative point of view, it is bilingual, functioning in both French and Dutch. Nonetheless, the city is characterised by considerable linguistic and cultural diversity; the use of well over a hundred languages has been documented, and over half of the city's children using at least two languages in daily life (Robert et al., 2020). A recent report on citizens' perceptions of social cohesion in the city drew a picture of an "urban mosaic", with a tendency for residents to live in "bubbles" characterised by strong local connections and socio-economically (and to a lesser extent, culturally) homogenous social networks (De Rynck, 2018). Multilingualism is seen by many as enriching the city and as proof of its cosmopolitan nature: yet for some it is alienating, often associated with "linguistic complexity", with the extensive use of non-national languages in certain areas felt to be a barrier to inter-group relations. The report identifies schools as the site *par excellence* to foster social cohesion, a point underlined by Sven Gatz, the Brussels Minister for Multilingualism. He advocates for the recognition of children's home languages in schools, coupled with the need to reinforce the learning of both main societal languages, as well as English, as a means of developing "shared citizenship" and widening economic and cultural participation (Gatz, 2019).

The school in this study was French-speaking and was situated in an area of the city with a mixed population in terms of socio-economic background. Nonetheless, the pupils generally came from the lower end of the spectrum and the school received extra funding to address additional needs associated with poverty. It also

tended to attract newcomer pupils, in part because it had space available, and in contrast to the more prestigious neighbouring school, which attracted local pupils from more wealthy backgrounds and was generally full.

The 92 pupil-participants in this study were between ten and twelve years old, and were almost all born either abroad, or in Belgium to non-Belgian parents, with only a small fraction born to 'heritage' French-speaking Belgian parents (for the most part, these pupils were more or less 'monolingual'). In each class there were between nine and thirteen home languages used, the most common of which were Arabic, Turkish and Spanish. Each of the four participating classes contained around five pupils who were the sole-speakers of their language, and there was a wide range of language competencies, ranging from recently arrived 'emergent bilinguals,' still learning the language of schooling, to pupils who could read and write in their additional language, to those with mostly (sometimes very limited) oral competence. All pupils learned Dutch for two hours a week.

The school had a clear language policy, printed in the pupils' school diary: "Our school is French-speaking, and the language of teaching is French. We ask all of our pupils to immerse themselves in this language and to use it." It was enforced in a rather patchy way and was based on the Headteacher's firm conviction of the learning benefits of a monolingual immersion environment, but also that it ensured openness and tolerance, thus avoiding isolationist behaviour between language groups. The vast majority of interactions between pupils took place in French but many reported using their home language in school, for whispered questions in the classroom, for games and jokes in the playground etc., albeit with varying degrees of frequency. Analysis of the children's friendship networks indicated that almost all of them engaged in friendships with pupils speaking a variety of home languages, with occasional pockets of shared-language reciprocal friendships, particularly between Spanish-speaking newly arrived pupils, and between the few children of Belgian descent. It is salient to note that for the duration of the study, the language rule for the school at large (i.e. including the playground) remained unchanged.

The four teacher participants in the study showed positive attitudes towards multilingual teaching but all reported that they had little idea of how to implement it in practice. Following a short training course about *FML* delivered by the primary researcher, the four teachers designed their own multilingual activities and wider classroom practices. Their tasks included linguistic comparisons, translation activities, pupils teaching others words in their language, multilingual/multimodal science reports, and multilingual mind maps. The classes varied in the number and type of activities proposed, as well as the language regime developed by the teacher. In two of the classes, the teachers stipulated that home languages should only be used in multilingual lessons or when authorised by them; conversely, the two other teachers placed virtually no restrictions on language choice. The teachers initially grouped the children by language, but over time, moved towards mixed language groups.

15.5 Research design

This study is part of a wider research project carried out in 2018 within a linguistic ethnographic framework (Copland & Creese, 2015). The principal researcher spent between two and three days a week in the four classes, acting as a participant observer (Schensul et al., 1999). This enabled her to develop a certain rapport with pupils as well as to develop a deeper understanding of classroom norms. She observed five or six planned multilingual lessons per class over the course of 7 months (total 23, filmed in two of the classes). After each lesson, a focus-group of six pupils from each class (a total of 24, representing a cross-section of languages, linguistic competencies and gender) discussed the dimensions of the activities, focusing on their own experiences, and then characterising those of their classmates. The focus groups were structured around a 'conversation rubric' (K. T. Anderson, 2009), designed to engender pupil-led reflexive discussion on key elements of multilingual pedagogy: cognitive, affective, social, home/school relations and the relationship with the teacher. All pupil participants completed a language self-evaluation chart to indicate their competencies across their repertoire, as well as a written final evaluation, in which they rated their preferences in terms of the multilingual activities and described their perception of the class language regime. The data collection was conducted in French and translations in this chapter are our own.

The analytical approach adopted sought to engender an emic understanding of the impact of *FML* on the localised norms and rules of speaking and how a new 'regime of competence' was negotiated by pupils (Wenger, 2010). Following Merriam (2009), interview transcripts, field notes, photographs of the school environment and of the pupils' work were subjected to initial inferential coding, identifying broad themes in terms of both horizontal (peer) and vertical (school and teacher) relationships. This was further refined using categories from scholarship on social cohesion, all the while mindful that much is derived from adult-led definitions (see UNICEF, 2019). Accordingly, our working understanding of the three principal dimensions (a willingness to participate and help, trust, and feelings of belonging) were supplemented by literature on language ideologies, multilingual approaches and children's linguistic practices in multilingual primary school settings. Emerging themes prompted questions which were iteratively embedded in the data collection, particularly in on-going focus-group exchanges and the final evaluations. Axial codes were developed further by examining how different themes cut across how individuals characterised their own practice and emotions, how they described those of their classmates, as well as how others in the class positioned them. The behavioural dimensions of classroom cohesion were identified using "event maps" (Green & Castanheira, 2012), based on iterative viewings of the video data. These were used to map language affordances and participation practices and were subject to additional thematic coding, drawing on themes identified in the pupils' interview commentary. The linguistic dimension of friendships across the classes was identified through sociograms (Iqbal et al., 2017).

15.6 Results

We begin by exploring the three main horizontal dimensions of social cohesion (i.e. those relating to pupils' attitudes and behaviours towards themselves and their peers), before addressing their views on the vertical dimensions of classroom and school rules.

15.6.1 Participation and willingness to help: Uneven reframing of linguistic capital

From the outset, *FML* opened up new possibilities for participation and many pupils joined in multilingual tasks with enthusiasm, keen to share their home language, to learn those of their friends, as well as use other languages not present in the class. Emergent bilinguals (i.e. newcomer pupils) tended to be more reticent in the whole-class tasks, perhaps because participation often required the use of French, but they were more forthcoming when using their home language in individualised scaffolding. Some became adept at using a tablet to translate instructions and many responded positively to encouragement to complete writing tasks in their home language, producing long and complex texts. The creative use of language repertoires for peer support became increasingly normalised, sometimes capitalising on linguistic similarity in the absence of other speakers of a language. For example, Eva (all names are pseudonyms), a Portuguese-speaking new arrival, worked with Spanish speakers to create a multilingual Maths vocabulary list. Critically, these teacher-led practices began to prompt the pupils to identify plurilingual openings themselves. Conscious of her halting French, Eva asked to participate in a class sketch in Portuguese (the others performed in French); in other classes the emergent bilingual pupils began bringing in extra homework completed in home languages.

Under the previous monolingual framework emergent bilinguals rarely spoke and often simply copied their neighbour as the teachers waited for time and exposure to bring their French up to a level that would enable them to join in. The plurilingual classroom environment radically reframed the opportunities for them to participate in a meaningful way and to present themselves as competent, knowledgeable learners. This is highlighted by one pupil talking about a Peruvian new arrival in her class:

> *"She knew a lot of things in Spanish, and it meant she participated a lot... because otherwise, she kind of stays on the side...she doesn't talk... we do all the talking... and today she joined in a lot."*

Despite some pupils believing that monolingual immersion was beneficial for language learning, multilingual practice was generally seen by the class at large as fair and justified for these pupils ("it helps them to learn"), as well as enhancing co-operation ("if we can use another language, it's easier for us to explain things to them").

However, this was more controversial for longer-term dual language learners. Across the class as a whole, access to participation was uneven and depended to a considerable extent on the linguistic and cognitive demands of the task and on pupils having school appropriate linguistic resources in their home language. Low-demand tasks such as pupils teaching each other words of greeting in their home language were popular and highly inclusive, in contrast to more academic tasks such as writing science reports, which effectively excluded those pupils unable to write in their home language or who lacked the technical vocabulary. Other factors included the specific language composition of the class; when working in language groups, differences in home language competence were dissipated and weaker pupils could be supported by their peers. Sole speakers were often anxious about performing their language 'alone', and their openings for active participation were even more limited when they spoke a language not present on translation software (e.g. Lingala, Mbo). In a few cases, pupils even refused to participate in the activities, sometimes rather dramatically, and often out of frustration at their linguistic limitations and the perceived associated social consequences.

This was particularly poignant for the few monolingual pupils who found themselves unable to contribute translations or to teach their peers new words. Benjamin, one such pupil, regularly objected to the multilingual activities, regretting his lack of linguistic capital:

> *"I am really not that keen on continuing the [*multilingual*] lessons…. with all these people who speak several languages…. when you only speak two, and they're the two most common languages in Belgium… well, honestly, it's hard for me."*

Some pupils could identify this struggle: Fatima, an Arabic speaker in his class said, "I'm not sure [about multilingual activities], because it's good for us but not for him."

15.6.2 Feelings of belonging: Refracting language community dynamics and linguistic knowledge

Many pupils expressed feelings of relief and joy at being able to use their home languages, with one saying, "I feel free when I can use my language in the classroom". Many equated it to "sharing [their] culture", and said they were "proud" to demonstrate their linguistic knowledge. However, at the same time, these positive feelings often went hand in hand with feelings of anxiety and embarrassment, invariably associated with linguistic insecurity or a fear of being mocked by others. Kadiatou, a Pulaar speaker said:

> *"I'm fine when I'm speaking with people who speak the same language as me, for example with my sister I'm fine… but in front of people I hardly know…I'm a bit scared."*

Indeed, the presence (or absence) of language peers changed both opportunities for participation (as outlined above) but also the 'sense' of multilingual practice in relation to the wider collective. Peta, the sole Romanian speaker in his class said that he disliked the artifice of him addressing the class in his home language: "they don't understand me so it's like I'm talking for no reason"; other sole speakers felt they were of less interest to the class community than the bigger language groups. Peer support could be constructive but could also sometimes be the source of unwelcome correction and public humiliation if a mistake was made. In such situations, the teacher could no longer function as the arbiter of what was 'correct', and some pupils were uncomfortable with the fact that they knew their work in their home language contained errors, but it was still validated as acceptable. This contributed to a feeling on the part of some pupils that the displacement of 'home' language practices to school was "bizarre" and "not real school".

To a certain extent, this 'performance anxiety' was born out when we examined how the pupils characterised the home language practices of others. Pupils who were seen to be "happy" and "proud" were invariably those who engaged in confident and extensive multilingual interaction and were seen to build stronger connections across the class. This dynamic is evident in the comment made by Dimena, a sole speaker of Mbo, who says of a group of five Lingala speakers in her class:

> *"When they spoke in their language, they were much more relaxed, and they talked lots and lots and lots. So, they were together a lot more... when they were helping each other, they were speaking their language."*

Conversely, the monolingual pupils were seen as building less connections through multilingual work, mostly because they were seen to lack the linguistic capital to contribute adequately to tasks. Whilst there was considerable empathy expressed for the minority positions occupied by monolinguals and sole speakers, some pupils admitted to laughing at other languages, finding the sounds "weird".

Nonetheless, there was a prevailing desire to learn other pupils' languages, particularly those of friends. Pupils showed a marked preference for working in mixed- language groups, rather than language-based groups. Learning the languages of others was more valued than teaching their own language to the class, and collaborative multilingual activities (e.g. creating a poem in multiples languages) were preferred over more individual tasks such as making a dual language mind-map in French. Myriam reflected this global feeling when she said:

> *"We shouldn't stay in our little bubble either…. we need to go and swim a bit in other bubbles…. I shouldn't stay the whole time in my Amharic…I also need to go a bit into Lingala, Portugal, Spanish…."*

This kind of attitude stands in stark contrast to the Headteacher's notion that a monolingual norm equated to tolerance. Overall, the pupils noted that the

multilingual tasks had enabled them to more accurately understand and find connections between their linguistic worlds. A Greek speaker and a Russian speaker identified the fact that they could read each other's alphabets and certain stereotypes were undone; for example, one pupil realised she had assumed that the two black pupils in the class spoke the same language at home.

15.6.3 Trust: The potential for linguistic misbehaviour

Even though classroom multilingual practice was almost always seen by the pupils as respectful and co-operative, their conceptualisation of multilingual *social* interaction was infused with concerns about whether their peers could be trusted to not insult others in other languages. Yet many reported actively embracing this possibility, revealing complex terrain around the way they strategically aligned and disaligned from behavioural norms. They described four different kinds of actual and potential insults in multiple languages:

1) Deliberate insults [in a language other than French], designed to exclude: Such insults were seen to be more potent than those in French (e.g. "…if he insults me, I don't care, I'll insult him in Arabic") and sometimes, somewhat unfair. Yet numerous pupils expressed a certain degree of furtive pleasure of engaging in an illicit, yet powerful practice ("…its funny!"). Concrete examples of aggressive insults were in fact rare, but they often centred on negative portrayals of newly arrived pupils, who did not yet speak French.

2) Deliberate insults, designed to be understood: Conversely, numerous pupils expressed surprise that anyone would bother to deliver an insult that couldn't be understood. Mehmet regularly used Turkish to call foul on the football field – but only with fellow Turkish speakers, and Kenza identified the potentially playful nature of such insults, saying "us Arabs, when we're insulting each other, we're having a laugh".

3) Involuntary insults: The spontaneous nature of insults was evoked by many pupils, and it was clear that their home language often had deeper emotional resonance. Klara pointed out that "if you're angry, words sometimes come out without you realising what you've said".

4) Shared and collaborative insults: Mehmet noted that the first thing his classmates wanted to learn from him in Turkish were "rude words", illustrating the fact that pupils from all language backgrounds knew insults in multiple languages. A mixed language group of girls in one class used a series of secret names in Lingala for the teachers ("Cat", "Witch", "Shouty"), indicating that this was meaningful cross-lingual currency, to be traded in friendships, regardless of whether the speakers shared their home language.

The question of multilingual insults cut across varying understandings of what constituted 'normal' behaviour for a plurilingual individual, yet all the while often supporting the monolingual expectation of the school. This dilemma is made clear in the following exploration of the language rules.

15.6.4 Vertical relationships: Who should decide the language rules?

Globally, the pupils expressed gratitude to the teacher that the constraints of the school language rule had been lifted and they enjoyed the repositioning of roles whereby the teacher became a learner of their languages. In the final written evaluation, all of the pupil participants were asked to describe the language rules in their class in terms of what they could/should do and couldn't /shouldn't do. *Table 9* shows the number of responses in each class, classified in terms of how the pupils framed their descriptions.

	'Permission' framing	**'Purpose' framing**	**'Terms and conditions' framing**
Examples of pupil comments	"We can use our languages in multilingual activities." "We are not allowed to use our languages in class."	"To help someone else understand." "To learn about others." "To participate."	"As long as we don't insult each other." "As long as we translate for other people if they ask."
Class A: M. Jean *Open language policy*	10 answers	9	12
Class B: Mme. Luisa *Teacher decides when HL can be used*	17	7	1
Class C: Mme. Caroline *Teacher decides when HL can be used*	16	1	0
Class D: Mme. Khadija *Open language policy*	12	6	0

Table 9: Summary of the pupils' description of the language rules in operation in their class at the end of the study

In classes B, C and D, the responses lie heavily around the axis of permission. This is not particularly surprising in classes B and C, given the more restricted language policy introduced by the teachers. However, the pupils in class A were significantly more oriented towards the social consequences of multilingual practice; this was

probably in part due to conversations with their teacher around rights and responsibilities but also perhaps to the way and the extent to which he implemented *FML*. His theories of learning were centred around pupils moving spontaneously across their plurilingual repertoire and he facilitated extensive, natural plurilingual learning practices that did not separate the pupils' social and linguistic worlds. In contrast, although the pupils in class B reported using their home languages frequently in class, aside from the tasks, this was generally restricted to activities such as answering the register in a different language, reflecting a teacher-led, compartmentalised approach to language repertoires.

In a follow-up task, the focus group pupils were asked whether they would advocate changing the school rule of "French only" to one which would allow them to use the language of their choice in classrooms, the playground, corridors etc. Note that during the study *FML* had been implemented in the classroom only and only in four out of twenty-six classes in the school. The pupils' responses, shown in *Table 10*, were mitigated and complex.

	Number of pupils	Pupil explanations
Yes, change the 'French only' rule	10	"Nothing would change." "Insults depend on the person, not the language." "To help others."
Maybe change the 'French only' rule	4	"Only when the teacher allows it." "To help others." "We might not understand each other."
No, don't change 'French only' the rule	10	"Disorder and insults, leading to violence." "We wouldn't make as many friends." "Languages of the country are French and Dutch."

Table 10: Pupil responses to the question of whether the school 'French only' language rule should change, and there should be free choice of language

Although the sample size is too small to draw widely applicable conclusions across the whole group, there was little difference between the classes, learner type nor language groups. Pupils who were the sole speakers of their language in their class (and often the school) were more likely to be reticent, possibly because a change of policy wouldn't necessarily open up new communicative possibilities for them, nor legitimise existing covert home language use. Benjamin, the one monolingual pupil in the focus groups, was firmly against the suggestion. The tensions around playground language use were crystallised by a comment by Javier, a Spanish-speaking emergent bilingual who was shocked when the researcher told him that

in some schools there were no language rules in the playground. He replied: "Woah. So that means [the pupils] can hit anyone they want?". Even though he would seem to be a net beneficiary of multilingual practice and a more open school language rule (he regularly used Spanish with his friends), for him, the potential benefits would not outweigh the threat of anti-social behaviour.

15.7 Discussion

There is an increasing body of research about the potential cognitive, social and community benefits of a multilingual approach in the mainstream primary classroom, but relatively little of it seeks to give voice to the experiences of the pupils (Vallejo & Dooly, 2019). This study underlines the importance of seeking their views, and in particular, of going beyond the experiences of emergent bilinguals, who tend to be the main focus of research. It is critical that we attempt to understand the opportunities and constraints of multilingual practice across all of the diverse linguistic profiles present in a class, and how these intermesh across the community. Prada and Turnbull (2018) speak of social justice in the classroom that is based on "a non-threatening equality between bi-/multi-lingual speakers' languages and associated identities" (p. 18), which in theory means equitable opportunities for access to learning practices, underpinned by the positive positioning of home languages in the school community. Whilst this laudable goal clearly requires a radical reframing of existing monolingual practices, we also need to avoid overly idealised portrayals which assume that multilingual practice de facto equates to actual and perceived inclusive practice for all pupils. Indeed, this study indicates the need for multilingual approaches to address potential structural, contextual and dispositional complexities in a holistic way (see also Duarte and Günther-van der Meij, 2018; Ticheloven et al.,2019).

The lens of social cohesion adopted in this study enabled an understanding of the way the pupils perceived and negotiated their place in the plurilingual class and in the school community, specifically in the context of the reframing of linguistic norms. The validity of translingual practice for emergent bilingual pupils went relatively uncontested by the community at large, however, for longer term dual language learners, the reality of the redistribution of linguistic resources revealed a complex dynamic of elements, refracting, amongst other things, their competence in their home language, the presence of language peers and access to translation technology. For some, multilingual practice valorised their individual repertoire, opening up spaces for them to be validated in the whole class community as a 'competent' plurilingual pupil. Yet a certain proportion of pupils struggled to actualise the positive positioning of their home language and to convert symbolic capital into meaningful linguistic and didactic capital (Rojo, 2013). Although the teachers maintained that the whole class tasks were key to their implementation of *FML* and to the creation of a plurilingually tolerant and open class, the activities were nonetheless the site of tensions around the need to perform, ideally as a school-oriented, normative, balanced-bilingual. It was sometimes preferable for certain pupils to revert back to safer monolingual

(French) school norms, particularly when they perceived privileged positions that they themselves could not access. Thus, this study highlights the social consequences of a specific tension inherent in multilingual tasks i.e. that by seeking to assign genuine school value to home languages, pupils are indirectly required to use them in a school-like way, for which they are often not prepared.

The Headteacher maintained that the French-only policy equated to 'openness' to all language groups, yet the data from the pupils suggests that a multilingual approach could generate multiple forms of inclusive practice that reached across difference. The pupils privileged outward-looking 'bridging' capital over inward-looking 'bonding' capital, seeking to build connections across their heterogeneous community, rather than reinforcing language-based affiliations (Putnam, 2000). Yet at the same time, this study supports research that suggests that practices that produce more inclusive practice in the classroom do not necessarily translate into other settings, for example, the playground (Arriaza & Rocha, 2016; Osterman, 2016). For all of their enthusiastic embracing of the classroom plurilingual community, many pupils were reluctant to relax the rules in the playground, and seemed to fear that the change would unleash a torrent of multilingual misbehaviour. The school monolingual rule was clearly felt to provide an authoritative boundary that stemmed potential excesses, but their views possibly suggest that the pupils had integrated wider societal discourses that a multilingual community, and in particular natural and spontaneous multilingual interaction, somehow inevitably implied chaos and social breakdown. This often crystallised around a fear of insults in unknown languages, both on the part of teachers and pupils. The data from this study echoes previous research findings in terms of the various pragmatic functions of multilingual insults, e.g. distancing, group bonding etc. (see Auger, 2008; Dewaele, 2021), but shows that there seemed to be little reflection or understanding on the part of the school of the emotional resonance of the dominant language nor the fact that insults (in any language) are a natural feature of the management of social life for young people. The linguistic dimension created an additional taboo, underlining a common deficit paradigm whereby schools only identify the perceived negative effect of using the home language in school. Our data indicates that a 'one-language fits all' rule for a linguistically diverse school potentially renders it more complex for individual pupils to reconcile the divergent parts of their identity in a coherent, constructive way.

School can be considered as preparatory ground for pupils to understand and enact the supposed shared values and normative behaviours for wider society. As such, a monolingual school rule entails the assumption that public interaction should only occur in the dominant societal language, a position that plainly contradicts the plurilingual reality of the pupils' lives, and indeed those they are likely to live as adults. The absence of linguistic diversity as a topic in the citizenship curriculum thus reflects a distorted focus on codified rather than active citizenship (Jansen et al., 2006); pupils are simply incited to follow a rule, where they could instead be provided with a framework to foster sociolinguistic competence i.e. an understanding of how to use language that is appropriate to specific social contexts. Moreover, given that a monolingual rule supresses natural

(and sometimes necessary) multilingual interaction, it almost presupposes that pupils will deviate from it, inviting an active and mutually complicit disregard for formal rules. Furthermore, the data in this study suggests that the restriction of multilingual interaction to moments where it is permitted by the teacher misses a key opportunity for pupils to engage in social learning, whereby their participation in social practices connects creative problem solving to social responsibility (Wildemeersch et al., 1998). As Wenger (2010) points out, being involved in social practices is conditional for learning how to participate; it is not the result.

15.8 Conclusion

These tensions are perhaps unsurprising. Transformation is likely to be turbulent and to a considerable extent, the wide divergence of experiences and positionings of self and others described in this study is doubtless indicative of the pupils' steady internalisation of zero-sum discourses around the use of home languages in school (Rojo, 2013). The monolingual norm becomes embedded in every-day language socialisation practices, leading to learners seeing the world in a certain way which is based on prevailing ideologies widely shared across the group. To counter this, Meier (2018) advocates for the purposeful embedding of positive self-evaluation in multilingual pedagogies, stressing the need to validate emerging plurilingualism and the importance of learner autonomy. In order to be effective, it seems clear that such an approach also needs to encompass realistic, but potentially disruptive dimensions of multilingual socialisation, such as insults. Indeed, scholars of diversity stress that social cohesion doesn't necessarily entail harmony (see Jedwab 2003). A plurilingual repertoire is by its very nature imbalanced, and those present in a class will always be diverse, thus potentially entailing differing participation opportunities across the group. But as long as a pupil's full linguistic repertoire is regarded as extraneous to learning and socialisation, we cannot create a meaningful multilingual identity across the group. To be sure, one sort of cohesion can emerge from a monolingual norm, but it is one based on an idealised "imagined community" (B. Anderson, 1991), rather than the actual community that pupils belong to, replete with complexity and contradictions as it may be.

VI Conclusion

16. Conclusion

I begin this conclusion with a brief review of the aims of the study and its global significance, followed by a summary of each of the sub-studies. I then critically review the connections between them and outline the contribution of this research to our understanding of how multilingual pedagogies are implemented and how teachers and pupils navigate the sometimes contradictory symbolic, pedagogical and social dynamics at play. This reflection is traversed by consideration of the binaries of home/school language and concludes by showing how the empirical findings of this study can contribute to the ongoing theoretical debate about whether the act of deconstructing 'named languages' is a fundamental condition for transformative practice. Finally, I offer a series of pedagogical principles and practices for *FML* that might go some way to addressing the tensions identified.

16.1 Research aims and general significance

This study set out to advance both the theory and empirical exploration of *Functional Multilingual Learning (FML)* (Sierens & Van Avermaet, 2014), a classroom approach which positions the full linguistic repertoire of plurilingual learners, and their fluid, translingual practice, as potential sources of capital for learning. My principal research question was as follows: *What kinds of dynamics, opportunities and constraints does* Functional Multilingual Learning (FML) *present in a mainstream linguistically diverse primary classroom?* I sought to answer it by following four teachers and their pupils in a primary school in Brussels as they moved away from the 'French-only' rule of their school and experimented with *FML* over a period of seven months. I investigated the multilingual practices and tasks that the teachers put into place, and traced the different ways the pupils participated, and how they characterised their own multilingual practice and that of their peers. I sought to understand how these multilingual participation and positioning practices recursively shaped individual and collective understandings of multilingual classroom life and enacted the local value of a multilingual repertoire. Globally, this study investigates how this dynamic interplay shaped what pupils and teachers were seen as being able or allowed to do and how this impacted on what it meant to be 'a pupil' or 'a teacher' in these experimental *FML* classrooms (Rampton, 2009).

To the best of my knowledge, this is the first study of a transversal multilingual pedagogy in a school in French-speaking Belgium, many of which operate on a monolingual norm. Thus, it offers policy makers and teachers an alternative perspective, and shows how the flexible use of 'home languages' can reframe understandings of 'legitimate language' in school and thus can contribute to the creation of more equitable conditions for learning, classroom belonging and school citizenship for language minoritised pupils (Sierens & Van Avermaet, 2014). This is pertinent in Belgium given the considerable achievement gap between 'native' and 'immigrant' pupils (Bricteux et al., 2019); it speaks to

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concerns that the prevailing assimilationist climate in the education system only offers subtractive, deficit visions of multilingualism and the fact that teachers have little training and low self-efficacy when it comes to the multilingual classroom (Meunier & Gloesner, 2023).

The triple focus on the dynamics, opportunities and constraints of *FML* addresses the need for more 'bottom-up' understandings of the implementation of multilingual approaches in mainstream settings and which dig deeper into the ways in which the full classroom collectivity adapts existing pedagogical and sociolinguistic norms when beginning to work multilingually (Afitska, 2020; Bonacina-Pugh et al., 2021; Duarte, 2018). This study demonstrates how teachers move between the symbolic, scaffolding and epistemological functions of translingual classroom practice (Duarte, 2018) and the fact that inclusive instructional design needs to take account of the interface between individual asymmetric repertoires and the varying affordances of the collective linguistic repertoire. The perspective of children is under-represented in research on multilingual pedagogies (Dooly & Vallejo, 2020) and their voice in this study underlines the socio-emotional significance of dissolving the hard boundaries between 'home' and 'school' language; it shows how pupils deploy discursive strategies to be positioned as legitimate plurilingual speaker-hearers in a new linguistic market, which inadvertently created a new class of 'legitimate peripheral participant' (Lave & Wenger, 1991). As such, this research offers examples of powerful practice but also sheds light on teacher and pupil hesitations identified in other studies (e.g. Peyer et al., 2020; Sierens, 2009; Sierens & Ramaut, 2018; Ticheloven et al., 2019).

In short, this study demonstrates the fact that dynamics, opportunities and constraints are deeply intertwined and cannot be understood one without the other. What represented a multilingual opportunity for some pupils represented a symbolic constraint for others; cycles of participation, self- and interpersonal positionings gave changing meanings to different forms of interaction, resulting in a range of ways to 'be' and 'to be seen to be' a plurilingual pupil in the classroom. These questions are significant if we are to propose models of multilingual education which are implementable and sustainable on the ground. Thus, this study speaks to the need to take inspiration from what has worked in other settings, but also to take account of local ideological and pedagogical contexts and i.e. not to assume seamless transferability. This constitutes a foundation to contribute to broader, ontological debates about the nature of language and social justice in education, thus also reaching into the global and historical forces that have fashioned the local status quo.

16.2 Summary of the four sub-studies

I begin with summary of the findings of the four sub-studies which comprise the main body of this thesis, highlighting their contribution to theory and the empirical literature.

Study 1: Functional Multilingual Learning*: Traversing the vertical and horizontal dimensions of language repertoires.*

The first study is an exploration of the theoretical foundations of *FML* with the secondary aim of situating it within wider discourses about multilingual education, specifically in relation to 'translanguaging as pedagogy' (e.g. García & Kleyn, 2016), the current dominant global model, and 'language awareness' (e.g. Candelier, 2003), the locally relevant model to French-speaking Belgium. I demonstrate the linguistic ontological foundations of *FML* as rooted in Heugh's (2015) concept of 'functional multilingualism' which combines horizontal and vertical language practices and show how this results in transformative goals for educational practice which are underpinned by critical, strategic compromise and a realistic sense of teacher agency. In contrast, the 'unitary' translanguaging model allocates teachers a moral and political imperative that, in some senses, is predicated on wholesale reform of the prevalent linguistic paradigm in society. I note that in reality, the pedagogical methods of translanguaging are very similar to those advocated by *FML*, and compare these to the weekly, pre-prepared lessons of *Éveil Aux Langues* which treat languages as separate semiotic systems and embodiments of culture, and where transformative ambitions are focused on the development of linguistic and metalinguistic knowledge and general valorisations of linguistic diversity.

This study positions *FML* within the current debate about the transformative claims of translanguaging (Bonacina-Pugh et al., 2021; Jaspers, 2018; Leung & Valdés, 2019). It demonstrates the considerable overlaps between the three pedagogical methods explored and highlights ongoing questions, notably whether top-down, structured pedagogies or bottom-up experimentation are more likely to engender sustainable practice.

Study 2: *Multilingual tasks as a springboard for transversal practice: teachers' decisions and dilemmas in a* Functional Multilingual Learning *approach.*

This study presents the four teachers' experimentation with *FML*, specifically the ways in which they envisaged their pupils' home languages as resources in meaningful multilingual tasks and general classroom practice. I draw up a typology of these positionings, which shows home languages used as: linguistic, academic, community-building and creative resources, drawing on pupils' own languages as well as those of their peers. The 'linguistic' dimension was the easiest for the teachers to operationalise and the most likely to serve an epistemological function i.e. to enhance the acquisition of knowledge and content (Duarte, 2018).

The most powerful practice also included individualised, inclusive multilingual scaffolding to support newcomers; this arose most frequently in the classes with an open language policy, and where practice ranged flexibly between spontaneous and teacher-led planned translanguaging and where the teachers saw opportunities for multilingual learning as co-constructed with the pupils.

The differences between the four teachers in terms of the quantity and nature of practices they implemented confirms research suggesting that an existing pupil-centred approach is a significant factor in powerful multilingual practice which goes beyond symbolic gestures (e.g. Audras & Leclaire, 2013; Auger & Kervran, 2013; Palmer, 2011). Nonetheless, the range of language repertoires in the class sometimes paradoxically resulted in exclusion, particularly of those with lower levels of a home language or monolingual pupils. This study thus highlights the challenges of balancing individual needs and creating a whole class linguistic community and points to the significance of *language awareness* approaches as productive entry points for teachers to bridge the divide between proficiency, knowledge and attitudes (Van Gorp & Verheyen, 2018).

Study 3: *Hierarchies of home language proficiency in the linguistically diverse primary school classroom: personal, social and contextual positioning.*

Repertoire diversity is the principle focus of the next empirical article, which explores the ways in which the pupils perceived their own home language proficiency and that of their peers. It highlights the complex nature of home language 'expertise' which presents itself in many different ways in a class including newcomers (still learning the language of schooling), more or less 'balanced bilingual' pupils (who often attended complementary schools), French dominant pupils (some with mainly receptive skills in another language), and French-speaking 'monolinguals'. Drawing on an analysis of discursive and participation 'positioning practices' (K. T. Anderson, 2009; Harré & Davies, 1999), I show how the pupils situated themselves and others in hierarchies of proficiency, even when they were not speakers of a language. These patterns fed into recursive cycles of social positioning which valorised pupils with 'school-like' language, and sometimes prompted those with less instinctive skills to strategically avoid participation.

This analysis supports Martin-Beltrán's (2010) conclusions that perceived linguistic proficiency is to a certain degree co-constructed in social interaction through the interplay of self and interpersonal positioning over time and events, but it extends the framework to recognise the importance of contextual factors such as task construction, language peers or translation technology which mediate multilingual participation. This study demonstrates that although collaboration between language peers could be benevolent, it was sometimes the source of exclusionary practice and defined conditions to be accepted as a legitimate speaker.

Study 4: *Negotiating and navigating plurilingual classroom citizenship: social cohesion and* **Functional Multilingual Learning.**

The notion of variable access to multilingual participation plays a role in the central theme of the final empirical study which examines the pupils' perspectives of the *social and community* dimensions of *FML*, both in terms of horizontal interactions with their peers, and vertical relationships with the school hierarchy. Using the lens of social cohesion (Chan et al., 2006), I show how *FML* transformed opportunities for newcomer pupils to participate in the classroom, enabling them to be positioned by their peers as competent learners. However, French-dominant, French-monolingual and sole-speaker pupils were in a more fragile position, sometimes struggling to convert symbolic capital into meaningful linguistic and didactic capital. The pupils generally privileged outward-looking 'bridging' capital which enhanced feelings of belonging. However, the potential for deliberate multilingual insults occupied a potent, yet complex position in the shared norms of 'good behaviour', particularly in the playground; there was little shared or institutional understanding of the emotional weight of pupils' first languages nor the role of insults in group bonding.

This study highlights the role of a multilingual pedagogy in generating multiple forms of inclusive practice which reach across difference, thus challenging policy-maker discourses that posit the exclusive use of one language as essential for school cohesion. Furthermore, it points to the need for schools to actively embrace potentially disruptive elements of multilingual social life as a means of promoting 'active citizenship' (Jansen et al., 2006). This study adds to the relatively small body of research regarding children's perceptions of social cohesion (Meier, 2014; UNICEF, 2019), and gives a picture of how this applies to a multilingual classroom.

16.3 Transversal discussion: What kinds of dynamics, opportunities and constraints does *Functional Multilingual Learning* (FML) present in a mainstream linguistically diverse primary classroom?

In this next section, I address my principal research question and extend the reflections above to explore a number of transversal findings which cut across the four sub-studies. I show where my findings support or develop existing research and practice, and where they provide a new perspective.

16.3.1 Recognising the non-linear processes that lead towards powerful practice

The findings of this study must firstly be considered in relation to the simulated monolingualism that had characterised the pupils' entire primary-school career and the teachers' professional trajectories. This seemed to have given rise to a 'linguistically fossilised' space, whereby pupils and teachers lacked basic knowledge about the language repertoires present in the classroom, and few had

any real understanding of terms such as 'bilingual' or 'plurilingual', nor of how these notions might apply to their linguistic lives. It is thus unsurprising that the teachers initially lacked nuanced skills to selectively, sensitively and strategically deploy multilingual repertoires in the classroom. Equally, the pupils sometimes struggled to exploit instinctive translanguaging practices in a classroom setting (see also Meyer & Prediger, 2011 and Rosiers, 2018 who note similar dynamics). In sum, it seems that having been constrained to function in "monolingual mode" (Grosjean, 2012) had had a tangible effect on the capacity of both individuals and the community to 'be plurilingual' in the classroom. This resulted in multilingual practice often feeling ideologically and emotionally charged.

Thus, whilst this study is about the *potential* of *FML*, it is also about the complex moment of transition *away* from a monolingual approach, i.e. the 'sense-making' phase of reflexive experimentation. This essentially represented a form of language socialisation in the sense that both teachers and pupils were collectively identifying and (re)negotiating the linguistic and interactional processes which mediated participation and signified belonging in their routine classroom practices (Duff, 2002; Lee & Bucholtz, 2015). To varying degrees, the teachers' intention was to 'unmark' multilingualism (Menezes de Souza, 2021) i.e. to position it as the norm, rather than the exception, and as a meaningful classroom resource. However, transformation of this nature is neither automatic, nor universal, nor instantaneous; indeed, the application of *FML* was uneven: tasks were sometimes successful, at other times slightly ill-judged or inappropriate for certain groups of pupils. Multilingual practice prompted a multiplicity of sometimes contradictory positions in relation to how this new paradigm fit into the existing classroom norms, including acceptance, rejection, inclusion and exclusion. Although the practice certainly 'settled' over the course of the study, 'multilingualism' remained marked as a choice in many situations as classroom actors 'unlearned' the simulated monolingual environment that had hitherto been their norm.

Drawing on the experiences of the teachers and pupils in this study, I visualise this process of 'unmarking' by adapting Piccardo's (2023) model of the processes of 'languaging'. The model at *Figure 4* depicts a series of stages of experimental multilingual practice (classroom pedagogical languaging) for both teachers and pupils. These stages are roughly chronological but are characterised by considerable overlap, repetition, and back and forth movement as they iteratively inform one another.
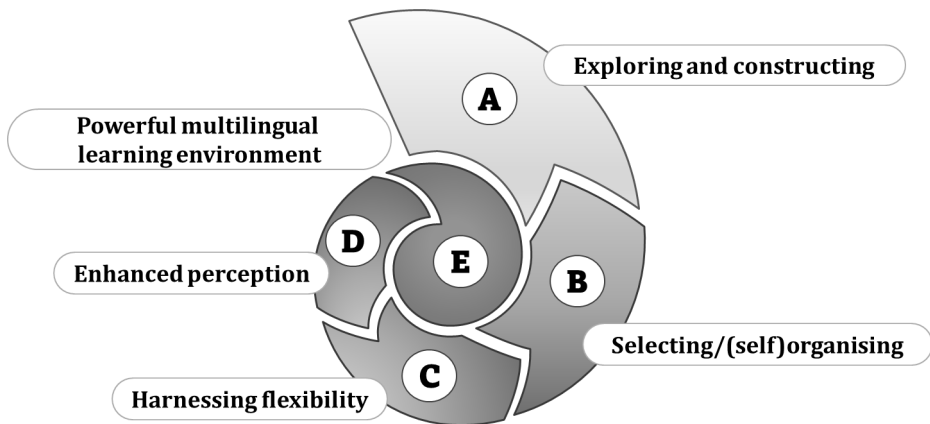
Figure 4: Unmarking multilingualism: a pathway of 'classroom pedagogical languaging'

Stage A: Exploring and constructing: Teachers and pupils critically and collaboratively explore their individual and collective linguistic repertoires, identifying named languages, varieties, codes, dialects, along with the functions, (translingual) practices and value that these hold for individuals (in wider society, their various communities, and in different places in school e.g. classroom, playground etc.).

Stage B: Selecting/(self) organising: Teachers and pupils begin to experiment with multilingual interaction and pedagogical design; they alternately form hypotheses about how to move between the horizontal and vertical dimensions of the repertoire and then select and organise their understandings.

Stage C: Harnessing flexibility: Multilingualism is still the 'marked' variety; evolving practice will not necessarily be tidy or linear and there may still be a feeling of imbalance and instability. However, the purposeful embracing of ambiguity begins to enable more flexible strategies.

Stage D: Enhanced perception: Classroom actors are developing a raised, more reflexive awareness of the various affordances and constraints of multilingual practice, giving rise to more individualised and strategic deployment in teaching and learning.

Stage E: Towards a powerful multilingual learning environment: Multilingualism is becoming less 'marked' and blends into transversal learning objectives; norms are no longer seen exclusively through the lens of barriers and constraints and there is greater awareness of the invisible assumptions that limit the learning and participation options of certain pupils and groups.

This pathway is speculative and recognises that agency, and therefore transformation is constrained by the local language ecology, teacher beliefs and a capacity for change at an individual and institutional level. As such, it does not presuppose that one group, nor all individuals within that group will necessarily evolve on exactly this trajectory, nor cover nor reach all of the stages. However, it posits that powerful, individualised, critical practice evolves over time through dynamic, iterative cycles of action, reflection and critical dialogue as teachers and pupils resituate themselves within interrelated nexuses of local and wider economies and ideologies of language (Jaffe, 2009). This model positions teachers as "deliberative thinkers" (Jaspers, 2019a, p. 217) and invites them to embrace 'interference' as prompting (self)awareness (Auger, 2022) and to see their pupils as "knowers" (Kerfoot & Bello-Nonjengele, 2022) i.e. as legitimate, active, and potentially contradictory or disruptive participants in the co-construction of the translanguaging space.

Thus, this study shows that the early days of *FML* (and other transversal multilingual pedagogical models) potentially constitute a messy, confusing terrain of language and pedagogical practice in flux. It confirms the findings of studies which suggest the need for reflexive, collaborative support for teachers which enables them to problematise situations as they arise in their local contexts (e.g. Lotherington et al., 2013; Rosiers, 2018). It also questions the self-evidential link made by some researchers between the 'naturalness' of translanguaging communicative practice and the powerful classroom deployment of a linguistic repertoire (e.g. García & Li, 2014; Otheguy et al., 2015), particularly in situations such as this study, where a monolingual paradigm has been in force for a long time, and the class is characterised by high linguistic diversity, meaning that for some pupils, it is quite possible that there are few, if any interlocutors available for translingual practice.

16.3.2 The conditions for multilingual pedagogies as co-constructed between teachers and pupils

This study examined both the 'official' and 'lived' curricula of *FML*, and by doing so identified interstices and processes which might not have been immediately visible on the surface, but which nonetheless fed into the 'corriente' or 'flow' of multilingual classroom action, and contributed to the affordances for learning that *FML* seeks to build. I highlight two findings from this study.

Firstly, when analysing the 'corriente', the literature often focuses on the teacher's stance, pedagogical design and shifts, and presents the flows as being principally between them and the pupils (García & Kleyn, 2016). Whilst this is a significant dimension, this research demonstrates the dynamics, force and significance of the flows *between* the pupils themselves i.e. the recursive cycles of multilingual participation and acts of peer positioning which bring to life the local value and 'hearability' of multilingualism. These dynamics are founded partly on the way children value their own linguistic repertoire, but this study showed that once in

the classroom, the notion of legitimate plurilingual speakers and hearers is framed and informed by a variety of factors including: visible multilingual practice and interaction; the stances pupils adopt and express regarding the legitimacy of their own linguistic repertoire and those of their peers; and peer linguistic surveillance. These practices serve to index authentic membership of certain categories (e.g. a 'real' Arabic speaker can write classical Arabic) but also reframings, resistance and rejection (e.g. 'our' Arabic is the one we use in Brussels). They contribute to situating pupils as a certain kind of 'plurilingual pupil/person', and potentially create emancipatory affordances, or barriers to participation or a claim to a certain identity. This means that when we are considering the implementation of a multilingual pedagogy, we must bear in mind that the pupils *become* a multilingual classroom environment for one another (McDermott, 1976, cited in Erickson & Schultz, 1997), and thus contribute to the classroom conditions for 'investment' in multilingual practice (Norton & Toohey, 2011).

Secondly, the lived multilingual curriculum must be understood as constructed within the *full* ecology of the class i.e. across a wide range of languages and asymmetric linguistic repertoires, personalities, friendship networks and priorities, which operate in varying inter-relations of harmony and conflict. This perspective is particularly pertinent in the mainstream classroom, where the local value of multilingualism is negotiated and enacted between pupils with significantly different, often mutually unintelligible, forms of (multi)linguistic capital. To give a concrete example, it means understanding that when a newcomer in a Brussels school completes a maths test in a mix of Spanish and French, the legitimacy and value of this practice is partially constructed through the linguistic practices and positioning of a monolingual pupil who has only ever used French in their daily life, which may contrast to those of a Spanish-speaker born in Brussels, which may contrast again with a pupil who arrived two years previously, speaking only Greek.

These cycles of stance, participation and positioning thus present the *FML* classroom as co-constructed between teacher and pupils and highlights the fact that gaps between the 'official' and 'lived' multilingual curricula are inevitable i.e. that the teacher will aim to craft an environment which valorises translingual practice as normal, but this is not necessarily what will emerge in full in the world of the pupils. This underlines the importance of researchers purposefully crossing pupil and teacher perspectives when considering the local value of multilingual repertoires (Prilutskaya, 2021).

16.3.3 Repertoire diversity and identities of plurilingual competence

The designations outlined in the previous section are by no means intended to be essentialised categories which assume certain behaviours; there was much fluidity between these positions, but they point to the significance of the diversity of repertoires across a mainstream class in terms of how and why a multilingual

approach valorises individual and collective repertoires and specifically the multi-faceted nature of the "meaningful" multilingual space it needs to create.

In *Study 3*, I grouped the pupils into four broad categories in terms of their self-identified relative proficiencies in French and their dominant home language (i.e. home language dominant, balanced, French dominant and French-monolingual). These groupings are neither hierarchical nor fixed but recognise the individual biographies and trajectories of mobility which have accorded differing access to differing linguistic resources and opportunities to develop skills (Blommaert et al., 2005; Weirich, 2021). *FML* seeks to create more linguistically equitable conditions for learning for all pupils and I use these groupings here as heuristic tools in order to deconstruct how pupils in this study were differently enabled to claim an identity of plurilingual competence i.e. the mobilisation of their full linguistic repertoire considered as symbolic capital in the classroom.

I explore this notion through Fricker's (2007) notion of "epistemic justice" in education i.e. policies and practices which give equal value to all languages and linguistic varieties as epistemic resources and can thus go some way to redressing hegemonic language policies and can create new paths to knowledge. This is predicated on the nature of the "relations of knowing" in operation i.e. relations which "construct (or fail to construct) others as knowers, and, more importantly, as producers of knowledge" (Kerfoot & Bello-Nonjengele, 2022, p. 1). At the classroom level, "relations of knowing" are partly dependent on the pupils' multilingual agency i.e. their capacity to act independently, to make strategic choices about language and participation and position themselves in terms of classroom norms (Lewis et al., 2007). As *Study 3* showed, this agency is constrained to a certain extent by the linguistic composition of the class, the language policy in place and the nature of the tasks designed by the teacher. But, as I outlined above, this agency also exists in dynamic relation with the way in which a learner's peers 'hear' a bid for a certain plurilingual identity, and how and whether they ratify, resist or reframe this bid. *Figure 5* summarises the dynamics in evidence in the classes in this study, in terms of how each group could exercise agency and the prevailing peer positionings of them as plurilingual learners.

	HL > French ⟺	HL = French ⟺	HL < French ⟺	No HL
Agency	Agentive, particularly when applied individually	Highly agentive, multi-directional participation	Agency depended on task, networks and support	Minimal agency, often spectators
Peer positioning	'Emergent' bilinguals, but a lack of French	Source of expertise and resources	In comparison to more competent others	As unlucky and marginalised

Figure 5: Dynamics framing affordances for a positive identity of plurilingual competence (home language (HL) dominant; 'balanced'; French-dominant; 'monolingual')

There is little doubt that *FML* accorded both epistemic *access* and *justice* to the newcomer pupils and positioned them as "knowers" and "producers of knowledge". For example, when newcomer Silvia could complete an interview project in Spanish, she produced a long, complex, age-appropriate piece of work that was held up to the class as an example of excellence. Such practices gave these pupils voice, challenged deficit understandings of their knowledge and skills, and enabled them to shift more quickly away from their assumed position of legitimate peripheral participation (Lave & Wenger, 1991). This confirms the findings of similar studies (e.g. French, 2016; Leoni et al., 2011 to name but two). These dynamics also prompt reflection on the received wisdom of the 'silent period' as an inevitable and natural stage of second language acquisition (see also Harris, 2019; Roberts, 2014); whilst it might indeed be the case in terms of the language of schooling, does it necessarily mean that the child must remain silent in school? This study points to a functional, ambitious, and above all, vocal alternative.

Another group which forged a positive plurilingual identity were those with a more or less 'balanced' profile who took advantage of multiple opportunities to agentively create knowledge in alternative ways. The deployment of a 'school-like' register was indicative of a certain ability to perform in parallel as 'separate monolinguals' (Heller, 2007), thus easily transforming their home language into appropriate symbolic capital for the classroom and enabling them to position themselves and to be positioned by others as 'knowers'. Their multilingual participation also served to normalise that of the newcomers and could be the source of powerful scaffolding, particularly, but not exclusively, between language peers (Woodley & Brown, 2016).

The position of the French-dominant pupils was more sensitive (although it must be noted that this group was very diverse in profile). Although the dynamics described above were possible and sometimes realised, the participation of these pupils was more susceptible to social negotiation, deficit positioning and lower feelings of self-efficacy. Some of the language passports from this group suggested primarily receptive skills in the home language and so for these pupils, epistemic access was almost certainly primarily and most effectively constructed through French. Li (2014) maintains that the ability to use home languages and to draw on 'funds of knowledge' associated with worlds beyond the classroom is a constituent element of "symbolic competence" (Kramsch, 2011) i.e. the ability to approximate or appropriate language for oneself and to shape the context in which the language is learned and used. He asserts that this results in more inclusive teaching, however, in this study, for the pupils with weaker home language competence, this symbolic competence was sometimes compromised and at certain moments, they felt excluded from the plurilingual identities that they themselves wished to construct. Teachers often raise concerns about these kinds of pupils (e.g. Rosiers, 2018), and whilst more nuanced, bottom-up practice might mitigate some of the dynamics shown here, it remains important not to dismiss this as merely evidence of a deficit perspective.

Finally, the 'monolingual' pupils recognised the relevance and significance of multilingual practice for their peers, particularly newcomers, but sometimes deeply regretted their own lack of (multi)linguistic capital. This was partly because of the emotional charge of the 'unmarking' process but also because both teachers and pupils initially failed to recognise Dutch, the school-learned language as a relevant linguistic resource. This points to the need to explicitly include school-learned languages in the conceptualisation of classroom multilingualism, for example, as is the case in the *We Are Multilinguals* project in the UK (www.wamcam.org) and the *Holistic Model for Multilingualism in Education* developed in the Netherlands (Duarte & Günther-van der Meij, 2018). Nonetheless, the monolinguals are emblematic of a certain symbolic pay off: on the one hand, their repertoire is reflected in a monolingual school language policy and acts as a default norm for all others to imitate; on the other, a multilingual approach runs the risk (in the early days in any case) of inadvertently stigmatising their monolingualism as they are invited to 'discover' and 'appreciate' the linguistic diversity that seems to be carried by others. However, this objection does point to a certain double standard whereby exclusion from classroom practice is accepted for newcomers yet is seen as problematic for monolinguals.

Virtually all of the pupils in this study had been the subjects of 'institutional erasure' of the 'non-French' parts of their language repertoire, and all of them stood to make (different) symbolic and epistemic gains from multilingual classroom practice. Yet the complexities highlighted here point to a certain paradox in the literature which often highlights the specificity of individual repertoires yet at the same time, tends to place 'plurilingual' or 'multilingual' children into a monolithic category. This study makes clear that transformative practice will not necessarily arise from simply according equality to all languages

and forms of linguistic practice, in part because certain desirable identity positions are contingent on the availability of certain linguistic resources. This is by no means intended to represent a deficit perspective but suggests that it is important not to idealise the sociolinguistic complexity of the multilingual classroom. Practice will almost certainly comprise an ebb and flow of pupils from the periphery to the centre and requires reflexive engagement with the interface between abstract, symbolic investment and the concrete, local here-and-now (Daugaard, 2022). In the next section, I turn to how this interface is mediated by more enduring dynamics which are anchored in existing norms and practices, and which underpin ideas of how to "do school".

16.3.4 "Doing school": How *FML* settles into prevailing classroom discourses

Newly legitimised multilingual practice entailed a range of new possibilities for participation, which, to a certain extent, remoulded social roles in terms of knowing and power, but at the same time, necessarily relied upon existing conventions and norms of participation. For example, this might be seen in meso-level 'typical' practices that will have been experienced by the pupils in each class of their school trajectory; these occupy spaces where the official and lived curriculum seem to align (Aoki, 1993) and become reified 'positive' models of participation i.e. those which are framed by the teacher and globally validated by the pupils as indexing engagement, interest and possibly also academic ability. Examples might be: completing an exercise in the time given, putting your hand up often, working productively in a group etc... Multilingual practice slotted into these conventions. For example, in the classes in this study: Karim was proud of completing his recording of his science project in Arabic; Myriam put her hand up to indicate she thought she could answer in Amharic; the Turkish speakers worked co-operatively together to produce a wordlist etc. Indeed, a socio-cultural perspective on the implementation of *FML* sees learning as the process of "fashioning identities of full participation" (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 43) and that the acquisition of knowledge and skills arises from the pupils' sense of belonging in the class, the way they identify with it and engage with its practices. So, when a pupil *does not* participate in the multilingual action of the classroom, perhaps because of the way a task positions the resources of their specific linguistic repertoire, this potentially interrupts a sense of order, and one which goes beyond language towards more generic concepts of 'pupil-hood' and the role of task involvement in conceptualisations of how to strive for excellence (McInerney, 1997). As such, *FML* doesn't merely reframe the linguistic norms of a classroom, but it unsettles schematic knowledge about how to act in a situation and how the actions of the self/others are evaluated.

This dynamic is all the more prevalent in teacher-led tasks but is also related to some of the pupils' sense of a dissonance between home language use and normative discourses of 'correctness' that have resonance in the classroom. Indeed, despite their teachers' assertions that it didn't matter if they made

mistakes, the pupils wanted to be able to speak and write with fluency, precision and accuracy in their home language. On the one hand, we could interpret this as adherence to the dominant standard-language ideology and attendant relations of power, and indeed, Flores and Rosa (2015) might recognise it as evidence of a deficit discourse of 'appropriateness' which only values academic language, thus reproducing deficit racio-linguistic ideologies. This is doubtless present, but I would assert that it is more complex and, in line with Portante (2011), links to processes of social identification and the way the pupils hold themselves and each other accountable to local and distant frames about the relationship between valued generalised patterns of participation and how to be successful in school.

Thus, the valorisation of 'correctness' seen in this study is not particularly surprising if we consider that prior to and during the implementation of *FML*, the pupils regularly completed closed grammar exercises and graded tests, the results of which were averaged out to give a percentage grade for the end of term report. In three out of the four classes, much classroom interaction was based around IRF sequences (Cazden, 2001). Such practices privilege right/wrong discourses of academic and linguistic achievement, and inexorably invite hierarchical comparison between peers. This perhaps goes some way to explaining the way in which the pupils' valorisation of their home languages veered towards vertical discourses (i.e. standardised, formal) in the sense that it was fashioned to a certain extent against the existing orders of indexicality regarding not only language, but achievement and participation in the classroom. Yet this stands in contrast to the theory of *FML*, which as with translanguaging, *starts* from the perspective of the pupils' horizontal repertoires (i.e. informal, between peers, hybrid, translingual), considered as "funds of knowledge" (González et al., 2005) and how these can be combined with the vertical registers of school to constitute a powerful multilingual learning environment. Of course, these are not mutually exclusive registers but the tidal pull of the vertical discourse in the classroom setting is evident and clearly frames the initial ways that the teachers and pupils constructed their translanguaging space.

In conclusion, this study supports the findings of others which posit that successful multilingual pedagogies are more likely to take root where teachers are already functioning with a socio-constructivist model of learning (e.g. Audras & Leclaire, 2013; Auger & Kervran, 2013). But critically, it also shows that the existing models of learning and patterns of participation have a tangible impact on the way the pupils themselves also engage with and enact multilingual practice, thereby influencing its relative success. This highlights the essentially intertextual nature of a new multilingual pedagogy i.e. that pupils and teachers "draw on past texts (oral and written) and practices (ways of being with and constructing text) to construct present texts and/or to implicate future ones" (Gee & Green, 1998, p. 132). Thus, the blending of the horizontal and vertical dimensions of the language repertoire is perhaps more likely to be adopted by pupils whose school trajectory has been characterised by active, social learning experiences, focused on the collective construction of knowledge and where instruction and evaluation are integrated (De Backer et al., 2017). This facilitates individual and collective

mindsets which value bottom-up, pupil-led practices and position them as relevant to learning.

16.3.5 The interface between teacher-led tasks and pupil-led interaction

The dynamics outlined above must also be understood in terms of the analytical gaze of this study (i.e. on tasks) which perhaps directed the teachers' perspective away from the affordances of spontaneous moves and interaction. However, the teachers maintained that the tasks served two important purposes: firstly, to overtly situate multilingual interaction as legitimate "front stage" classroom activity (Goffman, 1959), in part to redress the historical deficit positioning of the 'French-only' policy, and thus to create a collective, performative space to explore and enact "being multilingual" in school (Auer, 1984). This was particularly significant for sole speakers, who otherwise had limited possibilities to go beyond the language of the classroom. Secondly, the teachers maintained that the tasks enabled them to develop a more nuanced understanding of the nature of the linguistic repertoires in the class and the local meanings and functions that could be attributed to them.

As such, to a certain extent, this study affirms Cunningham and Little's (2022) proposal to use multilingual tasks as a means of overcoming mainstream teachers' "inert benevolence" towards multilingualism and to enable them to perceive language repertoires as "a holistic, single identity" (p. 6). Yet it also shows the limits of such an approach. The task space here was often mediated by authoritative dialogue, led by the teacher, and which tended to rely on sequential, standardised, 'separate monolingual' language practice. The fact that two out of the four teachers in this study opted for a restricted language policy (i.e. practice was mostly confined to tasks, with minimal opportunities for spontaneous interaction between pupils) indicates that is a sensitive dynamic and confirms research which shows that teachers are often anxious about losing control in the multilingual classroom (e.g. Strobbe et al., 2017). Nonetheless, powerful practice also needs to entail bottom-up, pupil-led moves, whereby children can agentively use their linguistic resources and own networks in order to contribute to negotiating the conditions of their learning (Portante, 2011). The dynamics in this study still prompt the question as to how *FML* and other multilingual approaches can embed holistically at the 'ordinary level' of classroom work (Scibetta & Carbonara, 2020) i.e. encompassing meaningful tasks *and* interaction (both spontaneous and planned), which are both teacher-led and generated from pupil practice. In this way, we are more likely to generate genuinely 'functional' multilingual practice, i.e. which bridges the pupils' perception of their needs and articulation of their preferences, with the teacher's understanding of how this contributes towards learning goals.

16.3.6 Pupil-led practice: crafting new understandings from existing spaces

Nonetheless, the notion of 'functional' cannot merely be limited to learning situations, particularly if we consider that one of the objectives of *FML* is to instil a 'safe classroom environment'. *Study 4* encompassed both learning and social situations and demonstrated the emotional resonance and social strategies underpinning translingual practice. This was particularly the case on the playground, a space one step removed from the gaze of authority figures and the school norms of proficiency, and whose business is focused on play and friendships. The findings of *Study 4* suggested that for some pupils, multilingualism in the playground equated to social disorder and potential exclusion; yet the Spanish-speaking newcomers played discretely together in a corner, often also with non-Spanish speakers; Zehra whispered secrets in Turkish with her best friend, invariably switching to French when someone else arrived; and Mehmet's insults in Turkish were heard by *all* players on the field. Although the playground wasn't the specific focus of my research, my data was in line with studies where it was the principle or one of several sites of investigation (e.g. Cekaite & Evaldsson, 2008; Iqbal et al., 2017; Rydland & Kucherenko, 2013); these testify to children engaging in multiple processes of language preference and alternation which served to negotiate belonging, ethnic and linguistic boundaries and group affiliations. This places the playground as a site for "pedestrian crossing", a physical space where everyday recognition and exchange occur, exemplifying how young children live with cultural and linguistic diversity and the negotiation of similarity and difference.

The typology of insults in *Study 4* confirms the widely held concerns (of teachers and pupils) that pupils might insult each other and teachers in unknown languages; indeed they did. But if we consider this through a multilingual lens, it simply positions language choice as an additional stance resource which is available to multilingual speakers (Jaffe, 2009), potentially enhancing the pragmatic force of their communicative act and contributing to "polylingual power politics" and the role they play in processes of social identification (Cekaite et al., 2014). But in this study, these kinds of insults in fact occurred relatively infrequently, and potentially obscured the social significance of others which contributed to what Kerfoot and Bello-Nonjengele (2016) call "playful multilingual jousting". Indeed, in their study of playground interaction in a township school in Cape Town, they note the messy and surprising features of these encounters across difference and found that it was "the learners who, in their everyday translanguaging practices, forged new forms of conviviality out of everyday frictions" (p. 468). They considered that the pupils were modelling processes that could create transformative practices and pedagogies, and in fact to a greater extent than the teachers, school or educational policies.

Whilst playground encounters are certainly not always benevolent (see Auger & Romain, 2015), this bottom-up perspective perhaps holds some wisdom in terms of the dynamics of *FML* implementation and how to open up more pupil-led practice in the classroom. Prinsloo and Krause (2019) maintain that it is

impossible to undo language policies built on separatist, static notions of language "without 'looking down' into local assemblages of diverse language resources" (p.169). This might entail the teachers implementing *FML* to enquire into the socio-linguistic functioning of the playground, not to police it, but to attempt to understand the cultural processes at work, to identify the different and contending practices, their meanings, functions and symbolic resonance for the children. Such enquiry might extend Fricker's (2007) notion of "epistemic justice", for children to be able to be seen as "knowers", to include a notion of "socio-emotional justice" i.e. the right for children to see themselves and to be seen by others as "befrienders" and "havers of feelings" in the languages, varieties, registers which make the most sense to them. Whilst a language passport can give a narrated summary of a linguistic repertoire, it is in the playground that the meaning of being a plurilingual school citizen is being worked out and comes to life.

These findings add to those which advocate for a whole-school approach to multilingualism (Allard, 2017; Kirwan, 2020) and underline the importance of encompassing 'the whole child'. This threads an understanding of the emotional learner as integral to the cognitive learner and the fact that the world-building going on in the playground is significant and relevant to a child's capacity to feel welcomed in school. I conclude by adapting Harris' (2019) distinction regarding the places and spaces of multiculturalism to make a distinction between the *FML* classroom (in transition) and the playground. The classroom can be considered as a place where "multilingualism is done" (i.e. invariably with an eye to national, essentialist ideologies and vertical repertoires) and the playground as a site of practices which constitute "the doing of multilingualism" (the negotiated multilingual encounter, primarily horizontal). The pupils traverse these spaces every day, on multiple occasions and if we are to generate pupil-informed, emotionally honest practice, teachers need to purposefully cross these spaces themselves. Rather than creating a 'third space' (Gutiérrez, 2008), this goes some way to building bridges between the linguistic spaces in school and bringing pupil-led multilingual practice into the 'first space' of the classroom.

16.4 Hybridity, named languages and the implementation of multilingual pedagogies

When describing and analysing the way in which multilingual approaches are implemented, the literature cites a myriad of contributing factors, as researchers seek to understand when and why opportunities were successfully exploited, whether they had the intended impact, and where challenges still lie and which of them might be overcome. There are few simple answers, however, advocates of 'strong' translanguaging often maintain that successful, transformative implementation is inexorably predicated on the teacher adjusting their conceptualisation of language to a unitary model (e.g. Kleyn & García, 2019). The language used is often that of moral invective (each time my italics) (e.g. "It is *imperative* that we focus on the bilingual unitary repertoire," (Li & García, 2022, p. 317); "teachers *lack the necessary belief* that a bilingual's meaning-making process

is not bounded by separate named languages but is unitary" (Aleksić & García, 2022, p. 3844). These positions are used to support arguments that it is *impossible* to fully realise the transformative potential of multilingual approaches if teachers continue to view students from the external socio-political perspective of named languages, racial classification and nationality, rather than from the perspective of their internal lives, identities, and use of language (Poza, 2017; Li & García, 2022). My research supports this as a general premise, and certainly shows the need for teachers to understand their pupils' 'languaging' practices, and with a critical perspective, if their classrooms are to be based on more equitable linguistic paradigms. However, does it give any indication as to whether a teacher *de facto* needs to engage in a full ontological rejection of 'named languages' in order to be transformative?

Li and García (2022) maintain that a unitary perspective is the *only* way to engage with the linguistic and cultural particularities of each pupil, because it focuses the gaze exclusively at language production. To be sure, in at least in the two classrooms this study, i.e. those with a restricted language policy, there was little room for fluid, hybrid, spontaneous, pupil-led practice, resulting in broadly teacher-led framings of acceptable and useful linguistic practice. Both teachers and pupils made regular references to 'your/my' language, i.e. not French, thus marking an artificial boundary between home and school and a certain 'othering' (Duarte & Günther-van der Meij, 2022). However, given that the intervention material made free use of language labels and did not explicitly problematise the notion of 'named languages', it is impossible to say if the teachers would have adopted a 'unitary' posture, nor whether it would have changed these practices.

However, there was considerable evidence that both the act of 'naming' languages and conceptualising them as separate codes had meaning for both teachers and pupils. 'Named languages' served as broad (even if at times inaccurate) heuristics for the teachers to deconstruct the processes of 'unmarking' multilingualism and 'unlearning' monolingual classroom practices. It enabled them to articulate their emerging understanding of their pupils' language repertoires and to identify and valorise academic skills acquired in other languages e.g. Mme. Khadija understanding that Eva, her newcomer, could write a full science report in Portuguese. M. Jean's powerful practice was supported by his own metaphors of 'switching tracks' or 'picking up a different suitcase', which, whilst it does not necessarily correspond to the reality of fluid language practice, nonetheless was part of the foundation for sensitive, respectful, pupil-led practice. Furthermore, labels such as 'French' or 'Lingala' also corresponded to the terms used by the pupils themselves when talking about their language lives and they gave meaning to their stories of mobility, their identification with 'other' places (for example Ari's use of his writing skills as constituent of and indexing his belonging to 'Georgia') and sometimes more complex hybrid identities of belonging. The notion of moving across coded boundaries was also evident in the pragmatic intention of multilingual insults or shared rude names in Lingala about the teachers. Slembrouck (2022) notes that "boundary drawing between languages is part and

parcel of language use" and indeed, this was significant, and at times empowering in the classroom that had previously been based on simulated monolingualism.

The notion of language as separate codes was also evident in the teachers' pedagogical planning which often (but not always) resulted in a functional separation (e.g. translations; first one language, then another), particularly in the early days of implementation. Indeed, they were often 'adding' home languages into their curriculum planning, looking for opportunities to valorise, variously, the pupils' home languages as separate codes (e.g. find out the way animals are gendered in your home language) or their full language repertoire (e.g. use any language you want to make a mind map) or as objects of celebration (e.g. tell me why you are proud to be plurilingual). Whilst less binary or essentialist conceptualisations of language might have resulted in alternative, and more nuanced forms of instructional design, this posture is possibly also indicative of the weight of the monolingual modality of the curricula, textbooks, and above all, the high-stakes standardised tests that all pupils take at the end of primary school, and which influence their options for secondary school. This is often raised as a point of concern by teachers when considering the 'feasibility' of multilingual approaches (e.g. Donley, 2022) but the unitary model remains very vague on the bridge between the horizontal idiolect and wider discourses which, regardless of what we do in school, still privilege vertical, monolingual, standardised language.

Furthermore, it is claimed that reifying languages as separate entities will (my emphasis) "*always* leave out bilingual students," (Li & García, 2022, p.317) and that "named languages have *nothing* to do with speakers and the linguistic repertoire they use" García and Kleyn (2016, p. 19). This somewhat extreme perspective legitimately seeks to combat the "coloniality of language" (Quijano, 2000), however it ultimately draws its own ideological boundaries (Duchêne, 2020) and potentially renders illegitimate the pupils' ambitions for academic success in standardised, socio-economically useful codes, as well as their teachers' sense of their professional responsibility to help them achieve this (Slembrouck, 2022). The teachers in this study were aware of some of the inequalities stacked against their pupils, but all four were driven by the desire for them to do *as well* as their more advantaged peers. Perhaps their classroom practices reinforced some of these inequalities, but I would suggest that their stance could also be interpreted as contributing to a culture of high expectations, a critical factor in the academic success of pupils from minoritised backgrounds (Hattie, 2008).

The pupils' discourses of 'correctness' identified in this study are also potentially indicative of their own ambition and high expectations of themselves, yet they are doubtless also evidence of internalised deficit perspectives about what constitutes legitimate languages and forms of language in school. Advocates of the unitary model might claim that educational practice can only counter this kind of perspective with an understanding that named languages are "socio-political constructs" (Otheguy et al., 2015, p. 286). Of course, an understanding of language ideologies in general, how they enable and constrain certain groups in a global and local context, and the part that the teachers themselves play in the reproduction

of inequalities, cannot be questioned as key foundations for critical practice. But the logical conclusion of the unitary perspective seems to be an act of scalar telescoping, whereby free idiolectal practice de facto equals liberation from the "watchful adherence to the socially and politically defined boundaries of named (and usually national and state) languages" (Otheguy et al., 2015, p. 281). However, this skips over, and thus misrepresents, the role played by meso-level contexts, processes and power dynamics which frame the affordances of transformative practice; these define the 'useability' of the various features of a repertoire in different social and spatial domains (e.g. school, but also the local community, football club etc.), along with local orders of indexicality, which assign meaning, value and status to the diverse codes used by the pupils (Prinsloo & Krause, 2019).

The significance of this level is clear in this study. Firstly, "free idiolectal practice" was constrained by the local language community and was thus, for example, a qualitatively different experience for sole speakers than for those with language peers. Furthermore, as Karim's experiences show, free practice was not necessarily always liberating. Secondly, I found plenty of evidence to indicate powerful, alternative, multilingual boundary-setting and dissolving practices at the level of the pupils and which went beyond the question of whether the teacher was "seeing like a state" (Scott, 1998 cited in Krause-Alzaidi, 2022). The negotiation of social affiliations was key, as evidenced in Myriam's bubbles and the tensions around multilingual insults; these gave rise to fluid hierarchies that often did not align with the language hierarchies generally in evidence in Brussels. In sum, I would argue that the mission to combat the *coloniality* of language through transformative educational practice must be accompanied by a critical understanding of the *locality* of language repertoires, i.e. the positioning of the idiolect within the local discourse community and the consequences for learners. Thus M. Jean's problematising of Karim's struggles to assert himself as an Arabic speaker in the face of Nadia's forceful, deficit positionings is potentially as important as his framing of the wider global-level, socio-political processes which gave rise to 'named' codes such as French and Arabic, and Karim's 'unnameable' Brussels-Arabic-French hybrid practice. The act of 'not naming' languages is an act of decategorisation, and *may* produce new perspectives and practices, which are potentially genuinely heteroglossic, but we cannot assume this as given.

Cummins (2021a) maintains that the linguistic ontological foundations of a unitary model are likely to create confusion for teachers and indeed, this study suggests that it is more legitimate, and meaningful, to expect teachers and pupils to simultaneously occupy both 'separate' and 'flexible' positions (Creese & Blackledge, 2011). A more productive approach to the ontology of language might be one outlined by Donley (2022) whereby trainee teachers identified areas of synergy, negotiation and tension between a 'separate language' conceptualisation and 'translanguaging'. This invites critical reflection of monoglossic and separate language discourses in education, without assigning teachers the invidious, seemingly contradictory task of both enabling their pupils to access as wide a range as possible of the linguistic, economic and cultural resources available

beyond the boundaries of school, whilst at the same time working from a linguistic model that privileges the hyper-individualised linguistic practice of the idiolect. Fullan (2007, p. 9) states that "the interface between individual and collective meaning and action in everyday situations is where change stands or falls" i.e. we cannot build new meaning too far away from old understandings. This study suggests that change *can* occur with more modest shifts in understanding in terms of language separation and that our energies would in fact be better focused on the "meaning-making" dimension of translingual practice, i.e. helping teachers and pupils to develop an understanding of translingual practice as natural, and to engender reflection on where and why it can be meaningful for socio-emotional and learning processes.

16.5 Research into practice

Design-based research seeks to concurrently advance theory and practice by situating itself in the complexities of real-world practice. In the previous discussion, I have shown the theoretical contribution of my research in the field of *FML* and multilingual pedagogies in general and in this next section, I turn to a second objective of design-based research i.e. the development of outcomes which are authentic, tangible and implementable, and which can enhance and improve educational practices (Armstrong et al., 2020). In the final years of my doctoral research, I had the opportunity to lead the content design for a 90-hour online e-course for Flemish teachers, relating to multilingualism and the implementation of *FML* in their classrooms. This allowed me to translate some of the findings of this study into useful principles and practices for effective implementation. I outline three dimensions arising from this study.

Firstly, alongside the principles and worked examples of multilingual practice that customarily are presented in teacher guides, the course took a 'realistic' perspective on the implementation of *FML*. Following the pathway outlined in *Figure 5* it constructed reflexive trajectories of experimentation which embraced the uncertainties and irregularities of the multilingual classroom. These principles were evident in the stages of the teacher tasks we designed (e.g. threading the results of a language passport through to individual pupil learning plans) as well as the inclusion of 'reality check' questions which addressed common concerns around feasibility, negative attitudes from colleagues etc. (see also Auger and Le Pinchon-Vorstman's (2021) teacher guide which is structured around 'bottom-up' questions).

Secondly, it is clear from this study that inclusive *FML* in the mainstream classroom must embrace repertoire diversity alongside linguistic diversity in the creation of a powerful multilingual learning environment. This helps to ensure that multilingual practice can become a sustainable, collective resource for learning and is not simply a temporary scaffolding strategy. Auger (2020) outlines a 7-step model for teaching the language of schooling to newcomer pupils in mainstream settings, of which the second is: "Use [home] languages as a resource

for teaching and learning" (p.4). The findings of this study suggest that at the outset, teachers might not always identify the various options at their disposal. Thus, throughout the e-course we gradually presented our teacher participants with a series of *FML* didactic decision-making options and encouraged 'purposeful variety' in order to maximise inclusive practice for all repertoires. The following list is not intended to be presented all at once.

1. Moving strategically between: bottom-up **pupil-led practice** where pupils can exercise a certain amount of agency in terms of how to deploy their repertoire; and **teacher mediated practice** which guides this towards learning objectives and outcomes.

2. Exploiting a mix of **spontaneous translanguaging practices** with i.e. **planned scaffolding and more complex tasks and projects** (Vanherf, 2022; Williams, 1996).

3. Conceptualising and exploiting both the **inner, individual** and **social, interactional** dimensions of multilingual learning processes.

4. Using a blend of **individualised actions** and **whole-class actions** in order to support the most vulnerable learners (i.e. newcomers), whilst also creating a classroom climate where multilingual practice is the norm.

5. Tasks and strategies which vary in complexity and alternately serve **a symbolic, scaffolding** or **epistemological function** (Duarte, 2018); this indirectly varies the linguistic demand and enables greater participation from those with lower home language competency.

6. Vary **participation modalities** in tasks and give choice (e.g. between contributing orally, in writing or with illustrations).

7. Vary **groupings** in a flexible, strategic way (e.g. language groups, mixed language groups, monolingual groups).

8. Alternate and blend between **an explicit focus on language, plurilingualism and critical language awareness** and **transversal strategies** which understand language as the primary vehicle for learning.

9. Use **scaffolding strategies to support both class and home-language participation** e.g. through translation tools, strategic grouping, preparation/checking at home with parents.

10. Actively include **school-learned languages** in the conceptualisation of a plurilingual repertoire, particularly for the inclusion of monolingual learners and to encourage a broader sense of multilingual identity (see (Duarte & Günther-van der Meij, 2018; Kirwan, 2020; Rutgers et al., 2021).

Finally, with a view to moving beyond the process of 'unmarking' multilingualism, the e-course embedded principles of multilingual learning into more general strategies for rich academic language development. These were sometimes 'monolingual' in orientation, for example, advocating instructional design that moved strategically between pupils' 'everyday' repertoire towards abstract, academic language (see Cummins, 2021; Meyer and Prediger, 2021; Gibbons, 2006). But I also infused monolingual research findings with multilingual practices (my additions in italics), for example when presenting a summary of a review of effective practice for language development (Vanbuel et al. 2017):

Context
- Plenty of high-quality, comprehensible input (with opportunities for vocabulary acquisition and reading development) *in multiple languages;*
- Using the pupils' *multilingual, multicultural* 'funds of knowledge' (language and content) as an asset for learning;

Interaction
- Opportunities for language production, practice and interaction, *possibly in multiple languages;*

Language support
- Scaffolding to support reading, writing, speaking and listening in the language of schooling and the acquisition of content, *possibly using home languages;*
- Explicit language teaching (vocabulary, grammar and skills), *with a cross-lingual dimension;*
- Rich, formative, strategic feedback, focused on both language and content.

The ultimate ambition of *FML* would be that its principles and practices no longer have the label 'multilingual', but they are simply part of good practice in functional language learning.

16.6 Limitations and avenues for future research

As with all research, this study is framed by certain limitations. Firstly, this research was conducted with willing volunteers, all of whom began this study with positive attitudes towards individual and societal multilingualism, and sometimes had a personal vested interest to reject the monolingual paradigm. Thus, its findings are not necessarily indicative of what might happen in the classrooms of the majority of teacher respondents in the Fédération Wallonie Bruxelles *Barometer of Diversity* i.e. those who indicated that children should not be allowed to use their home languages on school grounds (André et al., 2018). Secondly, as discussed in the methodology section of this thesis, ethnographic research is by definition interpretative, artful and political. Much of the analysis presented here problematises the notion of multilingual inclusion and exclusion; whilst these

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themes were derived from systematic analysis of the data, my 'teacher-problem-solving' lens no doubt framed my interpretation of the dilemmas involved.

My data set expanded from my original intention of one class to four, with consequences for the granularity of the analysis and resulting conclusions. On the one hand, this meso-level gaze enabled me to take account of a much wider range of linguistic profiles than I had original planned and to explore similarities and differences across classes, tasks and linguistic profiles. This strengthens the generalisability of the conclusions, particularly in the context of this one school but also to other mainstream contexts. However, collecting data in four classes imposed certain time constraints and rendered impossible my original intention to drill down into the interactional patterns of one or two pupils. Indeed, much of the analysis here is based on interaction which was conducted principally in French and at the whole class level. More multilingual, micro-ethnographic, discourse analysis would doubtless have brought rich seams of understanding, for example, in terms of how the pupils operated when working in table groups, the degree to which they stayed on task, or of multimodal translingual communication (Guzula et al., 2016). The analytical possibilities of this study were also bounded by the limits of my own linguistic repertoire (English, French and Spanish), compounded by my struggles to find people to help with the (admittedly onerous and time consuming) task of transcribing and translating classroom interaction in languages other than French. Thus, this research is about multilingualism but ideally, would have been conducted more multilingually.

In terms of areas for future research, the inclusion of 'sole speakers' of a language is a question that is often raised by teachers, and was a recurring theme in this study, yet it has hitherto been given little attention in research. Indeed, *FML* has been described as "a multilingual model of *social* interaction for learning" (Slembrouck et al., 2018, p. 18) and translanguaging scholarship posits the transformative classroom a space which facilitates fluid translingual *practice* (Li, 2011). However, these perspectives entail interactional and pedagogical moves that are unavailable to pupils without language peers in the classroom, potentially with compromising consequences; their practices, positionings and experiences merit further exploration.

Similar dilemmas face monolingual pupils who are often conceived to be beneficiaries of multilingual practice, but this entails somewhat compromised opportunities to contribute to a classroom translanguaging space. Their situation invites *FML* to enter terrain opened up by research projects such as *We Are Multilingual* in the UK (www.wamcam.org) and the *Holistic Model for Multilingualism in Education* developed in the Netherlands (Duarte & Günther-van der Meij, 2018) which incorporate school-learned and local languages (e.g. Frisian) in their conceptualisation of multilingualism. This has significance in Brussels, where all pupils in French-speaking schools must learn Dutch, and there is increasing pressure for more CLIL model French/Dutch immersion schools. What can *FML* theory offer and learn from these models? How is broader multilingualism incorporated into their conceptualisation of teaching and

learning? How do children from multilingual backgrounds add Dutch to their already multilingual identity?

Finally, the discussion above encouraged teachers to apply a socio-linguistic gaze to the social space of the playground, and this is certainly an area that would merit further exploration. It would potentially complement the findings of studies (e.g. Higgins & Ponte, 2017) which found that teachers' perspectives of their pupils' multilingualism changed when they encountered them in the socio-cultural spaces of their families and communities outside school. But these questions around school and community belonging can also be related to city-wide conceptualisations of citizenship and societal cohesion. Funding for 'multilingual' projects is separate to those seen to support 'social cohesion' (focused on the learning of French or making links between 'communities'). One wonders if there is funding available to give voice to some of the hybrid "everyday" multilingual and multicultural practices going on in playgrounds and schools. One might take inspiration from the theatre project *Parlemonde* in Montbéliard in France, a public theatre festival whereby artists collaborate with children from a migration background to create multilingual productions. (MA Scène Nationale, n.d.).

16.7 Final thoughts

This thesis occupies the relatively narrow terrain of multilingualism in education and seeks to contribute to efforts to build more equitable, socially-just pedagogies for language minoritised learners. However, it goes without saying that this goal intersects with a multitude of other contributing factors, not least powerful system-level mechanisms and wider socio-economic and linguistic inequalities. Political discourse still often stands in stark contrast with academic positions: the current Minister for Education in Flanders has recently suggested that there is no scientific evidence to support the use of the home language in the classroom and that parents should be fined if they are not considered to be doing enough to support their children's acquisition of Dutch (HLN, 2023). The Fédération Wallonie Bruxelles has begun implementing the *Pact for Excellence,* the vast, wide-ranging reform of its education system, seeking, amongst other things to reduce achievement gaps and inequalities. However, *Éveil Aux Langues* aside, its approach to multilingualism remains monolingual and focused on solving the problems of low proficiency in the language of schooling.

This thesis did not seek to demonstrate whether *FML* will result in greater acquisition of the language of schooling, but it does offer evidence that a multilingual lens applied across a class engenders an authentic understanding of the linguistic resources that pupils bring to school and can create powerful new forms of inclusive practice, particularly for newcomer pupils. Effective practice for newcomers is predicated on multilingual practice as the norm for all; this is not without its challenges, but this study points to the consequences of the simulated monolingualism so common in Belgian schools, which prompts linguistically conditional belonging and classroom cultures of "superficial knowing" whereby

individuals are forced to occupy artificial linguistic boxes in order to construct knowledge and articulate their relationship to the school community. In contrast, multilingual policies and practice constitute powerful tools which expand understandings of legitimate participation and invite pupils to behave as active, critical plurilingual citizens, and thus practise the sociolinguistic skills necessary to function in a multilingual democratic society.

Thus, a multilingual perspective represents a "promising disturbance of the curricular landscape" (Aoki, 1993, p. 259) but its role can potentially go beyond multilingualism. This study speaks to the *Pact for Excellence*'s aim to reduce the numbers of pupils repeating a school year. Indeed, the rates are beginning to fall but the underlying principle of legitimate, constructed failure is still deeply embedded in the mindsets of teachers, parents and pupils. The *Pact* highlights the important role of pedagogical differentiation as a key tool to address this i.e. the recognition that students have different ways of learning, requiring a variety of instructional methods. *FML* is precisely this and although it is predicated on a connectedness with one form of difference, it might also constitute a building block towards diversity being considered the norm, be it related to neurodiversity, socio-economic status, gender, sexuality etc...

Deleuze (1987, p.viii) states that "in a multiplicity, what counts are not the elements, but what there is between, the between, a site of relations which are not separable from each other. Every multiplicity grows in the middle." *FML* situates itself in 'the between' and seeks to build stronger connections between currently dispersed elements. I conclude by returning to Myriam, who wanted to swim in other linguistic bubbles. Perhaps the point here is not only the bubbles, their labels, whether indeed they exist, but also the act of swimming, how we swim in the in-between of the ecologies of language which have meaning in our past, present and future lives.

17. References

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18. Nederlandstalige samenvatting

Brussel is een stad met een grote talige diversiteit waar meer dan de helft van de kinderen in de Franstalige scholen dagelijks twee of meer talen gebruikt. Toch hebben de meeste scholen een eentalig beleid, en sommige dringen er zelfs op aan dat hun leerlingen hun "thuistaal" niet op school gebruiken. Dit soort taalbeleid heeft twee belangrijke motieven; ten eerste wordt het door leraren en beleidsmakers bedacht om de beste voorwaarden te scheppen voor de verwerving van de schooltaal (en dus voor academisch succes); en ten tweede wordt het gebruik van één gemeenschappelijke taal geacht de samenhang binnen de schoolgemeenschap te bevorderen. Deze standpunten zijn gebaseerd op "gezond verstand" over "wat werkt", maar in feite is er weinig wetenschappelijk bewijs om ze te ondersteunen, en zelfs voldoende om het tegendeel te suggereren. Ten eerste blijkt uit onderzoek dat het volkomen normaal is dat meertalige leerlingen hun taalrepertoire mengen en afwisselen, en dat zij dat met vaardigheid en doelgerichtheid doen. Ten tweede is er wereldwijd steeds meer onderzoek dat aantoont wanneer we leerlingen dwingen om alleen de schooltaal te gebruiken, wij hen mogelijks taalkundige en cognitieve hulpmiddelen ontnemen die hen kunnen helpen efficiënter en effectiever te leren. Deze observaties hebben geleid tot een "meertalige" wending in het onderwijsonderzoek, die beleidsmakers en leerkrachten aanmoedigt om de tekortkomingen in het discours over meertaligheid te herzien en de thuistalen van de leerlingen te positioneren als transversale hulpmiddelen voor het leren in het hele curriculum, en zo billijkere voorwaarden voor het leren van taalminderheden te scheppen.

We weten echter nog steeds weinig over hoe dergelijke modellen werken in reguliere klaslokalen waar de leraar de taal van de leerlingen niet spreekt, noch hoe de leerlingen zelf deze praktijken ervaren. In dit onderzoek wordt een model onderzocht dat specifiek is ontworpen voor de reguliere klas: Functioneel Meertalig Leren (FML) (Sierens & Van Avermaet, 2014). Dit houdt in dat de leerkracht een 'meertalige lens' hanteert en het dynamische en inclusieve gebruik van translinguale leerstrategieën stimuleert om dieper leren te bevorderen en een collectieve meertalige identiteit in de klas te bevestigen. Ik heb acht maanden doorgebracht in een school met een hoge talige diversiteit in Brussel, waar de schoolregel altijd had bepaald dat de leerlingen alleen Frans mochten gebruiken. Ik trainde vier leerkrachten in het gebruik van FML en volgde vervolgens hoe zij en hun leerlingen collectief hun thuistalen herontdekten als zinvol kapitaal voor leren en betrokkenheid in de klas.

Mijn hoofdonderzoeksvraag had tot doel de dynamieken, mogelijkheden en beperkingen van FML in de klas te begrijpen en is opgesplitst in vier deelstudies. De eerste is een theoretisch overzicht van FML, en omvat een transversale analyse met twee andere meertalige benaderingen in de klas: translanguaging als pedagogie (García & Kleyn, 2016) en Éveil Aux Langues (Candelier, 2003). Het vergelijkt beide pedagogische modellen, de manier waarop ze zijn gebouwd op een iets andere theorie over de aard van de taal zelf, en vervolgens hoe deze perspectieven samengaan in een transformatieve visie op elk model. De tweede

studie onderzoekt de beslissingen van de leerkrachten bij het ontwerpen en uitvoeren van "zinvolle meertalige taken". Het laat zien hoe zij zich de thuistalen voorstelden als individuele en klassikale hulpbronnen, die taalkundige, academische, creatieve en gemeenschapsvormende functies vervulden, en hoe zij vonden dat zij het leren, de betrokkenheid en de integratie versterkten. Er wordt ook verslag uitgebracht over het verschillende taalbeleid van elke leerkracht in de klas en over enkele uitdagingen van meertalige taken, zoals de integratie van eentalige leerlingen. De derde studie richt zich op de leerlingen en de manier waarop zij zich positioneerden in hiërarchieën van thuistaalvaardigheid, zelfs wanneer zij de taal van hun medeleerlingen niet konden spreken. Het laat zien hoe het voor meer 'gebalanceerde' tweetalige leerlingen gemakkelijker was om deel te nemen aan meertalige taken en interactie, waardoor cycli van positieve bevestiging ontstonden waartoe anderen moeilijk toegang hadden. De positie van kinderen die geen thuistaal delen met andere leerlingen wordt ook als gevoelig beschouwd omdat zij zich soms geïsoleerd voelden, evenals die van de leerkracht die niet altijd kon bemiddelen bij taalgeschillen tussen leerlingen. Het vierde en laatste artikel behandelt de impact van FML op gevoelens van sociale cohesie in de klas. Het laat zien hoe sommige leerlingen (bijvoorbeeld anderstalige nieuwkomers) zinvoller konden deelnemen aan het leven in de klas, maar dat eentalige leerlingen zich soms buitengesloten voelden, en dat leerlingen graag verbindingen opbouwden tussen verschillende taal- en etnische groepen. De kwestie van vertrouwen blijkt een complex gegeven te zijn, waarbij veel leerlingen bang waren voor meertalige beledigingen, vooral op de speelplaats.

In het algemeen laat deze studie zien hoe FML meertalige leerlingen, in het bijzonder anderstalige nieuwkomers, zinvolle mogelijkheden kan bieden om hun volledige taalrepertoire in te zetten voor het leren en erbij horen op school. Het biedt een beeld van het niet-lineaire proces van de invoering van een nieuwe meertalige aanpak, waarbij leerkrachten en leerlingen collectief hun eentalige gewoonten "ongedaan maken" en wijst erop dat het belangrijk is ervoor te zorgen dat bottom-up, door de leerling gestuurde praktijken de ruimte krijgen. Het toont aan dat, ondanks de spanningen op de speelplaats, dit de plaats is waar leerlingen de complexiteit van meertalig burgerschap beleven.

19. English summary

Brussels is a highly linguistically diverse city where over half of the children in its French-speaking schools are growing up using two or more languages daily. Yet for the most part, the schools are run monolingually, indeed some insist their pupils that they should not use their 'home' languages in school. This kind of language policy has two main motivations; firstly, it is conceived by teachers and policymakers to create the best conditions for the acquisition of the language of schooling (and therefore academic success); and secondly, the use of one shared language is deemed to promote cohesion across the school community. These positions are based on 'common sense' notions of 'what works' but in fact there is little scientific evidence to support them, indeed plenty to suggest the contrary. Firstly, research shows that it is completely normal for plurilingual pupils to mix and switch across their language repertoire and they do so with skill and purpose. Secondly, there is increasing evidence from across the globe that when we force pupils to only use the language of schooling, we are potentially depriving them of linguistic and cognitive tools that can help them to be more efficient and effective learners. These observations have prompted a 'multilingual' turn in education research which encourages policymakers and teachers to reframe discourse deficits about multilingualism and to position the pupils' home languages as transversal resources for learning across the whole curriculum, thus creating more equitable conditions for learning for language minoritised pupils.

However, we still know little about how such models work in mainstream classrooms where the teacher doesn't speak the pupils' languages, nor how the pupils themselves perceive these practices. This research investigates a model specifically conceived for the mainstream classroom: *Functional Multilingual Learning* (FML) (Sierens & Van Avermaet, 2014). This involves the teacher adopting a 'multilingual lens' and stimulating the dynamic and inclusive use of translingual learning strategies in order to promote deeper learning and affirm a collective classroom multilingual identity. I spent 8 months in a linguistically diverse school in Brussels where the school rule had always stipulated that the pupils should only use French. I trained four teachers on how to use *FML* and then followed how they and their pupils collectively re-imagined home languages as meaningful capital for learning and engagement in classroom life.

My main research question set out to understand the dynamics, opportunities and constraints of *FML* in the classroom and is broken down into four sub-studies. The first is a theoretical review of *FML*, and comprises a transversal analysis with two other multilingual classroom approaches: translanguaging as pedagogy (García & Kleyn, 2016) and *Eveil Aux Langues* (Candelier, 2003). It compares the pedagogical model that each proposes, the way each is built on a slightly different theory of the nature of language itself, and then how these perspectives combine in transformative vision of each model. The second study explores the teachers' decisions as they designed and delivered 'meaningful multilingual tasks'. It shows how they imagined home languages as individual and class resources, serving linguistic, academic, creative and community building functions and how they felt

that they deepened learning, engagement and inclusion. It also reports on the different classroom language policies adopted by each teacher as well as some of the challenges of multilingual tasks, such as the inclusion of monolingual pupils. The third study focuses on the pupils and the way they positioned themselves in hierarchies of home language proficiency, even when they couldn't speak the languages of their peers. It shows how it was easier for more 'balanced' bilingual pupils to participate in multilingual tasks and interaction, generating cycles of positive affirmation that others struggled to access. The position of sole speakers is also highlighted as sensitive as they sometimes felt isolated, as well as that of the teacher who could not always mediate on language disagreements between pupils. The fourth and final article addresses how *FML* impacted on feelings of social cohesion in the classroom. It shows how some pupils (e.g. newcomers) were able to participate more meaningfully in classroom life but monolinguals sometimes felt excluded, and that pupils were keen to build connections across different language and ethnic groups. The question of trust is shown to be a complex matter, with many pupils anxious about multilingual insults, particularly in the playground.

Globally, this study shows how *FML* can offer multilingual pupils meaningful opportunities to draw across their full linguistic repertoire in the service of learning and school belonging, in particular newcomer pupils. It offers a picture of the non-linear process of implementing a new multilingual approach as teachers and pupils collectively 'undo' their monolingual habits and points to the importance of ensuring bottom-up, pupil-led practices are given space. It shows that despite tensions on the playground, this is where pupils are living out the complexities of multilingual citizenship.

20. Appendices

Appendix A: Composition of pupil focus groups

Pupil pseudonym (* = sole speaker of their language)	Gender	Place of birth; year and age of arrival in Belgium	Languages used, listed in order of preference	Self-assessment of HL/FR proficiency ◆ HL > FR ● HL = FR ▲ HL < FR ■ no HL
Class A: M. Jean (pupils aged 10 and 11 in 2018)				
Karim	M	Belgium	French, Arabic	▲
Adem	M	Belgium	French/ Dutch /Arabic	●
Ari*	M	Belgium	French/Georgian	●
Myriam*	F	Belgium	French, Amharic, Tigrinya	▲
Nour	F	Belgium	French, Arabic	▲
Benjamin	M	Belgium	French	■
*Languages used in the class (in descending order of the number of speakers; * = one speaker only in the class):* Arabic, Spanish, French monolingual, Romanian, Italian (Sicilian dialect), Amharic*, Georgian*, Polish*, Tigrinya*, Turkish*				
Class B: Mme. Luisa (pupils aged 10 and 11 in 2018)				
Roberto	M	Colombia; 2017, age 9	Spanish, French	◆
Zehra	F	Belgium	Turkish, French, Kurdish	▲
Javier	M	Honduras; 2017, age 9	Spanish, French	◆
Kadiatou*	F	Belgium	French, Pulaar	▲
Dimena*	F	Belgium	French, Mbo	▲
Kenza	F	Belgium	French, Arabic	▲
*Languages used in the class (in descending order of the number of speakers; * = one speaker only in the class):* Spanish, Lingala, Turkish, Arabic, Croatian*, Greek*, Kurdish*, Mbo*, Mooré*, Polish*, Pulaar*				
Class C: Mme. Caroline (pupils aged 11 and 12 in 2018)				
Mona	F	Belgium	French, Lingala	▲
Dimitryi*	M	Belgium	French/Russian	●
Athena*	F	Greece; 2012, age 7	French/Greek	●
Muna	F	Belgium	French, Arabic	▲
Mehmet	M	Turkey; 2011, age 6	French/Turkish	●
Klara	F	Romania; 2007, age 4	French, Romanian	▲
*Languages used in the class (in descending order of the number of speakers; * = one speaker only in the class):* Arabic, Turkish, Lingala, Romanian, Spanish, French monolingual, Armenian*, Greek*, Pulaar*, Russian*, Vietnamese*,				
Class D: Mme. Khadija (pupils aged 11 and 12 in 2018)				
Freddy*	M	Belgium	French, Lingala	▲
Gizem	F	Belgium	French/Turkish	●
Asma	F	Belgium	French, Arabic	▲
Diego	M	Spain; 2016, age 9	Spanish, French	◆
Peta*	M	Belgium	French/Romanian	●
Murat	M	Belgium	French, Turkish	▲
*Languages used in the class (in descending order of the number of speakers; * = one speaker only in the class):* Arabic, Spanish, Turkish, Russian, French monolingual, Dioula*, Kinyarwanda*, Lingala*, Mooré*, Portuguese*, Romanian*				

Appendix B: Translated example of the pupil conversation rubric

The conversation rubric was accompanied by small name-cards (one for each pupil in the class) and an 'emotions' chart, showing a range of different feelings, both used to prompt more specific references and descriptions.

1. LEARNING: Did using several languages help with learning ?				
It made learning a lot harder	It made learning a bit harder	It didn't help with learning	It helped a bit with learning	It helped a lot with learning
- Think about yourself first. - Then talk about the class. - Can you give examples of people or moments?				

2. FEELINGS: How did people feel when they could use their other languages in the classroom?
- Use the feelings chart to help you.   - Think about yourself first.   - Then talk about the class.   - Can you give examples of people or moments? Other feelings?

3. CONNECTIONS BETWEEN PUPILS: Did using more languages help to build connections in the classroom?				
It put up a lot of barriers between people	It put up some barriers between people	It didn't change anything	It helped build some connections between people	It helped build a lot of connections between people
- Think about yourself first. - Then talk about the class. - Can you give examples of people or moments?				

4. HOME-SCHOOL CONNECTIONS: Did using more languages help to connect 'life in school' and 'life out of school'?				
It put up a lot of barriers between life in school and life out of school	It put up some barriers between life in school and life out of school	It didn't change anything	It helped to connect life in and out of school	It really helped to connect life in and out of school
- Think about yourself first. - Then talk about the class. - Can you give examples of people or moments?				

5. TEACHER: Do you think your teacher thinks it would be a good idea to teach in this way again in the future?				
Definitely not	Maybe not	We don't know	Maybe yes	Definitely yes
Can you explain?				

Appendix C: Example extract of an event map

(M. Jean, lesson 1. The task is to translate a sentence in the negative into home languages. The pupils are sitting in language groups)

Time	Speaker	Class level Teacher (T)/pupil actions (P)	Language	Interaction space	Karim — *What does he do? What does he talk about? How does he participate? How does he interact with other people? With Arabic speakers? With non-Arabic speakers? With the teacher?*	Notes	Opportunities for exploring self and others through text *Disruption or uneven access to these opportunities*
32.06	Ps, T Ps	Talking on their tables in language-groups, translating the sentence.	pupil choice	LG: language groups	32.47 Karim (K) immediately translates the phrase into Arabic. Mohammed (M) replies 'non non non' & gives his answer. Nour disagrees (hard to hear her comment). Karim asks M what kind of Arabic he speaks. Hassan asks if they speak classical Arabic and points out that Nadia does. Karim says that there is Arabic and the Arabic they speak here. Nour: "you see, that's normal Arabic"	Classical Arabic associated with Nadia - marker of competence.?	• Language group (LG): Translating from FR to other language
							• LG Negotiating linguistic expertise within the group
					33.55. Getting up and walking about. Repeating his answer in the translation task to Nour.	Talking about 'different' and 'the right' kind of Arabic	• LG Understanding and situating repertoires
							• P and LG Positioning themselves as experts to the teacher
		Teacher (T) setting different task for the monolingual pupils	FR	LG	34.05 K gets up and bumps into the table of Nour. He objects loudly [with an exaggerated Arabic accent in French]		• P 'performing' language; crossing French with others
					K saying to T that it is he who found the answer and asks Nour to validate this to the T.	K often seeks validation that he is right	• T Acting as learner of pupils' languages • *T Acting as a filter for pupils' language*
36.43	T	T asking for slow translation in Arabic from first group; writing on the board; group can't decide which 'kind' of Arabic	Fr , Ar	whole class (WC)	K watching the other group answer, squeezing his water bottle under the table.		• *LG Mediating and validating ideas of 'correct' or 'right' language*

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Appendix D: Original discourse utterances, *Study 3*

Excerpt 1

Speaker	Original
1. Ari	il faut l'écrire
2. Kristof	moi je ne sais pas écrire en polonais
	Ari returning to the table with a sheet of paper
3. Ari	*(showing Kristof his paper where he has written some letters in Georgian script)*
	Kristof, regarde comment on écrit dans mon pays
4. Kristof	*(looking at the paper)*
	on dirait que les lettres sont vraiment bizarres
5. Ari	c'est étrange
6. Kristof	*(in mock admiration at how difficult they are to write)*
	oh la la
7. Ari	*(laughing)*
	ce n'est pas de ma faute, hein ?
8. Kristof	je sais

Excerpt 2

Speaker	Original
1. M. Jean	*(looking across the class who are all listening)*
	trois… qui veut le dire dans sa langue ?
2. Myriam	*(putting her hand up, looking at M. Jean)*
	Five other pupils also putting up their hands, including Nadia.
3. M. Jean	Myriam trois c'est quoi
4. Myriam	*(Pause 4 seconds)*
5. M. Jean	qu'est ce qu'on doit faire ? trois c'était avec les mots des autres langues
6. Myriam	*(looking away)*
7. M. Jean	*(pointing at Nadia)* vas-y Nadia
8. Nadia	*(quickly, loudly)*I khassa à nini mantarna [Berber]
9. M. Jean	*(laughing, smiling)* j'ai envie de dire okay… ce qui veut dire?
	pour être sûre que j'ai bien compris ?
10. Nadia	Ben il faut il faut savoir ce que c'est
11. M. Jean	okay exactement

Excerpt 3

Speaker	Original
1. M. Jean	*(to Benjamin and Sofia)* comment est ce qu'on dit… au moins…. comment on dit au moins le le nombre pour désigner le nombre de côtés ? … comment on le dit?
2. Nadia	*(interrupting)* ithna ɛachara [Arabic]
3. M. Jean	toi tu sais mais je veux que lui *(points to Benjamin)*
4. Karim	*(interrupting, loudly, from the back of the room) moi* je sais le dire
5. M. Jean	ou Sofia le disent
6. Nadia	monsieur c'est faux ce qui est écrit là bas
7. M. Jean	*(to Nadia)* t'as peut-être raison … je ne peux pas le dire …on en parlera après
8. Sofia	*(hesitating and struggling to say the word in Arabic)*
9. Karim	*(crouching down under the blackboard)* monsieur je peux le dire ?
10. Sofia	*(still hesitating; Nadia is calling out pronunciation prompts)*
11. M. Jean	bon allez Karim fait le alors *(holds out the paper)*
12. Nadia	*(shouting)* monsieur je peux le faire?
13. M. Jean	*(to Nadia)* après tu pourras
14. Karim	*(hesitating, holds the paper out to Hassan)* Hassan vas-y s'il te plaît
15. M. Jean	*(to Karim)* pourquoi ça te gène?
16. Myriam	il a peur
17. Hassan	mais non! tu lis BIEN en plus
18. Nadia	monsieur je peux le dire? *(standing up, loudly)* ithna ɛachara
19. Myriam	allEZ… dit le
20. Karim	*(moving away from the teacher, indicating he doesn't want to read)*
21. M. Jean	qui veut le dire alors ?
22. Nadia	moi ! (*putting her hand up, moving to the front of the class*)
23. M. Jean	Nadia vas-y pas de problème
24. Karim	(*moving backwards, back hunched, away from the teacher towards the corner of the classroom*)
25. Nadia	(*takes the paper from Karim as she walks past him and reads as she is walking along*).
26. Nadia	*(nonchalant but halting, reading to the whole class)* hwa mothal'laɛon yaḥtawi ḥay yaḥtawi ɛala ithna ɛachara thilaɛan. [Arabic]
27. Nadia	*(when barely finished she drops the paper on the desk and walks back to her seat)* au revoir
28. Karim	*(picks up the paper and sits back down at his seat)*

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