Reflecting Lingualities and Positionalities for a Changing Education System

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Abstract

To improve teacher education for multilingual and often minoritized classrooms, we aim to find out more about future teachers' understandings of multilingualism. Using a biographical professionalization research approach, we investigate the interactions of students' biographical and academic knowledge in autobiographical texts, focusing on two minoritized students. Their texts allow to reconstruct biographical knowledge of family language policies, Heritage Language Instruction and translingual lifeworlds. They also show the students' knowledge of language ideologies that devalue multilingualism.

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1 Introduction

Multilingualities are neither neutral nor equal, even though they are part of everyday life and education in most societies all over the world. Research shows that minoritized multilingual students still face social injustice and run the risk of being educationally disadvantaged (Kuhn and Neumann 2017; Panagiotopoulou and Rosen 2018). Classroom practices that devalue multilingual languaging practices are greatly contributing to this inequality. This is often the case in national education systems that still support mainly monolingualism even though they are factually multilingual, such as in Germany or Austria. Teachers often report to be overcharged by the lingual heterogeneity in their respective classrooms, feeling ill-prepared and fearing to lose control (Arnold 2015; Baumann and Becker-Mrotzek 2014; Bredthauer and Engfer 2018). To better prepare future teachers for a changing education system, the module “Deutsch für Schülerinnen und Schüler mit Zuwanderungsgeschichte” (German for students with a history of immigration, short “DaZ module”) was implemented in teacher education in 2009 in Germany. In some of Germany’s federal states, it is mandatory for all students in teacher education), including the state where our project is located, and facultative in some of the other states (Baumann 2017). The module (6 ECTS¹) usually comprises a lecture and a seminar and provides an introduction to multilingualism and its didactics.

The “DaZ module” is meant to equip future teachers with knowledge to work on language-related didactics and education inequalities. Some studies show that teacher education students who participate in seminars that prepare teachers for multilingual classrooms show a greater appreciation of multilingualities and less insistence on strictly monolingual teaching practices (Strobl et al. 2019—albeit for a more extensive version of the module with 12 ECTS, Born et al. 2019). Furthermore, they show a higher competence in teaching matters related to

¹The University of Duisburg-Essen is the only university in North-Rhine Westphalia that offers a 12 ECTS module. The University of Dortmund offers 9 ECTS for secondary school teacher education degrees and 6 ECTS for other teacher education degrees. Before implementation, 12 ECTS were recommended (Stiftung Mercator 2009).

multilingualism and German as a Second Language (Bührig et al. 2020). The sum of attended seminars is the most important predictor for their competence growth (Stangen et al. 2019). However, some results also point towards an adversatory effect: The module seems to create and label a group of students as others, and moreover, as others having a deficit and needing the teachers' help (Döll et al. 2017). This seems to happen instead of developing a stance that values emerging bilinguals' linguistic curiosity, flexibility and their communicative and learning skills. Bredthauer and Engfer (2018) summarize their review of twelve empirical studies on teachers' beliefs about multilingualism by pointing towards a considerable discrepancy between teachers' overt positive stance towards multilingualism and their lack of actual multilingual teaching practices and negative views on minoritized languages. This is in line with research that stresses the importance of developing a professional and reflective stance toward issues of migration, social inequalities and language(s) as part of teacher education (Skerrett 2015; Gomez and Johnson Lachuk 2017; Dirim and Mecheril 2018; Gottuck et al. 2019). This is beautifully complemented by García's et al. (2017) insistence on the development of a translanguaging stance as the foundation for lesson planning and teaching within translanguaging pedagogy.

However, before we can do more research on teachers' stances on multilingualism, we need to find out more about students' actual understandings of multilingualism. What do they mean when they talk about multilingualism?

We approach this question with a focus informed by biographical professionalization research (Dausien 2003; Volkmann 2008; Schwendowius 2015; Dausien and Hanses 2017; Thoma 2018; Epp 2019). Drawing on the sociology of knowledge and its distinction between different kinds of knowledge (Berger and Luckmann 1966), biography research focuses on biographical knowledge (Alheit and Hoerning 1989; Dausien and Hanses 2017). Biographical knowledge is the knowledge we acquire throughout our lives. It is stacked up over the time of the life-span and specific to each individual. However, biographical knowledge is not just of a personal or individual nature, it also contains institutional and social knowledge, as individuals' experiences are embedded within social and institutional frames. By forming their biographical knowledge, they interpret and make sense of their experiences, and of themselves, within these frames. This allows us to view the students' biographical knowledge as being in a multi-layered interaction with social frames such as language ideologies (Irvine 2016). These interactions might shape their understandings of multilingualism and their respective beliefs.

It is important to note that biography is not simply a term that relates to individuals' life stories. Dausien and Hanses (2017) point out that biography is also

a social construct. Individual life stories reflect social expectations on (normal) biographies. They argue that it is possible to reconstruct social expectations of normalcy from the ways in which individuals present themselves through their life stories. From this perspective, a biography research approach is interested not only in individual life stories, but also, as Dausien and Hanses stress, in more general and abstract reconstructions of social expectations and constructions of normalcy with regard to biographies. In a similar vein, biographical texts allow to reconstruct social membership categories and the “rules” of their inclusiveness or exclusiveness by analyzing how individuals negotiate their own social memberships in their biographical texts.

Biographical professionalization research also highlights the interactional (Dausien and Hanses 2017) nature of biographical knowledge with other kinds of knowledge, such as “academic knowledge”. This relationship may be viewed as fluid (Epp 2019), or, as we find, also contradictory. We use the term “academic knowledge” to refer to the knowledge that might be created by participating in higher education. Processes of knowledge creation are individual. They are only partly influenced by the content matter of a curriculum and the learning opportunities that educators provide.

Thus, we ask:

- What understandings of multilingualism do future teachers have?
- What kinds of knowledge do future teachers’ understandings of multilingualism entail?
- Which influences of their biographical knowledge on their understandings of multilingualism can we reconstruct?
- Which interactions of biographical and academic kinds of knowledge can we reconstruct?

2 Method

To answer these questions, we conduct the ongoing project “DaZu” (“Aushandlungen von Zugehörigkeiten im DaZ-Modul”—“Negotiating Social Memberships in the DaZ-Modul”²). The project “DaZu” consists of quantitative and qualitative

²The research group working on this ongoing project is Tatjana Atanasoska, Sara Hägi-Mead, Magdalena Knappik, Corinna Peschel (University of Wuppertal) and Ashi Can Ayten (University of Münster); the project is led by Sara Hägi-Mead.

data; in this article, we will focus on the qualitative data. To pilot our study, we asked students who participated in the DaZ-Modul to write down their “multilingualities biographies”. This was an assignment at the end of their seminars in the module. We used a prompt that focused on the students’ individual encounters and experiences with multilingualism, multilingual speakers and German as a Second Language. We also asked them to write about any content matter they came across during their studies that had to do with multilingualism. The prompt was accompanied by a short questionnaire that asked students about their background information (like age, languages learned in their first three years, etc.). They could decide whether they wanted their text to be included in our project or not. 125 biographies were collected and anonymized using an individualized alphanumerical code. The written texts are two to four pages long in average.

Asking the students to write seems to have two major advantages: First, writing gives access to thoughts and beliefs, which otherwise could not be analyzed by us. Second, writing could, thanks to its epistemic quality, be a chance for the writers to organize their own knowledge and beliefs and reflect on them.

The data collection method proved apt to elicit explicit positionings of students towards multilingualities and their speakers. Students recounted both everyday experiences and things they learnt in their studies. It is possible to reconstruct biographical and academic knowledge from the texts, and it is very interesting how those kinds of knowledge contradict each other. Those contradictions seem to be a great source of data for analyzing frictions and changes in knowledge and concepts (also in those, that might have been inert before), developments in the way students reflect on multilingualism and, hence, learning processes.

As a limitation, in the pilot’s writing prompt, we did not explicitly ask students to reflect. We only had one point of data collection (towards the end of the DaZ-Modul), so it is not possible to reconstruct learning processes. However, we could reconstruct potential signposts for such processes. These are points where students make the aforementioned contradictions the subject of discussion. The seminar setting of data collection frames the relationship between students and researchers who were the seminar teachers. Institutional frameworks can have influenced which content students chose to write about. Considering the strong social desirability that is to be expected here, it is even more remarkable when students position themselves in opposition to content matter that was taught in the module. We utilized the data of our pilot study to develop a heuristic for these questions and to further develop our research design for the main study.

We interpreted the biographies using both, initially, a sequential analysis approach (Reichertz 2016) and later a category building approach drawing on Grounded Theory Methodology (Charmaz 2006).

3 Findings

When analyzing the biographies of multilingualism, we noticed that there are systematic differences between the biographical knowledge of minoritized multilingual students and students who grew up monolingual German-speaking. For students who grew up monolingual German-speaking, the contents of the DaZ module are knowledge productions about “others”. For migration-related multilingual students it is contents that address themselves as members of the group/category that is produced by the module (“with immigrant history”). They do not simply assign themselves to this group, but negotiate this addressation intensively. For this text, we will highlight the biographical knowledge of two multilingual students and the negotiations that are part of their understandings of multilingualism.³ In the following, we will present findings about the students’ negotiations of being a “Speaker of German as a Second Language”, about their family language policies, about their experiences with Heritage Language Instructions, and about their views on translanguaging practices. We chose to present the findings following the temporal sequence of the students’ texts.

3.1 Negotiating Being a “Speaker of German as a Second Language” (“DaZ-Sprecher*in”)

At the beginning of their texts, three-quarters of the multilingual students identify themselves as “DaZ speakers”. According to the contents taught in the DaZ module, this term refers to speakers who have acquired German after the age of three (Ahrenholz 2017). The term is used in the literature to distinguish this constellation of acquisition from that of simultaneous bilingual language acquisition, i.e. the acquisition of two languages within the first three years of life.

“My first contact with a DaZ speaker is probably I myself. Even though I now speak German much better than Arabic, it was the language with which I first came into contact, as I was born in Tunisia. But in the DaZ seminars I learned that your first language is not the same as the language one speaks best, but a completely neutral and time-oriented term” (BDS28, pp. 1–5).

³For analyses on majorized students’ understandings of multilingualism, see Hägi-Mead et al. (forthc.).

“Before I went to university, I was able to make experiences with speakers of German as a Second Language in many contexts, because I am basically a speaker of German as a Second Language myself. My family is originally from Turkey. My parents were both born in Turkey, albeit my mother completed her education fully in Germany. Hence, I was born in Germany” (RRA28, pp. 1 ff.).⁴

There are three things to note here: Firstly, the students self-identify as members of the group of “DaZ-speakers” with modalizing expressions such as “probably” (BDS28), which gives the impression that they assign themselves to this category hesitantly. Secondly, they link their identification as members of this group with explanations about their (educational) biography and sometimes, as in the case of RRA28, that of their parents. Thirdly, their assignment entails statements about their language skills in German and in their family language. The latter two points are usually closely intertwined; throughout their texts, descriptions of their language skills can be found.

First, the modalizing self-identification (“I am basically a speaker ...”, RRA28; “is probably myself”, BDS28) could be a reaction to the writing prompt. The first question of the prompt asked about experiences with “DaZ-speakers” which means that it is, in fact, not directed at them but at monolingually raised students. The modalization could also indicate that multilingual speakers do not like to be assigned to this category. The term “Second Language” is often understood as pejorative, especially by multilingual speakers themselves (Miladinović 2014; Dirim and Pokitsch 2018, also Ennsner-Kananen and Montecillo-Leider 2018 in critique of the term “English language learners”). It should also be noted that students who were raised monolingual German-speaking do not define themselves as such in their biographies. Being raised monolingually is an unmarked category.

Second, the self-assignment as a DaZ-speaker does not stand alone, but is linked with explanations of the writers’ migration biography. They explain why they are bilingual: either they themselves were born in the country of their family language, as in BDS28, or their parents, as in RRA28. This indicates that the writers feel a need to explain their bilingualism. RRA28 also mentions their mother’s educational biography, which was “fully” completed in Germany. One reason for this could be that she wants to show how long her family has been in Germany already, at least since her mother’s elementary school enrolment. A complementary interpretation is that by mentioning her mother’s educational

⁴All quoted passages are translations from the German original.

biography, and not merely the duration of her stay, she wants to point out her family's strong affiliation with the German educational system.

Third, both students make statements on their language skills in their family languages and in German. BDS28 says that his German is now much better than his Arabic, thus referring to a common understanding of first language as one's "best" language. The fact that the term "first language" as it is used in scientific literature differs from this common understanding—namely that the term is meant to be "neutral and time-oriented" (BDS28)—shows, again, that the common understanding contradicts this understanding. It seems to be relevant for students to emphasize their high language skills—in German and, partly, also in the family language.

3.2 Family Language Policy

Another important part of the students' multilingualism biographies is their explanation (and endorsement) of their family language policy (Macalister and Mirvahedi 2017). This term refers to the decisions that parents and their children make about the languages used at home (Crump 2017). According to Crump, family language policies have three components: ideology, practices and management. In the students' texts we learn about their representation of their parents' ideologies—what, in their perspective or recollection, their parents advocated and why. In very general terms, students also mention what was practiced in the family.

"The first language that I learned as a child was the Turkish language. My parents spoke only Turkish with me up until I was three years old. It was important to both of them that I have a good mastery of my family language. [...] I have to say this worked pretty well" (RRA28).

The family language policies of the students in our data vary, but they are similar in the two biographies examined here: both parents decide to use the family language exclusively (RRA28) or mainly (BDS28) for the first three years of their children's lives. The reason for this strategy is also the same: both families are convinced that their children would learn German later anyway; it is also important for the family of RRA28 that she has a good command of their family language. Both students evaluate the family language policy of their family as positive, both with reference to their language skills in German; RRA28 also with regard to her family language skills in Turkish. If we recall the opening passage of RRA28's biography where she highlights her mother's educational biography,

it is now possible to present another interpretation for this. RRA28 might want to emphasize here that her family's language policy, choosing Turkish only for the first three years, does not show a lack of educational aspiration or orientation towards the German educational system: At least one parent made this decision in full knowledge of the German educational system.

Crump (2017) stresses that a family language policy is never decided and enforced by parents alone, but negotiated between parents and children. We do not find any mention of such negotiations on the part of the children in the two biographies, but their positive presentation can be read as an endorsement of their family's language policy.

3.3 Heritage Language Instruction ("Herkunftssprachlicher Unterricht")

Both students recount experiences with Heritage Language Instruction (HLI) in their texts, and both assess it negatively. BDS28 recounts his perspective as a former student of HLI as a child, and RRA28 reflects on observations of HLI that she made during an internship during her teacher training. BDS28's recollection is characterized by a child's perspective. He remembers that, as a child, he did not like the HLI teacher, that he found the textbooks boring, that the lessons took place in the afternoon. He also felt excluded from a group of students with a different Arabic-speaking country of origin in the class. From an adult perspective, he analyzes that emotional distance to his family language was also a reason for his rejection of HLI. He states that he was emotionally distant to his father who, being a quiet man, never talked much to him. As a consequence, he says he did not experience his family language to be a language of emotions, but rather one that he was distant to. As an adult, however, he regrets that he "did not seize this opportunity" (BDS28) to develop literacy in his family language through HLI.

RRA28, who did not attend HLI as a child, discusses it from the perspective of a future teacher:

"During a practice placement at a high school I was given the opportunity to visit a 'Turkish heritage language class'. To my horror, I had to find out in the Turkish class that most students were not able to speak correct Turkish nor German. Instead, they talked a mixed language using both of them, but this was marked by grammatical mistakes. [...] Additionally, it has to be said that the teacher was originally from Turkey. He also was not able to speak German correctly. In my view, this is very problematic, because the teacher acts as a linguistic role model and, hence, should be able to also use the German language correctly" (RRA28, 22–30).

For RRA28, it is horrendous that the students do not speak German or Turkish correctly in the HLI class she observes. She reports that the students use translingual practices and make grammatical mistakes. At this point, we do not know whether she rejects translingual practices per se, or if she mainly rejects the lack of correctness she observes. Yet, it is not clear what RRA28 classifies as grammatical errors. In translingual practices, for instance, words from one language are often inserted into the syntactic and/or morphological system of the other language, which is called code mixing (Dirim 1998). If we were to assess the correctness of an entire discourse from within the system of a single (named) language, this phenomenon can appear as a lack of correctness in this language. RRA28 also criticizes the German language skills of the teacher who is of Turkish origin. She argues that teachers should also be language models and, thus, in her view, this teacher should also be able to speak German correctly.

RRA28's presentation is characterized by a strong dissociation from the observed lessons and the HLI teacher. In Sect. 4, we will discuss this in the context of her position as a member of a minoritized language group and in the context of societal demands on citizens' (German) language skills in German-speaking countries.

3.4 Views on Translingual Practices

We do not know whether RRA28 disavows translingual practices per se. Her recollections and observations seem to be based on the common idea of single named languages, rather than the idea of a translingual repertoire. She also describes her own language skills within the frame of separated, named languages. However, in her work as a substitute teacher, RRA28 aims to create translinguaging spaces:

“Based on my own experiences, it was important to me to include first languages in my teaching. So first of all, I got an overview of the individual first languages. My mastery of the Turkish language was very helpful. In my lesson planning, I tried to translate important expressions into the students' respective first languages as well, in order to make understanding easier. It should be assumed that most of the “newly arrived students⁵” also went to school in their home country and are, therefore, familiar with certain contents. It is important to build on this knowledge. By

⁵Students who enter the German school system after the age of 6, due to their family's migration, and who have usually participated in another country's school system before.

including the first languages, a very pleasant atmosphere was created in the class and the pupils had a lot of fun learning” (RRA28).

Even though RRA28 describes what she does in the vocabulary of separate languages, it is apparent that she is eager to include her student’s repertoires in a meaningful way. She values her students’ prior knowledge. Her lesson planning must have required some time and effort, but she does not mention it. Instead, she values her own family language skills as a resource for her planning.

BDS28, on the other hand, creates the image of a “cosmos” to describe his very positive translingual experiences at secondary school.

“The secondary school I attended had a high percentage of migrants - an estimated 72%. Playing with languages and cultures was part of everyday life, and living together between nations, religions and peoples was part of our identity. Boys could be insulted in dozens of languages from Russian to Italian to Polish and you could compliment girls and sing love songs to them from Turkish to Arabic to Spanish. Every day we talked about what things were called in other languages or reflected, in fact, on speaking habits. Sometimes we parodied the other language and had to laugh if something meaningful came out of it. [...] Foreign languages were a very conscious thing for us. This showed musically as well. Russian, Turkish or Greek music was not uncommon in the schoolyard and everyone knew a few songs. In this place we were foreigners, but we were foreigners together and identified ourselves with multiculturalism and multilingualism. We tried to take racism’s pungency away with humor, not only by throwing whole racist resentments at each other in jokes, but also by calling ourselves K*****, P***** or N*****.⁶ In fact, inter-ethnic conflicts were never an issue, even homosexual teachers were respected to the greatest extent. By living together with the foreign, we had simply learned to be tolerant and to empathize with the other. We had developed our own little cosmos” (BDS28).

BDS28 describes multilingualism here as a part of the *lebenswelt/lifeworld*⁷ (Schütz and Luckmann 1973) in which he lived as a secondary school student. His recollections seem to be situated mainly in the schoolyard. In this multilingual lifeworld, all languages seem to be available to everyone. Here, all students form a group in their shared “foreignness”, they are equal to each other. Their interactions are characterized by humor and respect. They also share experiences of racism, and “we [tried] to take the edge off racism with humor”. BDS28 recalls

⁶The student uses three racial slurs, he writes them fully in his original text. We censored them in the quotation of his text to disrupt the reproduction of the slurs.

⁷Ingrid Gogolin (1994) refers to migration related multilingualism as “lifeworld multilingualism”.

translingual practices such as singing love songs to girls and insulting boys, using a rich repertoire of languages for both. The young students use translingual practices in such a way that, in the words of BDS28, they create their “own little cosmos”. The youths also reflect on language(s) on a meta-level: “Every day we talked about what things meant in other languages, or reflected on speaking habits”.

BDS28 also uses named languages to describe the languaging practices in this “cosmos”, but he emphasizes how everyone could participate in any languaging practice, regardless of the languages’ names. This practice transcends notions of multilingualism as entailing just a first and a second language, or the notion of languages and their speakers as being associated with members of a specific nation. The shared languaging experiences that BDS28 describes are available to all, and instead of different “worlds”, this translingual space creates their “own cosmos”.

Later in his text, BDS28 describes the “cultural break” he experiences when entering university. Here, nobody cares for his full linguistic repertoire, as only German and English are valued as academic languages. This shows that the understanding of multilingualism described here, this translingual and equal cosmos, is not related to an individual alone, but describes the linguistic and social practices of a local community. The “cosmos” disappears in another context, at university.

4 Discussion

The students’ biographical texts allow us to reconstruct their biographical and academic knowledge of multilingualism and, thus, to gain insights into their understandings of multilingualism. With their recounts of their family language policies, their experiences with Heritage Language Instruction (HLI), and of a translingual lifeworld (as in BDS28), their texts allow to identify some shared elements of multilinguals’ biographical knowledge. These are elements that the texts of monolingually raised students in our data do not contain. However, this result should be regarded as preliminary, as it needs further confounding by more data.

The biographical texts also allow to reconstruct the students’ knowledge of social expectations of multilingualism and of language ideologies (Irvine 2016). Through their participation in monolingual institutions, their socialization in a society with a monolingual norm, through their reception of media and

(mainstream) arts, knowledge about language ideologies has become part of their biographical knowledge. In most biographies, this knowledge is not articulated as explicitly as the abovementioned elements—family language policies, HLI or translingual lifeworlds (although in some other text in our data, it is). Their knowledge about social expectations on multilingualism can be reconstructed by analyzing what the students seem to think is in need of explanation, and by analyzing their recurring assessments of language skills.

In the opening passages, the students explain why they are bilingual by relating their migration biographies and, in RRA28's case, also her family's migration history. This allows to reconstruct a knowledge of multilingualism as something that needs explanations in Germany. The social expectation of normalcy is monolingualism and a non-migration biography.

Both students combine their recounts of their family language policies with an emphasis on their strong language skills. RRA28 also highlights her family's connections to the German education system. It can be reconstructed that the students have a biographical knowledge that family language policies focusing on the family language are, in Germany, not considered an everyday part of parenting or a self-evident family right. Instead, family language policies seem to be in need of defense by highlighting strong language skills.

The students' biographical knowledge shows that the terms "first language", "second language", and "DaZ-speaker" are, in the common sense, not "absolutely neutral and time-oriented" terms, as BDS29 formulates for the technical term "first language". As a technical term, it conveys no information about the level of mastery of this language, but in their biographical knowledge, the opposite is more accurate. This can be reconstructed as the students only assign themselves hesitantly to the category "DaZ-speaker", and they are fast to highlight their strong German language skills. Here, the students' biographical knowledge contradicts the academic knowledge they acquire in the DaZ module.

We understand the students' articulations as answering and countering the social expectations on multilingualism that is part of their biographical knowledge. In their biographical texts, they self-position and re-position themselves against social expectations and ideologies on languages. We can reconstruct this in their assessments of multilingual policies, e.g. in their endorsement of their own family language policy, or in their rejection of HLI. Both needs to be interpreted against the language ideology of monolingualism as being the norm, and against the societal devaluation of migrant languages. With their endorsement of their family language policy, they reposition themselves against societal expectations that families should speak majorized languages. As regards to HLI, their

negative assessments allow them to align themselves with a common negative societal view on HLI that is reflected in its massive institutional marginalization. By this alignment, they might gain a socially viable position.

The students reposition themselves also against the simplicity of some of the technical terms and teaching matters that form part of their academic knowledge. These can be seen as “single stories” (Adichie 2009) if compared to the complexity of a multilinguals’ language biography. BDS28’s recounts of his father’s stillness and their ensuing emotional distance are opposed to the idea that family languages are important for the authentic expression of emotions, as might be emphasized in teaching as part of the module’s advocacy for multilingualism. In these regards, we can see how the students reposition themselves against assumptions and expectations on multilingualism that form part of their biographical knowledge.

In the instance of the emphasis on language skills, and on correctness in particular, the biographical texts also take up language ideologies in an affirmative way. RRA28’s text is characterized by a strong emphasis on correctness in language use. This can be interpreted as adoption of the language ideology of idealizing correctness, and this ideology often contains the idea of a native speaker as the ideal speaker of a language (Holliday 2006). BDS28 does not formulate correctness as a strong goal, but he constantly negotiates why his family language skills are “this bad” (BDS28). We can observe an adoption of language ideologies by multilingual students or teachers in several studies on translanguaging as part of teacher education, too. Holdway and Hitchcock (2018) show that engagement with translanguaging literature in a further education course changes teachers’ teaching practice to be more inclusive of multilingual resources. Out of seven teachers in this study, one teacher does not change her teaching and insists on focusing on teaching content matter using English-medium only. We think it is noteworthy that this very experienced and well-educated teacher is herself multilingual due to migration. Martínez-Roldán (2015) found that bilingual teacher candidates tended to reinforce hegemonic English languaging practices in an after-school program for Latinx students when there were no specific rules and spaces for the use of Spanish.

We have to take into account that speakers of minoritized languages are often taken as representative for their whole group (Gümüşay 2020). Minoritized future teachers are, in particular, in the position to negotiate their ideas on (multilingual) education, and their language biography, by negotiating the expectations of a society that widely endorses monolingual ideologies (Thoma 2018). The emphasis on correctness, and on their language skills, could be a way to leverage their language and educational biographies within this frame.

5 Conclusion

In order to further improve teacher education for a multilingual and often minoritized student population, we think it is important to find out more about future teachers' actual understandings of multilingualism. Using a biographical professionalization research approach, we are interested in the interactions of biographical and academic knowledge in the students' understandings of multilingualism. The term biographical knowledge does not only entail personal experiences, but also reflects social expectations on normalcy and "normal" biographies as social constructs (Dausien and Hanses 2017). Thus, this approach enables us to reconstruct students' biographical knowledge on social expectations and ideologies on multilingualism and multilinguals, as well as their acts of (re-)positioning themselves against those expectations. We used biographical texts written by students in teacher education with a focus on their experiences with multilingualism as instrument of data collection. In this text, we presented two minoritized multilingual students' biographies.

Family language policy, their experiences with Heritage Language Instruction, and, partly, their experiences with translanguaging lifeworlds are shared elements of their biographical knowledge of multilingualism. With Schwendowius and Thoma (2016), we suggest that it is important for teacher educators to acknowledge these elements as funds of knowledge (Moll et al. 1992). The translanguaging lifeworld that BDS28 describes is rich, multi-faceted and full of informal learning: linguistic and metalinguistic learning, the experience of solidarity, finding strategies for dealing with the experience of racism, and the development of a respectful empathy for all "others". Similarly, to know about family language policies and about HLI is a fund of knowledge that is important for (future) teachers to have in a multilingual migration society. In teacher education, this needs to be part of reflective work ("biography work", Dausien and Hanses 2017) for students in order to become aware of structural shortcomings and to develop transformative ideas for institutions such as Heritage Language Instruction, in particular if personal experiences with this were negative.

The biographical texts also allowed for reconstructions of the students' biographical knowledge of social expectations on lingualities and language ideologies, mainly the expectation of monolingualism as normalcy. We found that the students re-position themselves against some of these ideologies, for example by endorsing their family-language-oriented family language policy. However, we found that they have also taken up some of the ideologies, mainly the idealization of correctness and the idea of languages as separate entities. This was also apparent in their recurrent affirmation that their (German) language skills were strong.

The project “DaZu” is ongoing. So far, we gained first insights into the students’ understandings of multilingualism and how their biographical knowledge might interact with the academic knowledge they create when participating in the DaZ module. In a further step of the project, we will collect biographical texts before the DaZ module and ask students to comment on their own texts after the DaZ module. This way, we hope to gain more insight into possible changes of students’ understandings of multilingualism after the DaZ module and into their ways of reflecting on their biographies.

Martínez-Roldán (2015) points out that bilingual future teachers “need time to reflect on their own biographies, to interrogate their understandings and valuing of bilingualism, and teacher education programs should provide such opportunities” (Martínez-Roldán 2015, p. 55). The act of writing down your own language biography and reflecting on it in teacher education could provide an excellent opportunity to do this. Such kinds of reflection and ways of prompting it could then perhaps become a regular part of teacher education.

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