Chapter 9
Teachers with Migration Background in German Discourse: Insights into Research on Education, Professional Integration and Self-Perception

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Abstract This chapter presents the state of the art focusing on the so-called teachers with "migration background" in Germany. Applying the method of the literature review, we summarize current and emerging research trends as well as understudied areas in Germany. The chapter provides the reader with a critical survey of the extensive literature produced in the past decade and a synthesis of current thinking on the topic at hand across disciplines and methodological approaches. The chapter opens up with a concise presentation of the context, objectives and the methodology of the study. These are followed by a critical synopsis of the findings and a closing conclusion. The results of the analysis reveal that a vast amount of research is focusing on the three following domains: Ascriptions and (Self-)perception of minority teachers' role in education such as the responsibility of fostering the linguistic diversity) Minority teachers' role for students and students' own perspectives, e.g. the importance of the multilingual teachers for self-positioning of the students as migration-related multilinguals; as well as professional integration of minority teachers including access to the labour market and teacher education revealing an underrepresentation of minority teachers in schools. In the conclusion we point out new perspectives and areas in need of further research, such as the demand for new approaches on how to constructively include migration-related multilingualism in the course of teacher education.

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Introduction

In Germany, educational policies ascribe high expectations towards the so-called teachers with "migration background". In this chapter, we will present the state of the art focusing on this group of minority teachers. By means of a literature review, we will summarize current and emerging trends as well as research priorities in Germany. Germany constitutes an important research context as transnational mobility has been and continues to be crucial to the German society on one hand. On the other hand, Germany itself plays a significant role in worldwide transnational trajectories. The chapter will start with a short presentation of our research objectives and methodology. In the main part, we will provide the reader with a critical survey of the extensive literature produced in the past decade and a synthesis of current thinking across disciplines. The chapter will close with new perspectives and point out areas in need of further research.

Minority Teachers in Germany: Objectives and Context of the Research

In this chapter, we focus on minority teachers with a "migration background" within German educational context. The aim is to give an overview of the ascribed and perceived roles, chances as well as obstacles faced by the group of pre- and inservice professionals defined by these characteristics. As a substantial scope of research and literature has been dedicated to this topic, our aim was to conduct a narrative review (see section "Methodology") and present the international public with an extensive synthesis.

The group of minority teachers discussed in German research landscapes are quite heterogeneous with regards to age, gender, teacher status (pre-/inservice) and country of origin (some are born in Germany others migrated from different countries at different ages). Related to the age of arrival, some studies focus on individuals who studied to become teachers in Germany, others received an education in other countries. Studies also differ in their language backgrounds, as some of the teachers started to acquire German as adolescents or adults, others grew up with two or more languages including German. There also might be individuals who only spoke primarily German in the family – e.g. due to parental decisions. The (political) discourse and most of the reviewed studies are based on the ascribed common factor – the "migration background" as it is defined by the Federal Statistical Office of Germany (2018) "*A person has a migration background if he or she or at least one parent does not possess German citizenship by birth*"[1] (p. 4). However, it is worth noticing that some of the sources focus specifically on immigrant or newly arrived teachers.

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[1] This basically creates a three-level categorization of first-, second- and third-generation migration background based on citizenship and country of birth, going back three generations.

Methodology

To address the aim of the study, we applied the method of a narrative review. This approach, also called a literature review, allows for a broad perspective on a topic area that can be obtained inductively without the need to derive and formulate certain hypotheses (Petticrew & Roberts, 2006, p. 10). In our case, this review type followed five steps (based on Grant & Booth, 2009; Mertens, 2010, p. 89; Ressing et al., 2009):

1. Formulating the topic and the objective;
2. Finding pivot examples of the relevant literature, reviewing it and formulating keywords for the search. Researchers who already work in the respective field and are familiar with the topic oftentimes write stand alone narrative reviews. In these cases, the initial review is used to confirm the existing assumptions regarding the keywords;
3. Defining inclusion criteria i.e. deciding on the characteristics of the studies to be included in the review;
4. Searching for further relevant sources in the databases as well as hand-searching bibliographies and consulting experts for gray literature;
5. Reading, synthesizing, summarizing and writing.

First, the research objective was formulated. Then we specified the main concepts and respective keywords for the search based on our individual expertise, supported by pivotal papers.[2] We also decided to include only literature published in the last 10 years, as the topic is well established. Scientific articles as well as chapters in edited volumes and doctoral theses were included. For the search, we used the databases FIZ, ResearchGate, GoogleScholar, Academia and EBSCO Open Dissertations. The results of this search were expanded by hand searching and literature recommended by other experts. In the following, we synthesize by reviewing and comparing the results of the studies but also interpret the findings.[3]

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[2] These keywords were used applying AND/OR connectors "*MIGRATIONSHINTERGRUND, LEHRAMTSSTUDENT/STUDIERENDE, LEHRER/LEHRER*INNEN, LEHRKRAFT, LEHRERBILDUNG, PROFESSIONALISIERUNG, MEHRSPRACHIGKEIT, SCHULE, ZUWANDERUNGSGESCHICHTE, MIGRATIONSERFAHRUNG, AUSLÄNDISCHE ABSCHLÜSSE, INTERNATIONAL, TRANSNATIONAL* (migration background, teacher – male, female and gender-neutral form -, teacher education, teacher development, multilingualism, school, immigrant, migration experience, foreign diploma, international, transnational). Since the focus of the chapter is on Germany, we only applied the terms in German.

[3] The aim of the present chapter was to inform the reader on the recent state of the art in German research landscape. Since we incorporated quantitative as well as qualitative research of different types, scopes and disciplines, we did not opt to find standardized evaluation criteria for the critical evaluation of the sources. Thus, the publication does not contain any systematic evaluation of the studies. Further information on the peril of the narrative review approach of being prone to biases towards the prefered hypothesis can be found in Grant and Booth (2009). Yet, as we did not have any working hypotheses, we were not at risk to have one-sided source selection.

Results and Discussion

The results of our analysis reveal a vast amount of research in the last 10 years, in the three following domains: (1) Ascriptions and (Self-)perception of minority teachers' role in education; (2) Minority teachers' importance for students and students' own perspectives; and (3) Professional integration of minority teachers including access to the labor market and teacher education. We will present these domains in the following focusing on recent findings and the underlying argumentation.

Ascriptions and (Self-)Perception of Minority Teachers' Role in Education

Sociological studies in education analyze ascriptions towards the constructed group of teachers with a "migration background" as well as teachers' perception of these ascriptions. The Ministry for School and Education in North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW) regards teachers with "migration background" as "examples for successful rise through education" (MSW NRW, 2007, p. 3). In a current initiative for "gaining them", it is further stated that "with their double competence in the German language and heritage language as well as their experiences in two cultures, they can assume an important mediating function at school and promote intercultural qualification" (MSW NRW, 2007). Further studies of educational policies in official statements and documents confirm that teachers with "immigrant background" are expected to represent the complexity of the society and question societal power relations (Strasser & Steber, 2010). They are also supposed to function as so-called change agents, able to drive change within schools (Lengyel & Rosen, 2015). At the same time, they are seen as cultural bridge builders, mediators, language translators and role models (Akbaba et al., 2013; Georgi et al., 2011).

To begin with, these expectations reveal a number of problematising assumptions: Children and youths with an immigration history would need "examples" and would first have to "rise" through education. Thus, the responsibility for educational success is shifted to students and the complexity of institutionally induced educational inequality is ignored. At the teacher level, these assumptions reveal a number of ascriptions. Here, similar patterns of homogenisation can be found as in the case of children with a "migration background" namely: Regardless of the socio-economic background, the (educational) biography or the language skills, the group of teachers is constructed as having a "migration background". They are to be "gained" as a measure that is specifically aimed at the group of students with a "migration background" and not at the homogenisation strategies of educational institutions. In this way, "the responsibility for shaping education in a way that is sensitive to diversity is delegated to teachers who are positioned as migrants" (Hummrich & Terstegen, 2020, p. 117).

Numerous qualitative studies critically examine the link between professionalization and migration experiences from the perspective of the teachers themselves (Fereidooni, 2012; Akbaba, 2017). Edelmann (2013) conducted interviews with primary teachers, including 15 with "migration background", and has identified several types regarding attitudes towards migration related diversity, from distanced one to cooperative-synergie-oriented.[4] Interestingly, teachers with "migration background" were present in all the types, except for the distanced one, which was interpreted as due to engagement with diversity.

Studies on professionalization in dealing with diversity also include quantitative methods: Based on the COACTIV-model of professional competence, Hachfeld et al. (2012) examined self-efficacy expectations, enthusiasm and prejudices with regard to students with a "migrant background" depending on teachers' "own migrant background" and multicultural beliefs in 433 pre-service mathematics teachers. The authors conclude that teachers with a "migration background" have more pronounced multicultural beliefs, which in turn positively influenced their self-efficacy expectations and enthusiasm and negatively influenced their prejudices.

Finally, Syring et al. (2019) examined whether pre-service teachers "with and without a migration background differ in their attitudes towards dealing with social, ethnic-cultural and academic heterogeneity" (p. 201). Having interviewed 877 students, of which 169 "with a migration background", the authors conclude more favourable attitudes in the latter group: "lower costs and negative emotions, higher intrinsic motivation and perceived competence" (Syring et al., 2019) with regard to all three forms of heterogeneity.

With regard to language, the teachers examined in these studies reproduce monolingual notions of normality and support the German-only-policy in and outside the classroom (Panagiotopoulou & Rosen, 2016; Putjata, 2019a, b, c). This behavior has been explained as following: Being teachers, and thus academics themselves, this group of multilingual teachers who mostly grew up in Germany, have successfully passed through the German school and university system and today, they reproduce the constructed value of the educational language German for the successful educational biography. They have hardly encountered family languages in the school context and have not had the opportunity to acquire the expected multilingual reading and writing skills in the institution of school, since the teaching of family languages in German has so far been an exception (Goltsev et al., 2022). Their own perception of multilingualism is the result of socio-political discourse on multilingualism as reflected on the linguistic market of educational institutions. The way society deals with multilingualism shapes their current ideas of normality: Teachers who have experienced multilingualism as a legitimate part of everyday interaction and as a capital for learning and educational success see migration-related multilingualism as an important resource for their students and for society in general (Putjata, 2018).

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[4] Edelmann differentiates the following six types: detached-distant type, acknowledging type, individual-language oriented type, cooperative-language oriented type, individual-synergie oriented type, cooperative-synergie oriented type.

Yet, data on teachers' own perception of their expected role reveal rejections and resistance: teachers who grew up in Germany and want to be perceived as such refuse to be reduced to special competences of questionable value like knowledge of 'the heritage language' and 'two cultures' (Georgi et al., 2011). According to a recent study based on biographical methods, even the "spontaneous affinity to the role as integration model and mediator does not mean" that one's own experiences of discrimination in the education system lead "to an inclusion-oriented 'attitude' in the field of school that is critical of power and discrimination" (Schwendowius, 2015, p. 528). This critical attitude requires opportunities for interpretation that would make a reflective processing and re-interpretation of own experiences possible (ibid.).

Minority Teachers' Importance for Students' and Students' Own Perspectives

The second identified research area was the ascribed importance for students' academic development as well as students' own perspectives.

The debate on the existent discrepancy in the academic performance of students with and without a "migration background" – in part triggered by international school performance studies like PISA and TIMSS – has put the demand for teachers with a "migration background" increasingly in the focus of educational policy. The main claim is that teachers with an "immigrant background" have a specific potential for dealing with cultural heterogeneity in their teaching practice (Presse- und Informationsamt der Bundesregierung, 2007). Educational political bodies therefore hope that by employing more teachers with a "migration background" they can obtain a positive effect on the academic performance of students with a "migration background", based on the teachers' own migration experience (MSW NRW Ministry of Education, 2007). As already presented in section "Minority teachers in Germany: objectives and context of the research", this statistically used category "migration background" is highly vague and complex to apply equally to all people in this group. Nevertheless, special competencies with regard to students are being attributed to teachers, derived from their migration background and understood as the result of their biographical experience. These competences include sensitivity in dealing with migration-related heterogeneity in school or a special language assessment competence. Thus, they are assigned to have special access to students with a "migration background" (Rotter, 2014). Since the research interest has primarily focused on teachers themselves, little attention has been paid to the perspective of students. So far, only few studies could support the above-mentioned hopes of educational policies (Rotter, 2015; Strasser & Waburg, 2015). Studies that focused on discussions with different groups of students concerning age, gender and ethno-cultural background provide initial results on the students' perspective.

In her survey from 2015, Rotter examined the perspective of students with regard to the questions whether the "migration background" of teachers is particularly relevant for their students in everyday school life and whether the perception of teachers with a "migration background" differs between students with and without a "migration background". In the group discussions with students from both "categories" at two secondary schools, the ethno-cultural background of teachers did not receive any special attention. The students described their teachers by mainly using other, particularly lesson-related, categories. These included, for example, a good classroom management, the ability of a teacher to present new lesson content in a clear and methodically varied manner as well as an understanding of the interests and concerns of their students (Rotter, 2015, p. 17). Two aspects were particularly important to the students: the teachers' technical competence ('mastery theme') and their student-oriented behaviour inside and outside the classroom ('love theme') (ibid.). Yet, interestingly, the results of this study showed that the "immigrant background" of the students has a positive impact on the description of this characteristic in teachers (ibid.). Rotter (2015), however, states that this influence is not determinative or should be understood in a linear relation. The influence rather depends on other factors like language skills in the German or family languages beyond German as well as one's own relationship to the majority society.

Another study that examined students' perspectives on "minority teachers", (Strasser & Waburg, 2015), comes to the same conclusion. Like Rotter (2015), they conducted group-discussions with students in grades 5, 7 and 9. In order not to bias the students' opinions about their teachers' "ethno-cultural background", the groups were asked about their general experiences at school and concerning all their teachers. The results show that teachers' "minority background" itself did not play an important role in terms of the students' expectations. Their judgements rather focused on teachers' personal attitudes and preferences, assigned to the before-mentioned dimensions 'love' and 'mastery theme': "A good teacher – according to the students – delivers vivid lessons, is knowledgeable in his or her subject, maintains good relationships with students and is fair and just." (Strasser & Waburg, 2015, p. 267). The authors, therefore, conclude that the cultural background of teachers does only become relevant to students when they try to find explanations for a certain behaviour of their teachers, thus assigning this characteristic an explanatory function, or when "they want to differentiate or reassure themselves" (Strasser & Waburg, 2015, p. 266).

At the same time, studies from childhood and youth research show that teachers who use their multilingualism in school practice are noticed by students. A recent study on personality development and identity construction shows that multilingual teachers are important for self-positioning as migration-related multilingual students in society: as part of the imagined community and for the legitimacy of minority languages in formal and informal situations. Having experienced that "my teacher had an accent too" – they do not perceive the accentuated pronunciation of authority figures as an obstacle and consequently see themselves as a legitimate member of a linguistically heterogeneous community (Putjata, 2019c).

Finally, the study by Neugebauer and Klein (2016) addresses the question of whether a stronger presence of preschool teachers with a "migration background" has a positive effect on children with a "migration background" thus helping to compensate ethnic disadvantages and contributing to more equal opportunities in education. In order to examine this question, children with a "migration background" who had teachers with a "migration background" were compared with those, whose teachers had no "migration background". A total of 1082 children from 171 kindergardens were included in the study, which mainly focused on two outcome variables: the cognitive-performance-related components such as the German language, natural sciences and mathematics, as well as childrens' social skills. The results did not confirm the postulated expectations. A positive influence could not be determined in neither of the mentioned competence fields. The analysis even showed the opposite: children with a "migration background" from groups with teachers with a "migration background", achieved poorer scores than those groups only with teachers without a "migration background" (Neugebauer & Klein, 2016).

The presented findings point out that teachers with a "migration background" do not necessarily meet the expectations of German educational policies. Their migrant status and ethno-cultural background, considered by itself, is not a primarily characteristic which is noticed by students and which does not automatically lead to positive effects on students' educational achievement. Thus, the migration background in itself implies no special competence for dealing with "migrant" children and students. It is rather the overall teaching competence than the teachers' cultural background that defines the quality in dealing with children and students. Teacher training must therefore focus on offering appropriate opportunities to all (future) teachers to develop the needed skills in the course of their professionalization regardless of their linguistic and migrational background.

Professional Integration and Teacher Education

In this chapter, we will present findings from the last identified research area: professional integration of minority teachers and teacher education.

Studies with newly immigrated teachers in Germany show that their access to the school education market is severely restricted (Terhart et al., 2018). In the interwoven interplay of economic, social and cultural capital, language in particular is a powerful instrument: although immigrant teachers have the incorporated (pedagogical knowledge and skills) and institutionalised capital (diploma) in Bourdieu's sense, it is not present in legitimate language. Every step of recognition is tied to this symbolic capital. Access to a qualified employment is thus restricted and leads to social relegation and suspension, at most on a fee basis with contracts for special services "[...] these would be awarded especially because of the foreign qualifications of the teachers and result in mother-tongue teachers being rated worse in terms of service and salary and often working with contracts limited to one year" (Kremsner et al., 2020).

However, not only newly arrived teachers face difficulties in their education. The recent statistics and findings of studies that are devoted to questions of representation numbers in specific domains show that students who came to Germany at an early age or have parents or grandparents who migrated to Germany are underrepresented in schools: While for students it is 12,5%, it is only 8% for teachers and in teacher education (Besa & Vietgen, 2017; Berthold & Leichsenring, 2012; DESTATIS, 2018).

The latter aspect – underrepresentation in teacher education – can be attributed to negative school experiences and institutional boundries that prevent the decision and the possibility to enter teacher education as well as inequalities during the education that lead to high drop out rates (ibid.). These can include financial, organisational and language issues[5] (Karakaşoğlu, 2011; Kimmelmann & Lang, 2014; Zerlik et al., 2014; Besa & Vietgen, 2017).

Studies on diversity within the educational system and in particular in teacher education, reveal that within the first and second phase of the training at universities and in schools (so called Referandariat) the students often experience discrimination like lacking sense of belonging, offensive remarks as well as rejection and exclusion by colleagues and trainers (Naumann, 2011; Georgi et al., 2011; Fereidooni, 2016).

Based on the outcomes of the research dealing with the school situation from the perspective of the teachers, it can be assumed that the first aspect – underrepresentation in schools – is the issue of retention. Here, different kinds of discrimination are reported as well (Georgi, 2010). They range from openly uttered pejorative comments on the accent or ethnic-cultural background to more subtle ways of sweeping attributions in regards to the phenomenon of othering and associations with the (alleged) country of origin. At the same time, cases of conscious appreciation or use of multilingualism are hardly ever reported (Georgi, 2010; Naumann, 2011; Rotter, 2014).

As a reaction to the difficulties faced by the newly arrived teachers, programmes and courses have been developed throughout Germany with the goal to "provide language and technical qualifications for refugee teachers in order to facilitate their professional re-entry" (Terhart et al., 2018). Such opportunities for professional integration can result in teachers perceiving their migration-related multilingualism as a resource (Putjata, 2019b). Further initiatives and projects aim for teachers with "migration background" (Karakaşoğlu et al., 2013). To list only a few: the scholarship "Horizonte (horizons)"[6] or mentoring for students with migration background at university Kassel[7]; LehrkräftePLUS Köln (TeachersPLUS Cologne[8]) and so called Refugee Teachers and Social Worker Programs, for example in Bielefeld, Potsdam, Cologne, Münster, Oldenburg or Bremen.

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[5] Often due to monolingual expectations.

[6] https://www.scholarshipportal.com/scholarship/horizonte-stipendien-fuer-angehende-lehrkraefte-mit-migrationshintergrund

[7] https://www.uni-kassel.de/projekte/mentoring-mig/startseite.html

[8] https://portal.uni-koeln.de/international/studium-in-koeln/academic-refugee-support/lehrkraefteplus-koeln

As already stated, even those teachers who enter teacher education do not automatically act as enforcers of multilingual changes. According to the results from an 'integrative school' in Hamburg, it is not enough to simply rely on multilingual teachers in order to change monolingual sense of normality in educational contexts (Putjata, 2019a). Changes are necessary at various levels, from the level of political decision makers to school development as an overall process. It is for instance imperative that not only those who themselves have migration related experience but all teachers foster these changes (Mantel & Leutwyler, 2013; Stitzinger, 2014; Goltsev & Bredthauer, 2020). These modifications should also include professionalization on dealing with multilingualism: Multilingual teachers must be prepared to endure antinomies and contradictions and to shape their own practice in them (Goltsev et al., 2022). Beneficial approaches might be those that enhance possible potentials of multilingual teachers (Rosen & Lengyel, 2012; Lengyel & Rosen, 2015; Putjata, 2018; Syring et al., 2019). These new directions should be implemented in all stages of teacher education starting with the university. Potential focal points might be diversity sensitive communication, discrmination-critical representations in media, multilingualism in classes, research on controversial developments in educational systems and sociological as well as anthropological knowledge about migration and mobility (Allemann-Ghionda, 2017).

Conclusion and New Research Areas

The presented research shows that the topic of teachers with a "migration background" has developed in a broad research field in Germany: Sociological studies reveal ascriptions associated with the constructed group as "othering" and criticize teachers' positioning as responsible for shaping diversity sensitive educational settings. While interviews reveal denial on the part of teachers themselves, studies on students' perspectives show the perceived importance of teachers who position themselves as multilingual for students' self-perception as a legitimate member of the imagined (multilingual) community. Studies from migration research reveal perceived difficulties to access the labor and education market as well as discrimination at universities and schools for teachers with "migration background" and even more so for those with non-German qualifications. Yet, new programs and courses allow for professional and linguistic integration, which open space for valorization of existing skills and may, on long term, contribute to a shift in perception towards multilingualism and diversity in general.

Biographical research shows that monocultural and monolingual notions of normality are not integral constructs that once formed, remain stable. They are fluid and open to processes of change. These findings underline how important it is to develop further didactic methods that would rely on biographical experiences and their critical reflection as important for all participants in teacher education.

The present state of the art shows that the professional handling of (linguistic) diversity in the migration society is perceived as the task of all teachers in German

research. However, the handling of one's own experiences with (language) discrimination should constitute a significant topic of pedagogical professionalism (Hummrich & Terstegen, 2020, p. 118). These reflections should be carried out not in additional measures but in regular teacher training. As a reaction to this research lacuna, more research is needed on how to constructively include migration-related multilingualism in the course of teacher education (see the upcoming Special Issue by Author et al.). In light of ever-increasing transnational and global mobility, new research areas are being developed that underline the significance of the multilingual turn in teacher education and practice which extends far beyond the schooling system. As both, multilingualism and teacher education as well as their interaction are critical aspects in issues of equal opportunities, educational equality and social cohesion, this new topic is framed by questions of language-responsible teaching and equality in education.

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