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A Case-study of Pre-service vs In-service Teachers' Openness toward Plurilingual Pedagogies in the UAE: for a Didactisation of Plurilingualism in Teacher Education

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history

Received: 01 March 2023

Accepted: 16 April 2023

Published: 30 April 2023

Keywords:

Plurilingual pedagogies

Plurilingualism

Pre-service teachers

In-service teachers

Didactisation

ABSTRACT

Plurilingual pedagogies call for an acknowledgment of an individual's full linguistic and cultural repertoire as a resource for learning. Though the monolingual stance appears to still be largely prevalent in classrooms across the world, plurilingual pedagogies seem to be slowly gaining the interest of some teachers in plurilingual settings as is the case of the UAE. In a recent study (Coelho, Khalil & Shankar, 2022)^[9] which analyzed UAE-based in-service teachers' plurilingual 'hidden' practices in their K-12 classrooms, it became clear that teachers were already implementing plurilingualism-oriented strategies, even if in disguised ways so as not to go against the monolingual school policy, and their interest in continuing to do so was clear in the massive number of teachers who showed willingness to learn more about plurilingualism. Based on these results, another study was carried out in order to understand the perspectives of UAE pre-service teachers to compare them with their in-service counterparts. The results indicate that pre-service teachers are less open to the application of plurilingual approaches though very willing to learn more about them. This genuine interest in becoming more acquainted with such pedagogies calls for a revision of current teacher education programs that legitimize and didactize plurilingual pedagogies.

1. Introduction

Societies in general have been impacted by technologicalization, globalization and accelerated mobility of people, and so have world educational systems. Super-diversity (Vertovec, 2007)^[34] is almost the norm in a great amount of current schooling contexts around the world, with plurilingualism and pluriculturalism becoming increasingly present in contemporary classrooms. In the UAE alone, around 88% of the population are expatriates

(EdArabia, n.d.),^[19] turning this nation into one of the most culturally and linguistically diverse and, naturally, impacting its educational institutions and policies.

This super-diversity has heightened interest from educationalists and scholars, particularly within the field of critical applied linguistics, with plurilingualism becoming 'the topic *du jour*' (May, 2014, p. 1).^[25] Calls for more readiness on the part of teachers to cope with plurilingual classes have started to emerge, as have the recommendations to incorporate diversity, pluriculturalism and pluri-

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lingualism in teacher training programmes (e.g. Ziegler, 2013).^[36] For example, in Europe ‘initial teacher education (ITE) programs (...) have been transformed in recent decades in order to include new perspectives on language teaching and the management of linguistic diversity in schools.’ (Birello, Llompart-Esbert & Moore, 2021, p.1).^[2]

New pedagogical approaches and methodologies have also started to be explored so teachers could better respond to the learning needs of linguistically and culturally diverse students. Terms such as linguistically sensitive teacher (Birello, Llompart-Esbert & Moore, 2021),^[2] language-as-resource (Ruiz, 2010),^[30] translanguaging (García & Kleyn, 2016)^[21] based on the work of Cen Williams in the 1990s), spontaneous translanguaging (Cenoz & Gorter, 2017^[7] as cited in Iversen, 2019),^[23] code-meshing (Canagarajah, 2011)^[3] or plurilingualism/plurilingual pedagogy (Candelier et al., 2013)^[4] started to surface, all of which representing attempts to acknowledge and capitalize on the diverse linguistic and cultural repertoires of the students as valuable resources for learning. In the scope of these approaches, home/first languages are not regarded as a hindrance in classrooms, but as a tool for enhanced learning, with home and school languages working together in a ‘productive contact’ (Cummins, 2017).^[14]

Nevertheless, the monolingual bias still prevails in classrooms across many countries (Cummins, 2017;^[14] May, 2014).^[25] Throughout language education history, a ‘good’ language teacher, for example, is still, to this day, characterized as ‘someone who uses TL [target language] at all times and encourages learners to do so as well’ (Woll, 2020, p.6).^[35] As can be seen and as so well put by Piccardo (2018),^[29] ‘implementing a plurilingual vision is a process that requires several steps and a shift in mentality’ (p. 222). While it is understandable that this mentality shift involves a myriad of sociopolitical and methodological factors, going beyond the teacher as the main enabler of change, we echo Ziegler’s (2013)^[36] concept of teachers (especially language teachers) as *agents of plurilingualism*. Teachers are active members of any educational process and know their classroom environments better than anyone, having thus the potential to become powerful agents of change. However, the literature on the topic has pointed out that this change needs to start at the teacher training level (Ziegler, 2013)^[36] since ‘teacher education is essential for this transformation to take place’ (Cutrim Schmid, 2021, p. 37).^[15] It is during the training stage that important discussions on classroom diversity, bilingualism, plurilingualism and pluriculturalism and their impact on teaching and learning may take place, working as a catalyst for openness and for readiness to embrace them

pedagogically (Tian, 2020).^[31]

It is common to see pre-service teachers having more rigid beliefs regarding teaching methodologies, tending to *go by the book* and ‘teach[ing] the way they have been taught’ (Catalano & Hamann, 2016, p. 264),^[6] only to, later on, usually during the practicum stage, when they initiate regular pedagogical and social interactions with ‘real’ students, change their personal beliefs on what works best pedagogically-speaking. For example, based on a study by Otwinowska (2014) cited in Birello, Llompart-Esbert & Moore (2021),^[2] these authors stated that ‘in-service teachers are more aware of linguistic diversity than pre-service teachers.’ (p.4). Therefore, it may be expected for pre-service teachers to have more inflexible perspectives toward plurilingual approaches, preferring the long-standing monolingual stance.

In a recent study which involved surveying UAE in-service teachers on their beliefs and practices regarding plurilingual pedagogy, it was concluded that ‘despite the monolingual school policy, the majority of the UAE teachers acknowledge[d] the positive impact of capitalizing on other languages for a successful learning process; therefore, they naturally adopt[ed] plurilingual practices in their classrooms’ (Coelho, Khalil & Shankar, 2022, p.15).^[9] These teachers also expressed openly the desire to learn more on how to implement plurilingual pedagogies in their educational settings. This implied unpreparedness to implement plurilingual pedagogies on the part of these teachers brought up the discussion on what needs to be done at the teacher training level to better prepare UAE teachers to embrace plurilingualism and pluriculturalism as well as to adopt teaching methodologies that take advantage of diversity for learning purposes and student success.

Knowing that language and cultural diversity are not extensively discussed in a particular teacher training program offered by a private university in the UAE that prepares teachers to teach in highly plurilingual and pluricultural classes in mostly an English as the Medium of Instruction (EMI) model, we surveyed this university’s pre-service teachers on their beliefs toward plurilingual pedagogies to compare to those of in-service teachers in the study previously mentioned (Coelho, Khalil & Shankar, 2022).^[9] Therefore, the focal point of this study is to understand if inexperienced, in training future teachers have the same positive opinions as experienced, in-service teachers regarding the role of other languages and cultures in the learning process. Similarly, an analysis of the potential impacts of their beliefs on teacher training curriculum development is carried out.

Thus, our research questions are:

- What are the perceptions of pre-service teachers in comparison to in-service teachers regarding the application of plurilingual pedagogies in K-12 UAE schooling context?
- What implications may these perceptions have on teacher training in the UAE?

2. Plurilingual Pedagogies as per Pre-service and In-service teachers: Beliefs, Tensions and Challenges

Plurilingual pedagogies encompass all pedagogical approaches that embrace the linguistic and cultural backgrounds of students and include them in the teaching and learning process (Piccardo, 2018).^[29] It envisages the knowledge of several languages as a ‘single, inter-related repertoire’ (Council of Europe, 2018, p. 28)^[11] that can be utilized in combination with other competences whenever a learner engages in a learning activity. This may mean the utilization of in-class pedagogical strategies such as translation, dual-language projects, peer support in other languages (other than the target language or language of instruction), brainstorming or pre-tasking in home language, or using bibliographic resources for assignments in other languages, among others.

Despite the gradual growing interest in and acknowledgement of such approaches, the monolingual stand is still deeply ingrained in teacher education, hampering a true recognition of their potentialities and a concrete application in classrooms. As Cutrim Schmid (2021)^[15] stated, ‘what is being recommended and promoted in the applied linguistics literature seems to contradict the reality of everyday language teaching and learning in schools’ (p. 37). Various factors may be the reason behind this gap between what recent literature suggests and what is actually happening in schools, namely reasons related to pre-service and in-service teachers’ beliefs and level of preparedness.

When it comes to teachers’ beliefs, it is certain that there are mixed feelings toward plurilingual pedagogies. In a study by Iversen (2019),^[23] many pre-service teachers claimed they would only recognize linguistic diversity in their practicum classrooms when the knowledge of the language of instruction was insufficient, placing acknowledgement of plurilingualism as a pedagogical tool required solely when plurilingual students may need extra support. However, these same teachers reported instances when they, naturally, drew on their own or their students’ varied linguistic backgrounds in their classes.

Also, while some teachers spontaneously capitalize

on their students’ varied repertoires, some believe it is extremely challenging to adopt plurilingualism-oriented practices in classes since they themselves do not have sufficient proficiency in the languages that their students know (Nambisan, 2014),^[27] though this is not needed as can be seen in a study by Coelho (forthcoming).^[8] Plurilingual pedagogies should not be confused with a simplistic utilization of students’ and teachers’ home languages in class.

Similarly, teachers tend to be influenced and to adopt the same teaching strategies as the ones utilized when they were students or teachers in training (Catalano & Hamann, 2016),^[6] therefore, knowing that the monolingual stance is still ubiquitous in many educational settings (Cummins, 2007;^[13] Doiz & Lasagabaster, 2017)^[16] and, regrettably, in several teacher training contexts, it is natural to expect future teachers to prefer ‘folk pedagogy’ (Woll, 2020, p. 9)^[35] over research supported plurilingual approaches. Having been constantly instructed to exclude other languages from the teaching and learning context, many teachers express their full support of the monolingual language policy preconized by the schools they teach in, disagreeing with any other approach that disrupts this target-language-only or language-of-instruction-only cycle (Abiria, Early & Kendrick, 2013;^[1] Caroll van den Hoven, & 2017;^[5] Cutrim Schmid, 2021,^[15] Ollerhead, Choi & French, 2018),^[28] and many times regarding plurilingual practices as almost taboo, as seen particularly in the UAE in a study by Caroll & van den Hoven (2017).

As for the level of preparedness, claims related to lack of specialized training appear often mentioned as well (Cutrim Schmid, 2021)^[15] associated with lack of practical resources (Birello, Llompert-Esvert & Moore, 2021;^[2] Galante et al., 2020).^[20] Even when teachers develop an understanding of the importance of plurilingual approaches in current super-diverse classes, they still argue they do not feel prepared or do not have the means and support required.

Despite these vehement beliefs, tensions and challenges, more and more reports on openness to plurilingual approaches frequently appear associated with recent research studies. Some of these reports account for benefits, such as an increased sense of achievement, academic success, deeper learning and student agency when a plurilingual-oriented approach is used (Cenoz, 2017;^[7] Coelho, forthcoming;^[8] Cummins, 2007;^[13] Lewis, Jones & Baker, 2012;^[24] Van Viegen, 2020),^[33] a better accomplished acquisition of another language (McMillan & Rivers, 2011),^[26] an enhanced use of other languages and cultures as important resources for learning in general (French,

2015 cited in Ollerhead, Choi & French, 2018),^[28] the development of positive classroom environments (Henderson & Ingram, 2018)^[22] and the affirmation of students' identities in super-diverse classrooms (Ellis, 2013).^[18]

These benefits trigger a debate on what needs to be done to 'bridge the gap between theory and practice' (Galante et al., 2020, p. 981),^[20] i.e., to move from a theoretical or passive acceptance and understanding of the potential of plurilingual pedagogies to their active operationalization in classrooms.

With this in mind, and after understanding that UAE in-service teachers seem to acknowledge plurilingual pedagogies as valid teaching methodology that emerges in their classes and are willing to learn more on its applications (Coelho, Khalil & Shankar, 2022),^[9] this study aims at understanding how UAE pre-service teachers with little training on diversity and plurilingualism feel about the potential of plurilingual pedagogies in their future super-diverse classrooms. Will their beliefs differ from in-service teachers' due to the lack of specific training in plurilingualism, diversity and pluriculturalism? Or, will the extremely pluricultural and plurilingual context of the UAE and the pre-service teachers' own personal pluriversed backgrounds be sufficient to generate a general understanding of the affordances of plurilingual practices?

3. Methodology

Utilizing quantitative research, UAE pre-service teachers taking a Post-Graduate Diploma in Teaching in a private university were surveyed (Creswell, 2012).^[12] The survey had three parts: a) a very brief description of what plurilingual pedagogy means so as to contextualize the respondents, b) profiling questions (demography and linguistic/cultural backgrounds) and c) questions on teachers' beliefs and readiness to embrace plurilingual pedagogy in their future teaching (see Annex 1). The three main questions in part c) asked the respondents: 1) if they believed plurilingual pedagogies could be applied in K-12 schools in the UAE, 2) if they would be willing to go against the school policy if plurilingual approaches were not approved of, and 3) if they would like to learn more about plurilingual pedagogies.

The survey was designed and made available in both Arabic and English. After piloting it and upon approval from the university's Institutional Review Board, it was distributed internally via a variety of university platforms. Answering the survey questions was completely voluntary and respondents were provided with a consent form right before proceeding with answering the survey questions anonymously. Due to the voluntary nature of this survey, we were only able to collect 15 answers from pre-ser-

vice teachers while we had previously collected 91 from in-service teachers in this same survey (Coelho, Khalil & Shankar, 2022)^[9] whose answers are going to be used for comparison purposes. Therefore, this exploration of a 'specific issue, with a case (or cases) used to illustrate the issue' (Creswell, 2012, p. 465)^[12] turns this study into a case study where 15 future teachers in a specific context (enrolled in the PG Diploma) and who share specific characteristics (e.g. no previous teaching experience, located in the UAE, scarce training in language and cultural diversity) were the principal study object.

Participant Profiles

All the teachers' surveyed were enrolled in a Post-Graduate Diploma in Teaching at the time and did not have any teaching experience. This diploma offers a variety of courses that aim to prepare future teachers to take on a teaching career in the UAE, such as School Curriculum, Methods of Teaching and Classroom Management. Even though there were two courses that addressed issues related to student diversity, immigrant education and inclusivity at the time of data collection, these topics were covered remarkably briefly. To the best of our knowledge, there is no clear and extensive training on language and cultural diversity, bilingualism, plurilingualism or plurilingual pedagogies included in this certificate.

Regarding their ages, the majority of the participants were between 35-39 years old with 33% being in their forties. In comparison with the in-service teacher surveyed previously, these 15 case study participants are slightly younger in general (see figures 1 and 2).

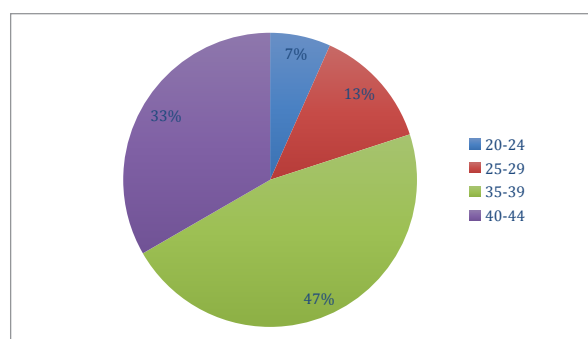


Figure 1. The distribution of the pre-service teachers across age groups

In terms of linguistic backgrounds, none of the pre-service teachers considered themselves monolingual. There was almost an equal number of bilingual and plurilingual teachers as can be seen in table 1. When compared with the in-service teachers' profiles, we can see there are some monolinguals in the respondents and the majority is bilingual; nevertheless, it is important to consider that the

in-service respondents in the previous study were many more, so a wider variety of linguistic profiles is expected.

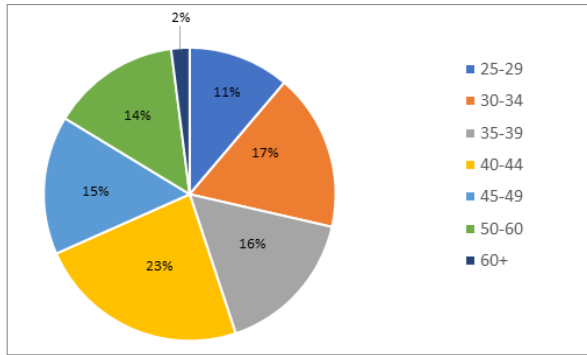


Figure 2. The distribution of the in-service teachers across age groups (in Coelho, Khalil & Shankar, 2022)^[9]

Table 1. The distribution of the participants according to their linguistic backgrounds (in-service teachers’ information retrieved from Coelho, Khalil & Shankar (2022))^[9]

	Pre-service teachers are	In-service teachers are
Monolingual	0	6
Bilingual	8	50
Plurilingual	7	35

As for the languages spoken by the pre-service teachers, all teachers spoke English and 80% of them also spoke Arabic (see figure 3). French and Italian are also present as languages known by these teachers with a couple of participants mentioning fluency in Hindi, Urdu and Kannada as well.

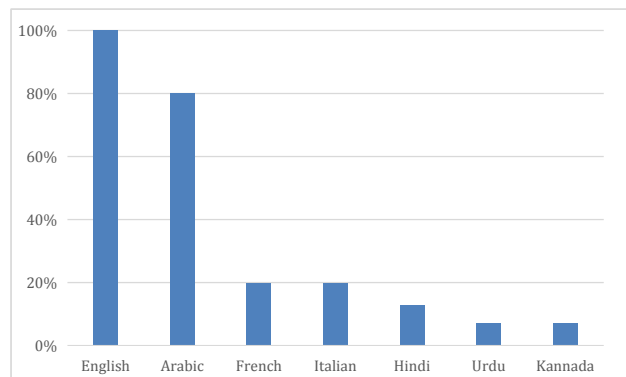


Figure 3. Languages spoken by pre-service teachers

English and Arabic had been pointed out as the most spoken languages by in-service teachers, naturally, given the fact that the UAE is a bilingual country, with Arabic as the official language and English as the *lingua franca*. French and Italian do not appear as pervasively in the in-service linguistic profiles, but Hindi and Urdu are well represented in both in-service and pre-service teachers’ language biography.

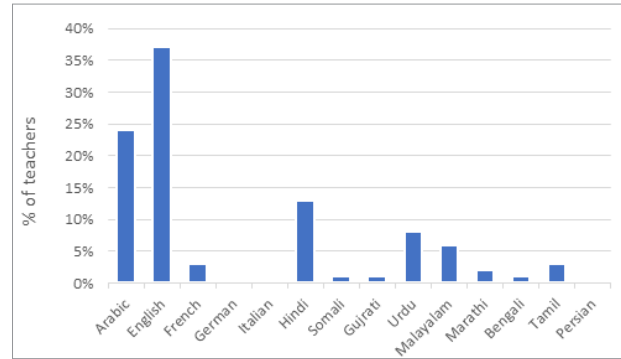


Figure 4. Languages spoken by in-service teachers (in Coelho, Khalil & Shankar, 2022)^[9]

4. Results

Similarly to the analysis carried out in the study developed with in-service teachers, in this section, the pre-service teachers’ beliefs and readiness levels will be discussed. First, these future teachers’ perspectives on the use of plurilingual pedagogies in the super-diverse, plurilingual educational settings of the UAE will be determined. Next, a report on their views regarding potential tensions between their beliefs and school policy will be presented. And, finally, their willingness to learn more about this approach will be assessed.

As per the survey (see Annex 1), three simplified questions were asked to gauge pre-service teachers’ opinions regarding the three areas described above. When asked if they considered plurilingual pedagogies as relevant and useful in the plurilingual context of most K-12 UAE schools, a mix of opinions was found (see Figure 5), but with the vast majority on the agreeing side (60%). When we look at figure 6, it is clear that the percentage of in-service teachers who support plurilingual pedagogy in the UAE is higher (73%). However, when the breakdown between ‘Strongly Agree’ and ‘Agree’ responses is done, there are many more pre-service teachers choosing the ‘Strongly Agree’ answer (47%) while a significantly higher amount of in-service teachers selected the ‘Agree’ only response (50%). It appears that pre-service teachers are stronger supporters of plurilingualism-oriented approaches but not necessarily more since if we focus solely on the answers on the agreeing side, it attests to a greater support for plurilingualism-oriented approaches on the part of teachers already placed in UAE schools. The percentage of ‘Neutral’ answers is higher in pre-service teachers as is, naturally, the number of answers on the disagreeing side. It seems that the 15 pre-service teachers in our case study are somewhat less approving of the plurilingual approach when put side by side with the 91 in-service teachers. An interpretation and discussion on these data will be presented in the next section.

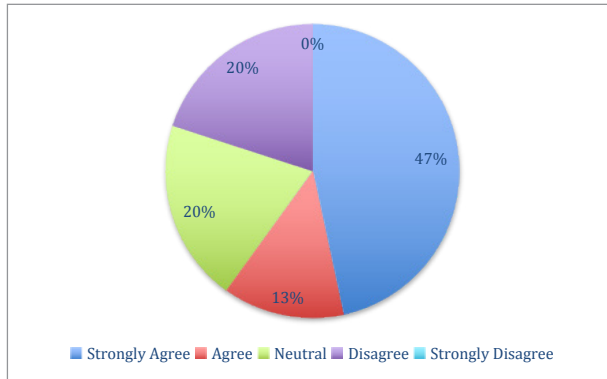


Figure 5. Pre-service teachers' opinions on whether plurilingual pedagogy should be applied in UAE K-12 schools

Regarding potential tensions with their future schools' policy, there are no significant differences between the pre-service and in-service teachers' answers. In figure 7, it can be seen that 74% of the pre-service teachers are on the agreeing side when it comes to complying with the school's policy even though they believe in the potentiality of the plurilingual pedagogy. The same applies to in-service teachers with 71% of their answers on the agreeing side as well (see figure 8). The most expressive difference appears when we divide answers between 'Strongly Agree' and 'Agree'. Pre-service teachers seem to be stronger supporters of following the school's policy regardless of their beliefs while this support is less significant with in-service teachers. None of the pre-service teachers strongly disagreed with scrupulously following the school directives and linguistic pedagogy, whereas the in-service teachers were more candid about their disagreement with 8% of these teachers being discordant with the continuous application of the monolingual stance that prevails in local educational settings.

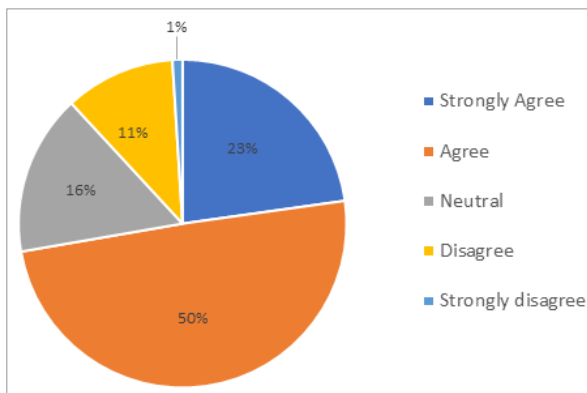


Figure 6. In-service teachers' opinions on whether plurilingual pedagogy should be applied in UAE K-12 schools (in Coelho, Khalil & Shankar, 2022)^[9]

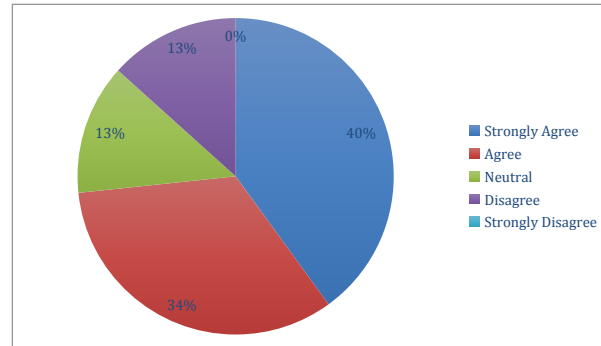


Figure 7. Pre-service teachers' opinions regarding following the school's linguistic policy.

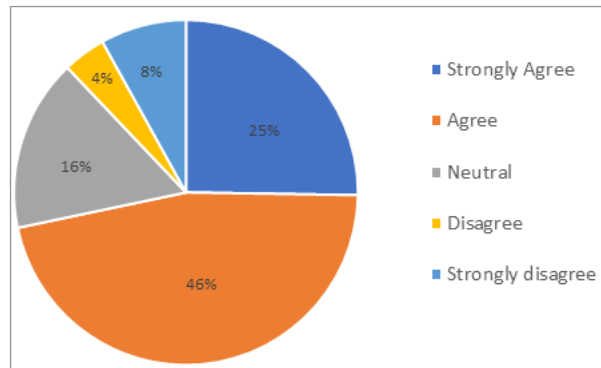


Figure 8. In-service teachers' opinions regarding following the school's linguistic policy.= (in Coelho, Khalil & Shankar, 2022)^[9]

Finally, when asked if they would like to learn more about such an approach, all (100%) the pre-service teachers indicated their disposition to gather more knowledge on how to implement plurilingual pedagogies in their future classes, contrasting with 92.3% of the in-service teachers.

5. Discussion

In this section, the results above will be discussed. As seen in the previous section, the survey questions presented to the participants were all closed-ended since we had previously formulated open-ended questions or closed-ended combined with open-ended (e.g. a 'why' question after a closed-ended question) but gathered extremely poor response rates, possibly because respondents were not fully aware of what the survey involved and may have felt slightly hesitant on what to write. One other reason could have been lack of time to respond to a survey that would take much more time than one where they would only have to pick the answer that corresponded to their beliefs. With more explicit, clear-cut questions in

which we first neutrally described our understanding of what plurilingual pedagogies entail, many more responses were collected. While the quantity of responses increased, it became obvious that the justifications for their response choice would not be evident in this survey. Only a post-survey interview with these participants would have provided specific reasons for their choices, but that became also a difficult task since anonymity was key for an expedited IRB approval, which we consider a strong limitation of this study. Having said this, this discussion section presents the author's own theoretical reasons for the answers from the respondents obtained in this survey, based not only on her experience as a teacher educator in the country and her knowledge of the usual pre-service teachers' profiles, but also on findings of previous similar studies.

Regarding question 1, when asked if plurilingual pedagogies had potential in the UAE's K-12 settings, we have seen that 60% of pre-service teachers agreed and 73% of in-service teachers also agreed. This higher agreement percentage on the part of the in-service teachers could be attributed to the fact that, being experienced teachers, they developed a better understanding of their students' realities and needs as well as of the real classroom complexities, which many times contrast with the theoretical 'ideal' scenarios provided to student-teachers during their training. It can also be evidence of their willingness to support student learning, after trying other methods, and of a realization that the monolingual approach does not seem to be working for them. Even though the rate of agreement from pre-service teachers is significant as well, some reasons for a lower percentage in comparison with in-service teachers could be the tendency to *go by the book* and follow the monolingual approach as they were taught. As mentioned in the participants' profiles section, no clear training on plurilingualism was present in their teacher education program and there was little presence of linguistic and cultural diversity in the courses of this program. Conceivably, these future teachers have lived in environments where they, themselves, have been instructed to use only the language of instruction in their own schooling (the local taboo mentioned previously (Caroll & van den Hoven, 2017)),^[5] making them supporters of the monolingual stance now that they are studying to become teachers (Caroll & van den Hoven, 2017;^[5] Cutrim Schmid, 2021,^[15] Ollerhead, Choi & French, 2018).^[28]

Nevertheless, when breaking down the agreement answers into 'Strongly Agree' and 'Agree', a considerable difference can be seen in pre-service strong agreement (47%) and in-service strong agreement (23%). In spite of not being possible to draw suitable conclusions on the

reasons for this difference, it is feasible to call the attention of the reader to the fact that none of these pre-service teachers claimed to be monolingual. According to Galante et al. (2020),^[20] teachers who are plurilingual or have been through some language learning process may possess a better understanding of language learning or language-in-education contexts and strategies. This could be at the basis of this stronger agreement on the part of these pre-service teachers who, possibly, developed a language tolerant mindset more open to the presence of other languages and cultures in teaching and learning.

The neutral and disagreement answers to the first question of the survey are not significant enough to be discussed at length in this section. But, based on the results, we can say that in general the pre-service teachers of this study seem to be slightly less supportive of the application of plurilingual pedagogies in UAE schools than in-service teachers.

As for question 2, which assessed the level of agreement with not going against the monolingual policy of the schools they will be placed in in the future, the differences between in-service and pre-service teacher answers are not significant on the agreement side. The majority in both groups showed a tendency to follow the school policy regardless of their beliefs. In-service teachers may want to avoid tensions with school management as they may believe that following the policy is being professional and if they do comply with the policy, perhaps they will be supported and have all the resources required. Pre-service teachers' answers were higher on the 'Strongly agree' side, possibly, as mentioned previously, because they tend to rely on what they are instructed to do, given their yet-inexperience in the field.

On the disagreement side for question 2, the results are worth a discussion here. Eight percent of in-service teachers strongly disagreed with preferring not to go against the school policy with 0 answers on strongly disagreeing from pre-service teachers. This concedes the possibility that in-service teachers' experience may tell them that sometimes there is room for discussion with school management teams if or when teachers see there are other or better options to support student learning that go beyond what is established by school policies.

Finally, question 3 asked the participants if they would like to learn more about how to implement plurilingual pedagogy in their practices. The 'yes' from all pre-service teachers may indicate the eagerness to learn associated with their current life stage as teachers-to-be. Probably, these future teachers have also observed that in their current training this topic is noticeably not present; therefore, having been involved in this research study may have

opened their eyes for other teaching and learning possibilities for which they would like to be prepared when they start teaching. Though not all in-service teachers showed disposition to learn more about the plurilingual approaches, with 92.3% of the respondents agreeing, the difference is not very significant, which means that in-service teachers, they too, would like to feel better prepared and have more resources to incorporate such practices in their teaching.

6. Conclusion

This study intended to answer two main research questions:

- What are the perceptions of pre-service teachers in comparison to in-service teachers regarding the application of plurilingual pedagogies in K-12 UAE schooling context?
- What implications may these perceptions have on teacher training in the UAE?

To address the first question, the results indicate that in-service teachers were more open to the integration of plurilingual approaches in the K-12 plurilingual UAE context, to the point of even considering disregarding the generally monolingual school policy in order to be able to apply plurilingualism-inspired strategies. However, all pre-service teachers were willing to keep abreast of current plurilingualism-oriented methods and a slightly lower percentage of in-service teachers showed such readiness.

Our interpretation of these results lies on two main dichotomies: experienced vs inexperienced teachers and prepared vs unprepared teachers. The real classroom know-how of the experienced teachers (in-service) may have contributed for a larger support of plurilingual approaches in teaching and learning while the ‘go-by-the-book’ impulse of the inexperienced (pre-service) teachers may lead them to feel more inclined to comply with the monolingual stance widely perpetrated by local schools. However, regardless of the level of *in loco* experience of both types of teachers, both groups showed genuine interest in better preparing themselves to address plurilingualism in their current or future classrooms. This brings us to answering the second research question of this study. As mentioned before, plurilingualism and plurilingual approaches are topics not covered in the pre-service teachers’ teacher training program and this appears reflected in their answers, both when they seem less open to the implementation of such approaches and when, contrastingly, they show interest in more training on this topic. Likewise, in-service teachers wanted to be taught on plurilingual approaches despite their experience in teaching and having been trained in the past. This tells us that, in order

to respond to the call for more specialized training reflected in these participants’ answers, some initiatives could be implemented at the teacher education level.

To begin with, it is fundamental to initiate a sensitization drive among the many stakeholders impacted by this potential paradigm shift. Students are, of course, at the heart of this paradigm shift and should, naturally, be involved in decisions related to plurilingualism-oriented pedagogical approaches (see example in Coelho, forthcoming),^[8] however, one of the goals of this study was to reflect on what can be done at the level of pre-service training which requires acceptance and approval mainly from several stakeholders other than the students themselves.

As can be seen in figure 9, governmental institutions, scholars, educational authorities, schools and educators may be the entities that need to be first involved in the sensitization movement. Research-based initiatives led by scholars should be promoted in order to work as information sessions offered to governmental and educational institutions to provide evidence on the potentialities of plurilingual pedagogies. Many times, as seen in the answers from the participants, the educators are ready for the change but the governmental and administrative support is not granted. These latter institutions need to be educated on how plurilingualism would work in diverse classrooms to be able to make the shift from traditional, *folk* pedagogy (Woll, 2020)^[35] to recent research-based pedagogy which would then impact policies. This does not mean assuredly a total elimination of other pedagogies, but a process of recognition of plurilingualism-oriented approaches as a valid pedagogy as well.

Secondly, in Figure 9, we also see how schools in particular would need to develop awareness of their learners’ and teachers’ diverse backgrounds by creating opportunities for those to arise in their classrooms, for plurilingual pedagogies application and for parent and community involvement as well.

As for teachers, finally, as in figure 9, besides a need to start acknowledging their learners’ plurilingual and pluricultural repertoires as assets for learning, it is crucial that they start receiving well-designed training on the topic. As suggested by researchers, this could involve, for example, having student-teachers learn another language unknown to them to experience the intricacies of language learning (Catalano & Hamann, 2016),^[6] having student-teachers learn content (e.g. Math) through a language they do not master completely, or having student-teachers present their projects in another language that they recently learned. This ‘being-in-your-shoes’ approach could be essential in sensitizing them to the potential of plurilingual

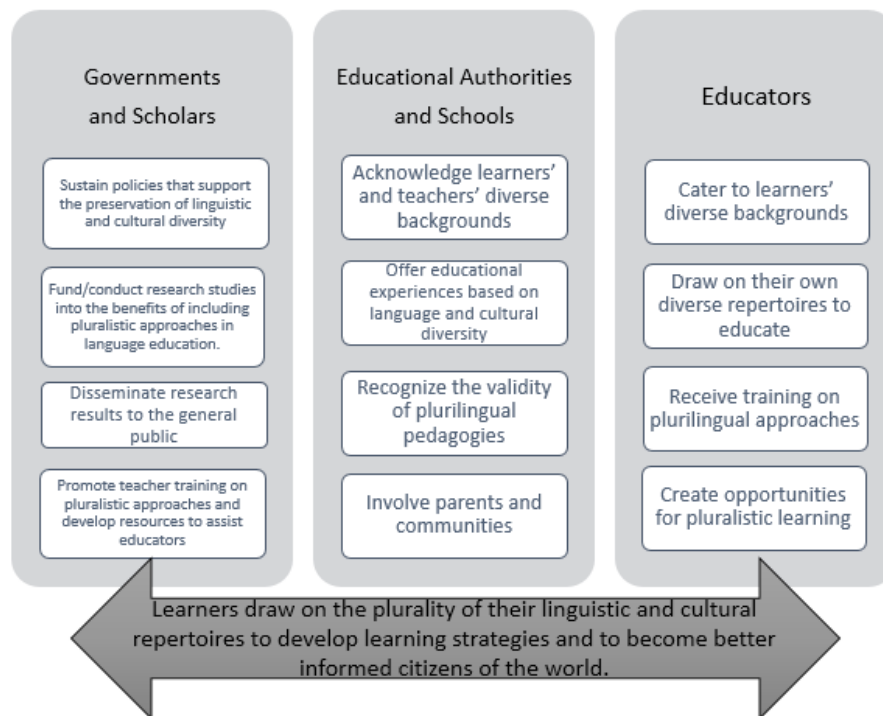


Figure 9. The role of each educational stakeholder towards an education paradigm shift

pedagogies. As Coombe et al. (2019)^[10] put it, ‘it is critical that teachers review their own practices in order to identify and better align their creative, intuitive and personal capacities with innovative pedagogies.’ (p.4)

Lastly and foremost, Woll (2020)^[35] defended that a mindset shift toward a practical application of plurilingualism-oriented practices can be facilitated only when there is a clear understanding of what it involves by teachers themselves, and, as mentioned before, both pre-service and in-service teachers often show evidence of their clear unfamiliarity with plurilingual pedagogies coupled with unpreparedness. Therefore, perhaps it is high time teacher educators became more proactive in their efforts to receive approval to include plurilingual didactic approaches into teacher education (Dooly & Vallejo, 2019;^[17] Troyan, 2014).^[32] If incorporated into teacher training courses endorsed by colleges and universities, plurilingual pedagogies may gain the legitimacy as a teaching methodology that they need to be awarded the validity that pre-service teachers and in-service teachers may need to feel safer embracing them. In other words, plurilingual pedagogies may need to be *didacticised* (Dooly & Vallejo, 2019, p. 81)^[17] in order to be widely accepted and gain the *folk pedagogy* status that seems to push teachers toward acceptance and implementation.

As a final note, while the case-study nature of this research and the survey limitations may prompt some reservations in regard to the generalization and the significance

of the results of this study, it is believed that this research study represents an initial auscultation of UAE pre-service teachers as far as plurilingual education and its value as pedagogy are concerned. The study’s clear report on the openness from pre-service teachers to learn more about plurilingual approaches can be a sign of a need for more open discussions on the topic as teacher training content in the region, which can be consolidated and further explored with more studies that could include interviews and focus group discussions from more local pre-service teachers.

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Annex 1

Part A

What is plurilingual pedagogy? Applying a plurilingual pedagogy in your teaching means allowing your students to draw on other languages they may know to develop learning strategies to support learning in a variety of subjects.

Survey questions considered for this study

Part B - Demographic information

Question 1.1

How old are you? - Choose the appropriate age range.

- 20-24
- 25-29

- 30-34
- 35-39
- 40-44
- 45-49
- 50-54
- 55-60
- 60+

Question 1.2

I speak...

- One language
- Two languages
- Three or more languages

Question 1.3

I speak... - Choose as MANY as apply to you.

- English
- Arabic
- French
- Tagalog
- Hindi
- Urdu
- Spanish
- Farsi
- Malayalam
- Bengali
- Tamil
- German
- Other. Which?

Part C- Plurilingual pedagogy

Question 2.1

I believe plurilingual pedagogy could be applied in K-12 schools in the UAE given the increasingly multilingual student cohorts they welcome.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Question 2.2

Even though I believe in the potential of plurilingual pedagogy in my teaching, I prefer not to go against my school curriculum policy.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Question 2.3

I would like to know more about how to apply a plurilingual pedagogy that supports learning in my classes.

- Yes
- No