

Fostering multilingual language development in the mainstream classroom: Lessons learned from bilingual education?

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Studies show that many (future) teachers feel unprepared to foster the different languages of multilingual students in the monolingually-orientated mainstream classroom (Becker-Mrotzek et al., 2012; Ricart Brede 2019). Particularly the attitudes of teachers towards multilingualism have an impact on their teaching behavior in linguistically heterogeneous contexts (Morys, 2014). This has consequences for the development of the language of schooling as well as for the heritage languages of multilingual students. In the first part of the talk, I will present data on the attitudes of teachers and future teachers towards multilingualism in schools in Germany combined with data on the reading and lexical competences of multilingual students in selected educational contexts.

Many bilingual education programs have been shown to provide good support for the language development of multilingual children (Müller, 2020; Steinlen & Piske, 2018). Teacher's attitudes and engagement in those programs are potential success factors (Fielding & Harbon, 2018). In the second part of the talk, I will focus on students' lexical and reading development in a bilingual Italian-German program and discuss them in light of teacher's attitudes.

I will ask whether there are any lessons learned from bilingual programs that could be transferred to the mainstream classroom in order to foster all of students' linguistic repertoires and I will consider paths forward.