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Austrian Teachers' Perspectives on Multilingual Education: Policy and Practice

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Kurzfassung

Die Art und Weise, wie Lehrkräfte Sprachrichtlinien interpretieren und umsetzen, wird stark von ihren persönlichen Überzeugungen und vorherrschenden Sprachideologien beeinflusst. Diese Studie untersucht das komplexe Zusammenspiel zwischen sprachlichen Überzeugungen, Ideologien und der Umsetzung von Richtlinien in zweisprachigen Bildungseinrichtungen in Österreich. Mithilfe eines Mixed-Method-Ansatzes, der sogenannten Q-Methode, wird anhand von 37 Aussagen zum Thema Mehrsprachigkeit und bilinguale Bildung analysiert, wie diese Faktoren die Unterrichtspraxis und alltägliche Entscheidungen der Lehrkräfte prägen. Die Ergebnisse zeigen, dass viele Lehrkräfte Mehrsprachigkeit sowohl als wertvolle Ressource als auch als grundlegendes Recht betrachten. Gleichzeitig werden jedoch wesentliche Herausforderungen bei der praktischen Umsetzung mehrsprachiger Lehr- und Lernprozesse deutlich, was auf Bereiche hinweist, in denen Anpassungen notwendig wären, um Lehrkräfte zu unterstützen und die mehrsprachige Bildung zu fördern. Diese Studie liefert wertvolle Einblicke in die praktischen Chancen und Herausforderungen der mehrsprachigen Bildung, indem sie aufzeigt, wie Überzeugungen und Ideologien der Lehrkräfte ihre Unterrichtsstrategien und alltäglichen Handlungsweisen beeinflussen. Die Ergebnisse unterstreichen die Notwendigkeit, Richtlinien besser an die Gegebenheiten im Klassenzimmer anzupassen und bieten Anregungen zur Verbesserung der Lehrpraxis sowie der Effektivität von Richtlinien im Schulalltag.

Abstract

The way educators interpret and enact language policies is deeply shaped by their personal beliefs and prevailing language ideologies. This study investigates the intricate relationship between language beliefs, ideologies, and policy implementation in dual-language bilingual education (DLBE) settings in Austria. Using a mixed-methods approach, including Q methodology with 37 statements on multilingualism and bilingual education, the research examines how these factors shape classroom policies and practices. Key findings reveal that many teachers perceive multilingualism as both a valuable resource and a fundamental right. However, the study also identifies significant challenges in the practical implementation of multilingual teaching and learning, pointing to areas where policy adjustments could better support educators and enhance multilingual education. By examining how educators' beliefs and ideologies shape their instructional strategies and adherence to policy, this study provides valuable insights into the opportunities and challenges surrounding multilingual education. The findings emphasise the need to better align educational policies with classroom realities and provide guidance to enhance both teaching practices and policy effectiveness.

1. Introduction

Multilingualism has become an increasingly significant focus in modern educational research given the diverse linguistic landscapes of contemporary societies. However, the presence of multiple languages in schools brings both opportunities and challenges, particularly in navigating the tension between promoting national or dominant languages and supporting linguistic diversity. Schools are tasked with creating environments where multilingual learners can thrive, but this often involves complex language policies and practices that must be carefully balanced. Understanding how these policies translate into the realities of classroom instruction is key to developing more inclusive educational practices that benefit all students, regardless of their linguistic backgrounds.

Teachers play a pivotal role in translating these policies into everyday classroom experiences, as they must balance the demands of promoting the national curriculum while supporting students' diverse linguistic backgrounds. This often requires adapting teaching methods, materials, and assessments to meet the varied needs of multilingual learners, while also navigating institutional policies that may not fully account for the complexities of linguistic diversity. Previous research has examined various aspects of teachers' roles, including their attitudes toward linguistic diversity, their beliefs about the feasibility of implementing multilingual practices, and the practical strategies they employ to support students' learning in multilingual settings (e.g. De Angelis, 2011; García & Wei, 2014). These studies highlight the importance of teachers' professional development, their ability to challenge monolingual ideologies, and their perceptions of language hierarchies within educational systems. Consequently, the successful integration of multilingual education depends not only on policy but also on teachers' beliefs, attitudes, and willingness to engage with multilingualism in their classrooms. How teachers approach this balancing act is crucial for ensuring that multilingual students receive equitable and meaningful educational opportunities.

This research examines how educators perceive and enact multilingual policies, with a focus on understanding how policy shapes their beliefs and strategies in the classroom and how they actively integrate them into their daily teaching. Policies related to multilingual education, as Shohamy (2006) highlights, are deeply embedded with language ideologies that influence their interpretation and enactment. Understanding teachers' perspectives is therefore essential for enhancing the effectiveness of

multilingual education and creating supportive learning environments for all students. This study aims to bridge the gap between policy and practice by exploring the ways in which teachers interpret and respond to the demands of multilingual education.

In Austria, the growing presence of multilingual students, largely driven by migration, has made multilingualism a central concern in education. While Austria has historically been a multilingual society, the types of multilingualism are evolving due to contemporary factors such as migration and displacement (Herzog-Punzenberger, 2020). As these demographic changes continue, understanding the impact of multilingual education policies on teaching practices becomes crucial for fostering inclusive and equitable learning environments. Teachers play a key role in this process, as they must interpret, adapt, and implement policies within the context of their unique classroom environments. By examining how teachers navigate these challenges, this research will shed light on the practical realities of multilingual education in Austria, offering insights into how policy can better support teachers in fostering linguistically inclusive classrooms..

The motivation for this research stems from my interest in how teachers' perspectives on multilingualism influence their educational practices, particularly in the context of Austrian schools. Through both my academic studies and teaching experiences in linguistically diverse settings, I have observed the complexities involved in implementing multilingual policies in classrooms. This has driven my desire to explore how teachers interpret and apply multilingual policies, and how their personal beliefs and experiences shape their approach to supporting multilingual students. By focusing on educators' experiences, this research seeks to contribute to the development of more inclusive and equitable educational practices that embrace linguistic diversity as a resource rather than a problem.

The central research question guiding this thesis is: *How do language beliefs, ideologies, and official management decisions influence dual-language bilingual education (DLBE) teachers' classroom policies and practices in multilingual educational settings in Austria?*

To answer this question, the thesis is organised into five main chapters following the introductory chapter. The first chapter provides a theoretical foundation, defining multilingualism and its implications in educational settings, and tracing the historical development of multilingual education policies. The second chapter explores language policies and ideologies, focusing on language management, societal ideologies, and personal beliefs about multilingualism. The third chapter outlines the methodology of the

study, detailing the research setting, method, and procedures. The fourth chapter presents the results of the empirical study, including the demographic survey, Q-sorting activity, and post-sorting questionnaires. Finally, the fifth chapter synthesises the theoretical and empirical findings, offering conclusions about how multilingualism is perceived and practiced in Austrian schools, and discussing implications for future research and policy development.

2. Multilingualism

Multilingualism is increasingly recognised as a key factor in shaping modern education, influencing policies, teaching strategies, and student outcomes. In diverse and globalised societies, the ability to speak and understand multiple languages is not only a valuable skill but also a critical component in fostering inclusive educational environments. This chapter introduces the concept of multilingualism and explores its significance in various educational settings, laying the groundwork for a detailed investigation of its impact on teaching and learning in the chapters that follow.

2.1 Defining Multilingualism

Multilingualism is a complex and dynamic phenomenon that defies simple definition. As outlined by Mahootian (2020, p. 7), the diversity and broadness inherent in multilingualism complicate the task of providing a singular, all-encompassing definition. The phenomenon spans individuals, communities, and societies, making it challenging to fully capture its essence. To provide a comprehensive overview, we will examine various attempts at defining multilingualism and the aspects they encompass.

Generally, multilingualism refers to the presence and use of multiple languages within a given context—whether at the level of individuals, communities, or institutions (Mahootian, 2019, p. 4). It can manifest in various forms: in multicultural societies where languages are used interchangeably, among bilingual individuals navigating between languages in daily interactions, or within educational settings where students acquire new languages.

The concrete conceptualisation of multilingualism, however, can vary greatly depending on the theoretical and practical perspectives adopted. Some scholars hold narrow and limiting perceptions, while others take a broader and more inclusive view. For instance, Li Wei, as cited in Coulmas (2018, p. 33), adopts a rather narrow perspective, defining

multilingualism as the active use of multiple languages. According to Wei, individuals must regularly and proficiently engage in communication using all five identified language skills - speaking, reading, writing, understanding, and producing speech - to qualify as multilingual.

In contrast, scholars like Oksaar (2003) take a slightly broader view, arguing that multilingualism encompasses not only the co-use but also the mere coexistence of several languages. They emphasise the interconnectivity and fluidity of multilingualism, highlighting how multilingual individuals can seamlessly navigate between languages. To them, being multilingual refers to "the ability of an individual to use two or more languages as means of communication and to switch easily from one language to another when the situation demands" (Oksaar, 2003, p. 31). This perspective acknowledges that multilingualism is not solely about active language use but also encompasses passive language skills, such as comprehension and recognition, thus broadening the understanding of what it means to be multilingual.

Going a step further, Edwards (1994, p. 55) suggests that even a basic understanding or ability to use foreign expressions reflects some level of multilingual proficiency. He argues that "[i]f, as an English speaker, you can say *c'est la vie* or *gracias* or *guten tag* or *tovarisch* - or even if you understand them - you clearly have some command of a foreign tongue". This viewpoint underscores the idea that multilingualism is not always strictly confined to fluency in multiple languages but also includes familiarity with and appreciation for diverse linguistic forms and expressions.

Some scholars propose that multilingualism is simply characterised by a mindset of openness, curiosity, and respect towards different languages and cultures. According to Chander Daswani, as cited in Coulmas (2018, p. 37), multilingual individuals actively engage with linguistic diversity, viewing it as a source of enrichment rather than a barrier. They seek opportunities to learn from others, to bridge linguistic and cultural gaps, and to foster understanding and collaboration across diverse communities. In this way, multilingualism becomes a reflection not of a set of skills but of a set of values such as a broader commitment to inclusivity, intercultural dialogue, and the concept of global citizenship.

Lastly, many scholars argue that multilingualism is deeply connected to personal and cultural identity. As Mahootian (2020, p. 4) suggests, language is not merely a tool for communication or a collection of beliefs and values, but a core component of personal

and cultural identity. Rather, the languages individuals speak reflect important cultural ties and experiences, such as their heritage or upbringing, which significantly shape how they perceive themselves and are perceived by others.

In exploring definitions and approaches to multilingualism, it becomes evident that there is no one-size-fits-all explanation. Scholars have proposed various perspectives, reflecting the diverse nature of multilingualism and multilingual experiences. Ultimately, multilingualism must not be viewed as a fixed concept; instead, it should be seen as a spectrum encompassing varying degrees of proficiency and engagement with multiple languages. Some individuals may be highly proficient and active in several languages, while others may have more limited proficiency or passive connections to languages.

For the purpose of this thesis, a broad and inclusive definition of multilingualism is adapted. The term will be used to encompass all forms and expressions of linguistic diversity, recognising that all individuals involved with more than one language, variety , or dialect, regardless of their proficiency level, contribute to and shape the dynamic landscape of multilingualism.

2.2 The Multilingual Turn

Perceptions of multilingualism have evolved significantly over time. Historically, the concept of a "monolingual habitus" dominated, where the dominance of a single language was culturally and socially reinforced (Aronin & Singleton, 2012, p. 20). It was widely believed that the ideal scenario involved being raised with one language and achieving proficiency through formal education. Consequently, monolingualism was viewed as the norm, while bilingualism and multilingualism were seen as exceptions or even disadvantages.

In the past, multilingualism was often framed through a deficit perspective. Scholars like Baker (2011) portrayed multilingual individuals as less developed compared to their monolingual peers, while Jessner (2008, p. 15) even described them as "incompetent speakers" of their languages. This bias towards monolingualism contributed to the stigmatisation of multilingual individuals. Some critics took these arguments further, characterising multilinguals as "social or cognitive Frankensteins" (Hakuta & Diaz, 1985, p. 320), arguing that learning multiple languages divided learners' attention and cognitive capacities, thereby impeding their ability to achieve fluency in any single language. As a consequence, multilingualism was often discouraged or even explicitly prohibited in

various settings, particularly in education. Schools frequently enforced policies that restricted the use of languages other than the designated instructional language(s), thus creating environments where heritage languages were marginalised or suppressed, even within language classrooms (Jessner, 2006, p. 123).

Recent attitudes towards multilingualism have shifted markedly. Contemporary perspectives increasingly recognise the cognitive, social, and cultural benefits associated with multilingualism. Although Aronin and Singleton (2012, p. 3) note that a narrow view of multilingualism - what they term the "person-in-the-street perspective" - may still prevail among the general public, attitudes among educators, policymakers, and academics have evolved. There is growing recognition of multilingualism as a valuable resource in personal, academic, and professional contexts, with increasing calls for greater support for multilingual education and practices (Aronin & Singleton, 2012, p. 20-22).

In fact, emerging insights underscore the advantages of multilingualism, which include heightened cultural awareness, broader personal and professional opportunities, and enhanced competitiveness in the global marketplace (European Commission, 2008). These benefits have contributed to a shift toward a more inclusive definition of multilingualism (Ellis, 2017, p. 122). Modern conceptions now emphasise not only the ability to speak multiple languages but also the strategic use of linguistic resources for communication, meaning-making, and identity expression.

This broader perspective on multilingualism is further supported by contemporary understandings that embrace a more dynamic view (Blommaert 2010, p. 133). Multilingualism is now seen as encompassing not only different languages but also a range of linguistic varieties such as dialects, registers, and styles. This expanded view acknowledges the flexible and strategic use of these linguistic resources in various contexts, reflecting the fluid nature of communication.

In modern societies, multilingualism is increasingly perceived as the norm rather than the exception (Blommaert 2010, p. 134). Nearly everyone exhibits some degree of linguistic variation, whether through different registers, dialects, or languages. This widespread linguistic diversity challenges the traditional view of languages as fixed, distinct entities. Instead, it highlights the fluidity of language practices, where boundaries between languages and dialects are often shaped by social, political, and cultural factors rather than purely linguistic ones.

The so-called multilingual turn has fostered a mindset that values linguistic diversity as an integral part of human experience (May, 2014). Failing to recognise the advantages of multilingualism poses significant risks, especially within educational settings. The next chapter will address these dangers and emphasise the importance of valuing and integrating multilingualism into educational practices.

2.3 Multilingualism In Education

Traditionally, languages have been treated as separate entities with distinct goals and learning outcomes. However, the emergence of a resource-based view of multilingualism increasingly recognises students' entire linguistic repertoire as a valuable tool for learning and interaction (Aronin & Singleton, 2012, p. 20-22). This perspective is essential, as failing to embrace and accommodate multilingualism within educational systems can result in significant disadvantages for linguistically diverse students.

One primary challenge faced by multilingual students is discrimination within educational settings. Despite the multicultural nature of many communities, multilingual students are sometimes viewed as inferior or less capable. They often encounter systemic biases that undervalue their linguistic and cultural backgrounds. King (2018, p. 18) highlights that in many societies, there is a hierarchy of languages, with some languages, such as English, being associated with power and status, while others are often regarded as inferior. This hierarchy can undermine the status of students' home languages, which can have negative effects on their cognitive development and educational experience.

First of all, multilingual students may face barriers to entry due to language proficiency requirements or cultural biases, hindering their access to quality education (García & Kleyn, 2016, pp. 198-199). Once enrolled, they may struggle to keep pace with instruction delivered in a language that is not their primary or dominant language, contributing to higher dropout rates and lower academic achievement compared to their monolingual peers.

Additionally, a lack of recognition and support for multilingualism can affect the types of diplomas and qualifications attained by linguistically diverse students (Obanya, 1999, p. 18). Without adequate support for language development and academic success, these students may be less likely to pursue higher education or achieve qualifications that reflect their full potential. This perpetuates cycles of inequality and limits social mobility among linguistically diverse populations.

To create inclusive and equitable educational environments, educators must actively address and mitigate discrimination, improve access to bilingual and multilingual education programs, and provide targeted support for language development (García & Kleyn, 2016, p. 182). Only by reformulating language policies to reflect inclusive practices and acknowledging the diverse linguistic backgrounds of students, educational institutions can promote equity and facilitate academic success for all learners.

The next chapter will explore language policies in detail, examining how language management, ideologies, and beliefs shape educational practices and influence outcomes for multilingual students.

3. Language policies

Language policies play a pivotal role in shaping educational environments and, consequently, students' experiences and trajectories. These policies dictate not only the languages used in instruction but also the broader pedagogical approaches and cultural attitudes toward language learning (e.g. Herzog-Punzenberger, 2019; May, 2014). The formulation and implementation of language policies can have far-reaching effects on educational equity, student engagement, and language acquisition outcomes. This chapter aims to provide a comprehensive view of how language policies are developed, enacted, and influenced taking into account the interplay of management strategies, ideologies, and beliefs.

Based on various theoretical frameworks (e.g. Sposky, 2012), the chapter is organised into three sections. The first section explores language management, encompassing the strategies and regulations gouverning language use within educational settings. The second section delves into language ideologies and beliefs, investigating how teachers' personal experiences, societal expectations, and prior knowledge shape their language ideologies. The third and final section addresses language beliefs, focusing on how these beliefs, influenced by historical and societal factors, inform and interact with educational policies.

While these components of language policies will be discussed individually, their inherent interconnectedness must be recognised. Each element - management, ideologies, and beliefs - does not operate in isolation but rather interacts dynamically with the others in complex ways. The interplay between these components can influence the overall

effectiveness of language policies, as well as their impact on educational practice and student outcomes.

3.1 Language Management

Language management, also sometimes referred to as language planning, describes the processes surrounding the regulation of language. Two of these processes are policy making and policy enactment (Spolsky, 2012, p. 5). As language management guides educators' viewpoints and decision-making, it plays a crucial role in shaping teachers' language use, instruction, and identity formation. In fact, effective language management can influence not only how languages are taught but also how they are perceived within educational settings. In the following sections, the focus will be on examining how language policies are formulated and implemented, and how these policies impact educational practices and student outcomes. This exploration will shed light on the interplay between policy, practice, and the lived experiences of educators and learners and reveal the broader implications of language management in education.

In essence, the term language management is used to describe a range of regulations about the use, learning, and teaching of languages at various levels, from national planning to individual classroom practices (Farr & Song 2011, p. 654). It includes decisions about who uses which language(s) and when by designating official, standard, and national languages, as well as determining appropriate choices in grammar, vocabulary, genre, and style for different contexts. These decisions always have a dual impact; that is, they influence both macro and micro levels, affecting national language planning and larger policy frameworks as well as language use within households and smaller community settings.

Language management has several key characteristics. Firstly, it is a highly complex and multifaceted process, intricately linked to broader discourses surrounding language, identity, and ideology on both local and global scales (Zuniga et al., 2018, p. 61). It encompasses a wide range of activities and decisions that are never made in isolation but are deeply intertwined with societal beliefs and ideologies regarding language. For example, language policy decisions are often influenced by prevailing attitudes toward issues such as linguistic diversity, bilingualism, and language rights within a given society, as well as by the personal beliefs individuals hold about these issues.

Secondly, language management may vary greatly in its level of formality and orientation, ranging from explicit policies to implicit practices. According to Schiffman (2006, p. 11), it is important to recognise that language policy "is comprised not only of the explicit, written, overt, de jure, official and 'top-down' decision-making about language, but also the implicit, unwritten, covert, de facto, grassroots and unofficial ideas and assumptions about language in a particular culture". Explicit language policies are clearly outlined in official documents such as laws or educational curricula. On the other hand, implicit language policies, also referred to as unstated or covert policies, are not formally documented but become evident from observing everyday practices. For instance, explicit decisions may include official language policies or guidelines set by institutions, while implicit decisions may involve informal language practices and norms that shape everyday communication and interactions between educators and learners.

Thirdly, language management is dynamic and evolves over time. Management decisions are not only influenced by societal attitudes but also contribute to the shaping and reinforcement of these very attitudes, thus perpetuating a cycle that continually impacts how language policies are formulated, understood, and applied (Zuniga et al., 2018, p. 61). For example, a policy promoting bilingual education may initially arise from a recognition of linguistic diversity and the benefits of multilingualism. Over time, as this policy is implemented and becomes part of the everyday practices of teachers, it can foster more positive attitudes toward multilingualism, thus further reinforcing the initial rationale behind the policy. This example illustrates how language policies, societal beliefs, and ideologies form a continuous feedback loop, where each element continually influences the others.

However, as Sonntag (2000) argues, while language beliefs and ideologies inevitably inform language management decisions such as policy making and enactment, it is important to note that they do by no means determine policy, nor can policy be directly derived from them:

> "The relationship between language ideologies and language policy is inseparable; that is, language ideology inevitably informs policy. Nevertheless, the former never determines the latter, nor can the latter be derived from the former" (Sonntag 2000, as cited in Farr & Song, 2011, p. 654).

It becomes evident from this statement that language ideologies do not directly dictate language management. Instead, language ideologies contribute to shaping the discourse

surrounding language management, thus significantly influencing the considerations, priorities, and goals that policymakers take into account when formulating policies.

The process of translating ideologies into concrete policy measures involves a complex interplay of various factors, including political agendas, institutional constraints, and societal dynamics. The complexity of this process is further heightened by the diversity within language ideologies and management strategies and the dynamics resulting from it. Sometimes conflicting ideologies may underpin the same policy initiative. For instance, a policy aimed at promoting linguistic diversity may face opposition from ideologies emphasising linguistic homogeneity or national unity. Conversely, similar ideologies may guide seemingly different language management considerations, as policymakers navigate competing interests and negotiate compromises to address diverse stakeholder perspectives (Farr & Song, 2011, p. 654). Thus, while language ideologies play a significant role in shaping language management, the relationship between the two is nuanced, dynamic, and often characterised by ambiguity and contestation.

For language management measures to be effective, it is crucial to align them with current language practices and societal dynamics (Sonntag, 2000). Language management decisions are heavily influenced by the sociopolitical and socioeconomic contexts of their time and place. These contexts may encompass shifts in political power, economic changes, migration patterns, and cultural trends, all of which can significantly influence the landscape of language use and education. In order to avoid creating a mismatch between policy decisions and the actual reality, language management measures should therefore take into account current language practices (Björkman, 2014, p. 358-359). This approach ensures that language management becomes a bottom-up process, reflecting the actual language dynamics experienced by individuals in their everyday lives, instead of a top-down process, failing to take into account the lived experiences of the people it aims to serve.

What is more, language management goes beyond formal policies and regulations to encompass everyday practices and interactions within communities and institutions. It entails numerous decisions about language use in educational settings, media representation, government communication, and intergroup relations. These decisions are not solely made by governmental entities but also by individuals within these contexts. As Hult (2014, p. 159) notes, "the classroom represents a key site where policies become action and teachers, through their pedagogical decisions based on their beliefs, are at the

metaphorical heart of language policy implementation". For example, in a school setting where the official policy promotes bilingual education, the practical application of this policy depends heavily on individual actions. While the government has set this policy, its success ultimately always depends on the everyday choices made by teachers, administrators, and students.

Finally, the implications of language management reach beyond linguistic concerns, influencing broader educational and social outcomes. As noted by Skutnabb-Kangas (2008), language management plays a significant role in various aspects such as (re)constructing national identity, promoting linguistic human rights, guiding the education of linguistic minorities, and supporting language revitalisation efforts. Indeed, language management decisions profoundly impact individuals and communities by shaping their access to resources, opportunities, and social inclusion. By assigning higher prestige to certain language varieties and stigmatising or suppressing others, language management can legitimise the linguistic practices and cultures of specific groups while marginalising others. In doing so, language management not only shapes linguistic landscapes but also reflects and reinforces power dynamics, social structures, and inequalities within society.

According to the literature, becoming aware of the characteristics and complexities of language management is crucial for promoting linguistic diversity, fostering inclusive language policies, and advancing social justice within diverse linguistic communities, especially in the educational context (Farr & Song, 2011, p. 659). Building on this finding, the next chapter focuses on the intricate relationship between language management and education.

Language Management and Education

Language management plays a pivotal role in shaping educational systems and practices worldwide. In the following section, the intricate relationship between language management and education will be explored, focusing on different types of language policies and how they are formulated, interpreted, and implemented within educational contexts. Furthermore, the roles of educators in mediating language policy implementation and the impact of their agency on educational practices and the concept of agency within the context of language policy enactment will be examined. Through a comprehensive analysis of these dynamics, the aim is to provide insights into the complexities of language management in education and its implications for language use and learning outcomes.

Language policies can be categorised into several distinct types, each addressing different aspects of language use and rights within educational settings. For instance, Macias and Wiley (1998) and Wiley (2004) classify various educational language policies concerning minority language rights in the US, offering a framework for understanding how such policies are formulated and implemented. In the following, their list of language policies will be presented in detail, supported with examples from the Austrian context:

- **Promotion-Oriented Policies**: These policies involve government or state support for community languages. An example in the Austrian context would be the promotion of Croatian, Slovenian, and Hungarian in Burgenland and Carinthia, where these languages are recognised as official regional languages.

- **Expediency-Oriented Policies**: These are designed to accommodate the perceived deficiencies in German proficiency among speakers of other languages. For instance, integration classes in Austria, so-called *Deutschförderklassen,* aim to support non-German-speaking students in acquiring proficiency in German to facilitate their education.

- **Tolerance-Oriented Policies**: These policies are characterised by the absence of state intervention, allowing minority languages to be maintained through private or religious schools. Examples are private schools run by minority communities such as the Turkish or Bosnian communities.

- **Restrictive-Oriented Policies**: These involve legal restrictions or prohibitions on the use of minority languages. Although Austria does not have stringent restrictive policies like those in some other countries, i.e. California's Proposition 227 or Arizona's Proposition 203 in the US, the strong emphasis on German in public education also strongly effects the use and teaching of minority languages.

- **Null Policies**: These refer to the lack of any policy. In Austria, this can be seen in the lack of formal recognition or support for certain immigrant languages, which are neither explicitly restricted nor actively promoted.

- **Repression-Oriented Policies**: These involve active efforts to eradicate minority languages. While Austria does not have explicit repression-oriented policies, historical policies towards Croatian and Slovenian languages in the early 20th century could be considered as such.

These insights into concrete educational management strategies illustrate once again that language policies can take various forms, from explicit promotion-oriented and expedience-oriented policies, which are directly stated and formally implemented by educational institutions or governing bodies, to implicit or covert approaches like tolerance-oriented and null policies (Schiffman, 2006). While the former are characterised by direct articulation and active implementation, the latter are characterised by the ignorance or absence of an explicit or overt language policy. It is crucial to acknowledge that both forms can significantly impact the maintenance and development of minority languages and the broader language use in society.

It can be noted that deficit views perpetuated through subtractive management decisions, such as restrictive-oriented policies and repression-oriented policies, can have particularly detrimental effects (Farr & Song, 2011, p. 659). These policies not only deprive students of essential learning opportunities, such as developing proficiency and literacy in their home languages, but they also cultivate negative perceptions towards subordinate languages, dialects, and their respective speakers and cultures. Such policies reinforce hierarchical linguistic structures and contribute to the marginalisation of linguistic diversity within educational settings.

In recent years, educational language management initiatives worldwide have generally shifted from subtractive, submersion programs aimed at privileging one language, namely the standard form of the national language, to additive, dual language bilingual education (DLBE) programmes aimed at supporting multilingualism and multiculturalism (Zuniga et al., 2018, p. 61). Nevertheless, subtractive policies continue to persist and exert influence on educational practices. Research indicates that despite a growing advocacy for plurilingual approaches, many institutional practices still tend to prioritise and reinforce a monolingual and monocultural perspective on language learning.

For instance, studies by Bonacina-Pugh (2012) and Young (2017) demonstrate that despite the advocacy for plurilingualism in European language policies, the prevailing perception of linguistic norms in French schools remains monolingual and monocultural. For example, by uncovering the policies that become evident throughout teachers' language practices, Bonacina-Pugh (2012, p. 216) has shown that teachers in France still tend to exclude languages other than the national language from the classroom. A similar study by Young (2017, p. 15-16) reveals that while the language(s) of the home and the language(s) of schooling already coexist on a personal level, on the institutional level,

languages other than those on the curriculum are frequently ignored or even regarded as a problem or barrier in French schools.

Standardised testing has been identified as a significant factor in shaping and perpetuating deficit views of language. Emerick and Goldberg (2022, p. 1341) have found that these tests are commonly used as the prior and sometimes sole means to measure students' competencies and skills. However, standardised tests often fail to accurately assess the abilities of emergent bilinguals (EBs). Since exams are typically administered in the national or school language, EBs with different first languages frequently achieve lower scores than their peers. This discrepancy can lead to increased pressure on teachers to ensure overall academic performance, which may result in frustration towards EBs and reinforce narratives about their perceived inability to succeed academically. Consequently, decisions such as strictly using the language of schooling in all contexts or implementing separate programs for EBs may be made with the intention of raising standardizsed test scores. However, these measures can further marginalise emergent bilinguals by isolating them from their peers and limiting their opportunities for holistic language development.

Teachers hold significant influence over language management. Farr and Song underscore this by asserting that

> "[t]eachers produce, affirm and/or disconfirm language policies every day – when they allow or disallow the use of one language or variety rather than another, when they choose to use a particular variety of a language to communicate with their students, when they prefer a certain structure over another in the curriculum, when they show their lack of knowledge about certain languages or varieties, etc" (Farr and Song, 2011, p. 660).

This daily interaction with language policies highlights the powerful role teachers play in shaping language use within their classrooms and beyond. Teachers' decisions and actions regarding language use, whether consciously or unconsciously, impact the implementation of language policies and influence students' linguistic experiences and development. Their choices about which languages or varieties to employ, how to integrate language instruction into the curriculum, and their attitudes towards different languages can either reinforce or challenge existing language hierarchies.

The intricate relationship between teachers and language management becomes evident on two levels (Zuniga et al., 2018, p. 62). On the one hand, teachers receive directives to implement official language policies from school or district leadership, or from local and national governments. For instance, they could be tasked by educational authorities with

integrating language immersion programmes to promote bilingualism among students. On the other hand, as micro-agents, teachers are responsible for implementing, interpreting, or possibly resisting policy initiatives. Through their daily classroom decisions, such as banning languages other than the national or subject language from their classrooms, or raising awareness for the multilingualism and multiculturalism present in classrooms, they also contribute to policy creation, maintenance, and development.

Although language management is commonly considered an official and bureaucratic process, teachers play a pivotal role in mediating policy implementation. Zuniga and his colleagues (2018, p. 60) argue that "while the term 'policy' suggests top-down initiatives filtered to classrooms from upper levels of legislative, judicial and education systems, language policy enactment is to a larger extent layered and mediated by individual agency, ideologies, and social factors." They explain that despite being influenced by larger sociopolitical contexts and administrative systems, teachers do in fact have the capacity to co-determine the extent to which they support, question, or challenge different policy initiatives.

Research indicates that teachers play a significant role in shaping language policy within educational contexts through their exercise of agency (Zuniga et al., 2018, p. 62). In this context, agency refers to educators' capacity to act independently and make decisions based on their own free will, even within the constraints of social and political systems. It involves being intentional and proactive in choosing, designing, and executing actions that support their beliefs, values, and goals. Teachers typically demonstrate agency when they believe they can bring about change that aligns with their professional responsibilities, social considerations, academic objectives, and beliefs regarding what is 'best' for their students.

The exercise of agency highlights the significant influence teachers have in the practical application of language policies. This influence allows teachers to either reinforce or challenge existing educational norms and structures based on their individual decisions and actions. Classroom teachers must become aware of their continuous engagement in language policy and the implications of their practices. According to Farr and Song (2011, p. 660), "it is critical that teachers feel empowered as agents in interpreting and implementing language policies affecting their teaching practices. Recognizing their own roles in implementing language policy in the classroom is the first step for this". They

argue that incorporating language policy into teacher education programs is essential, given its significant influence on teaching and learning.

In fact, agency serves as a prerequisite for effectively interpreting and implementing language policies in ways that promote equitable and inclusive educational practices. Zuniga et al. (2018, pp. 61-62) have shown that teacher agency can either limit or support the success of certain language policies, as it shapes language use, learning outcomes, and social equity in the classroom. For instance, teachers with a strong sense of agency might recognise and address sociolinguistic realities in multilingual classrooms and implement inclusive language practices that support linguistic diversity. Conversely, educators lacking agency may adhere strictly to prescribed policies, neglecting the linguistic backgrounds of their students (Farr & Song, 2011, pp. 655-656). Therefore, it is their sense of agency that empowers educators to navigate complex policy landscapes, interpret directives, and make decisions that reflect their understanding of the unique needs and circumstances of their students.

Local actors, including teachers, administrators, and other stakeholders, play a key role in the implementation and interpretation of language management. Ultimately, the extent to which language policies are implemented and adopted by individuals or groups might vary greatly across societies, time periods, and places. As Spolsky (2012, p. 218) points out, the success of language management "depends in large measure on its congruity with the practices and ideology of the community". By critically engaging with language policy and its underlying ideologies, educators can work towards creating more inclusive and equitable learning environments that honour linguistic diversity and promote social justice in education (Bernstein et al., 2023, p. 191; Farr & Song, 2011, p. 655). Even when official language management measures have clearly defined subtractive or additive language goals, the actions of school agents may negotiate policy initiatives and contest underlying ideologies based on their own experiences, beliefs, and language ideologies.

To conclude, language management is far from being a static directive but rather a dynamic and evolving process shaped by several influential factors. Firstly, societal attitudes and beliefs towards language greatly influence the formulation and implementation of language policies. These attitudes can either support or challenge the adoption of specific language practices within educational settings and broader societal contexts. Secondly, political dynamics play a crucial role as governments and policymakers enact legislation and directives that shape language policies, reflecting

broader political agendas and goals. These policies can have significant implications for language use and educational practices across different regions and communities. Thirdly, educational philosophies and pedagogical approaches also contribute significantly to language management. The beliefs and values held by educators, administrators, and stakeholders within educational institutions shape how language policies are interpreted and implemented on a day-to-day basis.

Finally, as Spolsky (2004, p. 222) observes, "the real language policy of a community is more likely to be found in its practices than in its management", and "[u]nless the management is consistent with the language practices and beliefs, and with the other contextual forces that are in play, the explicit policy written in the constitution and laws is likely to have no more effect on how people speak than the activities of generations of school teachers vainly urging the choice of correct language". These insights underscore the importance of examining not just formal policies but also the underlying beliefs and practices that shape language use in educational settings. The following sections will explore how individual beliefs and common ideologies influence the implementation of language policies and examine their effects on educational access, equity, and the experiences of students and educators.

3.2 Language Ideologies

Having explored the processes involved in language management decisions in the previous section, this section aims to examine the underlying principles that shape these decisions: language ideologies. These ideologies, which encompass deeply ingrained beliefs and attitudes about language, have important implications for broader educational policies by influencing teachers' instructional decisions and approaches. Through an exploration of language ideologies, the underlying beliefs and assumptions that shape teachers' approaches to language teaching and learning can be uncovered. In the following section, the focus will thus be on the concept of language ideologies, their historical development, and their influence on language education. This exploration will illuminate how language ideologies not only affect individual teachers and students but also shape the general educational landscape.

Various definitions of language ideologies exist, reflecting the multifaceted nature of this concept. Some of the earlier attempts at defining language ideologies, such as the one proposed by Silverstein (1979), focus primarily on language ideologies as shared beliefs about language and its use. He describes language ideologies as "beliefs about language

articulated by the users as a rationalization or justification of perceived language structure and use" (Silverstein, 1979, p. 193). This definition underscores the role of language ideologies in shaping how individuals perceive and interpret language and emphasises that they generally serve to rationalise and justify language phenomena.

Building upon this foundational definition, more recent perspectives delve deeper into the socio-cultural context in which language ideologies operate and the implications they have for individuals and societies. Woolard (1998, p. 3), for example, defines language ideologies as "representations, whether explicit or implicit, that construe the intersection of language and human beings in a social world". This perspective shows that language ideologies can take on several forms, whether clearly stated (explicit) or subtly implied (implicit). Moreover, it highlights the significant role that human beings play within these ideologies, given that they navigate and construct their social realities through language.

In a similar vein, Bacon (2020, p. 173), describes language ideologies as "systems of belief, performed in context, at the intersections of language and social power structures". This definition emphasises the entrenched, intricate, and context-dependent nature of language ideologies, which are strongly shaped by social structures and power relations. Similarly, Kroskrity (2010, p. 192) characterises language ideologies as "beliefs, feelings, and conceptions about language structure and use which often index the political economic interests of individual speakers, ethnic and other interest groups, and nation states". This perspective underscores the broad influence of language ideologies, which not only serve as indicators of personal beliefs but also as representations of the political and economic interests of individuals, ethnic groups, and nation states.

At their core, language ideologies represent a complex interplay of beliefs, emotions, and conceptions concerning language. They are phenomena that both influence and are influenced by power dynamics, social structures, and cultural norms and have a profound impact on how language is valued, utilised, and perceived within society (Blackledge, 2002, p. 68). As highlighted by Young (2017, p. 14), language ideologies are neither individual nor *ad hoc*; rather, they are deeply ingrained within cultural frameworks and are shared among multiple members of a society. Understanding language ideologies thus always requires moving beyond mere linguistic considerations of language structure and form to contextualise them within the broader socio-cultural context in which they operate.

In the field of education, language ideologies have been found to be particularly influential, especially in multilingual educational settings. Henderson (2017, p. 31) cited in Bernstein et al. (2023, p. 193) argues that "[l]anguage ideologies mediate language policy". Indeed, studies have shown that language ideologies profoundly shape educators' beliefs about language, multilingualism, and diversity. Consequently, these beliefs may have tremendous effects on the ways languages are taught, learned, and assessed. For example, a teacher's language ideologies can shape their expectations and interactions with multilingual students by consciously or subconsciously influencing their attitudes and behaviours. Teachers with positive ideologies about multilingualism may adopt more inclusive teaching practices, while those with negative ideologies might inadvertently exclude students who speak languages other than the dominant one.

Language ideologies play a crucial role in shaping the educational environment by establishing prevailing assumptions about language use (Woolard, 1998, p. 3). In the Austrian context, for instance, it is often considered the norm that German is the superior and primary language of instruction, while English is seen as the essential foreign language to be learned. This prevailing belief influences national language policies, which tend to prioritise these languages over others. As a result, the hierarchical privileging of certain languages affects educational access and equity, creating barriers for marginalised languages and potentially limiting opportunities for students who speak them. National language policies, therefore, often reflect these dominant ideologies, leading to disparities in support and recognition for various languages (Shohamy, 2006). This can result in less inclusive and equitable educational practices, where students who speak marginalised languages may not have equal opportunities to succeed.

According to Ricklefs (2023), language ideologies can be categorised into three basic orientations toward language, a framework originally developed by Ruiz (1984). These orientations are not merely theoretical concepts but serve as a lens through which the interpretation and enactment of language policies are shaped.

First, language can be viewed as a problem, where linguistic diversity is perceived as an obstacle to communication and social cohesion. This ideology often leads to policies that promote linguistic assimilation, aiming to reduce or eliminate linguistic diversity in favour of a dominant language. Such policies can have negative consequences in educational settings, where students' native languages are devalued, and they may face additional challenges in achieving academic success.

Second, language can be regarded as a resource. Here, multilingualism is seen as an asset that enhances cognitive development, cultural richness, and social inclusivity. In this framework, language policies tend to promote bilingual education, preserve minority languages, and support a more equitable learning environment where students' linguistic repertoires are valued. This orientation aligns with broader goals of fostering intercultural understanding and inclusive education.

Lastly, language can be viewed as a right. This orientation prioritises the protection of linguistic rights, ensuring that individuals have access to education, healthcare, and other public services in their native languages. Language policies rooted in this ideology advocate for linguistic equality, guaranteeing that speakers of all languages are treated with equal respect and given equal opportunities, regardless of their language background.

Ricklefs' framework underscores the importance of understanding these ideologies in relation to policy-making and social integration. It highlights the complex ways in which language policies can either reinforce inequalities or promote greater inclusion, particularly in multilingual societies like Austria. By examining the dominant language ideologies in a given context, we can gain insight into how policies are shaped and the implications they have on both educational outcomes and social cohesion.

3.2.1 Multilingualism as a Problem

The framing of multilingualism as problematic can be found in several prevailing language ideologies that shape public discourse and policy decisions across many Western nations. One prominent example highlighted by Hansen-Thomas (2007, p. 261) is the 'one nation-one language' ideology, which posits that the official or national language of a country is the most valuable and should be the preferred language used by all citizens. This ideology creates a language hierarchy, often visualised in scholarly literature as a pyramid (Young, 2017, p. 16). At the top of this pyramid is a highly standardised, academic form of the national language, which is considered the most prestigious. In the middle tiers are foreign languages taught in schools, which are seen as secondary to the national language. At the bottom tiers are migration languages, which are often marginalised or undervalued in society.

Another detrimental ideology is the standard language ideology, also known as monoglossic language ideology. According to Hansen-Thomas (2007, p. 251), the idea

underlying this ideology is that there is a single, 'correct' form of a language that should be used in all formal and official contexts. It idealises a standardised language model derived from the linguistic norms associated with the upper middle class, thereby also reinforcing societal hierarchies. This ideology privileges the language practices of dominant groups while disregarding alternative forms of expression and thus linguistic diversity. Individuals who do not conform to the presumed linguistic standard are often perceived as deficient or excluded from fully participating in the dominant societal groups.

The notion of semilingualism is another language ideology that regards multilingualism as a hindrance. This ideology suggests that emergent bilingual or multilingual students are somehow deficient or incomplete in their linguistic abilities, since they are often believed to be neither fully proficient in their home language nor the school and official language (Young, 2017, p. 17). This perspective implies that multilingual students are linguistically handicapped, unable to master either language sufficiently to benefit fully from educational opportunities. However, the notion of semilingualism fails to recognise the dynamic and interdependent nature of bilingualism and multilingualism, and the potential for multilingual individuals to develop their linguistic skills in a more holistic manner, utilising their knowledge of multiple languages to enhance their overall cognitive and academic abilities (Karlander & Salö, 2020, p. 520-522). Recent work has challenged the concept of semilingualism, with scholars demonstrating that multilingual individuals can develop their linguistic skills in ways that contradict the deficiencies suggested by this ideology.

These three examples of prevailing language ideologies all covertly or overtly advocate monolingualism while disregarding the complementary nature of languages and language learning. At the core of these ideologies lies the so-called 'monolingual habitus' or 'monolingual mindset', where "languages are viewed as if they are in competition rather than functioning in a complementary manner" (Young, 2017, p. 17). Instead of acknowledging and advocating for the value of linguistic diversity, these ideologies promote the idea of linguistic homogeneity. They prioritise dominant national languages, and in doing so, marginalise regional dialects and minority languages (Hansen-Thomas, 2007, p. 251).

Despite the fact that today most individuals can be considered multilingual, the reality of multilingualism is often overshadowed by monolingual ideologies and practices. In fact,

Lippi-Green (2011, p. 67) points out that "a bias toward an abstracted, idealized, homogeneous spoken language which is imposed and maintained by dominant bloc institutions" persists. What is particularly harmful about this, according to Bacon (2020, p. 173), is that "monolingual ideologies are normalized to the degree that they become functionally invisible to those perpetuating them." Thus, although these ideologies are omnipresent in society and play a pivotal role in educational outcomes, they are so pervasively hegemonic that they are rarely discussed or counteracted.

In the educational context, language ideologies can have detrimental effects on teaching, learning, and social relationships, as they influence not only pedagogical practices but also shape social interactions within educational settings. These ideologies impact how students from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds are perceived, which, in turn, affects whether they are included or excluded from various aspects of the educational experience. In fact, research in applied linguistics has shown how educators frequently rely on deficit ideologies about language, race, nationalism, and social class when reflecting on their interactions with emergent bilingual students (Emerick & Goldberg, 2022, p. 1340). Bacon (2020, p. 173) explains why this is extremely harmful, stating that "[s]uch monolingual ideologies function to abnormalise or pathologise bilingualism, particularly for students of color, contributing to the systemic marginalisation of students who do not conform to certain racialised monolingual norms."

What is more, deficit language ideologies have been found to significantly impact teachers' own language use in the classroom. For instance, educators who subscribe to these beliefs often feel obligated to prioritise instruction in the standard language. In doing so, they want to ensure that students attain proficiency in the dominant language, which is perceived as essential for academic achievement and social integration within the school environment (Emerick & Goldberg, 2022, p. 1343). However, this focus on the standard language often neglects students' home languages and undervalues their linguistic and cultural backgrounds, therefore entrenching inequalities within the education system and broader society.

Identifying and challenging ideologies that regard multilingualism as a hindrance or problem is essential to fostering educational environments that support and celebrate linguistic diversity and empowering all students to achieve their full learning potential across languages and cultures. According to Young (2017, p. 16), it is imperative for educators and society to become aware of the "unrecognised, unvalued and

undeveloped learning potential" embedded within the diverse cultural backgrounds and linguistic repertoires of students. Each language a student brings to the classroom may enrich not only their individual cognitive abilities but also contribute to the collective learning environment of everyone involved in the learning process. This perspective sets the stage for understanding multilingualism not as a problem to be managed, but as a resource that can enhance learning and foster inclusivity in the classroom.

3.2.2 Multilingualism as a Resource

Positive views on multilingualism recognise it as a valuable resource that enriches individuals and societies alike. Embracing multilingualism enhances cognitive abilities, promotes cultural understanding, and fosters inclusive communities where linguistic diversity is celebrated rather than viewed as a barrier. This perspective is closely linked to the concept of language awareness, which has been defined as "a person's sensitivity to and conscious awareness of the nature of language and its role in human life" (Donmall, 1985, p. 7). The concept of language awareness is built on Cummins' (1979) interdependence hypothesis, which posits that knowledge and skills can be transferred from one language to another, thus facilitating meaning-making and deeper understanding.

According to Jessner (2006, pp. 129-130), developing language awareness is crucial for challenging prevailing myths and practices that promote a monolingual habitus, particularly within educational settings. Firstly, teachers who possess a deep understanding of the linguistic and cultural obstacles encountered by students whose home language differs from the language of instruction are better equipped to empathise with their challenges. This empathy is essential for creating inclusive learning environments where all students feel valued and supported. Secondly, heightened language awareness empowers educators to adapt their teaching methods and approaches to better meet the diverse linguistic backgrounds and needs of their students. By accepting and valuing the linguistic diversity in their classrooms, teachers can leverage the strengths that multilingualism brings to learning and foster academic success among all students.

One integral aspect of developing language awareness involves recognising the benefits of multilingualism which are manifold, including social integration, cognitive development, and personal growth. The benefits will be discussed in detail in the following section to

illustrate how embracing multilingualism enhances educational outcomes and fosters a more inclusive learning environment.

3.2.2.1 Social Benefits

Multilingualism offers a multitude of social benefits, enriching both individual lives and broader communities. First of all, exposure to multiple languages can positively impact identity formation and relationship building. As noted by Hofer (2023, pp. 13-14) by engaging with different linguistic systems and speakers, individuals often develop a more nuanced understanding of their own language and identity. Consequently, this can lead to deeper, more meaningful connections with others who share similar or diverse linguistic backgrounds.

Moreover, multilingualism offers a unique opportunity to enhance one's cultural awareness (García, 2011, p. 223). Even a basic understanding of additional languages can significantly broaden individuals' perspectives. It fosters an appreciation for cultural diversity and opens up new ways of thinking and experiencing the world. This expanded awareness not only enriches personal experiences but also facilitates meaningful interactions with people from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

Finally, multilingualism plays a crucial role in fostering more inclusive and diverse societies by promoting respect for linguistic diversity (García, 2011, p. 50). When individuals value and respect different languages and cultivate a positive perspective on multilingualism, they contribute to building harmonious communities where linguistic and cultural differences are acknowledged and appreciated. This respect for diversity ultimately enhances social cohesion, as it encourages mutual understanding, reduces prejudice, and strengthens the bonds between people from various backgrounds.

3.2.2.2 Cognitive Benefits

Multilingualism offers a multitude of cognitive benefits that extend beyond linguistic proficiency. One of the most notable advantages is enhanced cognitive flexibility, which refers to the ability to adapt and switch between different tasks, ideas, or ways of thinking (Hofer, 2023, pp. 7-10). Multilingual individuals are used to navigating between multiple languages, which requires them to constantly switch between linguistic systems and cultural contexts. This cognitive agility not only enhances problem-solving skills but also enables individuals to approach challenges from various perspectives.

Furthermore, research suggests that multilingualism is associated with superior executive functioning, i.e. cognitive processes crucial for goal-directed behaviour and self-regulation (Kwon et al., 2021, pp. 1-2). Multilingual individuals often demonstrate superior abilities in maintaining focus amidst distractions and exhibit heightened proficiency in conflict resolution. Their constant adaptation to diverse communication, negotiation, and mediation processes fosters increased self-awareness and enhances interpersonal effectiveness.

Lastly, multilingualism promotes a deeper understanding of language organisation and structure (e.g. Bialystok, 2005; Jessner, 1997; Gass et al., 2013). Multilingual individuals develop a heightened sensitivity to language patterns, syntax, and semantics across multiple languages. This so-called metalinguistic awareness not only facilitates language learning but also enhances academic achievement across various subjects. By engaging with multiple languages, individuals might gain a richer linguistic repertoire and a deeper awareness of and appreciation for the complexities of language and communication.

3.2.2.3 Personal Benefits

Multilingualism not only enriches individuals socially and cognitively but also offers profound personal benefits. First of all, multilingualism encourages a dynamic approach to language learning and personal development (García, 2011, pp. 219-220). Growing up multilingually teaches individuals that language proficiency is an ongoing journey rather than a fixed destination. This perspective promotes continuous learning and adaptability in an ever-evolving linguistic landscape. Multilingual individuals often develop resilience and flexibility in their communication and problem-solving skills, which are valuable skills in navigating diverse personal and professional environments.

Secondly, multilingualism facilitates meaningful communication with family members, including parents, siblings, and extended relatives across generations (García, 2011, p. 221). This ability to connect and converse fluently in multiple languages strengthens familial bonds and deepens cultural ties. It enriches personal relationships by enabling individuals to engage more fully in family traditions, stories, and histories, thereby enhancing their understanding of familial heritage and enriching their overall sense of belonging.

Finally, beyond its role in enhancing understanding of and empathy for others, multilingualism has also been associated with heightened self-esteem and an

appreciation for one's own cultural heritage (García, 2011, pp. 222). Embracing linguistic diversity nurtures pride in one's multilingual abilities and a profound respect for one's linguistic and cultural roots. This appreciation contributes to a stronger sense of identity, belonging, and overall personal well-being.

3.2.3 Multilingualism as a Right

A third and final way of viewing multilingualism is to regard it as a human right. Multilingualism has become increasingly prevalent in today's globalised world. Results from the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) show that in 2015, nearly one in four 15-year-old students in OECD and EU countries either have foreign-born backgrounds or parents, and frequently use languages other than the schooling language at home (OECD, 2018). This demographic diversity underscores the essential role of multilingualism in facilitating communication, cultural exchange, and equitable access to education.

In Austria, multilingualism is also a deeply ingrained aspect of society. As Herzog-Punzenberger (2017, p. 2) asserts, "linguistic diversity has been a part of Austria's history since its inception". Nevertheless, there has been a noticeable increase in multilingualism in recent years. According to the Austrian Language Center, it can be argued that nearly everyone now possesses some level of multilingual ability (ÖSZ, n.d., p. 10). This trend becomes especially evident in Austrian schools, where an increasing number of students are reported to speak languages in addition to German. It is important to note, however, that the available data focuses on languages spoken at home rather than on actual bilingual competence or proficiency. As such, the true picture of multilingualism in Austria might be more complex, as we lack insights into students' language skills in both their home languages and in German.

2006/07	38,2
2007/08	39,5
2008/09	40,9
2009/10	41,8
2010/11	43,3
2011/12	44,3
2012/13	45,1
2013/14	46
2014/15	47,5
2015/16	49,7
2016/17	51,2
2017/18	51,9
2018/19	52,2

As illustrated in Figure 1, the proportion of Austrian students whose first language is not German was 38.2% during the academic year 2006/07. By the academic year 2018/19, this figure had risen to 52.2% (De Cillia, 2001, p. 5). This notable increase reflects a substantial shift towards greater multiculturalism and multilingualism within Austrian educational settings.

Figure 1: Increase in Non-German First Languages (2006/07–2018/19)

The diversity of languages spoken in Austria is extensive, with approximately 250 different languages represented across the country (Statistik Austria, 2001). Among the most commonly spoken languages besides German are Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian (BCS), Turkish, English, Hungarian, and Polish, to mention but a few.

In Vienna, the capital city of Austria, multilingualism is particularly visible, especially compared to the national averages. In primary schools across Austria, the percentage of students with a first language other than German was 12.1%, whereas in Vienna, this figure was significantly higher at 30.7%. Similarly, in middle schools, the national

Schulart	Österreich	Wien
Volksschulen	12,1%	30,7%
Hauptschulen	10,6%	36,4%
Sonderschulen	20,9%	36,7%
Polytechn. Lehrgang	10,7%	37,7%
AHS	6,2%	14,6%
BMS	9,4%	25,8%
BHS	5,2%	14,6%

Figure 2: Non-German First Languages: National vs. Vienna

average was 10.6%, while in Vienna, it stood at 36.4%. The disparities are even more pronounced in academic high schools (AHS) and vocational high schools (BHS), where the percentage of non-German-speaking students in Vienna highly exceeded that of the national averages. In AHS, the national average was 6.2%, whereas in Vienna, it reached 14.6%. Similarly, in BHS, while Austria recorded 5.2%, Vienna saw a significantly higher percentage at 14.6%.

The significant prevalence of multilingualism in Austria underscores the necessity of recognising multilingualism not merely as a reality but as a fundamental right. As the data highlights, a substantial and growing proportion of students in Austrian schools, particularly in Vienna, come from multilingual backgrounds. This linguistic diversity presents both an opportunity and a challenge for educational systems and emphasises the need for policies and practices that uphold the rights of multilingual individuals.

So far, this chapter has explored the nature of language ideologies, identified different types, and discussed their potential consequences. However, in the Austrian context, where many language ideologies are influenced by broader discussions surrounding migration and integration, it becomes challenging to separate ideologies about language from those related to migration. Nevertheless, for the purpose of this study, the focus has been placed primarily on the ideologies surrounding multilingualism. To effectively advocate for and support the rights of multilingual individuals, a thorough understanding of educators' language ideologies is essential. Therefore, the next chapter will delve into

the diverse factors influencing teacher language ideologies and their implications for educational practices.

3.2.4 Teacher Language Ideologies

First and foremost, teacher language ideologies are shaped by a myriad of factors that influence their beliefs about language usage and their perceptions of linguistic diversity and multilingualism. Bernstein et al. (2023, p. 194) delve into the complex factors that contribute to the formation of teacher language ideologies. These factors include personal levels of multilingualism, experiences with language learning, age, demographics (such as growing up in linguistically diverse communities), teaching experience (with more experienced teachers sometimes developing more negative attitudes), academic programs or degrees pursued, as well as international experiences. The interplay of these diverse influences collectively shapes the language ideologies held by teachers, which in turn shape their language use, perceptions of students' language practices, and ultimately impact classroom dynamics and educational policies.

What is more, teacher language ideologies are highly dynamic and context-dependent. They evolve over time and differ between individuals and situations. It is crucial to recognise that language ideologies are inherent to all language users, including educators. They not only guide individuals' own language practices but also shape their perceptions of others' language use. Bernstein and her colleagues (2023, p. 191) emphasise this, noting that

> „[a]ll language users hold beliefs about how language works and should be used. Whether conscious or not, these language ideologies guide individuals' own language use and their perceptions of others' language practices. Teachers are no exception and, like other rule-makers (e.g., legislators, CEOs, parents), are in positions to impose their language ideologies on others through the creation of classroom language policies".

To conclude, it must be noted that educators wield significant influence in perpetuating language ideologies through their beliefs and actions. By adhering to ideologies that prioritise monolingual norms and view linguistic diversity as a hindrance, educators may unintentionally contribute to the marginalisation of multilingual students. Conversely, by embracing ideologies that view multilingualism as a valuable asset and fundamental right, educators can foster inclusive and equitable learning environments that acknowledge and celebrate linguistic diversity, thereby enhancing social justice in education. In order to achieve the latter, educators must critically examine the contexts that shape their personal ideologies and align them with broader policy frameworks (Fairclough, 2001, as

cited in Zuniga et al., 2018). The subsequent chapter will therefore delve into policy frameworks and investigate their impact on perspectives and practices regarding multilingualism in education.

3.3 Beliefs

Building on the previous discussion of language ideologies, which reflect broader societal and institutional views on multilingualism, this section explores the more personal and immediate level of teachers' beliefs. While ideologies provide a societal framework for understanding language policy, teachers' beliefs shape their classroom practices and decision-making. These beliefs, particularly regarding multilingualism, influence how educators interact with linguistically diverse students, guiding their expectations and actions. This chapter examines how teachers' beliefs, often shaped by broader ideologies, impact educational practices and can either support or challenge the implementation of inclusive multilingual policies.

Teachers' beliefs are essential for understanding how language policies are enacted in the classroom, as they directly affect instructional choices and, consequently, student outcomes. Farr and Song (2011, p. 650) emphasise that language policy is mediated through education, which is itself conducted through language. Therefore, teachers' views on language not only influence their teaching methods but also contribute to the development and application of language policies. Recognising and addressing these beliefs is key to improving language teaching practices and supporting student learning. The following chapter explores the complexities of teachers' beliefs and their implications for educational practice.

According to Borg (2001, p. 186), "[a] belief is a proposition which may be consciously or unconsciously held, is evaluative in that it is accepted as true by the individual, and is therefore imbued with emotive commitment; further, it serves as a guide to thought and behavior". In the realm of teaching, beliefs constitute a framework of principles, assumptions, values, and convictions that educators hold regarding students, the classroom environment, educational concepts, curriculum, pedagogy, and discipline. These beliefs profoundly influence how teachers conduct themselves in the classroom, guide their decision-making processes, and aid in structuring and prioritising information essential to the teaching and learning process.

Teachers' beliefs are often deeply ingrained and therefore extremely difficult to observe or access. Nevertheless, they can significantly impact both educators and students. For instance, beliefs about students' home languages, if not informed by research, may lead to detrimental effects on teachers' effectiveness with linguistically diverse students. Teachers might have lower expectations or create limiting educational opportunities for multilingual students based on unfounded beliefs. As a consequence, this can lead to the formation of an institutional culture favoring monolingualism and reinforce disparities in education. Scholars such as Young (2017, pp. 18-19) thus emphasise the importance of recognising and respecting the linguistic competencies and preferences of diverse families to create an inclusive learning environment.

A teacher's personal beliefs can shape their expectations and interactions with multilingual students by consciously or subconsciously influencing their attitudes and behaviours. Teachers with positive views about multilingualism may adopt more inclusive teaching practices, while those with negative views might inadvertently exclude students who speak languages other than the dominant one.

It has been found that teachers' beliefs about background, race and language, in particular, significantly influence their pedagogical decisions and have a profound impact on students' success in learning environments. In the US, for example, a research project by Emerick & Goldberg (2022) has shown that any deviation from the white, middle-class, monolingual norm is often considered deficient. This belief of intellectual inferiority has profound consequences for students who do not conform to this norm, such as emergent bilinguals (EBs) or emergent multilinguals (EMs), as they are automatically regarded as inferior compared to their native-English-speaking monolingual peers. When EBs or EMs are non-white, research has shown that the effects are even more detrimental. Emerick & Goldberg (2022, p. 1340) explain that the "co-construction of non-standard language practices with non-white racial identities has exacerbated social inequality and social reproduction through schooling; within the U.S. public school system, EBs have systematically received lower-quality education, despite being promised equitable opportunity".

According to the literature, in order to create inclusive and equitable language classrooms, teachers should hold certain fundamental beliefs about their students (e.g. DeAngelis 2011; Haukås, 2016; Tsiplakides & Keramida, 2010). Firstly, they should believe in the academic potential of *all* students, regardless of their linguistic or cultural

backgrounds. This foundational belief supports a classroom environment where every student is seen as capable of succeeding academically and contributing meaningfully to the learning community. Secondly, teachers should maintain positive attitudes towards concepts such as diversity, multilingualism, and multiculturalism. Embracing these concepts not only enriches the educational experience but also validates the diverse linguistic and cultural identities of students. Moreover, educators must advocate for multilingual learners and actively address societal inequities that may hinder their educational opportunities. This advocacy involves challenging discriminatory practices and policies while promoting educational initiatives that support linguistic diversity and cultural inclusivity.

Therefore, in order to ensure equitable and inclusive educational practices, it is essential for teachers to critically examine and reflect on their beliefs about issues such as language or linguistic diversity. Various studies have explored teachers' beliefs in multilingual contexts, providing insights into common perceptions and how they influence teachers' practices.

Beliefs and Language Learning

The next section reviews these studies to shed light on the complexities of teachers' beliefs and their implications for language education.

For instance, a study conducted by Erling and her colleagues in 2020 surveyed teachers' beliefs about students' language backgrounds and abilities, their needs for and uses of English, their beliefs about their students' mindsets, and reported language practices in Austrian classrooms. It employed a questionnaire, consisting of 88 questions. The findings revealed that teachers' language use in the classroom and their beliefs have been found to have a relationship with learning outcomes in English. Additionally, the study found that teachers' beliefs varied along the lines of the dual-track education system that can be found in Austria, with perceived student achievement significantly higher at academically oriented schools (AHS), where teachers generally exhibited more positive views about their students' abilities, motivations, and exposure to English outside of school.

Similarly, DeAngelis (2011) conducted research examining teachers' beliefs about the role of prior language knowledge in learning, using a Likert scale questionnaire. This study involved 176 secondary school teachers from Italy, Austria, and the UK. The findings

indicated that while teachers recognised the potential benefits of multilingualism, their perception of these benefits did not necessarily extend to language interactions. Additionally, a significant number of teachers believed that language knowledge may aid in learning additional languages, but were less inclined to associate language knowledge with better overall academic performance.

In a cross-cultural comparison conducted by Hammer et al. (2018), US and German teachers' beliefs concerning the teaching of multilingual learners were compared, revealing notable differences between the two groups. Specifically, US teachers demonstrated greater sensitivity towards language demands in content classrooms and expressed a stronger sense of responsibility for providing language support, as well as exhibiting a stronger value for multilingualism compared to their German counterparts.

Qualitative studies by Young (2014; 2017) provided insights into teachers' language beliefs and their effects on teaching practices in France. For example, Young's (2014) study involved interviews with 46 head teachers, focusing on their attitudes towards multilingualism and language policies in schools. The findings indicated that many teachers lacked awareness of official language policies and often relied on personal beliefs rooted in monolingual myths. A subsequent study in 2017 revealed a common misconception among teachers that multilinguals mix languages due to confusion or incompetence, leading to the belief that bi/multilingualism is detrimental to linguistic and cognitive development (Young, 2017, p. 18).

In the Scandinavian context, Haukås (2016) delved into language teachers' beliefs about multilingualism. This study, conducted through focus group discussions with twelve Norwegian language teachers, revealed several misconceptions about multilingualism and multiculturalism among teachers that hindered effective language teaching practices, particularly in leveraging students' multilingual backgrounds. In a different study, Lundberg (2018) employed Q methodology to uncover Swedish primary school teachers' beliefs about multilingualism. This approach also revealed prevalent misconceptions among teachers, often based on monolingual ideologies, highlighting the need for more nuanced understandings of multilingualism in educational contexts.

These studies collectively underscore the complexity of teachers' beliefs and their significant implications for language education. Recognising the critical role of teachers' beliefs and underlying language ideologies in shaping instructional practices and influencing student outcomes, especially in multilingual educational settings, is

paramount. Building upon this understanding, the present study explores teachers' perspectives on multilingualism and how they correlate with policy and practice. In the subsequent chapter, the methodology of the research project will be outlined, detailing the approach taken to investigate these dynamics and provide deeper insights into the complex interplay between language policy, educational practice, and societal influences.

4. Methodology

The previous chapters have highlighted the intricate relationship between individual beliefs, broader language ideologies, and their link to language management. To understand how these factors influence language policy development and enactment, a methodological approach that considers the perspectives and actions of those tasked with enacting education policy is required. This chapter outlines the methodology applied for this study in order to investigate the connection between language ideologies and policy enactment among DLBE (Dual Language Bilingual Education) teachers in Austria. By examining the individual beliefs of teachers and potential underlying language ideologies, this thesis aims to uncover the complexities involved in policy implementation, especially in the context of multilingual education. Using a Q methodology approach, the present study seeks to capture the diverse range of beliefs, practices, and experiences that shape teachers' approaches to multilingualism in Austrian classrooms. Ultimately, this research aims to provide valuable insights into the dynamics of language policy enactment and its impact on multilingual education.

4.1 Research Setting

Austria's education system comprises a diverse array of school types, catering to students of varying ages and educational needs (Weiß & Tritscher-Archan, 2011). Schooling is compulsory for nine years starting at the age of six. During the first four years of compulsory education, Austrian students typically attend primary school (*Volksschule*). At the age of ten, they progress either to middle school (*Mittelschule*) or the lower grades of a higher general secondary school (*Allgemein-Bildende Höhere Schule (AHS)* or *Gymnasium*) for grades five to eight. After grade eight, students get to make a decision again: pre-vocational school (*Polytechnische Schule*) if they want to start an apprenticeship (*Lehre*) or upper secondary education which includes either academic-oriented schools (*Allgemeinbildende Höhere Schulen*, or *AHS*) or vocational schools

(*Berufsbildende Mittlere Schulen*, or *BMS*) and concludes with the general school-leaving examination (*Matura*).

In order to shed light on the perspectives on multilingual education policies within the Austrian context, the present study includes teachers of two types of school settings. Among the schools were a middle school as well as an upper secondary school (AHS) encompassing both lower and upper secondary levels. A total of 24 teachers, twelve from each school type, were recruited to participate in the study. The participants included both novice and experienced teachers from diverse linguistic backgrounds, covering various subjects.

Importantly, all selected schools have a focus on Dual Language Bilingual Education (DLBE). DLBE is an educational approach that emphasises instruction in two languages, typically the national language and a foreign language, to promote bilingualism and biliteracy among children, teenagers, and young adults. This focus is significant for the study as it underscores the relevance of exploring how language policies are perceived and implemented within educational environments specifically designed to support multilingualism and linguistic diversity.

The first school included in the study was an AHS located in the inner city of Vienna. This institution, with approximately 600 students, offers a dual language programme which aims at fostering language proficiency through Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) for lower secondary students (grades five to eight). The bilingual programme is one of several educational branches offered at the school, alongside other specialisations such as arts and sciences. Admission to the dual language programme requires submission of specific documents: the annual report card from the third grade of primary school and the semester report card from the fourth grade of primary school. These documents are necessary to assess the applicants' academic performance and readiness for the bilingual curriculum. Students admitted to the bilingual branch receive instruction in English for at least three subjects per week from specialised DLP teachers and a native speaker.

The second school participating in the study was a middle school located in a more rural area, approximately 60 kilometres outside the city centre of Vienna. With around 280 students, this school operates with a strong emphasis on language learning. At this institution, all students engage in bilingual lessons, facilitated by 34 teachers and five native speakers from diverse English-speaking countries. Instruction across nearly all

subjects is conducted in English, enabling students to overcome initial apprehensions and develop advanced language skills over the course of their four years at the school. Currently, admission to the bilingual programme is based on academic grades and an admission interview, with no formal admission test required. However, the school plans to introduce an admission exam for the next academic year to better assess applicants' readiness for the bilingual curriculum.

4.2 Method and Procedure

Education, as a cornerstone of society, is a complex domain shaped by various factors, including cultural, economic, and political influences. It is constantly evolving and deeply individual, shaped by personal narratives and subjective experiences. The growing phenomenon of multilingualism adds a new layer of complexity to the field of education, presenting both new challenges and opportunities within educational settings. Recognising the power of multilingual education, scholars have been increasingly underscoring the need for research methods that can effectively capture the intricate nature of multilingual education (Lundberg et al., 2020, p. 1). They emphasise the importance of moving beyond simplistic generalisations and linear explanations, instead advocating for more nuanced and multifaceted research approaches.

In previous studies examining multilingual education practices, researchers often utilised either qualitative or quantitative data collection methods. While these approaches can yield several interesting insights into educators' perspectives and experiences, they also come with certain limitations. For instance, quantitative methods may sometimes elicit responses that are socially acceptable or conform to participants' expectations, potentially masking genuine viewpoints (Lundberg & Brandt, 2023, p. 4). Similarly, qualitative approaches, while providing valuable statistical insights, may overlook marginalised viewpoints when averages are calculated across different demographic variables (Lundberg et al., 2020, p. 2). As the general understanding of multilingual education continues to evolve, there is a growing recognition of the need for more robust research methodologies capable of capturing the contexts, socio-cultural factors, and individual experiences that shape multilingual educational practices. One such methodology that addresses these needs is Q methodology.

Q Methodology

To overcome the limitations of common research methods and provide a nuanced understanding of complex questions and challenges, researchers in education are increasingly turning to mixed-method approaches like Q methodology (Lundberg, 2019, p. 270). Developed by William Stephenson in 1935, Q methodology allows participants to rank a set of items according to their subjective perspective regarding a specific topic, thereby revealing their inner beliefs and attitudes. The items can involve statements, visuals, objects, audio, or video files all centered around a certain question or issue.

One of the key strengths of Q methodology lies in its high flexibility (Lundberg et al., 2020, p. 12). The approach can be applied across a broad variety of topic areas within the field of educational research. Whether the focus is on understanding educators' perspectives regarding daily professional challenges, exploring attitudes towards innovative teaching approaches, or investigating the complexities of language policy enactment in multilingual classrooms, Q methodology offers a versatile framework for inquiry. This adaptability enables researchers to delve deeply into the complexity and nuances inherent in educational issues and to reveal insights that traditional research methods like Likert scales or tick box tasks may not capture.

The goal of Q methodology is to gain a deeper understanding of the subjective perspectives and lived experiences of a variety of education stakeholders. This includes learners, educators, staff, and other individuals involved in the educational environment. By systematically exploring and analysing the diverse viewpoints held by these groups, Q methodology allows researchers to capture the nuanced and often complex ways in which people perceive and interpret their educational experiences. Through this approach, it becomes possible to identify commonalities and differences in perspectives, uncover underlying values and beliefs, and ultimately develop a more comprehensive and empathetic understanding of the educational landscape.

However, while Q methodology may offer valuable insights into individuals' attitudes and beliefs, it is important to acknowledge that Q methodology is not without its limitations (Lundberg et al., 2020, p. 3). One major concern revolves around the validity of the findings obtained through this approach. Critics argue that the subjective nature of the data collected through mixed-method and hybrid approaches like Q methodology may raise questions about the reliability and generalisability of results. Another challenge lies in the time-consuming and complex nature of implementing Q research. This approach

requires careful planning and coordination to ensure meaningful results. Researchers must dedicate sufficient resources to data collection, analysis, and interpretation in order for Q methodology to yield useful results.

Despite these challenges, proponents of the approach argue that Q methodology provides a unique window into the inner experiences and perspectives of stakeholders in educational settings. Lundberg and his colleagues (2020, p. 2) particularly emphasise that Q methodology visualises the honest and valuable standpoints of local actors, taking into account their individual conditions and personal narratives. An essential advantage of this approach is its ability to achieve this without relying on written or spoken language or complex computational tools.

What is more, although critics argue against the subjective nature of Q methodology, subjectivity remains a central aspect of the approach. In fact, Q researchers do not perceive subjectivity as a hindrance but rather as a valuable asset in educational research. Rather than viewing subjectivity negatively or in contrast to scientific objectivity, proponents of Q methodology recognise subjectivity as a valuable lens through which to explore highly individual and complex phenomena. Lundberg and his colleagues (2020, p. 1) even go as far as to describe Q methodology as "the science of subjectivity", underlining that subjectivity, understood as the inner experience of individuals, can can be of great value in providing a comprehensive representation of educational issues.

Acknowledging the potential of Q research, scholars such as Gooding (1971, p. 46) regard Q methodology as an "increasingly valuable tool in the educational researcher's repertoire". Montgomery (2010, p. 1) refers to it as "our window to learning about subjective reactions or responses to the issues confronting professionals daily". Hughes (2016, p. 63) praises Q methodology for its ethical, critical, respectful, and person-centered approach, which is beneficial for researchers navigating the complexities of educational research and seeking to make meaningful contributions to the field. These scholars assert that systematic and empirical evidence gathered through Q research can significantly enhance educational practice by providing insights into subjective reactions and responses.

Lo Bianco (2015, p. 70) highlights Q methodology as a particularly valuable research method for exploring and defining the nature and complexity of communication problems within the field of language policy. According to Lo Bianco, Q methodology is effective in mapping out the field of arguments, positions, and underlying discourses in debates

about multilingualism. The present study seeks to explore the multifaceted perspectives and discourses surrounding educational practices and policies, with a particular focus on multilingualism. By employing Q methodology, the diverse viewpoints of educators regarding their experiences and opinions on language use and policy can be systematically captured and analysed. This approach provides a detailed and nuanced understanding of the complex dynamics at play in educational language policy debates.

Steps of Q Methodology

To explore these perspectives in a structured and systematic way, Q methodology involves a series of well-defined steps. Lundberg and his colleagues (2020, p. 2) propose a comprehensive step-by-step guide for conducting Q methodology, which encompasses six sequential steps. This structured approach provides researchers with a systematic framework for designing and implementing Q methodology studies.

1. **Concourse development:** As a first step, researchers collect a diverse range of statements, visuals, or other items relevant to the research topic, forming what is known as the "concourse". These items serve as the foundation for participants to later rank and visualise their beliefs.

2. **Q set construction:** From the concourse, researchers carefully select and refine a balanced set of items known as the "Q set". This step is important to ensure that the items capture a broad and balanced range of viewpoints within the topic area, allowing for a comprehensive exploration of participants' perspectives.

3. **Participants' Q sorting:** Participants then engage in a sorting activity where they rank the items in the Q set according to their subjective viewpoint. This activity typically involves placing the items along a continuum, ranging from those they strongly agree with to those they strongly disagree with or consider most important to least important, depending on the research focus.

4. **Post-sorting activities:** Following the sorting activity, researchers may conduct post-sorting activities such as interviews or questionnaires to gain deeper insights into participants' reasoning behind their placements.

5. **Q factor analysis:** The collected data from participants' sorting activities is then subjected to analysis using statistical techniques such as by-person factor analysis. This analysis helps identify patterns and groupings among participants' responses thus revealing shared perspectives and differences.

6. **Factor interpretation:** Finally, researchers interpret the results of the analysis to uncover overarching themes and insights into participants' subjective viewpoints. This step involves synthesising the qualitative and quantitative aspects of the data to develop meaningful insights.

4.3 Research Design

In developing the research methodology for my empirical data analysis, I built upon Sandra Dallinger's Master's thesis (2023), which also employed a Q methodology approach to investigate teachers' beliefs about multilingualism. Collaborating with Adrian Lundberg, Sandra Dallinger created a Q set inspired by Lundberg's research project from 2019 which revolved around primary teachers' beliefs about multilingualism and multilingual education strategies in Sweden. This Q set was tailored to delve into the personal attitudes and beliefs of Austrian VoXmi teachers regarding multilingualism and multilingual education.

Given our shared supervisor and potential for future data comparison, I developed my study building upon the experiences and results Dallinger gained over the course of her research project. After careful consideration and consultation with my supervisor, I decided to adopt the same Q methodology approach using the Q set developed by Dallinger and Lundberg, albeit with slight adjustments to the statements to better align with my specific research focus.

In total, we made adjustments to 6 out of the 37 items in Dallinger's Q set. The changes were motivated by two main factors. Firstly, we wanted to align the items more closely with the research project, which focuses on bilingual (English & German) education programmes in Austrian secondary schools. We introduced items that specifically address bilingual education, such as the benefits of bilingual education for all learners (Item 1) and the potential challenges it may pose for content learning (Item 22). Secondly, and in line with this, we wanted to move away from the monolingual/multilingual dichotomy present in some of the original items, because all students in a bilingual education programme could be perceived as multilingual. Moreover, it seemed like the term "multilingual" was used somewhat pejoratively to refer to students with another home language to German. We thus rephrased items 5, 7, 8, and 26.

Furthermore, we made three main changes to the post-sorting questions suggested by Watts & Stenner (2005). Firstly, instead of asking participants to justify all items placed on

40

the extremes (-4, +4), we revised this approach to make it easier and less time consuming. Instead, participants were prompted to select one item that they most strongly agree with and one item they most strongly disagree with and provide reasons for their choices. Secondly, we removed questions 3 and 4 about additional items participants might have wanted to add or found confusing from the post-sorting section, as they did not yield relevant results in Dallinger's project and thus could make space for more relevant questions. With this space, we introduced a hypothetical language policymaking question to prompt participants to engage in critical thinking about language programming. Following Bernstein (2023), we crafted a scenario where participants imagine being consulted by the Austrian *Bildungsdirektion* ('Department of Education') about their school's bilingual policy. We asked them to share what works well, suggest changes to the current policy, and consider whether similar programs should be implemented elsewhere. This approach allows us to gather valuable insights into participants' perspectives on bilingual education policy and how the enactment of language policies is influenced by teachers' beliefs and ideologies.

What is more, in contrast to Dallinger's study, which involved 17 participants, the current study aimed to recruit approximately 40 participants. This target number was recommended by Adrian Lundberg to ensure the data's representativeness and reliability. However, due to limitations such as the involvement of only 2 schools and the significant time required for data collection, the study was concluded with a total of 24 participants. Additionally, unlike Dallinger's focus on VoXmi schools (VoXmi schools are educational institutions that participate in the VoXmi project, which is an initiative aimed at promoting multilingualism and fostering inclusive learning environments in Austrian schools), my study targeted schools with a multilingual programme that are not part of the voXmi initiative. Furthermore, while Dallinger primarily investigated teachers' beliefs about multilingualism, this study explores the influence of multilingual policies on teachers' beliefs and practices.

In her thesis, Dallinger (2023) provided detailed insights into the chosen research design, which I will use to explain the methodology we applied in our projects. Both our research processes began with the realisation of face-to-face sessions with individual teachers. These sessions, each lasting approximately 30 minutes, served as the primary means of data collection. The Q set employed during these sessions consisted of 37 carefully crafted items, in our case statements. Both Sandra and I adhered to the methodological

guidelines specified by Watts and Stenner (2012) to ensure the usability and comprehensibility of the items. Each item was standardised in design and careful attention was given to font size to balance readability and manageability. Additionally, the use of laminated cards ensured durability and facilitated easy handling during the sorting process.

To further facilitate the sorting process, participants were provided with a sorting aid in the form of a grid. This aid guided participants in indicating their level of agreement or disagreement with each statement. The sorting grid, as depicted in Figure 3, was colour-coded, using three different shades of blue to represent the categories *I agree*, *I don't know/neutral*, and *I disagree*. Both the sorting aid and the item set used for the study are included in the appendix for reference (p. XY).
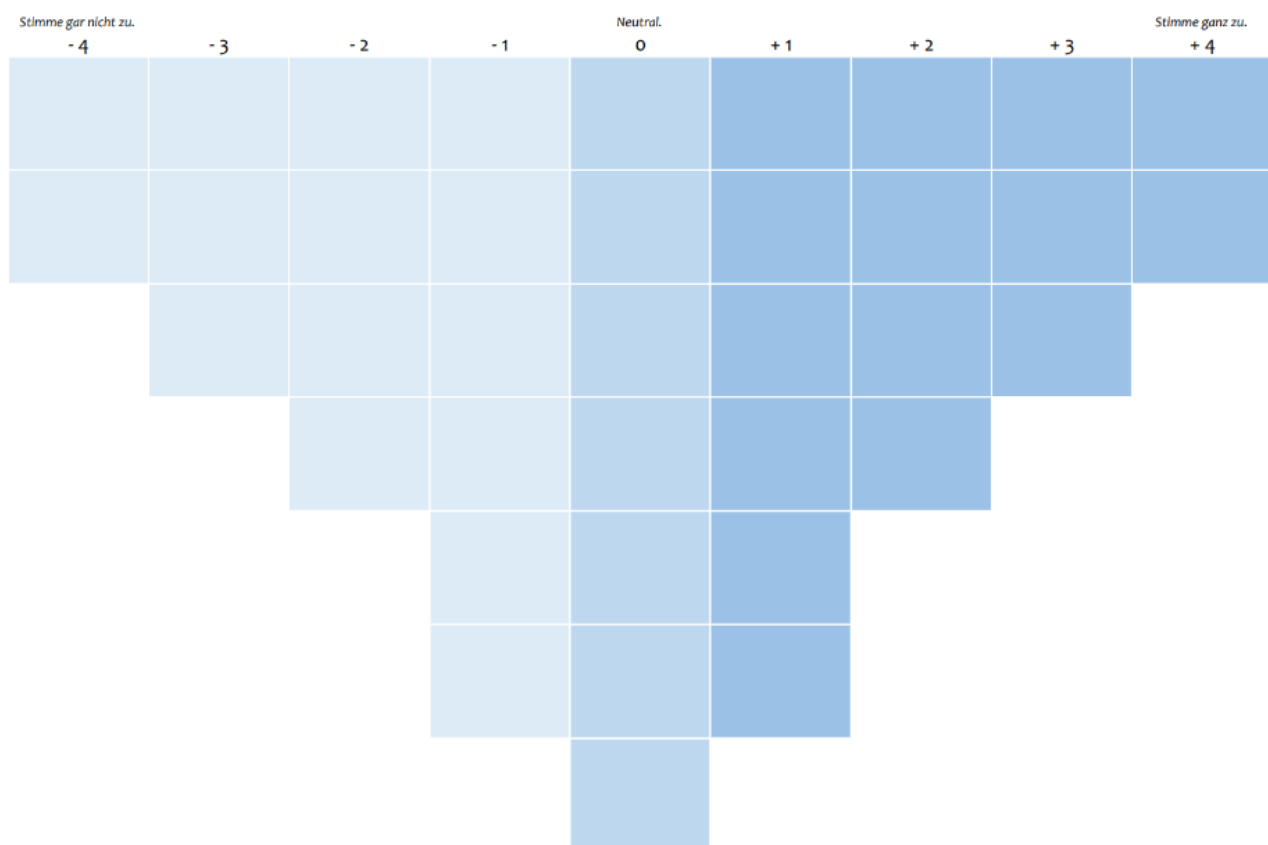
Figure 3: Sorting aid

The choice of distribution range and slope was based on different factors such as the size of the Q set and participants' estimated prior knowledge about the topic. As outlined by Dallinger, the chosen sorting distribution usually corresponds to the number of items in the Q set. As suggested by Brown (1980, cited after Watts & Stenner, 2012, p. 79) we applied a nine-point (-4 to +4) distribution since we utilised a Q set of around 40 items. As

far as the distribution's shape is concerned, Sandra Dallinger took into account the participants' presumed expertise on the subject matter. Since previous knowledge about the topic might vary greatly, a steep distribution that requires fewer decisions was chosen (Watts & Stenner, 2012, p. 79).

Following the sorting activity, participants were presented with questionnaires to gather additional information. Initially, general demographic details about the participants were collected to provide context for the analysis. This included information such as age, years of teaching experience, language proficiency, and any specialised training in multilingual education. These aspects were carefully considered during the analysis phase to explore potential correlations between participants' backgrounds and their attitudes towards multilingualism and language policies. Additionally, participants completed a post-sorting questionnaire based on sample questions outlined by Watts and Stenner (2005, p. 78).

These questions aimed to explore participants' interpretations of the statements they ranked at the extremes (+4 or -4) and to gather their opinions on the effectiveness of bilingual education programmes. This process was designed to provide researchers with more detailed insights to aid in the interpretation of the data.

4.4 Data Collection

For the data collection process, I personally visited the selected schools to conduct the Q sort procedure and distribute the questionnaires. This face-to-face approach allowed for in-depth engagement with participants and facilitated a more nuanced understanding of their beliefs and perspectives regarding multilingual education policies and practices. By being present during the process, I could encourage participants to express themselves freely and engage more deeply with the task. This personal interaction likely enhanced their engagement, leading to more thoughtful and detailed responses than might have been obtained through online procedures.

Prior to the Q session, participants were presented with and asked to sign a consent form outlining the purpose of the research, data protection and confidentiality measures, and their right to withdraw from the study at any time. This ensured that participants were fully informed and comfortable with their involvement in the study. In addition, the consent form included contact details for both the supervisor and the researcher in case of further queries or concerns.

Once the consent form was signed, participants were guided through the sorting process, which involved reviewing the statements provided, considering their agreement or disagreement with each statement, and then sorting them into three categories (*agree*, *neutral/do not know*, and *disagree*) using the sorting aid provided. Participants began by arranging the statements they agreed with on the grid, followed by arranging the statements they disagreed with. Finally, they sorted the remaining statements in the middle.

After completing the sorting activity, participants engaged in a set of concluding questions aimed at providing context for the analysis of the data and eliciting further insights and reflections on their sorting decisions. Following each Q-session, the researcher recorded the gathered data on camera and subsequently stored it securely in an Excel sheet, ready for analysis. This structured approach ensured consistency and accuracy in data collection.

4.5 Data Analysis

The analysis followed an inductive approach, aiming to explore and interpret teachers' beliefs, attitudes, and experiences regarding multilingual education policies and practices. In contrast to traditional hypothesis-driven methods, data were collected and analysed first, with categorisation and interpretation emerging from the data itself. This approach, as outlined by Watts and Stenner (2012), encourages researchers to derive meanings from the data without predefined categories or hypotheses.

The analysis focused on three key areas: the demographic survey, the Q-sorting activity, and post-sorting questionnaires. First, the study examined how teachers' personal experiences and demographic backgrounds influence their approaches to multilingualism and bilingual education, with an emphasis on understanding how these personal factors shape beliefs and strategies for managing multilingualism in the classroom. Secondly, the Q-sorting activity was analysed to identify patterns in how teachers rank and prioritise different aspects of multilingual education, providing insights into commonalities and differences in their perspectives. Thirdly, post-sorting questionnaires offered further context and depth, allowing for a more nuanced interpretation of the factors influencing teachers' views on multilingual education.

Together, these areas of inquiry provide a comprehensive understanding of how multilingual policies and personal beliefs intersect to shape educational practices in Austria.

4.5.1 Data Preparation

The analysis process began with an overview of participants' sorting patterns and questionnaire responses to identify recurring themes or patterns across the data, which laid the groundwork for deeper exploration. I initially counted and grouped responses, attempting to categorise them under umbrella terms to better understand the general trends. Following this preliminary analysis, a more systematic examination was carried out using KADE, a specialised software tailored for Q methodological research.

For this purpose, the results of the Q sorting sessions were initially stored in an Excel sheet. Subsequently, four UTF-8 formatted TXT files were created: one for the statements, one for the Q sorts, one for the Q sort pattern, and one containing the project name. These files were then compiled into a ZIP file. The ZIP file was uploaded to the KADE software, where the data is processed and the results extracted for analysis.

4.5.2 Calculating Correlations

The statistical analysis of the dataset began with the calculation of correlations among the various Q sorts. This initial step in factor analysis helps determine the degree of similarity between different Q sorts. A high correlation between two Q sorts indicates that the items were ranked similarly by participants, while a low correlation suggests differences in ranking. For this research project, correlations were automatically calculated using the KADE software.

As a second step, the software was used to generate a correlation matrix, which illustrates the study variance observed in the dataset. The correlation matrix provides an overview of the entire spectrum of perspectives and the variability among them. The study variance represents the collective sum of different viewpoints, opinions, and understandings captured within the dataset.

Factors were retained only if their Eigenvalue was ≥1, as per the guidelines suggested by Watts and Stenner (2012). This threshold ensures that only significant factors, i.e. those that explain a meaningful amount of variance, are included in the final analysis.

4.5.3 Factor Extraction

The subsequent step involved analysing the dataset to identify factors, or groups of participants with similar Q-sorts. This was done to uncover patterns and structures within the data, with the goal of explaining as much of the study's variance as possible (DATAtab, 2022). Factor analysis, a fundamental tool in Q methodological research, helps researchers detect correlations between participants' Q-sorts (Kline, 1994). Through this process, participants who share similar views on certain topics are grouped into factors, thus simplifying the data and offering a clearer understanding of the diverse perspectives represented in the study.

The method used for factor extraction was Centroid Factor Analysis (CFA). This approach works by determining the central tendency (centroid) of the data points in order to uncover the most significant structures in the data. Centroid Factor Analysis is widely used in Q-methodology because, unlike other methods, it offers flexibility by presenting multiple factor solutions, allowing researchers to select the most appropriate number of factors for the study (Lundberg, 2020; Watts & Stenner, 2005, 2012). Following Watts and Stenner's (2012) recommendation of extracting one factor per six to eight participants, it was decided that for each Q set of twelve participants, two factors would be extracted.

Following the extraction of factors, the dataset was scanned for similarities among variables, and an overview of the factor loadings was provided. Factor loading indicates the extent to which a variable (Q sort) is explained by a certain factor and can range from -1 to 1. Variables closely associated with a factor typically exhibit loadings close to -1 or 1 (Minitab, 2023). High positive or negative loadings suggest that the Q sorts are strongly influenced by the corresponding factor, whereas loadings closer to zero indicate a weaker association. By identifying these factor loadings, researchers can better understand the structure of the data and the relationships between different Q sorts, ultimately leading to a more nuanced interpretation of participants' perspectives and the underlying themes in the dataset.

4.5.4 Factor Rotation

In the next step of the analysis, the factors were rotated to enhance clarity and comprehension, using Varimax rotation. This technique is designed to maximise the loading of distinct variables on each factor while minimising their loading on other factors (DATAtab, 2022). Varimax rotation is favored in Q-methodology for its objectivity and

reliability compared to manual methods. It enhances the clarity of factor loadings, making the data more straightforward and easier to interpret by revealing the underlying patterns and relationships within the dataset.

The result of the Varimax rotation, known as the rotated component matrix, displays the factor loadings and is used to assign Q-sorts to their respective factors. For this thesis, the significance level was set at $p < 0.05$, and Q-sorts were automatically flagged based on this criterion. Finally, the flagged data was sent to *Output*, where it could be downloaded for further interpretation.

4.6 Data Interpretation

In the final step of the analysis, the output data was interpreted to draw meaningful conclusions from the Q-methodology study. Z-scores were utilised to effectively represent the strength of agreement or disagreement with specific statements within each factor. By examining statements with high positive or negative Z-scores, researchers can identify key themes and viewpoints represented by each factor.

A positive Z-score signifies strong agreement with a statement relative to the average ranking across all participants, indicating that the statement is highly endorsed by individuals associated with that factor. Conversely, a negative Z-score reflects disagreement, suggesting that the statement is less supported or viewed negatively by those participants. This analysis allows researchers to identify the central perspectives within each factor and understand the underlying attitudes towards multilingualism.

5. Results

This chapter presents the results of the study investigating Austrian teachers' perspectives on multilingual education, focusing on the relationship between language ideologies and policy enactment. The findings are organised into three main sections: the demographic survey, the Q-sorting activity, and the post-sorting questionnaire. For each of these sections, there are subsections that discuss the results for both schools, thus providing a comparative analysis of the teachers' views and experiences in relation to multilingual education across two educational settings.

Firstly, the demographic survey provides context by detailing the participants' backgrounds. Secondly, the Q-sorting activity explores teachers' views on various

statements related to multilingual education, revealing their underlying language ideologies and beliefs about multilingualism, particularly with regard to educational practices. Finally, the post-sorting questionnaire delves deeper into teachers' specific opinions and experiences regarding the implementation and impact of multilingual education policies.

5.1 Demographic Survey

The following section provides a demographic and professional profile of the teachers participating in the study. The data was collected through a questionnaire containing a mix of multiple-choice and open-ended questions. The focus was on various aspects such as gender, age, professional experience, academic background, subject specialisations, linguistic capabilities, and perspectives on multilingualism.

5.1.1 Age and Sex

School 1 (AHS)

The survey at AHS includes responses from twelve teachers. The group comprises seven females and five males, with ages ranging from 27 to 61, and an average age of 38.
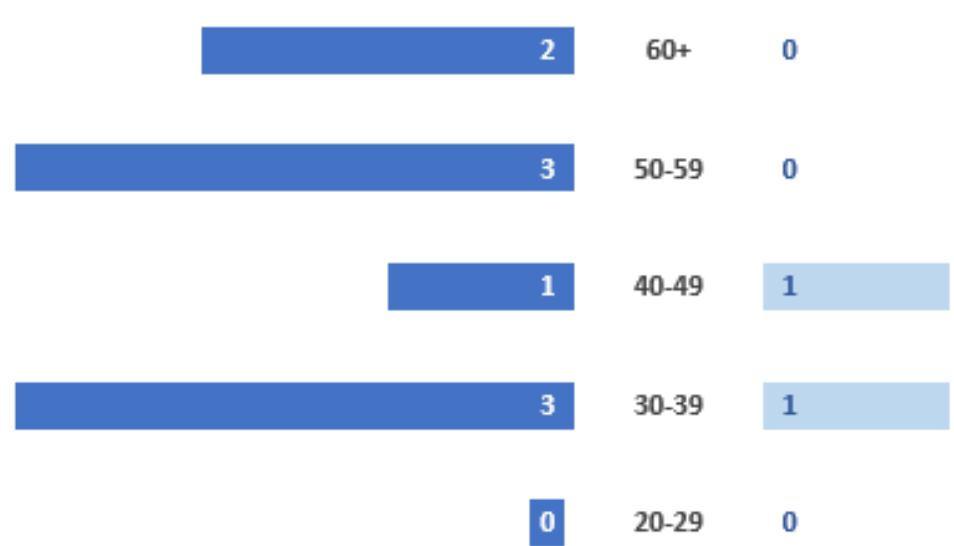

Figure 4: Age and Sex AHS

School 2 (MS)

At MS, twelve teachers participated in the survey, with a predominantly female group (10 females and 2 males), ranging in age from 31 to 65 years, and an average age of 48.
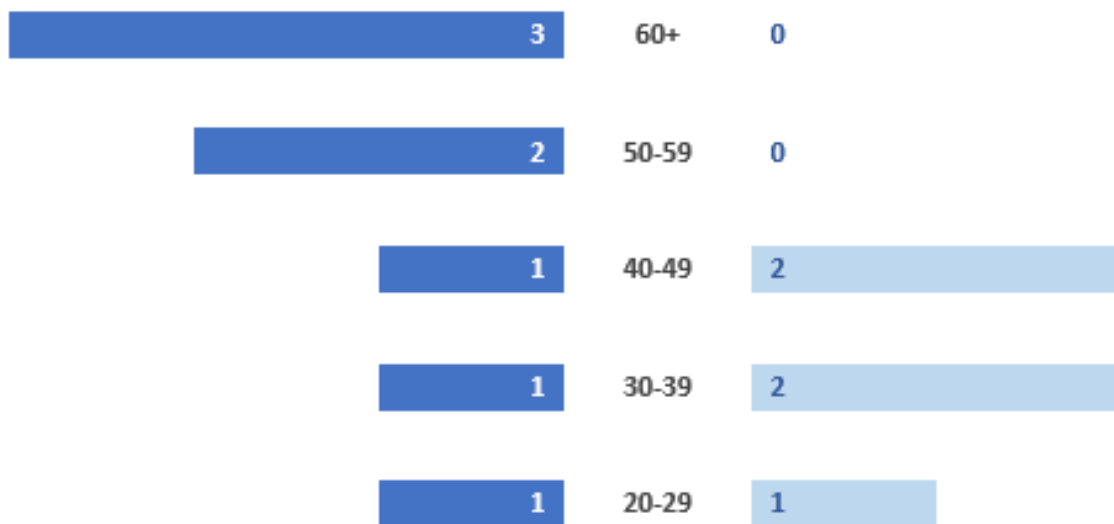
Figure 5: Age and Sex MS

5.1.2 Professional Experience and Tenure

School 1 (AHS)

The participants at AHS exhibit a wide range of professional experience, from less than a year to over three decades, with an average experience of approximately 15 years. The tenure of teachers ranges similarly from less than a year to thirty years, with more than half of the teachers having taught at their current school since the start of their careers. This might suggest a strong sense of loyalty and a familiarity and passion for the institution and the programmes offered among the staff.

Figure 6: Tenure AHS

School 2 (MS)

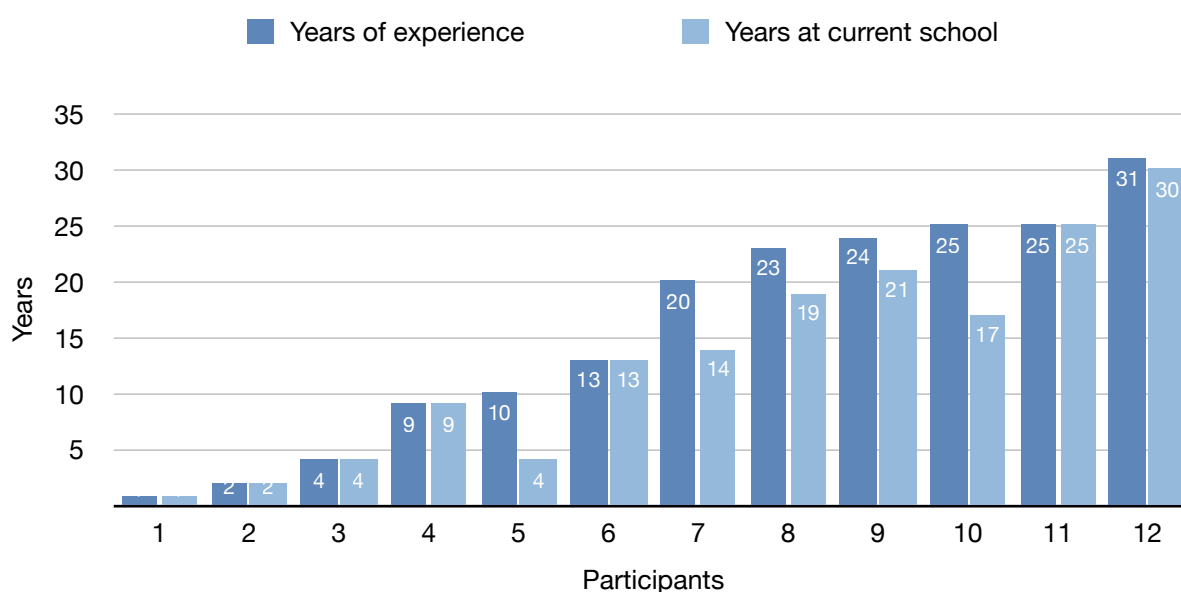In contrast, the staff at MS have a longer average professional experience of about 25 years, with a range from seven to 44 years. Their tenure at the current school varies from one to 33 years. Notably, five teachers have been at the MS for over 20 years, and one has been there since the institution's foundation in the 1990s. This variation in experience and tenure indicates a mix of long-term dedication and newer additions to the staff, which might reflect differing levels of familiarity and engagement with the institution and its programmes.
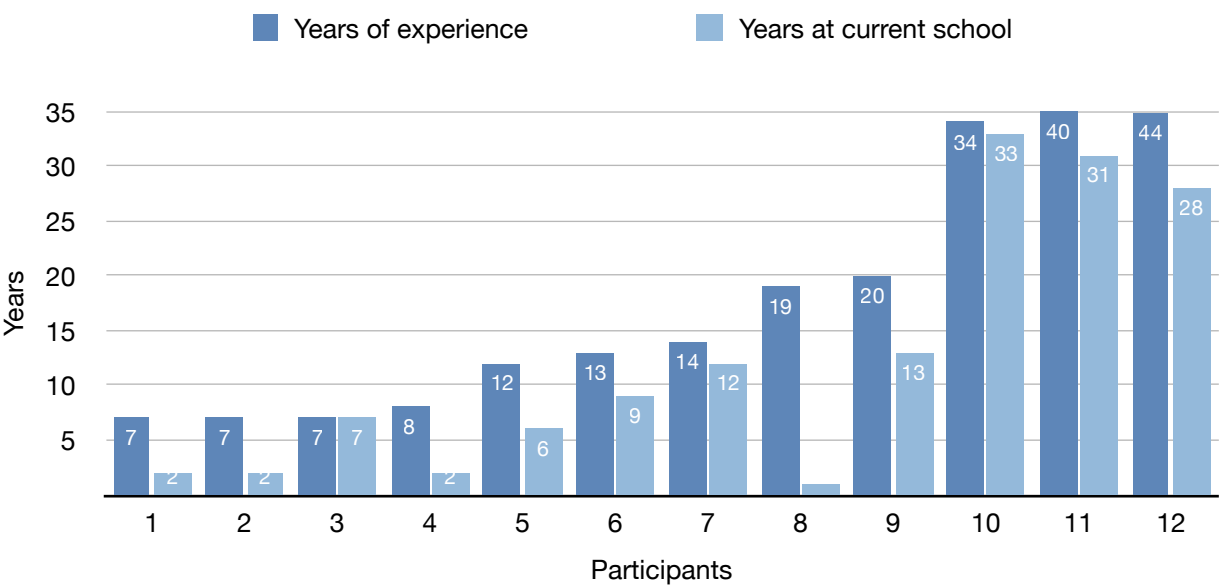
Figure 7: Tenure MS

5.1.3 Subject Specialisations and Qualifications

School 1 (AHS)

The teachers at AHS are specialised in a wide variety of subjects, catering to students across lower secondary school, upper secondary school, and vocational high school. Seven teachers focus on languages such as German, English, Spanish, or French. The others specialise in subjects such as Physics, Biology, Mathematics, Geography, or History. Two teachers focus solely on language subjects whereas four teachers exclusively teach non-language subjects.

One teacher at School 1, whose first language is English, collaborates with subject teachers to offer Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), instructing subjects such as Physics, Biology, Geography, Music, and Mathematics in English.

Most teachers at AHS have subjects directly related to their academic studies, and are equipped with the respective qualifications such as Magister, Bachelor of Education (BEd), or Master of Education (MEd). However, a smaller group of teachers are involved in teaching subjects outside their primary academic field, such as Peer Mediation, Digital Literacy, Communication, Rhetoric, Self-Competence, or have backgrounds in different academic fields like International Business.

School 2 (MS)

The teachers at MS are also involved in a broad spectrum of subjects, primarily catering to lower secondary education. None of the teachers at School 2 exclusively focuses on languages. Instead, three specialise only in non-language subjects, while seven teach a mix of subjects. Among the participants, three teach German, six teach foreign languages (English or French), and all of them teach other subjects such as Geography and Biology. Out of the twelve participants at School 2, there are two teachers whose first language (L1) is English and who offer CLIL lessons in subjects such as Physics, Biology, Geography, Music, Mathematics, and Art.

Regarding qualifications, one teacher at MS holds a Magister, nine have a Bachelor of Education (BEd), one has a Master of Education (MEd), and two have other qualifications including a pedagogical academy diploma and a doctorate. Four teachers studied the exact subjects they currently teach, while eight teach subjects outside their primary field of study. These include Digital Literacy, Crafts, Social Learning, Physics, and Theater. Several teachers have backgrounds in different academic fields such as English Communication Science or Informatics. This diverse range of educational backgrounds might contribute to varied approaches to teaching and professional development.
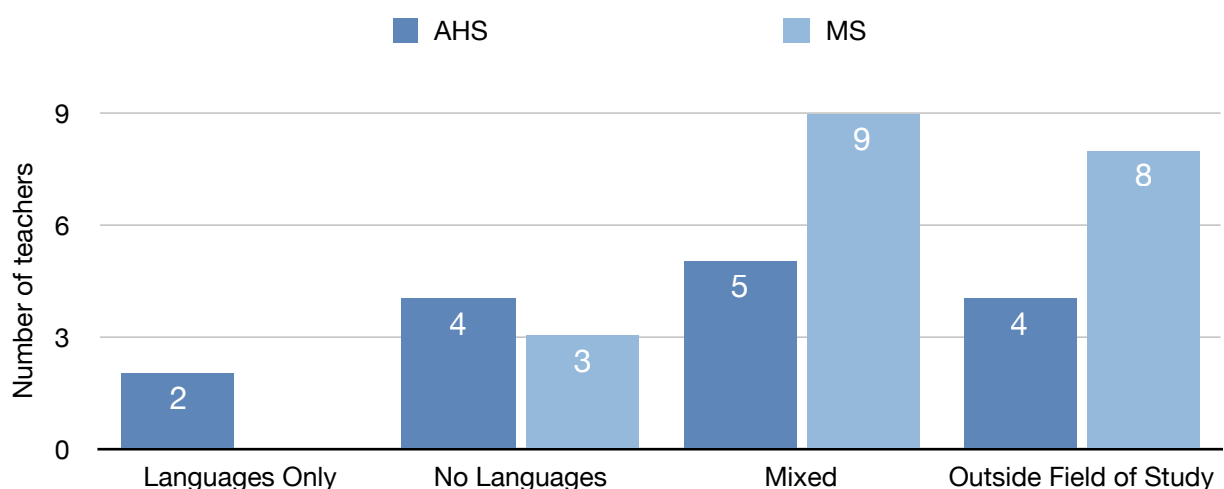

Figure 7: Tenure MS

5.1.4 Language Proficiency and Backgrounds

School 1 (AHS)

The linguistic repertoires of the teachers at School 1 are extremely diverse. A substantial number of teachers, specifically 50%, speak at least three languages. 20% are proficient in four languages and 10% can communicate in up to six languages. The languages represented include German, English, Spanish, French, Italian, Turkish, Russian, and Korean.

Eleven out of the twelve teachers at AHS were raised in monolingual German-speaking households. One teacher, whose first languages are English and French, grew up in a multilingual environment. Another teacher was raised in a household where German was spoken almost exclusively, despite the parents' first language being Turkish. This distribution suggests a predominantly monolingual background among the teachers, with some variation in personal experiences of multilingualism.

School 2 (MS)

The linguistic capabilities of the teachers at School 2 are notably diverse. Five teachers speak two languages, six are proficient in three languages, and one teacher is fluent in five languages. The languages represented among the teachers include German, English, Spanish, French, Italian, and Hungarian.

Eight out of twelve teachers at MS grew up in households where German was spoken exclusively, while two were raised in English-speaking environments, and two experienced a bilingual upbringing with both English and German. This linguistic diversity reflects varied personal and professional experiences with language learning and multilingualism.
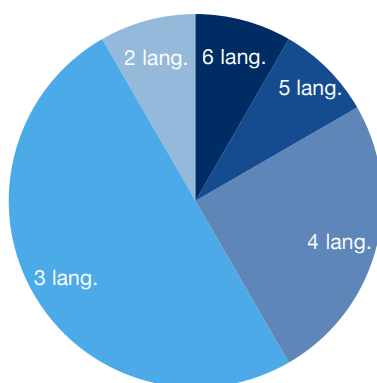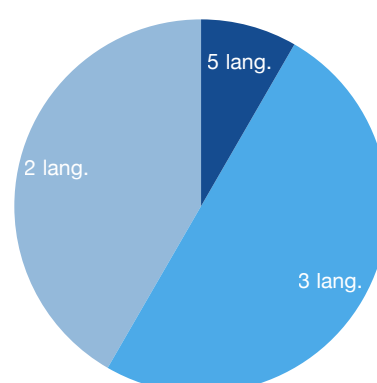

Figure 9: Number of Languages Spoken AHS

Figure 10: Number of Languages Spoken MS

5.1.5 International Experience

School 1 (AHS)

The international exposure of the teachers at AHS varies substantially. While four teachers at School 1 have no experience abroad, eight teachers have spent between six to ten months in countries such as Australia, New Zealand, Great Britain, Spain, and France. Three teachers have had multiple international experiences, living in various countries for extended periods. This exposure to different cultures and languages might profoundly shape the teachers' perspectives and influence their approach to multilingualism.

School 2 (MS)

The international experiences of the teachers at MS are equally varied. Six teachers have no experience abroad, while four have spent between six months to five years in countries such as the UK and the US. Two teachers have had extensive international experiences, including multiple countries like Great Britain, Canada, Ivory Coast, Poland, Jordan, Malaysia, UAE, and Algeria. The different levels of engagement with other cultures and languages probably impacts their attitudes toward multilingualism.

5.1.6 Training and Development in Multilingual Teaching

School 1 (AHS)

In terms of professional development related to multilingual education, there is a notable variation among the teachers at AHS. Half of the participants have not undergone any specific training in this area. Conversely, approximately one-third have received training in Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), while another third have participated in Dual Language Program (DLP) training. This indicates a diverse level of formal preparation for multilingual teaching settings within the staff.

School 2 (MS)

At MS there is a similar variation among the teachers when it comes to multilingual training and development. Seven participants have not undergone any specific training. In contrast, two teachers have received training in Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), and three have participated in other programmes related to multilingual education, such as teacher training workshops or vocabulary expansion courses. This suggests that the staff have differing levels of formal training for teaching in multilingual settings.

5.1.7 Perspectives on Multilingualism

To explore teachers' individual perceptions and personal definitions of multilingualism, the questionnaire included one open-ended item asking respondents to complete the sentence "Being multilingual means...". In the following analysis, the responses will be examined in the context of the frameworks of multilingualism as a resource, a right, and a problem, as outlined in the literature section. This approach enables a first exploration of how teachers perceive multilingualism and its implications for their educational practices and beliefs.

Theme	Mentions at AHS	Mentions at MS
Cultural Openness and Global Perspective	15	12
Opportunities and Advantages in Life	12	12
Personal Growth and Broadened Horizons	9	8
Enrichment of Experience and Understanding	7	9
Challenges with Multilingualism	1	-

Table 1: Perspectives on Multilingualism

Cultural Openness and Global Perspective

School 1 (AHS)

A common theme among the responses is the belief that multilingualism fosters cultural openness and a broader understanding of the world. Several teachers emphasise that being multilingual means "being open to other people, cultures, and the world," highlighting the importance of embracing diversity. This sentiment is echoed by participants who state that multilingualism enables one to "see and understand the world more intricately," suggesting that it provides a deeper, more nuanced perspective on global issues.

School 2 (MS)

Similar to AHS, MS teachers emphasise the role of multilingualism in fostering cultural openness and a global outlook. Many respondents see multilingualism as key to promoting tolerance and understanding across different cultures. One teacher describes it

as "having many opportunities and being open and tolerant," indicating that multilingualism not only enhances communication but also encourages an inclusive mindset. This perspective aligns with the idea that being able to speak multiple languages allows individuals to connect more deeply with diverse cultures and communities, thereby broadening their global awareness.

Opportunities and Advantages in Life

School 1 (AHS)

Another prominent theme is the perception of multilingualism as a gateway to a broad range of opportunities. Respondents describe it as "having a world full of possibilities ahead" and "having an advantage in life." This reflects the belief that multilingual individuals are better equipped to seize educational, professional, and social opportunities, thereby enhancing their life prospects. One teacher captures this by stating that multilingualism is "a great opportunity that enriches both personal and professional experiences."

School 2 (MS)

In a similar manner, MS teachers repeatedly highlight the opportunities and advantages that come with multilingualism. They believe that being multilingual equips students with the necessary tools to access a wide range of educational and career opportunities. One teacher emphasises that being multilingual means "having more opportunities in life," suggesting that it opens doors to global careers, travel, and international networking. Another respondent notes that it allows individuals to "be freer and more independent."

Personal Growth and Broadened Horizons

School 1 (AHS)

Teachers also view multilingualism as a tool for personal growth. One participant at AHS notes that it means "broadening horizons" and "coping with life better," indicating that multilingualism contributes to personal resilience and adaptability. This theme suggests that learning and using multiple languages can help individuals navigate challenges more effectively by providing diverse perspectives and problem-solving approaches.

School 2 (MS)

The concept of personal growth through multilingualism is also a recurring theme among MS teachers. They often associate multilingualism with mental flexibility and adaptability, which are seen as essential skills in today's interconnected world. One teacher comments that being multilingual helps in "being more flexible". Another respondent mentions that multilingualism leads to "having fewer language barriers and better communication possibilities," further underscoring the role of multilingualism in improving interpersonal relationships and facilitating smoother interactions across different countries and cultures.

Enrichment of Experience and Understanding

School 1 (AHS)

The enrichment of life experiences and understanding is another key theme. Teachers at AHS believe that multilingualism allows individuals to gain new insights and experiences, which enrich their understanding of the world. One respondent expresses this by stating that multilingualism is about "gaining new insights and experiences," highlighting its role in enhancing both intellectual and emotional intelligence.

School 2 (MS)

MS teachers also see multilingualism as enriching both on a personal and intellectual level. They believe that it allows individuals to gain new perspectives and insights. One teacher describes multilingualism as "an opening of the mind". However, to them the enrichment is not limited to academic benefits; it also encompasses a broader appreciation for cultural diversity and a more nuanced understanding of global issues. The ability to "communicate with many people" is seen as another significant advantage, enabling richer and more meaningful exchanges.

Keyword Analysis

Lastly, this section explores the key terms identified in the open-ended questionnaire responses from teachers at both AHS and MS. By examining the frequency and context of specific keywords, further insights can be gained into how multilingualism is perceived and valued by educators across the two school types. The table below categorises the keywords into three broader themes. Each theme captures a range of related concepts mentioned by teachers. The counts represent the number of teachers who referred to at least one keyword within each theme.

Broader Themes	Keywords	Mentions at AHS	Mentions at MS
Perceived Benefits	*advantage; gain; potential; possibility; added value; expansion of horizons; to benefit; enrichment*	5	6
Global Perspectives	*international; global; everyday life; future; important*	3	3
Language Skills	*speaking; communication; knowledge of foreign languages*	4	2

Table 2: Keyword Analysis

School 1 (AHS)

The word "open" is mentioned twice by participants at School 1, indicating a consensus that multilingualism fosters openness to other cultures and the world. Additionally, terms such as "distinct," "versatile," and "diversity" are mentioned three times, highlighting the varied perspectives and skills multilingualism offers. Words like "opportunity," "expansion," "advantage," "better," and "chance" collectively appear five times, underscoring the perceived benefits of multilingualism in enhancing educational experiences and personal growth. However, one participant views multilingualism more negatively, noting challenges, particularly when students' first language is not German and German is learned later in life. This perspective highlights the potential complexities in multilingual education and the difficulties faced by both students and educators.

School 2 (MS)

At School 2, the term "opportunity" is mentioned three times, indicating a general view of multilingualism as providing numerous advantages. Concepts such as "openness," "opening of the mind," and "world openness" appear four times, underscoring the perceived broadening of perspectives that multilingualism offers. Terms such as "communicating" and "understanding" are mentioned three times, highlighting the benefits of multilingualism in enhancing communication. Lastly, "flexible" is cited twice, emphasising the high adaptability associated with multilingualism.

Overall, both schools illustrate a strong consensus that multilingualism is a valuable asset, fostering cultural understanding and global awareness as well as providing personal and professional advantages.

5.2 Q-Sorting Activity

This section examines the Q-sorting activity performed in AHS and MS to analyse teachers' perspectives on multilingualism. By systematically analysing the participants' viewpoints, the results will highlight how various groups perceive the role and implementation of multilingual education. The main focus is on exploring both the diverse viewpoints represented in the schools and the commonalities and differences among them.

The analysis will begin with a focus on School 1 to gain a detailed understanding of its unique perspectives and practices regarding multilingualism followed by an exploration of the specific viewpoints represented at School 2. In the discussion following this section, a comparative analysis will be conducted to highlight the similarities and differences in teachers' approaches to multilingual education across the two different educational settings.

5.2.1 School 1 (AHS)

The Q-methodology analysis of School 1, involving twelve participants and 37 statements, revealed several distinct but related perspectives on multilingualism. These perspectives were extracted into two key factors using Varimax rotation, explaining 53% of the total variance, with Factor 1 accounting for 44% and Factor 2 explaining 9%.

Factor 1: General Support for Multilingualism in Education

Participants associated with Factor 1 are enthusiastic advocates for promoting multilingualism in schools. They see it as an integral aspect of modern education, benefiting both students and the school environment as a whole. For these participants, bilingual education is viewed positively, as it becomes evident from their strong agreement with the idea that bilingualism should be encouraged in Austrian schools (Statement 1: Z-score = 1.05). They also emphasise the importance of multilingualism more generally, believing that it should be promoted as part of the core mission of schools (Statement 24: Z-score = 1.35).

Moreover, participants from AHS recognise that Austrian schools must adapt to the growing multilingualism of the population (Statement 16: Z-score = 1.31), indicating a belief that educational institutions need to be responsive to demographic changes. They reject the notion that a "German-only" policy should be enforced in Austrian public

schools (Statement 29: Z-score = -2.13), viewing it as a regressive stance that could hinder students' educational experience. For this group, learning multiple languages is not seen as a complicating factor in education but rather as a tool for enhancing academic success (Statement 34: Z-score = -1.24).

The support for multilingualism in Factor 1 is evident from the high rankings given to ideas about supporting equity and inclusion. Participants in this group view multilingualism as a fundamental educational right and a crucial means of addressing inequalities, especially for students from non-German-speaking backgrounds. They believe that embracing linguistic diversity not only enhances educational outcomes but also fosters social cohesion within the classroom.

Key Statements for Factor 1:

- *Multilingualism as a right in school:*

    Participants in Factor 1 support policies that promote multilingualism in the classroom, viewing it as a fundamental educational right.

- *Rejection of monolingual norms:*

    Additionally, this group strongly opposes the enforcement of a "German-only" policy in schools, rejecting the idea of limiting language use to German alone.

- *Practical benefits of multilingual instruction:*

    Lastly, Factor 1 participants perceive multilingualism as beneficial in addressing educational inequalities and enhancing overall school success.

Factor 2: Moderate Approach to Multilingualism

In contrast, participants aligned with Factor 2 also support multilingualism but approach it with greater caution. Their perspective is characterized by practical concerns, particularly regarding the potential burden on teachers. Although they agree that students should be encouraged to use their full linguistic repertoire in the classroom (Statement 28: Z-score = 1.65) and that leveraging all their languages is beneficial (Statement 18: Z-score = 1.07), their enthusiasm is moderated by concerns about the challenges of implementing multilingual policies effectively. Specifically, they are more likely to worry about the difficulties in applying these policies without overwhelming teachers (Statement 7: Z-score = -1.00). This caution reflects their focus on the practical implications and feasibility of multilingual education.

This group shows a greater focus on ensuring that practical goals are met. For example, while they do see bilingualism as beneficial, they believe that ensuring competence in one foreign language is sufficient (Statement 12: Z-score = -1.55). This view contrasts with the more ambitious goals of the participants in Factor 1, who see multilingualism as an expansive educational aim. Factor 2 participants, on the other hand, prioritise a balance between fostering multilingual skills and managing classroom realities, such as the need for teacher training and the availability of resources.

Key Statements for Factor 2:

- *Support for multilingual practices:*

  Participants in Factor 2 recognise the importance of allowing multilingual students to utilise their full range of linguistic resources in the classroom. They support practices that enable students to draw on all their languages as part of their learning process, believing this approach can enrich their educational experience.

- *Practical concerns:*

  However, this group also considers the potential difficulties involved in implementing multilingual education, particularly the additional burden it may place on teachers. They are mindful of the challenges associated with managing diverse linguistic needs in the classroom and are concerned about the feasibility and support required to effectively integrate multilingual practices.

Commonalities and Differences

A comparison of the two factors reveals two distinct perspectives on multilingualism in education at School 1 (AHS). Both groups of teachers reject monolingual policies, such as enforcing "German-only" rules in schools, and agree that linguistic diversity is an asset to education. However, despite this shared recognition, there is a notable difference in the degree of enthusiasm and focus on practical implementation between the two groups.

Factor 1 participants are generally more optimistic, focusing on the potential benefits of multilingualism for students and society. They see multilingual instruction as a way to address inequalities and promote academic success, and their support is more focused on ideals of inclusion and equity.

By contrast, Factor 2 participants are more pragmatic. While they share the belief that multilingualism is important, they are more focused on the challenges of implementation.

Their concerns about the burden on teachers, in particular, suggest a more cautious approach, where the practicalities of day-to-day teaching are given more weight. This group's moderated stance reflects a desire to balance the promotion of multilingualism with the realities of classroom instruction, where limited time, resources, and teacher preparation might pose barriers to its effective implementation.

In conclusion, the Q-methodology analysis at School 1 highlights two main perspectives on multilingualism in education. Both groups reject monolingual policies and broadly support the promotion of linguistic diversity, but they differ in how they approach the practicalities of implementation. Factor 1 represents a more enthusiastic stance, where multilingualism is viewed as an educational right and a tool for enhancing school success. Factor 2, while still supportive, emphasises the need to consider the practical challenges of multilingual education, particularly the burden it may place on teachers.

5.2.2 School 2 (MS)

From the Q-sorting of School 2 with another twelve participants, two key factors were extracted with Varimax rotation, explaining 48% of the total variance. Factor 1 explains 30% of the variance, while Factor 2 explains 18%. Similar to the results from School 1, the analysis reveals two distinct perspectives on multilingualism: one group shows strong support for multilingualism as essential for educational equity and adaptation to a multilingual society, while another group is more cautious, acknowledging the value of multilingualism but raising concerns about its practical implementation, especially the increased burden on teachers.

Factor 1: General Support for Multilingualism in Education

Participants who load on Factor 1 strongly advocate for multilingualism, viewing it as a fundamental right and a key element for reducing educational inequalities. They believe that multilingual instruction is crucial for addressing disparities and that schools need to adapt to the growing multilingualism among students. For instance, they strongly support the right to multilingual education (Statement 9: Z-score = 1.31) and see multilingual instruction as essential for alleviating inequalities (Statement 35: Z-score = 1.15). They also emphasise the importance of schools adapting to increasing multilingualism (Statement 16: Z-score = 0.83). This group firmly rejects the idea of enforcing a "German-only" policy in public schools (Statement 29: Z-score = -3.72) and does not believe that

learning multiple languages complicates the educational process (Statement 34: Z-score = -1.82).

Key Statements for Factor 1:

- *Multilingualism as a right in school:*

  Participants loading on Factor 1 strongly support the right to multilingual education, viewing it as a crucial step in order to alleviate educational inequalities and promote a more inclusive environment.

- *Rejection of monolingual policies:*

  What is more, there is a strong opposition to the enforcement of a "German-only" policy, with participants clearly favouring a more inclusive approach to language in education.

- *Adaptation to changing demographics:*

  Finally, participants loading on Factor 1 recognise the necessity for schools to adapt to the increasing multilingualism among students, reflecting an understanding of the evolving educational landscape.

Factor 2: Practical Concerns about Multilingualism

Factor 2 represents a more cautious perspective on multilingualism, acknowledging its benefits but expressing significant concerns about the practical challenges it poses. While participants loading on this factor recognise the value of multilingualism (Statement 1: Z-score = 1.17), they are less enthusiastic about its active promotion and are worried about the potential burden on teachers. They express reservations about the practicality of implementing multilingual education, particularly regarding the additional workload it may create for educators (Statement 7: Z-score = -1.53). This group also believes that maintaining proficiency in one foreign language might be sufficient, rather than actively promoting multilingualism in schools (Statement 12: Z-score = -0.71).

Key Statements for Factor 2:

- *Moderate support for multilingual practices:*

  Participants loading on Factor 2 generally acknowledge the importance of multilingualism but have concerns about the practical challenges of implementing such practices in schools.

- *Burden on teachers:*

  There are significant concerns about how multilingualism could increase the workload of teachers as well as worries about the feasibility of effectively managing diverse linguistic needs.

- *Focus on basic proficiency:*

  Participants believe that proficiency in a single foreign language might be sufficient, indicating a more reserved approach to promoting multilingualism compared to Factor 1.

Commonalities and Differences

In School 2, there seems to be a shared recognition of the value of multilingualism, reflecting a common commitment to linguistic diversity as a positive force in education. Both groups of teachers reject monolingual policies, such as "German-only" rules, and agree that linguistic diversity enriches the educational experience.

The primary difference lies in their approach to the practical aspects of multilingual education. Factor 1 participants demonstrate high enthusiasm, viewing multilingualism as a vital component for fostering educational equity and adapting to a multilingual society. They emphasise the benefits of multilingual instruction in addressing educational disparities and enhancing academic success.

Conversely, Factor 2 participants adopt a more cautious stance. While they acknowledge the benefits of multilingualism, they also highlight practical challenges associated with its implementation. Their concerns about the additional burden on teachers and the feasibility of multilingual education reflect a pragmatic approach. This group considers the need to balance the promotion of multilingualism with practical considerations, such as classroom dynamics and constraints of time, resources, and teacher preparedness.

Similar to School 1, the Q-methodology analysis at School 2 reveals two distinct perspectives on multilingualism in education. Both groups strongly support multilingualism and reject monolingual policies, yet their approaches to implementation vary significantly. Factor 1 represents a strong commitment to multilingualism as a fundamental right and a crucial element for reducing educational inequalities, while Factor 2 acknowledges its benefits but focuses on the practical challenges, particularly the additional burden on teachers.

5.3 Post-Sorting Questionnaire

To conclude this chapter, the following section presents the findings from a series of post-sorting questions that educators were asked to answer after completing the Q-sorting activity. These questions aim to delve deeper into educators' reflections and insights regarding the sorting exercise. Specifically, the post-sorting questionnaire includes items designed to:

- **Clarify Reasons for Extremes:** Participants are asked to explain why they ranked specific statements at the extremes (+4 or -4) in the Q-sorting activity. The goal in doing so is to uncover the underlying reasons and justifications for their strong preferences or aversions.

- **Evaluate Bilingual Education Programmes:** Participants are also invited to share their personal opinion on bilingual education programmes and how well they meet students' and educators' needs. By gathering feedback on the strengths and limitations of bilingual education programs, the analysis seeks to determine their efficacy in fostering an inclusive and supportive learning environment for multilingual students.

To organise and interpret the responses, they are categorised into three distinct perspectives:
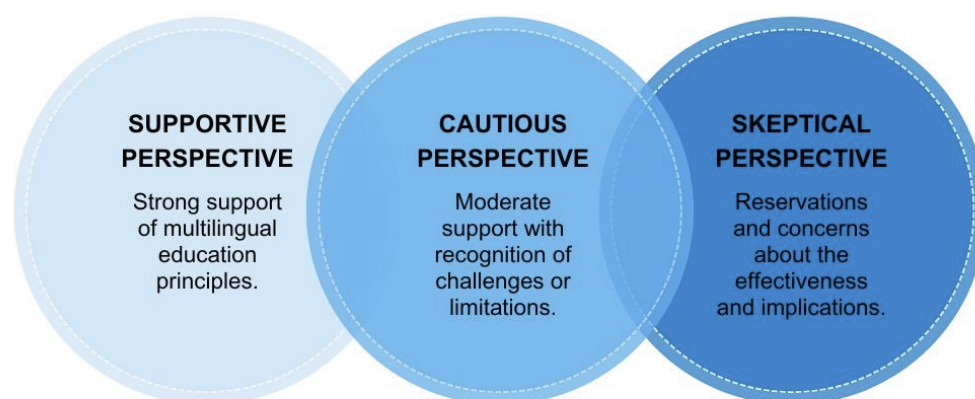
Figure 11: Perspectives on Multilingual Education Principles and Policies

The Supportive Perspective is characterised by a strong agreement with multilingual education principles and a positive view of bilingual education. In contrast, the Cautious Perspective reflects a moderate support for multilingual principles while acknowledging potential challenges and limitations. Finally, the Skeptical Perspective is marked by reservations and concerns about the effectiveness and implications of multilingual education.

It is important to note that these perspectives exist on a spectrum, and certain statements may potentially be categorised into more than one of these groups, or may even fall somewhere in between. However, for the purposes of this thesis, the findings will be clearly categorised to ensure greater accessibility and comprehension. This approach helps to streamline the analysis and present the results in a way that is easier to interpret, while still acknowledging the nuanced and fluid nature of opinions on multilingual education.

5.3.1 Supportive Perspective

Educators who align with the Supportive Perspective typically emphasise the cognitive and educational benefits of multilingualism, advocating for the recognition and incorporation of students' home languages into the curriculum. They often highlight the importance of equality and respect in educational settings, the foundational role of literacy in home languages, and the positive impact of bilingual education on students' language skills and overall learning outcomes. This perspective views multilingual education as a valuable asset that enhances students' academic and personal growth, and supports the promotion of multilingualism in the classroom as a means of enriching the educational experience for all students.

School 1 (AHS)

At School 1 (AHS), a substantial number of respondents strongly agree with the principles associated with a supportive perspective.

One of the key areas where a supportive perspective becomes evident is in the commitment to **equality in education**. The statement "I treat all students equally, no matter what their first language is" (Item 20) is most strongly supported by respondents at AHS. Specifically, four respondents express that treating students equally is crucial for fostering a supportive learning environment. One respondent explains, "Because it allows for a respectful, appreciative interaction," while another adds, "Education should measure actions, not language origin". A third respondent underscores that "Language should not be a criterion for treating someone better or worse". These statements show a strong commitment to equality and respect within educational settings among the respondents.

Another key area of agreement among respondents is the **value of literacy in home languages** as a prerequisite for learning additional languages. Two teachers agree most with the statement that "Students need literacy in their home languages before learning

additional languages" (Item 5). One explains, "Only if I can express myself in a language (emotions, feelings, etc.), I can understand myself and thus respond to others (emotionally and linguistically)". The other one points out that "Mastery of the first language often helps to understand the structure/grammar, etc., of other languages, especially when these languages are similar". This indicates a shared belief in the foundational role of home language literacy in supporting multilingual development and language acquisition.

The **benefits of bilingual education** are also highlighted by the respondents. The statement "Bilingual education is beneficial for all learners" (Item 1) is endorsed, with one respondent noting how bilingual education positively impacts students' language abilities. "I have experienced in DLP lessons how naturally all students speak English". This indicates a belief in the positive impact of bilingual education on learners' language abilities.

Support for the **importance of a common language** also becomes evident from the results of the post-sorting activity. The statement "A common language is important" (Item 3) received endorsement, with one respondent commenting, "Without a common language, meaningful interaction is not possible, both within the class community and between teachers and students". This underscores the necessity of having a shared language for effective communication in educational settings.

Furthermore, there is strong support for the **promotion of multilingualism** within the classroom. The statement "Multilingualism should be actively promoted in the classroom" (Item 24) resonates with respondents who see the value in fostering an environment where multiple languages are celebrated. One respondent notes, "All learners would benefit from learning about their peers and different languages and cultures". This reflects a belief that actively promoting multilingualism enriches the educational experience by fostering understanding and appreciation of diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

The **facilitation of learning through multilingualism** is also recognised as a significant benefit. The statement "The possibility to use all languages in the classroom facilitates learning for multilingual students" (Item 28) received support from respondents who see the practical advantages of leveraging students' existing language skills. One respondent shares that "Students find it easier in foreign language lessons when they can make connections to other languages, and for the flow of the lesson or the final result, it often

makes no difference". This perspective suggests that utilising students' multilingual skills can enhance students' learning experience by making new concepts more accessible.

In addition, respondents acknowledge the importance of **supporting students' self-image as multilingual individuals**. The statement "A central task of the teacher is to support in a systematic way the students' self-image as multilingual persons" (Item 32) is highlighted by respondents who see the role of teachers as crucial in fostering students' multilingual identities. One respondent notes that "A central task of the teacher is to support in a systematic way the students' self-image as multilingual persons" (Item 32). This reflects the view that teachers play a crucial role in fostering and nurturing students' identities as multilingual individuals, helping them to build confidence and see their multilingualism as a valuable asset.

Finally, there is a recognition of the role of multilingual education in **addressing inequalities**. The statement "Multilingual instruction helps alleviate inequalities and disadvantage" (Item 35) is supported by respondents who see multilingual education as a tool for promoting equity in the classroom. One respondent explains that "Students have no influence over their first language and their life circumstances, but they are often disadvantaged because of this. Multilingual instruction helps to create 'more equal' conditions". This reflects the view that multilingual instruction can help mitigate educational disadvantages linked to students' linguistic backgrounds, thus contributing to a more equitable educational experience.

School 2 (MS)

At School 2, there also seems to be a strong commitment to the supportive perspective.

A key area of agreement is the **benefits of bilingual education**. Four respondents at School 2 most strongly agree with the statement "Bilingual education is beneficial for all learners" (Item 1). One respondent argues in favour of bilingual education by noting, "Bilingual education allows us as teachers to switch between languages as needed, creating a common ground for all learners". Another adds, "Every language opens a new world, a new way of thinking". A third respondent emphasises that "Bilingualism is a huge advantage - for everyone", while a fourth mentions, "Students not only learn to think in two languages but also to express themselves in two languages". These statements collectively underscore a shared belief in the benefits of bilingual education, particularly in enhancing cognitive and expressive skills.

The **value of literacy in home languages** before learning additional languages is also strongly emphasised. Two respondents most strongly agree with the statement "Students need literacy in their home languages before learning additional languages" (Item 5). One respondent explains, "Students need to express themselves in one language, and this should be well mastered". Another reflects, "Experience (40 years) has shown that students face the greatest problems if they do not have a solid command of their mother tongue". These responses illustrate a belief in the foundational role of home language literacy as a basis for further language acquisition.

In terms of **equality in education**, the statement "I treat all students equally, no matter what their first language is" (Item 20) is also endorsed by two respondents. One respondent highlights that "Treating all students equally is a human right and a respectful necessity to create the harmony needed in a mixed nationality culture". Another adds, "No matter which language the children speak, they are valuable and equal as individuals". This reflects a commitment to equality and respect in educational settings.

Support is also evident for the **importance of a common language** in educational settings. One respondent asserts, "We need to understand each other. Without a common language, which both sides understand, teaching is not possible!". This highlights the necessity of a shared language for effective communication and learning.

The **facilitation of learning** through the use of multiple languages in the classroom is another area of agreement. The statement "The possibility to use all languages in the classroom facilitates learning for multilingual students" (Item 28) is supported by respondents. One educator notes that "Students find it easier in foreign language lessons when they can make connections to other languages, and it often makes no difference to the lesson flow or final result". This highlights the benefit of leveraging students' multilingual skills to enhance their learning experience.

Furthermore, there is support for the **promotion of multilingualism** in the classroom. Respondents agree with the statement "Multilingualism should be actively promoted in the classroom" (Item 24). One educator argues that "All learners would benefit from learning about their peers and different languages and cultures". This suggests a belief in the educational and cultural benefits of promoting multilingualism. However, one respondent notes that "Schools should have access to multilingual teaching materials" (Item 11). They explain "In mathematics, there is, in my opinion, too little material

available". This indicates the need for more resources that reflect the multilingual nature of students.

The idea of **integrated language teaching** is also discussed, with one respondent questioning the notion that "Individual languages should be taught in isolation from each other" (Item 17). This suggests a belief that languages should be integrated to enhance overall learning rather than separated to avoid confusion, reflecting a more holistic approach to language education.

What is more, the view that bilingual teaching complicates **content learning** is contested. The statement "Bilingual teaching makes content learning more difficult for students" (Item 22) is disputed by one respondent who reflects, "I don't find that at all, as I have experienced how an additional language in teaching supports and makes it enjoyable." This challenges the belief that bilingual teaching necessarily hinders content learning, instead highlighting its potential to enhance the educational experience.

Additionally, the role of educators in **supporting students' multilingual self-image** is recognised. One respondent notes the importance of the teacher's role in this process, agreeing with the statement "A central task of the teacher is to support in a systematic way the students' self-image as multilingual persons" (Item 32). One respondent notes, "Teachers play a crucial role in helping students build confidence and view their multilingualism as a valuable asset". This reflects the importance of teachers in fostering positive multilingual identities.

Finally, there is agreement that multilingual instruction helps address **educational inequalities**. One respondent supports the statement "Multilingual instruction helps alleviate inequalities and disadvantage" (Item 35), explaining, "Students have no influence over their first language and their life circumstances, but they are often disadvantaged because of this. Multilingual instruction helps to create 'more equal' conditions." This indicates that multilingual instruction is seen as a means to address and mitigate educational inequalities, contributing to a more equitable educational experience.

5.3.2 Cautious and Skeptical Perspective

While many educators express strong support for multilingual education, the post-sorting questionnaire also reveals some concerns and reservations. These concerns are indicative of the Cautious and Skeptical Perspectives, which highlight different levels of caution and critique regarding the implementation and impact of multilingual education

policies. Educators with a cautious perspective generally acknowledge the value of multilingual education but also recognise the practical challenges and limitations associated with implementing such policies. They tend to support the principles of multilingualism while expressing concern about how these principles are applied in real-world educational settings. In a similar manner, those with a skeptical perspective critically question the effectiveness and implications of multilingual education policies. Educators holding this viewpoint often question the practicality of these policies and their potential impact on the educational environment.

School 1 (AHS)

At School 1, there are notable areas of concern regarding specific policies and practices related to multilingual education, reflecting a range of critical perspectives among educators.

A significant area of disagreement revolves around the idea of a **"German-only" policy** in Austria's public schools. The statement "We need a 'German-only' policy in Austria's public schools" (Item 29) is met with strong opposition from seven respondents. One respondent strongly asserts, "I see absolutely no reason for this. It would convey that other native languages are a disadvantage/negative, and students would be ashamed of their languages." Another explains, "We need the opposite of a 'German-only' policy. Multilingualism should be officially promoted rather than banned." Further criticisms describe the policy as "a step backwards in every respect" and "unrealistic and inhumane," reflecting a consensus against limiting linguistic diversity and emphasizing the need to support multiple languages.

In addition, there is notable opposition to the notion that German should be the **standard language** over individual multilingualism. The statement "In Austria, German is the norm and not the individual multilingualism of the students" (Item 21) is resisted by respondents who assert, "Diversity is the future." This highlights a belief that multilingualism should be embraced and valued rather than overshadowed by a single language norm.

The idea that **proficiency in one foreign language** is sufficient is also contested. The statement "Competence in one foreign language (English) is enough" (Item 12) encounters disagreement, with one educator stating, "The more foreign languages, the better! You cannot get by everywhere with English alone." This indicates a belief in the importance of learning multiple languages to navigate a globalised world effectively.

Furthermore, the belief that multilingual students require **reduced learning goals** is strongly challenged. The statement "Multilingual students often need reduced individual learning goals" (Item 25) is contested by respondents who note that "Multilingual students are often among the 'strongest' students in the class. Multilingualism does not negatively affect performance." This underscores the view that multilingual students should not be given lower goals, as their multilingualism can be a strength.

Finally, there is skepticism about the need for schools to change their **teaching practices** due to increased multilingualism. The statement "Schools need to change their teaching due to the increased multilingualism in the population" (Item 16) is questioned by respondents arguing "Schools do not need to change their teaching. They just need to change their attitude towards multilingualism." This suggests that instead of altering teaching methods, shifting attitudes to better embrace multilingualism is more crucial. Additionally, although many support the promotion of multilingualism, there is concern that "The teaching cannot take over 'everything.' Actively promoting multilingualism detracts from other content that is also important." This reflects a worry that focusing too much on multilingualism might detract from other essential areas of the curriculum.

School 2 (MS)

At School 2, skepticism arises regarding the feasibility and practicality of implementing certain multilingual education goals. For instance, there is notable concern about the feasibility of students mastering **functional multilingualism**. Concerns are raised about the statement "Each student should be able to use at least three languages functionally" (Item 6). One respondent observes, "That would be cool, but the implementation would be relatively difficult." This feedback highlights doubts regarding the practicality of achieving such a high level of multilingual proficiency for all students.

There is also resistance to the notion that **teacher education** should heavily incorporate multilingualism. The statement "Multilingualism must be part of the education and training of teachers" (Item 23) is challenged by one respondent who argues, "It is not my task as a teacher to know 6-20 languages!" This reveals concerns about the expectations placed on teachers to possess extensive multilingual skills and the feasibility of integrating such training into their professional development.

Finally, skepticism is also evident concerning the belief that multilingual students inherently serve as **role models** for their peers. The statement "Multilingual students can

be role models for their peers" (Item 13) is questioned, with one respondent stating, "I have never observed that. In what way should this be the case?". This reflects a hesitancy to accept the notion that multilingual students inherently serve as role models for others.

Moreover, there is hesitation about the need for schools to change their **teaching practices** due to increased multilingualism. The statement "Schools need to change their teaching due to the increased multilingualism in the population" (Item 16) is criticised, with one respondent suggesting, "For me, it would be a 'never-ending story' and not goal-oriented." This indicates a concern that continuously adjusting teaching practices to address multilingualism might be impractical and counterproductive, potentially leading to constant revisions without clear, achievable goals.

5.3.3 Educators' perspectives on bilingual education programmes

The final part of the post-sorting survey aimed to explore educators' perceptions and evaluations of bilingual education programmes within their schools. Specifically, it aimed at uncovering the perceived strengths and benefits of these programmes as well as any associated challenges or areas for improvement.

5.3.3.1 Strengths of Bilingual Education Programmes

School 1 (AHS)

At School 1, respondents identify three key advantages that underscore the value of multilingualism as a significant educational resource. Firstly, the cognitive benefits of bilingual education, particularly its role in enhancing language skills across various subjects, are highlighted. Four respondents emphasise that bilingual education programmes improve overall language competence, noting that "English in other subjects strengthens language skills—students are generally more competent." Additionally, they positively comment on "the success our students achieve through the programme".

Secondly, the social and personal advantages of bilingual programmes are also highly valued. Respondents appreciate how these programmes foster a positive learning environment and support the integration of students with varying language proficiencies. One respondent points out the value of "relatively easy and unbiased access to a new language," while another notes the positive impact of "the encouragement and resulting positive culture of making mistakes." Moreover, it is observed that bilingual education

helps students "learn about language diversity across subjects," reflecting the broader social and cultural benefits of these programmes.

Lastly, the ease of integrating English into daily activities is recognised as a significant strength of the bilingual programmes. Six respondents observe that the programme fosters a natural approach to learning English, with comments such as, "English becomes easily and joyfully learned as a secondary language". Furthermore, they underscore the advantages bilingual programmes offer by highlighting "the joy they experience using the language," and "the pride students take in becoming bilingual."

School 2 (MS)

When it comes to the perceived strengths of the current bilingual education programme, several key areas emerge from the responses given by teachers at MS. First of all, the cognitive benefits of the programme are acknowledged. One respondent notes that "The English proficiency of most students [at School 2] is very good (pronunciation, fluency, etc.)." This indicates that the programme significantly enhances students' language skills.

Additionally, the programme is praised for its social and personal advantages. Five respondents appreciate the positive impact on student integration and cultural awareness. Comments such as "English as a working language enables global communication" and "Our school has a long-standing practice of bilingual education, which enriches the classroom with many bilingual students (E, D)" reflect this sentiment. Furthermore, it is mentioned that bilingual education influences how students interact with each other, with one respondent observing that "The children are more tolerant and respectful towards each other."

Moreover, the natural and unforced use of English is recognised as another strength of the programme. Four respondents observe that students are comfortable and proficient in using English, as reflected in statements like "Students are accustomed to using the language without hesitation" and "Children lose their reluctance to use English and learn to handle it in everyday contexts."

Finally, other strengths include the extensive experience with the programme and effective collaboration among staff. One respondent positively mentions "the long experience with the programme (30 years)," while another appreciates "the good cooperation between native speakers and subject teachers." These factors collectively

underscore the programme's long-term success and the strong teamwork that supports its implementation.

5.3.3.2 Weaknesses and Possible Improvements

School 1 (AHS)

Regarding possible improvements, there are several key suggestions for further enhancing bilingual education programmes at AHS. Four respondents recommend extending the programme to upper secondary classes. For lower secondary education, there is a call to increase both the number of subjects and the weekly hours dedicated to bilingual instruction.

The need for improved teacher training and professional development is highlighted by four respondents. Additionally, the requirement for more bilingual teaching materials is noted, with proposals for "More bilingual materials for all subjects" and incorporating "Educational films in English (or with English subtitles) in all subjects."

Another issue mentioned by respondents is the need for additional staff to support the bilingual programme, including more teachers whose first language is English. Two respondents also emphasise the importance of better internal organisation and coordination, suggesting, "More precise internal structures to coordinate projects and learning content across subjects."

School 2 (MS)

In terms of potential improvements, suggestions at MS vary. Three respondents feel that no changes are necessary. One respondent advocates for increasing the number of lessons taught by instructors whose first language (L1) is English. Two respondents emphasise the importance of hiring staff who are committed to the programme.

Moreover, the need for enhanced teacher training and professional development is highlighted by two respondents, with suggestions such as "More educational events and programmes should be undertaken," or "Joint training, discussion rounds, and experience exchanges within the staff."

Improving internal organisation and coordination is another area of possible improvement, with suggestions for "a suitability test at the beginning (assessing language acquisition)" and better internal coordination. Additionally, there are calls for more teaching materials, including a respondent's request for "other books with examples given in English."

Finally, there is a call for a more balanced approach between English and German in instruction. Two respondents suggest that "We teach E/D, so German should be well-mastered to learn English," advocating for a more explicit emphasis on German. They propose that the instruction balance should be "50:50," indicating that while English is important, German also plays a crucial role in effective bilingual education.

5.3.3.3 Opinions on Expanding Bilingual Programmes

School 1 (AHS)

When asked about the creation of additional bilingual programmes in schools, respondents at AHS present differing views. Two respondents express the belief that the current offerings are sufficient. They argue that students are already exposed to a variety of bilingual content outside of formal education: "There are already enough programmes. Students watch many videos in English, play computer games, etc."

On the other hand, nine respondents support the expansion of bilingual programmes, advocating for their broader implementation in schools. One respondent notes, "In a global world, communication should be encouraged."

School 2 (MS)

At MS, eleven respondents support the idea of expanding bilingual education. They believe that more programmes would greatly benefit students: "Bilingual education offers significant advantages and is in high demand."

Conversely, one respondent feels that bilingual education may not be suitable for all students, noting, "Bilingual instruction requires a certain level of language proficiency, so I believe it is not suitable for every clientele."

This chapter has provided a comprehensive overview of the study's findings on Austrian teachers' perspectives on multilingual education. Through a detailed examination of the demographic survey, Q-sorting activity, and post-sorting questionnaire, valuable insights have been gained into how teachers' backgrounds, ideologies, and experiences shape their views and practices regarding multilingualism.

The upcoming discussion chapter will interpret these findings in relation to the literature and theoretical frameworks outlined in Chapters 2 and 3. It will explore the implications of teachers' perspectives on policy enactment and practice, and assess how well official policy documents align with observed classroom practices. By applying Ruiz's model of

multilingualism as a right, resource, and problem, the discussion will provide a structured analysis of the study's results, highlighting how teachers' views align with or diverge from theoretical and policy perspectives. The aim is to offer insights into the practical impact of multilingualism policies and suggest recommendations for future research and educational practice.

6. Discussion

This chapter delves into the findings from the demographic survey, Q-sorting activity, and post-sorting questionnaire to uncover Austrian teachers' perspectives on multilingual education. Using Ruiz's (1984) framework of multilingualism as a resource, right, and problem, the discussion explores key themes and insights from the data. Subsequently, it will be examined how teachers' attitudes align with national and European policy frameworks. The chapter also reflects on the study's limitations and outlines implications for future research, policy development, and teaching practices to enhance multilingual education and support inclusive learning environments.

6.1 Key Themes

In analysing the findings from the study, several key themes and insights into Austrian teachers' perspectives on multilingual education emerge. These findings can be categorised and interpreted through the lens of Ruiz's (1984) theoretical framework, which views multilingualism as a resource, a right, and a problem. This framework provides a useful structure for understanding the varied and complex ways in which teachers perceive and engage with multilingualism in educational contexts.

6.1.1 Multilingualism as a Resource

The majority of teachers in the study recognise multilingualism as a valuable resource, highlighting the cognitive, social, and academic benefits it offers.

In the Q-sorting activity, a substantial number of participants appreciate the cognitive advantages of multilingualism. Teachers observe that multilingualism enhances executive functioning and metalinguistic awareness, leading to better academic performance and adaptability. These findings align with research by Kwon et al. (2021), who demonstrate that multilingual individuals often excel in tasks requiring focus and problem-solving.

Moreover, educators value the social benefits of multilingualism, including improved cultural understanding and stronger interpersonal relationships. Teachers' responses reflect an appreciation for how multilingualism promotes tolerance and positive interactions within the classroom. This view resonates with García (2011), who highlights that multilingualism fosters respect for linguistic diversity and enhances social cohesion.

Factor 1 in the Q-sorting activity, representing 44% of participants from School 1, underscores both cognitive and social benefits of multilingual instruction. Teachers within this factor perceive multilingualism as beneficial in addressing educational inequalities and enhancing overall school success, recognising how it contributes to improved cognitive abilities as well as social integration and interaction.

The recognition of multilingualism as a resource has significant implications for educational practices. Teachers who value multilingualism often implement strategies that leverage students' diverse linguistic backgrounds to enhance learning. For instance, they may incorporate students' home languages into classroom activities or design assignments that allow for linguistic expression in multiple languages (Cummins, 1979).

Furthermore, educators who acknowledge the benefits of multilingualism are more likely to adapt their teaching methods to support diverse learners. They might use differentiated instruction techniques or provide additional support to help multilingual students thrive (Jessner, 2006). Teachers who view multilingualism positively also tend to promote activities that celebrate linguistic diversity, such as organising multicultural events or integrating diverse linguistic perspectives into the curriculum. These practices contribute to a more inclusive and supportive educational environment, ultimately enriching the learning experience for all students (Donmall, 1985).

6.1.2 Multilingualism as a Right

What is more, the Q methodology research indicates that a substantial number of teachers perceive multilingualism as a fundamental human right.

In the study, teachers frequently express the belief that educational settings should actively support and embrace students' home languages. They highlight the importance of implementing resources and policies that reflect and respect the linguistic diversity present in their classrooms. Many educators advocate for bilingual or multilingual programmes, arguing that the use of students' home languages can significantly enhance their educational experience. This perspective aligns with research by García (2009), who

emphasises that incorporating students' home languages into the curriculum can foster a more inclusive and effective learning environment and enhance students' academic performance and personal development.

Furthermore, teachers assert that accommodating multilingual students extends beyond practical necessity and is a matter of upholding their rights. Educators feel responsible to contribute to creating a more equitable and inclusive learning environment by recognising and valuing students' linguistic backgrounds. This perspective is supported by García and Wei (2014), who emphasise that acknowledging and integrating students' linguistic identities is crucial for fostering an inclusive educational environment. They argue that such practices ensure that all students, regardless of their home language, have access to educational opportunities and feel valued within the classroom.

The Q-sorting activity further supports these findings. Participants loading on Factor 1, representing 44% of School 1 and 30% of School 2, demonstrate a clear commitment to multilingual education as a fundamental right. They view multilingualism as essential for alleviating educational inequalities and promoting a more inclusive environment. This perspective is coupled with a strong opposition to monolingual policies, such as "German-only" approaches, favouring instead a more inclusive approach to language in education. Moreover, the teachers from both schools recognise the necessity for schools to adapt to the increasing multilingualism among students.

Recognising multilingualism as a right has significant implications for educational practices (Donmall, 1985). Teachers who advocate for this perspective often push for policies that reflect the diverse linguistic landscape of contemporary society, ensuring that all students have access to the resources and support necessary to thrive academically. This includes the implementation of inclusive curricula, the provision of translation services, and the promotion of cultural awareness within schools.

Furthermore, viewing multilingualism as a right fosters the development of educational practices that respect and support students' linguistic identities (Jessner, 2006). For example, schools may adopt bilingual education models or integrate language support services to address the needs of multilingual students more effectively. These practices not only affirm the value of linguistic diversity but also contribute to creating a more equitable educational environment, where all students, regardless of their linguistic background, have the opportunity to succeed and feel valued in their educational experiences.

6.1.3 Multilingualism as a Problem

Lastly, some teachers in the study voice concerns with multilingualism and the implications for teaching and learning. In both School 1 (9%) and School 2 (18%), participants aligned with Factor 2 acknowledge the benefits of multilingual education but also express apprehensions about its implementation. They highlight practical challenges, such as the additional burden on teachers and the complexities of managing diverse linguistic needs in the classroom.

It is important to note that these concerns do not reflect fundamental opposition to multilingualism. Rather, they illustrate the real-world difficulties educators face in effectively integrating multilingual practices. For example, some teachers worry about the impact of multilingualism on students' acquisition of academic language and overall performance, which aligns with the concept of semilingualism described by Young (2017). This concern underscores the need to balance linguistic diversity with effective language instruction.

The implications of these views for educational practices are significant. Rather than overshadowing the benefits of multilingualism, the identified challenges should inform strategies to further enhance multilingual teaching and learning. On the one hand, educational policies and practices need to be adapted accordingly. On the other hand, it is essential to provide extra support, resources, and professional development opportunities for educators to help them manage multilingual classrooms effectively. By implementing these measures, the effectiveness of multilingual programmes can be enhanced, creating a more inclusive and supportive learning environment for both educators and students.

6.2 Teachers' Perspectives in the Context of Policy Guidelines

The findings from the Q methodology research reveal a strong alignment between Austrian teachers' views on multilingualism and the national and European policy frameworks guiding multilingual education. This section examines how teachers' perspectives correspond with key elements of Austrian curriculum documents and broader European policies such as the CEFR.

6.2.1 National Curriculum Documents

This section examines the alignment between teachers' perspectives on multilingualism and the objectives outlined in the Austrian national curriculum. It assesses how well teachers' views on multilingualism and their educational practices correspond with the goals established by the official policy documents. For this purpose, three sections of the curriculum have been anylsed in detail: General Educational Goals, Curriculum Principles and Specific Provisions for Language Education.

General Educational Goals

The "General Educational Goals" section of the Austrian curriculum outlines the fundamental objectives that teaching and learning processes across various subjects and educational stages must be based on.

Language and Communication
First of all, the Austrian curriculum emphasises the importance of language and communication skills, highlighting the role of engaging with multiple languages to enhance cognitive abilities and cultural understanding. This perspective is grounded in the belief that multilingualism significantly contributes to students' expressive, cognitive, and social capacities.

The findings from the study reveal that teachers strongly support this view. They highlight multilingualism as a valuable cognitive and social resource, noting its positive impact on problem-solving skills and cultural understanding. Teachers' perspectives and practices align closely with the curriculum's aim to develop students' diverse linguistic and cognitive abilities.

Human and Society
Furthermore, the Austrian curriculum emphasises the importance of fostering critical thinking and decision-making competencies in relation to global human issues. It highlights the need for education to promote human rights, tolerance, and solidarity, and to prepare students to engage thoughtfully in a multicultural society.

The study findings indicate that many teachers, especially those who view multilingualism as a right, strongly support these principles. They advocate for inclusive practices that recognise and address students' diverse linguistic backgrounds. Consequently, teachers'

practices align with the curriculum's goal of developing critical thinking skills and preparing students to navigate and positively contribute to a multicultural world.

Intercultural Education

What is more, the curriculum highlights intercultural education as central to creating inclusive learning environments. It aims to cultivate an appreciative and respectful learning atmosphere by integrating discussions on linguistic and cultural diversity, thereby enhancing students' intercultural awareness and empathy.

Teachers' responses in the study indicate a strong alignment with this principle. They emphasise the importance of fostering intercultural competence and addressing multilingualism in their teaching. By incorporating discussions on linguistic and cultural diversity into their lessons, teachers support the curriculum's goal of developing a respectful and inclusive learning environment.

Curriculum Principles

The "Curriculum Principles" section of the Austrian national curriculum outlines the foundational principles that guide the development and implementation of educational content and practices.

Individual Learning Needs

Principle 1 of the Austrian curriculum focuses on recognising and catering to individual learning needs. It directs educators to personalise education to support students' diverse learning processes, aiming to enhance student motivation and performance.

The study findings reflect this principle, as teachers who value multilingualism seem to adapt their teaching methods to accommodate students' varied linguistic abilities. This practice aligns with the curriculum's directive to personalise education. Teachers' efforts to support individual learning needs through multilingual approaches demonstrate a commitment to strengthening student motivation and performance, thereby fulfilling the curriculum's objectives.

Inclusive Teaching

Principle 3 of the curriculum emphasises creating inclusive learning environments that value diversity. It encourages educators to leverage linguistic diversity as a resource for learning and development, aiming to foster an inclusive atmosphere that supports all students.

In the study, teachers' practices, such as using multilingual materials and supporting home languages, illustrate their commitment to this principle. By fostering an inclusive environment, teachers align with the curriculum's goal of valuing and utilising linguistic diversity as a resource. Their approach supports the curriculum's emphasis on creating inclusive learning environments that enhance students' educational experiences.

Respect for Diversity

Principle 6 of the curriculum stresses the importance of respecting students' diverse backgrounds. It aims to cultivate a global perspective and promote a positive view of diversity within the educational setting.

The study findings show that teachers who view multilingualism positively contribute to this principle by promoting respect and appreciation for linguistic diversity in their classrooms. Their efforts to create an environment where students understand the value of multilingualism resonate with the curriculum's emphasis on respect for diversity.

Specific Provisions for Language Education

The "Specific Provisions for Language Education" section of the Austrian national curriculum outlines the specific guidelines and objectives for language instruction at different educational levels.

Middle School

The curriculum for middle schools primarily emphasises the development of communicative competence and cultural sensitivity through foreign language education. It aims to enhance students' awareness of cultural diversity and their ability to engage in democratic processes.

The study's findings reveal that teachers in Austrian middle schools actively promote multilingualism in the classroom. They support students' multilingual self-image by incorporating multilingual resources and facilitating learning through the use of multiple languages. This approach aligns closely with the curriculum's focus on fostering communicative competence and cultural sensitivity, demonstrating a strong connection between teachers' methods and the curriculum's goals for middle school education.

AHS Lower Secondary Level

At the AHS lower secondary level, the curriculum focuses on communicative competence

and cultural understanding, similar to the middle school curriculum, but with a greater emphasis on preparing students for further education.

The study indicates that Austrian AHS lower secondary teachers actively support students' home languages in their lessons. They integrate students' first languages into their teaching and facilitate comparisons between different languages. This practice aligns with the curriculum's emphasis on multilingual engagement and prepares students for tertiary education and lifelong learning.

AHS Upper Secondary Level

The upper secondary curriculum above all emphasises intercultural awareness and citizenship education, aiming to prepare students for a globalised world and foster intercultural sensitivity.

Findings from the study indicate that AHS upper secondary teachers in Austria view multilingualism as a right and a resource, which aligns with the curriculum's focus. These educators integrate students' linguistic backgrounds into their lessons and promote a European perspective. This approach demonstrates how teachers' practices at the upper secondary level contribute to preparing students for global challenges and reflect the curriculum's emphasis on intercultural sensitivity.

Overall, the analysis reveals a strong alignment between teachers' perspectives on multilingualism and the Austrian national curriculum documents. Teachers' views support the curriculum's emphasis on multilingualism as a cognitive, social, and cultural resource. On several levels, their practices reflect the curriculum's principles, including catering to individual learning needs, fostering inclusive teaching environments, and respecting diversity. By integrating these principles into their teaching, educators contribute to creating an effective and inclusive learning environment that aligns with national educational goals.

6.2.2 CEFR

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) provides a comprehensive guideline for language education across Europe. The results from the study reveal a strong alignment with the CEFR's goals of fostering intercultural awareness and plurilingualism.

First of all, participants highlight the importance of sociocultural knowledge in effective language teaching, reflecting the CEFR's emphasis on understanding the society and culture associated with the target language (Council of Europe, 2001). Teachers recognise the need to incorporate sociocultural elements into language instruction, which aligns with the CEFR's approach to raising learners' awareness of cultural similarities and differences (Council of Europe, 2001).

Furthermore, the findings align with the CEFR's advocacy for plurilingual and pluricultural competence. The study indicates that teachers value the development of a plurilingual identity. This supports the framework's aim of integrating diverse linguistic experiences into learners' cultural identities and of facilitating communication across different cultural contexts (Council of Europe, 2001).

The study also highlights the importance of aligning language instruction with broader educational goals, as suggested by the CEFR. Teachers' focus on promoting linguistic diversity supports the CEFR's recommendations for designing language courses that foster cross-linguistic skills and intercultural understanding (Council of Europe, 2001).

6.3 Study Limitations

While this study provides valuable insights into teachers' perspectives on multilingual education, several limitations must be acknowledged.

One of the primary limitations of this study relates to the ambiguities surrounding the definition of multilingualism. As outlined in Chapter 2, there is no universally accepted definition of the term. Throughout the research process, it became evident that 'multilingualism' is understood in various ways. Participants frequently interrupted the Q-sorting sessions to express concerns that their responses were heavily influenced by their personal interpretation of the term. This variability in understanding raises questions about how representative the findings are, as different interpretations may have shaped participants' responses.

To address this issue, I included an open-ended item in the post-sorting activity titled "Being multilingual means…". However, instead of focusing on providing a definition, most participants used this opportunity to reflect on the perceived advantages and disadvantages of multilingualism. These reflections provided some insights into their views, particularly around the benefits of linguistic diversity and challenges faced by

multilingual individuals. However, the open-ended item did not fully resolve the ambiguity surrounding the definition of multilingualism, leaving this as a key limitation of the study.

Another significant limitation concerns the method employed in this study. While the approach was in-depth and informative, it proved time-consuming for both researchers and participants. Recruiting a large and diverse sample within the available timeframe was challenging, and Lundberg's recommendation of at least 40 participants for generalisability was not met. Despite this constraint, the study provides valuable insights into multilingual education, highlighting trends that can inform future research and policy development. Moreover, it demonstrates how Q methodology can be effectively applied to explore the complex and sometimes contradictory beliefs about multilingualism, offering a nuanced understanding of teachers' perspectives that may not be captured through other methods.

6.4 Implications for the Future

Despite the limitations, the insights gained from this study have significant implications for future research, policy development, and my personal teaching practices.

In terms of future research, this study highlights the need for further exploration of how multilingualism is defined and understood in educational contexts. Future research could refine tools and methods to accommodate varied interpretations of multilingualism, ensuring more consistent data collection. Longitudinal studies could also examine the long-term effects of multilingual education on both student outcomes and teacher experiences. Additionally, researchers might focus on developing and testing practical strategies for managing multilingual classrooms, including professional development opportunities that enhance teachers' language awareness and pedagogical skills.

From a policy perspective, the findings underscore the need for policies that both recognise the benefits of multilingualism and address the practical challenges of implementing multilingual education. Policymakers should consider the concerns raised by educators, such as the difficulty of balancing linguistic diversity with curriculum demands. Providing clear guidelines and resources, including training and support for teachers, will be crucial in helping educators integrate multilingual practices into their classrooms effectively. Moreover, policies should affirm students' linguistic rights and promote inclusive educational practices that celebrate and support linguistic diversity.

7. Conclusion

The present study aimed to explore how language beliefs, ideologies, and official management decisions influence dual-language bilingual education (DLBE) teachers' classroom policies and practices in multilingual educational settings in Austria. The results reveal both opportunities and challenges within multilingual education. Teachers broadly agree on the importance of treating students equally, supporting home language literacy, and leveraging multilingual skills. This reflects a strong enthusiasm for multilingualism and linguistic diversity. However, the study also highlights significant reservations about specific policies and practical challenges. A key insight from the findings is the complex role of multilingualism in the classroom, particularly when students' home languages extend beyond the two main school languages of German and English. This multilingualism can both enrich the educational experience and pose challenges for implementing effective dual-language programs, as teachers must navigate the diverse linguistic backgrounds of their students. These findings reveal a gap between the idealistic goals of multilingual education and the practical difficulties teachers face in accommodating a wide range of languages within a structured bilingual framework.

The relevance of this study lies in its contribution to understanding how the interaction between policy and personal beliefs shapes educational practices, especially in multilingual settings. By exploring how educators perceive and implement multilingual policies, the study illuminates the complex relationship between top-down policy mandates and teachers' professional agency. While policies are designed with specific objectives, their implementation is deeply affected by the diverse and unique contexts of individual classrooms. Teachers interpret and adapt these policies based on their personal beliefs, experiences, and the needs of their students. Therefore, this study underscores the critical role teachers play in translating policy ideals into practical realities.

Before carrying out this research, I expected teachers in bilingual institutions to hold predominantly positive views on multilingualism. This expectation was grounded in the belief that daily exposure to multilingual classrooms would naturally foster a strong endorsement of linguistic diversity and its educational benefits. However, the study revealed a more complex picture. A significant number of educators expressed cautious or skeptical perspectives regarding multilingual policies. This divergence from my

expectations is striking and reveals a deeper, more nuanced reality. It underscores that while educators may support the concept of multilingualism in principle, practical challenges and uncertainties significantly impact their views. The presence of such skepticism among educators highlights the critical need for addressing the practical difficulties that arise when translating policy ideals into classroom practice. If these challenges are not adequately addressed, the positive viewpoints held by teachers at the outset may not be sustained. In fact, the challenges they experience could unintentionally turn these viewpoints negative, making it clear that policies alone are insufficient without accompanying support and clear guidance to help teachers navigate the complexities of multilingual education.

As I move forward in my teaching career, the findings of this study will profoundly shape my approach to teaching and learning. Inspired by Hult's observation that 'the classroom represents a key site where policies become action' (2014, p. 159), I am committed to advocating for and implementing effective multilingual practices that not only reflect the diverse linguistic backgrounds of students but also foster a more inclusive and equitable learning environment. The study's insights underscore the importance of fostering enthusiasm for linguistic diversity while also addressing practical challenges, such as managing diverse linguistic environments and meeting the specific needs of students. This balanced approach will be crucial in creating effective and inclusive educational practices. As I integrate these findings into my teaching, I aim to contribute to an educational environment that truly supports and values multilingualism, bridging the gap between policy ideals and classroom realities.

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Appendix
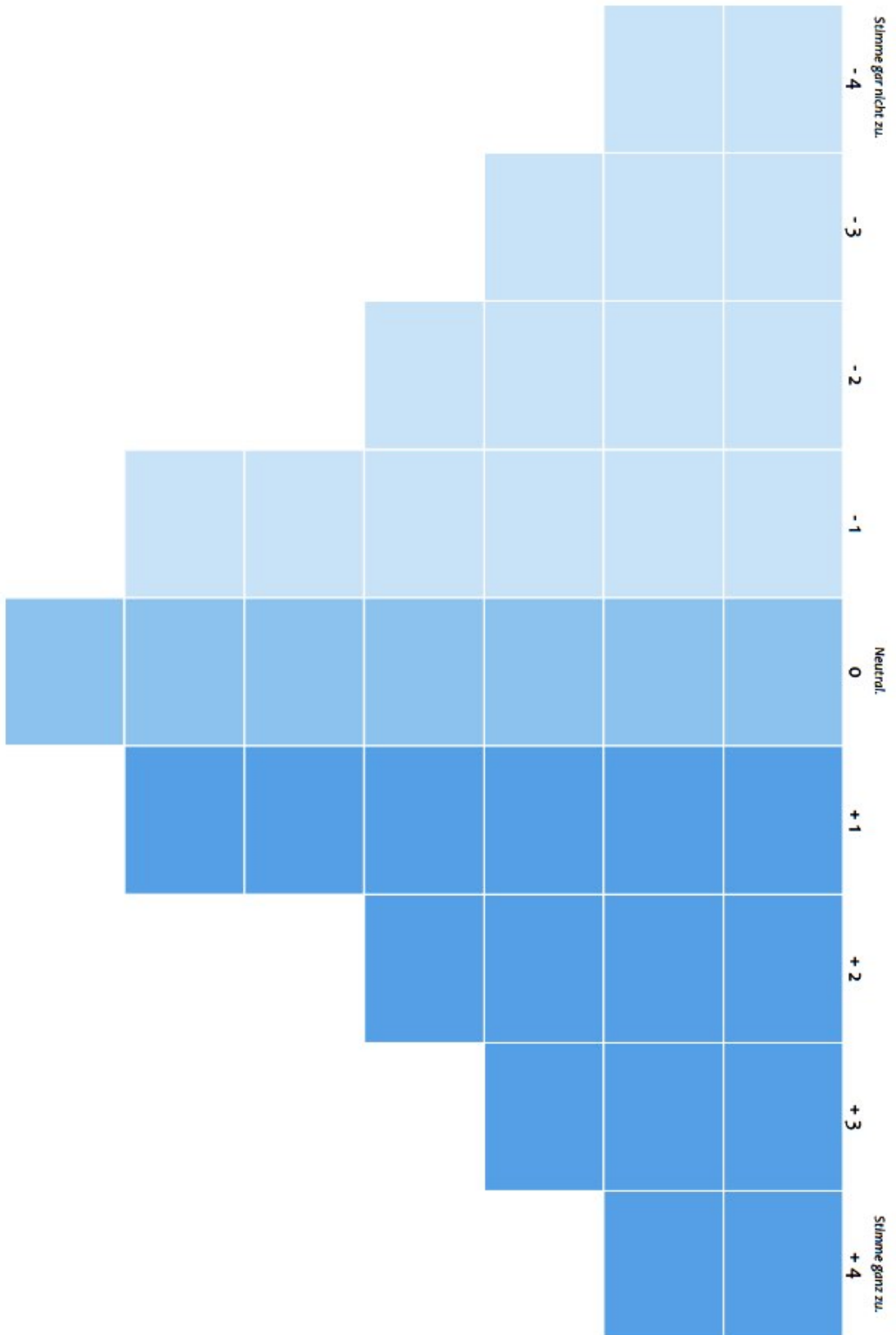
Sortierhilfe

Ordne jedes Statement einer der drei Kategorien zu.

Ich stimme nicht zu bzw. eher nicht zu.	*Neutral / Weiß nicht.*	*Ich stimme zu bzw. eher zu.*

Consent form

Informationsblatt für Teilnehmende

Austrian Teachers' Perspectives on Multilingual Education: Policy and Practice

ZWECK DER FORSCHUNG

Das Ziel dieser Forschung im Rahmen meiner Masterarbeit ist es, den Einfluss offizieller Richtlinien zur Mehrsprachigkeit auf die Einstellungen und pädagogische Praxis von Lehrkräften, die an österreichischen Schulen mit Sprachförderprogrammen unterrichten, zu untersuchen. Durch Ihre Zustimmung erklären Sie sich damit einverstanden, dass Ihre Angaben im Rahmen des Forschungsprozesses zu wissenschaftlichen Zwecken verwendet werden dürfen. Ihre Informationen werden vertraulich und anonym behandelt. Sie helfen uns, ein besseres Verständnis für Ihre Erfahrungen und Einstellungen zu gewinnen.

DATENSCHUTZ UND DISKRETION

Ihre Kontaktdaten und Ihre angaben während des Forschungsprozesses werden geschützt und mit Diskretion behandelt. Alle angegebenen Daten werden anonymisiert und nicht an Dritte weitergegeben, sondern rein für wissenschaftliche Zwecke verwendet.

BEENDIGUNG DER TEILNAHME

Sie können frei entscheiden, ob Sie an diesem Projekt teilnehmen wollen. Sie können Ihre Teilnahme jederzeit widerrufen. Dieser Widerruf gilt für alle zukünftigen Veröffentlichungen, nicht jedoch für bereits erfolgte Publikationen.

ÜBEREINSTIMMUNG

Mit dieser Erklärung stimme ich offiziell zu, dass ich damit einverstanden bin, dass meine während der Forschung angegebenen Daten für wissenschaftliche Zwecke verwendet werden dürfen.

_____   _____   _____
Datum   Unterschrift   Name in Blockbuchstaben

Vielen Dank für die Unterstützung!

Bei weiteren Fragen und Interesse an den Ergebnissen können Sie mich kontaktieren.

Gerne sende ich Ihnen nach Fertigstellung die Forschungsarbeit zu.

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Demographic survey

Demographische Fragen

Bitte geben Sie Ihr Geschlecht an.

- ☐ weiblich
- ☐ männlich
- ☐ divers
- ☐ keine Angabe

In welchem Jahr sind Sie geboren?
Geburtsjahr: _____

Seit wie vielen Jahren arbeiten Sie als Lehrer*in? (insgesamt)
Dienstjahre insgesamt: _____

Seit wie vielen Jahren arbeiten Sie an Ihrer(n) aktuellen Schule(n) als Lehrer*in?
Dienstjahre aktuelle Schule(n): _____

An welcher Schule bzw. an welchen Schulen unterrichten Sie momentan?

- ☐ Mittelschule
- ☐ Gymnasium Unterstufe
- ☐ Gymnasium Oberstufe
- ☐ Berufsbildende höhere Schule (BHS)
- ☐ Berufsbildende mittlere Schule (BMS)
- ☐ Polytechnische Schule
- ☐ Andere:

An welcher Schule bzw. an welchen Schulen haben Sie vor Ihrer aktuellen Schule unterrichtet?

- ☐ Mittelschule
- ☐ Gymnasium Unterstufe
- ☐ Gymnasium Oberstufe
- ☐ Berufsbildende höhere Schule (BHS)
- ☐ Berufsbildende mittlere Schule (BMS)
- ☐ Polytechnische Schule
- ☐ Andere:

Was ist Ihr höchster Bildungsabschluss?

- ☐ Matura
- ☐ Magister
- ☐ Bachelor BEd
- ☐ anderer Bachelor (BSc, BA)
- ☐ Master MEd
- ☐ anderer Master (MSc, MA)
- ☐ anderer Abschluss:

In welchen Sprachen können Sie sich verständigen?

- Geben Sie die Sprache/n an.
- Geben Sie ihr Sprachniveau in den jeweiligen Sprachen an.

Sprache   Geringe Kenntnisse   Ausgezeichnete Kenntnisse

	1	2	3	4	5
1.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Welche Sprachen haben Ihre Eltern mit Ihnen als Kind gesprochen?

Haben Sie jemals in einem Land außerhalb des deutschsprachigen Raums gelebt? Wenn ja, wo und wie lange?

Welche Fächer unterrichten Sie?

Welche Fächer haben Sie studiert?

Haben Sie bereits Fortbildungen zum Thema Mehrsprachigkeit besucht? Wenn ja, welche?

Vervollständigen Sie den Satz:
Mehrsprachig sein heißt ...

Post-sorting questions

1. Welchem Item (+4) stimmen Sie am Meisten zu? Warum?

Item:

Begründung:

2. Welchem Item (-4) stimmen Sie am Wenigsten zu?

Item:

Begründung:

3. Ihre Einstellungen zu bilingualen Bildungsprojekten

Stellen Sie sich vor, die Bildungsdirektion konsultiert Sie, um Ihre Meinung zur bilingualen Schulpolitik Ihrer Schule einzuholen.

- Was sind Ihrer Meinung nach die Stärken des aktuellen bilingualen Bildungsprogramms an Ihrer Schule?

- Welche Änderungen würden Sie an Ihrem Programm vornehmen, um die bilinguale Bildung zu verbessern?

- Halten Sie es für angebracht, dass mehr bilinguale Bildungsprogramme geschaffen werden? Warum oder warum nicht?

Instructions for the participants (written version)

Anleitung Q-Ranking

1) Verschaffen Sie sich einen Überblick über die vor Ihnen liegenden Statements. Überlegen Sie, ob Sie den Aussagen zustimmen oder nicht.
2) Ordnen Sie die Aussagen mithilfe der Sortierhilfe (optional) einer der drei Kategorien zu (*Ich stimme zu; neutral/weiß nicht; Ich stimme nicht zu*).
3) Starten Sie mit den Aussagen, denen Sie zustimmen. Orden Sie diese im Raster Ihrer Meinung entsprechend an (*+4, +3, +2*).
4) Ordnen Sie nun die Aussagen, denen Sie nicht zustimmen auf dem Raster an (*-4, -3, -2*).
5) Ordnen Sie abschließend die „neutralen" Aussagen auf dem Raster an (*-1, 0, 1*).
6) Kontrollieren Sie, ob die Anordnung der Aussagen Ihrer Meinung entspricht. Nehmen Sie eventuelle Änderungen vor.
7) Wenn Sie mit Ihrer Anordnung zufrieden sind, melden Sie sich bitte bei Nina.
8) Beantworten Sie die abschließenden Fragen.

Vielen Dank für Ihre Teilnahme!

Q Set English

1. Bilingual education is beneficial for *all* learners.	13. Multilingual students can be role models for their peers.	25. Multilingual students often need reduced individual learning goals.
2. Multilingualism is an important issue in school.	14. Teaching materials must address the issue of multilingualism.	26. Students have the right to individual support in their first language.
3. A common language is important.	15. A common attitude towards multilingualism is important within the teaching staff.	27. All teachers and principals should receive information about multilingualism to inform parents and students.
4. It is important that students who need it get additional support to learn German.	16. Schools need to change their teaching due to the increased multilingualism in the population.	28. The possibility to use all languages in the classroom facilitates learning for multilingual students.
5. Students need literacy in their home languages before learning additional languages.	17. Individual languages should be taught in isolation from each other.	29. We need a "German-only" policy in Austria's public schools.
6. Each student should be able to use at least three languages functionally.	18. Students should be encouraged to use their entire linguistic repertoire at all times.	30. I don't understand my students' first language, so I don't want them to use it in my classroom.
7. Multilingualism represents an additional burden on teachers.	19. The school needs clear guidelines on multilingualism.	31. Teachers of different language subjects should work closely together.
8. Some students need additional German courses.	20. I treat all students equally, no matter what their first language is.	32. A central task of the teacher is to support in a systematic way the students' self-image as multilingual persons.
9. Multilingualism is a right at school.	21. In Austria, German is the norm and not the individual multilingualism of the students.	33. Students can use all their languages in class as long as the end result is German/ English/etc.
10. Discussing students' languages in class is interesting but a waste of time.	22. Bilingual teaching makes content learning more difficult for students.	34. Learning multiple languages at the same time presents additional challenges and complicates the learning process.
11. Schools should have access to multilingual teaching materials.	23. Multilingualism must be part of the education and training of teachers.	35. Multilingual instruction helps alleviate inequalities and disadvantage.
12. Competence in one foreign language (English) is enough.	24. Multilingualism should be actively promoted in the classroom.	36. A holistic approach to multilingualism in schools can make a significant contribution to school success.
		37. Learning succeeds best when only one language is used in the classroom.

Q Set German

1. Zweisprachiger Unterricht bringt einen Mehrwert für *alle* Lernenden.	13. Mehrsprachige Schüler*innen können Vorbilder für ihre Mitschüler*innen sein.	25. Mehrsprachige Schüler*innen brauchen oft reduzierte individuelle Lernziele.
2. Mehrsprachigkeit ist ein wichtiger Bereich in der Schule.	14. Lehrmittel müssen das Thema Mehrsprachigkeit aufgreifen.	26. Schüler*innen haben das Recht auf individuelle Förderung in ihrer Erstsprache.
3. Eine gemeinsame Sprache ist wichtig.	15. Innerhalb des Kollegiums ist eine gemeinsame Haltung zu Mehrsprachigkeit wichtig.	27. Alle Lehrer*innen und Schulleiter*innen sollten Informationen über Mehrsprachigkeit erhalten, um Eltern und Schüler*innen zu informieren.
4. Mehrsprachige Schüler*innen brauchen zusätzliche Unterstützung, um Deutsch zu lernen.	16. Schulen müssen ihren Unterricht aufgrund der vermehrten Mehrsprachigkeit in der Bevölkerung verändern.	28. Die Möglichkeit, im Unterricht alle Sprachen zu verwenden, erleichtert mehrsprachigen Schüler*innen das Lernen.
5. Schüler*innen müssen ihre Erstsprache beherrschen, bevor sie weitere Sprachen lernen können.	17. Einzelne Sprachen sollten isoliert voneinander unterrichtet werden.	29. Wir brauchen eine "Nur-Deutsch-Policy" in den staatlichen Schulen Österreichs.
6. Jede*r sollte mindestens drei Sprachen funktional anwenden können.	18. Die Schüler*innen sollten ermutigt werden, jederzeit ihr gesamtes sprachliches Repertoire zu gebrauchen.	30. Ich verstehe die Erstsprache meiner Schüler*innen nicht, also möchte ich nicht, dass sie diese in meinem Unterricht anwenden.
7. Mehrsprachigkeit stellt eine zusätzliche Belastung für Lehrer*innen dar.	19. Die Schule braucht deutliche Richtlinien zu Mehrsprachigkeit.	31. Die Lehrer*innen der verschiedenen Sprachfächer sollten eng zusammenarbeiten.
8. Einige Schüler*innen benötigen zusätzliche Deutschkurse.	20. Ich behandle alle Schüler*innen gleich, egal welche Erstsprache sie sprechen.	32. Ein zentraler Auftrag der Lehrkraft ist es, auf systematische Weise das Selbstbild der Schüler*innen als mehrsprachige Personen zu unterstützen.
9. Mehrsprachigkeit ist ein Recht in der Schule.	21. In Österreich ist Deutsch die Norm und nicht die individuelle Mehrsprachigkeit der Schüler*innen.	33. Schüler*innen können alle ihre Sprachen im Unterricht verwenden, solange das Endergebnis Deutsch/Englisch/etc. ist.
10. Die Diskussion über die Sprachen der Schüler*innen im Unterricht ist zwar interessant, aber Zeitverschwendung.	22. Bilingualer Unterricht erschwert den Schüler*innen das Erlernen von Inhalten.	34. Mehrere Sprachen gleichzeitig zu lernen birgt zusätzliche Herausforderungen und erschwert den Lernprozess.
11. Schulen sollten Zugang zu mehrsprachigen Unterrichtsmaterialien haben.	23. Mehrsprachigkeit muss ein Teil der Aus- und Weiterbildung von Lehrpersonen sein.	35. Mehrsprachiger Unterricht trägt dazu bei Ungleichheiten und Benachteiligung zu mildern.
12. Kompetenzen in einer Fremdsprache (Englisch) reichen.	24. Im Unterricht soll Mehrsprachigkeit aktiv gefördert werden.	36. Ein ganzheitliches Konzept für den Umgang mit Mehrsprachigkeit in der Schule kann einen wesentlichen Beitrag zum Erfolg der Schule leisten.
		37. Lernen gelingt am besten, wenn nur eine Sprache im Unterricht verwendet wird.