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ABSTRACT
This special issue brings together papers that discuss how teachers deliberate competing institutional, pedagogical and language ideological imperatives in the multilingual classroom. It does so because research on language-in-education policy often singles out teachers who resist and transform monolingual policies, or those who ignore pupils’ multilingual resources. Such accounts usefully highlight the possibility of change or the need for intervention. But they risk overlooking the many occasions where teachers waver between both types of conduct to reconcile contrary views on language, teaching, and learning. This issue argues that teacher behaviour must be explained in relation to these contrary views rather than to one of their component parts. Thus, it puts the lens, among other things, on teachers who implement monolingual policies without disregarding the value of multilingualism; on those who take up linguistic authority in congenial fashion; or on those who respect pupils’ linguistic repertoires while setting out to improve their skills in named languages. This introduction discusses some broad tendencies in earlier work on language-in-education policy, the chronic nature of contradictions in class and the ambivalence it invites, before presenting the different contributions of the issue.

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Background

Across the field of socio- and applied linguistics it is relatively common to find quotes like the following:

Paradoxically, although schools everywhere and especially in urban centres have seen a growing change in their populations, the increased visibility of linguistic diversity is not reflected in classroom practices […] Increased language contacts in the world and the growing need to communicate across language borders mean that educational language policies need to be reframed in order to take into account societal multilingualism. But […] linguistic diversity remains a difficult challenge to address in education systems built on the ideology of linguistic uniformity. (Hélot 2012, 214)

Such quotes bear witness to a widely shared dissatisfaction with national language-in-education policies. The reason for this discontent does not merely reside in the persistent emphasis on monolingualism in these policies and their subsequent mismatch with the rich diversity of linguistic resources pupils bring to school. It also stems from a sincere concern with the effects this mismatch can have on pupils’ sense of identity, well-being, and learning outcomes, and with how these effects are entwined with broader patterns of marginalisation and inequality. Scholars underline that failing to recognise the pedagogical potential of non-curricular linguistic resources deprives pupils of learning opportunities and complicates their access to curricular knowledge. They argue that this lack of
recognition harms bi- and multilingual pupils’ self-confidence and lowers their performance. And they fear that such pupils will come to see their own repertoires as exotic, if not deviant, when education policies continue to picture normal or ideal citizens as monolingual speakers.

In light of these concerns scholars often insist that the curricular language must be urgently changed, and that apart from policymakers, teachers are key actors for bringing this about. Thus there have been frequent calls that teachers give positive consideration to nonstandard, fluid, or minority language practices in class; that they should maintain a holistic view of learners’ practices in which ‘an ungrammatical expression of accurate content, or a grammatically correct expression of inaccurate content, may be just as much a sign of learning as a grammatically correct expression of accurate content’ (Hornberger 2004, 166); and that they must be aware of their capacity to act as agents of change.

Not infrequently these professionals articulate their powerlessness and lack of know-how in the face of a daunting linguistic diversity. Or, worse, they are found to have negative attitudes towards their pupils’ non-curricular linguistic skills (see, for instance, Pulinx, Van Avermaet, and Agirdag 2017). In response, scholars often advise that in-service teachers follow anti-bias training or that teacher education be reformed so that it raises pre-service teachers’ awareness of the opportunities of linguistic diversity and changes their potential prejudices. Through this teachers are to acquire a critical insight, a greater ability to act as agents of change, and a proper sense of their responsibility:

Critical language awareness [...] addresses teachers’ awareness of the ideological and political nature of language functioning, it provides them with the linguistic tools to be socially committed and engaged, and it stresses their social responsibilities. (Hélot 2012, 227–228; cf. also Alim 2010; Lucas and Villegas 2013)

This responsibility becomes acute when it is claimed that a multilingual education leads to improved learning outcomes (see, among others, Liddicoat and Heugh 2015), or that ‘the inability to authenticate a multilingual and heteroglossic reality is responsible for educational failure of many language minorities around the world’ (García and Li 2014, 56).

Such calls and claims intimate a strong commitment to create educational equity for linguistically marginalised pupils and a conviction that curricula cannot remain tone deaf to the socio-linguistic changes that are occurring outside school. Nevertheless, it would seem that the more multilingual education is advocated for instrumental reasons, that is, as a tool for improving learning outcomes, and the stronger this advocacy underlines teachers’ responsibility, the greater the overlap becomes with the linguistic and educational logic of the monolingual authorities that scholars take issue with in the first place.

To be sure, all Western governments have come to see education as the principal, often singular, motor for reducing social inequality, contrary to the available facts (e.g. Bourdieu and Passeron 1977; Moore 2007; Reay 2010). And like socio- and applied linguistic scholars, these governments generally assume that language greases the wheels of the educational motor. Both parties only disagree over the type of language: governments insist that pupils’ swift acquisition of a standard, monolingual variety guarantees best results, while many socio- and applied linguists maintain that these results depend on fostering the development of pupils’ entire linguistic repertoire. The logic behind this conviction would seem to maximise the causality of language beyond what is theoretically and empirically tenable: that many minority multilinguals succeed while many, often working class, majority monolinguals fail, indicates that although pleas to changing the instruction language are defensible on principle, its current monolingual character can neither be taken as a direct cause of pupils’ underachievement nor as a guarantee for their success.

Furthermore, although calling on teachers to act as agents of change motivates them to break the mould rather than respond dutifully to directives from higher up, the associated emphasis on responsibility may not be inconsonant with governmental accountability discourses. Indeed, authorities have found in accountability measures a way to represent the combating of inequality as a matter of rigorous quality assurance in education so that all pupils have equal opportunities to compete for marketable degrees. In its most ideal form this approach defers the ultimate responsibility for
social inequality to pupils’ different capacities and efforts or to teachers’ faulty application of effective procedures and preset standards. Various scholars have pointed out that such an approach overstates the effects of interaction in class by obscuring the structural grounds for learners’ access to quality employment, and that it imagines teachers as mere technicians of a meritocratic rat-race, rather than as professionals who strive to (trans)form their pupils intellectually, socially, and personally (see, e.g. Biesta 2010; Lefstein 2013; Borgnakke, Dovemark, and Marques da Silva 2017). Arguing that pupils fail at school because teachers refuse to authenticate their linguistically diverse repertoires thus certainly helps underline the urgency of calls that linguistic practices at school be reformed, not to mention that it can be convincing to suggest that linguistic diversity is the answer to authorities’ search for measures that improve learning outcomes. But in a similar way to government reform discourses, such claims tend to inflate the effects of schooling on subsequent mobility patterns (Moore 2007).

They also depict the recognition of linguistic diversity at school as a mainly technical issue, a matter of applying effective language rather than language that is valuable for intellectual or cultural reasons. In so far as teachers without ifs or buts are to replace the corroded monolingual parts in the educational engine with the shiny multilingual pieces that scholars promise will make it spin like new, their responsibility towards language in class would only seem to diminish.

Ambivalent behaviour

Representing teachers as agents of change in the promotion of bi/multilingual education moreover has empirical repercussions. To be sure, the various concerns sketched above have generally focused the empirical lens on data that help argue, on the one hand, the possibility of change or, on the other, the necessity of intervention. There has been ample interest therefore in teachers who resist or rework monolingual school policies by including pupils’ linguistic resources in official classroom procedures (see, among others, Cahnmann 2003; Skilton-Sylvester 2003; Ramanathan 2005; Hélot 2010; Hornberger and Link 2012; Flores and García 2013; García and Leiva 2014; Pease-Alvarez and Thompson 2014; Cooke, Bryers, and Wistanley 2018). Conversely, many studies have focused on teachers who repress pupils’ non-curricular linguistic resources as a result of their ‘monolingual habitus’ (Gogolin 2002; see, among others, Blommaert, Creve, and Willaert 2006; Agirdag 2010; Martín Rojo 2010; Young 2014; De Fina 2017; Pulinx, Van Avermaet, and Agirdag 2017). Both types of studies are not merely descriptive: the first strand approves of the practices it describes and hopes that others take inspiration from them, while the second gives the thumbs down to the teachers who continue to ignore or curb their pupils’ linguistic diversity in spite of scholarly calls and international advice.

This bifocal lens has produced important results. It has revealed how outstanding teachers skilfully manage their dual role as concerned supporters and objective evaluators of pupils (cf. Erickson 1986, 138) by introducing non-curricular language in the cracks and on the margins of institutional and policy requirements (through code-switching, offering or inviting translation, turning a blind eye to non-curricular language use off- or on-task, organising multilingual buzz sessions, and so on). It has also demonstrated how exceptional teachers in difficult contexts focus on meaning in whatever linguistic form, so that pupils’ excitement about their own meaning production helps pique their interest in curricular language forms that enhance their eloquence or creativity. In extensively documenting the mostly negative attitudes that teachers report in a range of Western countries (Belgium, Germany, Denmark, France, Spain, the Netherlands, the US) this lens has equally offered a critical diagnostic of the many other run-of-the-mill teachers who grapple with their linguistic working conditions and prefer easier solutions. The latter studies serve as an important reminder that the appeal of linguistic uniformity is strong, if they do not imply that teachers’ mindsets may not be so easily changed as is assumed in awareness training programmes. Indeed, if attitudes must be seen as stances that are adopted in wider controversies (cf. Billig 1996), teachers’ negative attitudes to linguistic diversity may not flag their ignorance or bias as much as their readiness to disagree with scholars over what type of language should be taught.
But however insightful the accounts are that have emerged from this empirical lens, they leave little room for observing shades of grey, that is, for describing teachers who behave in less clear-cut, often ambivalent ways. I am thinking here of those teachers who articulate their opposition to a monolingual policy but still maintain it in various ways; of those who ardently support monolingual policies but in fact also regularly resist, ignore, or ridicule them; or of those who are aware that they find monolingualism and multilingualism both worthwhile and continuously grapple with how they should translate this into classroom practice. There has not been much attention either for teachers who choose not to draw on pupils’ linguistic backgrounds or personal needs, but who wish to create a scholastic ‘here and now’ that temporarily liberates pupils from all personal issues, family expectations and socio-linguistic backgrounds in order to generate a collective focus on subject matter that pupils are invited to make their own (Erickson 1987, 342; Pennac 2010; Masschelein and Simons 2013). The sense of urgency behind the predominant bifocal lens in this context moreover risks representing the observation of ambivalent behaviour as problematic, that is, as a relatively imperfect response to the expectation that teachers organise change, or as a transitional phase that separates a stage that teachers should slowly but surely abandon from the ideal stage they ought soon to attain. When change matters, ambivalent behaviour becomes disappointing, a problem to be overcome rather than explained.

The argument of the introduction to this issue is, first, that at least a fair amount of the ‘grey’ behaviour that teachers produce when it comes to language policy is invited by the coexisting relevance of competing values: linguistic uniformity versus linguistic diversity, curricular versus pupils’ pre-existing knowledge, and teachers’ authority versus pupils’ well-being. There are various reasons moreover, and second, for arguing that these ambivalent responses are not part of a transitional phase but must be seen as chronic aspects of teaching that are made more acute by recent changes in education. Such an approach may, thirdly, generate evaluations of teacher behaviour that avoid the twin dangers of uncritical celebration or radical contestation.

**Chronic contradictions**

Teachers face a range of contradictions in their professional lives, and these contradictions appear to be long-lasting, if not a definitive aspect of teaching. A typical contradiction in societies with intensive policymaking for education resides between the abstract policy texts and the messy detail of the everyday. As Ball, Maguire, and Braun (2012) argue, policies are ‘typically written in relation to the best of all possible schools, schools that only exist in the fevered imaginations of politicians, civil servants and advisors, and in relation to fantastical contexts. These texts cannot simply be implemented!’ (2012, 3; emphasis in original). All policies, regardless of whether they promote a mono- or multilingual curriculum, need to be ‘made sense of, mediated and struggled over, and sometimes ignored or, in another word, enacted’ (Ball, Maguire, and Braun 2012, 3; emphasis in original) in specific contexts, with specific pupils, at a particular stage in their trajectory. Consequently, even implementing monolingual policies can be expected to generate a wide diversity of ‘interpretation[s] and recontextualisation[s]’ (2012, 3), rather than the uniform picture of straightforward imposition that is conjured up when teachers are seen to live up to a monolingual habitus.

How abstract policies will be enacted and made sense of in context is not arbitrary, but depends on judgements about what it is suitable to do. Such judgements, Biesta argues, ‘can only be made with reference to what it is one aims to achieve. This means that in education there is nothing that is desirable in itself’ (2012, 38): what a teacher does or should (not) do and why can only be decided in relation to what the purpose of schooling is. Scholars’ calls for a multilingual curricular language demonstrate that this purpose is a matter for debate. But regardless of the eventual outcome of such debates (provided that such debate is possible), Biesta suggests that the question of educational purpose is a multidimensional one and that this poses constant challenges to teachers. Broadly speaking, in his view, the purpose of education plays out in three domains: qualification (the transmission of knowledge and skills); socialisation (introducing pupils to traditions and values explicitly,
but also the implicit effect of what happens at school, the so-called hidden curriculum); and subjectification (helping pupils to become autonomous individuals, seeing them as 'subjects of action and responsibility, not objects of intervention and influence' [Biesta 2012, 39]).

The point is not that teachers should choose between these purposes, but that pursuing one of them has a positive or negative impact on the others. Thus, synergy can occur when the knowledge that pupils obtain helps them question implicit conventions and increases their autonomy. But these purposes may also invite tensions or pull teachers in different directions when, for example, a strong emphasis on high learning outcomes makes pupils experience stress and a lack of self-initiative, or imparts to pupils implicitly that they should see each other as competitors rather than collaborators. Teachers have to find the right balance, therefore, trading off the benefits obtained in one domain against the costs incurred in another, and this may cause varied outcomes even with the same group of pupils depending on the particular occasion, learning goals, or time of day. Such a challenge does not disappear if language-in-education policies become distinctly multilingual: each curriculum reduces the complexity of the world outside school by concentrating on selected rather than all types of knowledge, skills, attitudes and values. A multilingual curriculum does not relieve teachers from balancing the primacy given to selected types of language against pupils’ potential impression that their own, non-curricular, linguistic skills are less valuable. The different purposes of education thus require chronic dilemma management (Lampert 1985, 178; cf. Berlak and Berlak 1981; Bullough 2012; Lefstein and Snell 2014).

A different way of sketching the necessity of making judgements between rival purposes is by drawing attention to the fact that education is a space of competing ideologies which operate on scales that range from the micro-level of turn-allocation in class to the macro-level of policy briefs, and which bring to bear dissimilar stakeholder concerns. Pachler et al. (2008) argue this when they question the view that the educational field is dominated by one over-arching ideology, and suggest instead that

teachers move through different aspects of their jobs using very different ideological tools and [are] orientating – often simultaneously – towards different ideological ‘centres’: themselves, their colleagues, their groups of learners, the head teacher, the school as an institution with a tradition, the education system, the curriculum, the government, society-at-large, and so on. Their discourses reveal traces of such multiplicity and layering (2008, 440; see also Creese 2005, 48)

The suggestion is that the different centres that teachers are orientating towards are often disharmonious, and that this requires teachers to navigate the resulting contradictions. Pachler et al. indicate that such navigations are never random, but that teachers ‘bring into their professional activities a series of elements that belong to wider ideological views of society, of what they have to be as professionals, or of what their learners ought to become’ (Pachler et al. 2008, 440). Such a claim tallies with Biesta’s view that teachers’ judgements ‘are not merely technical [about the “how”] […] but ultimately always normative judgements [about the “why”] […] oriented towards the human good’ (2012, 45). It is not so much the multiplicity of the ‘centres’ that complicates teachers’ jobs, then, but the fact that those centres are home to ideas about the human good and ‘beckon [teachers] to move the lesson in different directions, all legitimate and desirable’ (Lefstein and Snell 2014, 6).

These wider ideological views of society, teaching and learners may be less manifold than Pachler et al.’s image suggests. It would be difficult, for instance, to imagine each set of stakeholders operating in splendid isolation from the others, harbouring unique ideological views. Chances are instead that what learners, teachers themselves, or society-at-large think about appropriate schooling will offer variations on the same, limited, set of themes. This is argued by Billig et al. (1988) who claim that, by and large, educational ideologies in the West come in pairs, as views defined in contrast to each other:

each position is not formulated as an exercise in itself, as a self-contained schema or conception of the world, but rather defined point by point in contradiction to another position which must inevitably, therefore, belong to the same universe of discourse (Billig et al. 1988, 45)
‘Pupil-centred’ education, to take one example, did not so much emerge as an autonomous ideology of education but as a critical response to a view that consequently came to be known as ‘authoritarian’ or ‘curriculum-centred’ education. Billig et al. suggest that such opposing views are not mutually exclusive, moreover, and that advocates on either side tend to share the same arguments. After all, only the most ardent advocates of pupil-centred education would insist that pupils must totally ignore the idea of a pre-defined curriculum, while few supporters of curriculum-centred education see schooling as a process that is entirely empty of pupil input and bottom-up meaning creation. There is a substantial common-ground, in other words, a ‘common culture’ (Billig et al. 1988, 45; cf. also Edelman 1977, 6–7). This places teachers in a dilemma: if it is important that pupils are taught a pre-defined curriculum instead of being allowed to do as they please, but also that pupils learn for themselves rather than parroting curricular knowledge, teachers have to reconcile contrary goals. As a result, they often waver between these, as Billig et al. (1988, 48–54) demonstrate by showing how self-declared progressive teachers articulate pupil-centred and curriculum-centred beliefs, and organise practices which ostensibly elicit from pupils discoveries that are in fact pre-defined and cued. Neoliberal attacks on ‘progressive education’ and calls to go ‘back to basics’ in this view appear to have overlooked the fact that education had remained partly ‘conservative’ all along (cf. also Berlak and Berlak 1981, 218–219; Delamont 1987) – neither have the reforms engendered by these calls made teachers unconcerned with bottom-up learning and congenial interaction, quite the contrary (Harris and Lefstein 2011).

These dilemmas are not an exclusively educational phenomenon, Billig et al. insist. They are variants of wider oppositions in the West which juxtapose freedom and social discipline, equality and authority, the individual and society, and so on. The fact that each member of such oppositions is necessary to understand the other, and that both must thus be seen as contradictory parts of the same system of meaning and thought, prompts Billig et al. to claim that rather than as complete, cohesive belief systems, ideologies must be seen as intrinsically contradictory, as containing conflicting values and expectations. The ideology of liberalism is suggested as a case in point: while the pursuit of individual liberty could be asserted with unchecked passion in an absolutist state like pre-revolutionary France, it later evoked the counter-value of solidarity as a limit to unbridled individualism, and invited dilemmas over individual freedom and constraint within liberal states. People’s devotion to equality was likewise inspired at the time by a radical authoritarianism, but concerns emerged later about how authority could be legitimately exercised in the name of equality, or about when it would be acceptable to draw on expert, authoritative knowledge. The core values of liberal modernity thus invite chronic argument and debate (Billig et al. 1988, 34–36).

While Billig et al. do not discuss language, the values of linguistic uniformity and diversity may also have to be seen as dilemmatically related. After all, as Bauman and Briggs (2003) explain in their analysis of the discursive origins of Modernity, the pursuit of linguistic uniformity did not emerge independently but in reaction to the perceived social, scientific and political evils of linguistic diversity. A similar reaction can be seen when the idea of linguistic uniformity, and in particular of French as the language of a universal Enlightenment, gained wide popularity from the eighteenth century, and invited questions over the conditions under which it could be justifiable to value other languages: Herder’s Romanticist philosophy point by point contradicts the case for French, juxtaposing the emphasis on individual rationality and cosmopolitanism with the argument that the vitality of a language, and the social coherence and emotional well-being of those using it, depends on its strong pedigree in a local, poetic tradition. A the same time, as Bauman and Briggs underline, Herder’s opposition to a universal language did not prevent him from advising that linguistic standardisation be pursued within the boundaries of what were considered organic nations (2003, 189ff.) – an advice taken so seriously that purism is now often seen as an exclusively nationalist phenomenon (Absillis and Jaspers 2016). Enlightenment philosophers’ pretensions of a universal language can likewise be punctured by the observation that they continued using their own, local, language rather than, say, Latin, and moreover advised the use of a plain, contextually flexible variety for civil conversation rather than pure, rational language use (2003, 47–48). It seems too restricted, then, to associate
the emergence of Modernity and nationalism exclusively with linguistic uniformity and ‘one nation – one language’ ideals, rather than to see both philosophies as grappling with, and setting dilemmas over, the competing claims of linguistic uniformity and diversity.

In this perspective, suggestions that teachers act out a ‘monolingual habitus’ are not merely problematic in so far as they downplay the fact that this habitus is formed, and only makes sense in, a wider context where the counter-value of linguistic diversity is recognised too – which raises questions over how it is that some have developed a monolingual habitus whereas others have not. They are also problematic, as I wish to underline in what follows, for the degree to which they evoke an image of teachers as unreflective agents of ideology.

The deliberate teacher

Of course, many socio- and applied linguists have not failed to notice that teachers can face complex pedagogical and linguistic dilemmas (see, among others, Heller 1995; Mondada and Gajo 2001; Cahnmann 2003; Hornberger 2004; Martín Rojo 2004; Creese 2005; Jaffe 2008; Creese and Blackledge 2011; Codó and Patiño-Santos 2014; Martínez, Hikida, and Durán 2015; Henderson 2017; Puskás and Björk-Willén 2017). This issue builds on this work. It argues though that teachers’ ambivalent response to these dilemmas today is not merely a result of their struggle with a single, monolingual, ideology but derives from their simultaneous – though not necessarily equivalent – orientation to monolingualism and its opposite, that is, linguistic diversity. It suggests that this ambivalence does not merely flag teachers’ temporary difficulty to transcend widespread monolingual or purist ideologies but is more usefully seen as a way to address chronic, albeit changeable, tensions between contrary views of language, teaching, and learning. If this is the case, it is important to explain teachers’ behaviour in relation to these contrary views rather than to one of their component parts (cf. Billig 1991, 8ff.).

This means it will be important to avoid the exemplary types of teacher that tend to be assumed in the bifocal accounts mentioned earlier. To be sure, such accounts often conjure up two, mutually exclusive, images of the teacher: the agentic actor who is critical of the language-ideological status quo versus the compliant professional who habitually transmits an ideology she is largely unaware of. The first type of actor opposes social and ideological constraints, while the second seems to be duped by them, a mere ‘leaf in the social winds’ (Varenne and McDermott 1999, 131). Apart from offering mutually exclusive explanations for behaviour, these accounts appear respectively to minimise the existence of social constraints and individuals’ capacity for social criticism. They moreover invite the analyst, in the first case, to celebrate teachers’ perceptive autonomy and, in the second, to pity or contest their enduring ignorance (cf. Billig 1991, 9ff.; Varenne and McDermott 1999, 131ff.)

One way to avoid this may be provided by Billig’s notion of the ‘deliberative’ or ‘argumentative’ thinker, that is, by seeing individuals as actors who need to engage with the contrary themes that predominate in the ideological history they become a part of. In such a view individuals cannot simply escape ideology since their behaviour will be interpreted as exemplifying one theme rather than the other – requiring them to explain or justify themselves. On the other extreme, this view maintains that even widespread, banal ideologies never close down thinking, since their discursive expressions ‘will bear traces of the messages which they seek rhetorically to exclude’ (Billig 1997, 225) and so make these opposing messages available as an inspiration for arguing against them. On a number of occasions it will not merely be possible to think differently, but necessary to contemplate opposing options and to deliberate a fitting course of action, that is, when people recognise that opposing options are, to a certain extent, equally sensible.

Such occasions arguably arise in contemporary education. If Western schools once were sites where teachers had near-total control over pupils to inculcate them with the national standard language (cf. Heller and McElhinny 2017), they have since World War II become sites of substantial and widespread reform. Authoritarian pedagogies have been discredited as harmful to children’s
healthy development and learning, so that teachers are now commonly expected to adopt a friendly, convivial style to ensure pupils’ well-being and creativity and to foster relations that are compatible with democratic ideals of tolerance and equality. Approaches that conceive of education as a unilateral knowledge transfer have likewise been criticised for ignoring the role of pupils’ active input and motivation, and for disregarding that building on pupils’ pre-existing skills can increase their interest and integration of new knowledge (Gilliam and Gulløv 2017). The impact of these views has been so extensive that it is appropriate, in Biesta’s view, to speak of an overall ‘learnification’ of education, that is, the tendency to think of education almost exclusively in terms of learning, with teachers as coaches or facilitators of learning experiences (Biesta 2010, 2012). Teachers’ wings have been clipped as well by increasing accountability requirements and calls for evidence-based practice. In sum, there are increasing grounds for saying that teachers are no longer the unopposed authorities they once were.

On a linguistic level too it is becoming difficult to picture schools, certainly in urban settings, as places where the value of monolingualism and standard language has a total monopoly. There are serious national differences in the extent to which teaching and teacher training degree courses have been influenced by socio- and applied linguistic research. But the number of teachers confronted with the advice that they ought not to stigmatise pupils’ non-standard accents or vernacular ways of speaking for fear of alienating them from the school has become ever more significant (cf. Erickson 1987; Rampton 2006, 271ff.). In recent years, ample scholars have argued that monolingual instruction without respect for pupils’ multilingual resources will have the same detrimental effects and may, contrary to teachers’ goals, complicate rather than facilitate learning. It is also clear that multilingualism, in the last decades, has become much more favourably received: policymakers and managers sing its praises as a vital tool for economic growth and transnational communication, while many people have become attracted by its promises of cognitive advantage and increased labour market entry – even if this praise applies to a multilingualism that is composed of a set of parallel monolingualisms in economically useful languages. While this has not invited an overall drastic change in Western language-in-education policies (disregarding the ample experiments with immersion and CLIL), it has made it increasingly difficult for teachers to impose monolingual or standard language policies without, at the very least, paying lip service to linguistic diversity.

Such evolutions illustrate that widespread views can be successfully disputed and changed, and that the position of opposing values can be reversed: there is relatively more weight now on conviviality than authority, on bottom-up learning than top-down teaching, while the jury is still out on the changing weight of linguistic uniformity versus diversity. This does not, however, dissolve dilemmas and deliberation (cf. Billig 1996, 245). Conviviality and bottom-up learning may have gained in importance, but at least during evaluation teachers will be expected to take up authority and assess pupils’ progress in a pre-defined curriculum. Multilingualism may recently have been hyped, but this hasn’t relieved teachers from the duty of transmitting a monolingual standard variety in view of pupils’ access to higher education and the labour market. Indeed, the existence of these dilemmas makes good teaching highly difficult, a challenge that far exceeds following best practices, policy guidelines or scholarly advice about linguistic awareness. At the same time this makes teacher behaviour a privileged site for observing how and with which effects teachers implement monolingual policies without seeming unacceptably authoritative, unconcerned with pupils’ well-being, and ignorant of the value of multilingualism; for examining how they display a concern with pupils’ well-being if the latter are reluctant to speak the target language; or for exploring how teachers reconcile a respect for pupils’ linguistic repertoires with the hope of improving their linguistic skills in named languages. The negative attitudes teachers report towards linguistic diversity provide a ‘rich point’ in this sense for investigating how these attitudes are alluded to or attenuated in actual practice and with what justifications teachers let themselves off the attitudinal hook.
Observing deliberation

The ambivalence that characterises teachers’ relations with pupils, language and learning may not only be visible in the contrast between teachers’ articulations (e.g. their language attitudes) and actions in class. It can also be observed between articulations, that is, in teachers’ simultaneous adherence to contrary themes, when they argue explicitly that linguistic uniformity and diversity are both, to some extent, valuable or reasonable. This includes the formulation of rhetorical disclaimers which evoke a value while facilitating the articulation of the opposing one, and rationalisations for why discrepancies are acceptable. Looking at action in class we may see teachers adhere to contradictory values when they intersperse their monolingual teaching with various signs that evoke their recognition of pupils’ non-curricular linguistic skills without abandoning the monolingual school policy: by recasting pupil replies in the school language, asking pupils to reformulate their turns in that language, providing or asking for translations into pupils’ family languages, or by using loan-words, code-switches, and casting a blind eye to infractions. Such teachers could be argued to pursue a monolingual policy relatively multilingually. Others pursue a dual language learning policy and appreciate their pupils’ mixed language use during speaking, but insist on monolingual language use during more consequential tasks such as writing (Martínez, Hikida, and Durán 2015).

On a more implicit level the linguistic construction of conviviality can itself be investigated for its orientation to the authoritative relations and plans that they make more acceptable, for example when the interactional location of a teacher’s convivial multilingual talk in off-task activity signals implicitly where such multilingual behaviour is acceptable, in contrast to the more serious, on-task activity in the curricular language (Jaspers 2014, 2015). In fact, the demand for conviviality in class can obtain its own dilemmatic aspects: being too friendly may invite pupils to make light of what must be done or learnt, whereas not being friendly enough risks evoking doubts about a teacher’s modern professionalism (cf. Billig et al. 1988, 74ff; Codó and Patiño-Santos 2014).

Focusing on the deliberative aspects of teacher behaviour does not preclude advocacy in favour of changing the curricular language. While in principle linguistic uniformity and diversity can both be reasonably pursued, they are not always equally reasonable: given the challenges that teachers face in highly multilingual classrooms, it would be unwise in such contexts to pursue an unforgiving monolingual policy. Convincingly advocating that language-in-education policies must become more multilingual may even, as suggested above, contribute to changing the balance between the value of monolingualism and multilingualism and so change widespread language ideology. It is important to see, however, that such a change does not simply remove the earlier contradictions. Pupils, parents or scholars may still point out, in a hypothetically fully translingual education system, that acquiring named languages is important for pupils’ future persuasiveness in a range of contexts where such languages are valued (cf. Rampton, Cooke, and Holmes 2018), so that teachers find these languages cannot totally be ignored. We can also expect that pleas to recognise linguistic diversity at school will run up against their own linguistic form: the advocates of such a change usually count on the persuasive, authoritative form of their call, which tends to be formulated in a monolingual, standard variety. The way in which advocacy is formulated or anti-bias training is organised may moreover reinstate authoritative, transmission-oriented pedagogies if such advocacy represents teachers as ideologically confused, ignorant, and helpless without expert information. This does not diminish the value of teacher training or transmitting knowledge about language, but it makes clear that this can have side-effects that need to be taken into account, especially if similar side-effects (e.g. pupils’ lack of well-being) are important in the contestation of monolingual policies.

Demonstrating deliberation can reveal teachers as intelligent, but constrained professionals who make debatable judgements. Scholars can relatively easily dismiss such judgements as uniformed, and this may be difficult to pass up when they disagree with teachers. Such moves, however, reduce scholars’ dialogue with teachers to a knowledge exchange, and easily turns teachers into objects of reform, if not into pawns in a broader language-political game when they are expected to apply scholars’ favoured views. A similar lack of dialogue applies, however, if teachers’ perspectives are
considered sacrosanct articulations of a different point of view. An alternative view is to distinguish professional autonomy from the acquisition of knowledge, and to see the pursuit of the former as independent from the latter but contingent upon scholars’ active intervention (cp. Biesta 2017). Teachers are in this perspective not supposed to accept any scholarly truths. The idea is rather that scholars call upon teachers to use their own intelligence and that they verify if this is done carefully, not with a specific outcome in mind but with a concern for the process that leads to it. Such an approach opens the door for outcomes scholars did not spell out or may not agree with. To be sure, scholars concerned about teachers’ autonomy would have to verify if teachers are applying multilingual courses of action on the basis of their own thinking rather than on the authority of the scholarly idea. In the latter case a reconsideration is called for, even if this may lead to a more monolingual outcome. Scholars in this view play a critical role in fostering teachers’ professional development and autonomy. The necessary questioning of language-in-education policies, and their impact on teacher judgements, can then become the object of political debate rather than a matter of awareness raising among teachers.

The idea here is thus not to present teachers’ ambivalence, similar to hybridity in cultural studies, as a kind of ‘third’ space which must be celebrated for its creative combination or transcendence of established views and identities. The point is rather that if ambivalence is hard to avoid, we can distinguish between more and less desirable types of ambivalence, or assess how dexterously or ineptly, and with which effects, teachers respond to linguistic dilemmas and other contradictions. Rather than a reason for celebration, teachers’ ambivalence must be seen as a matter of verification and argumentation. Much research on language policy has been engaging in such verification work, arguing that the pursuit of monolingual qualification goals has negative effects on pupils’ well-being or self-image. But this does not exhaust the possibilities, nor should this be a one-way street. A teacher’s decision to respect pupils’ individual repertoires may be problematised if it means that orientating them to new, collectively valued language forms comes to be seen as a manipulation of pupils’ inviolable authenticity. Teachers may also be taken to task if their tolerance of ungrammatical forms, as a way of socialising pupils into accepting linguistic difference, eventually makes pupils believe that grammatical correctness is unimportant. Or they may not be taken to task, if evaluators think that the latter side-effect is preferable over others, or when they are convinced by the teacher’s argument that subsequent actions avoid that risk. There exist, in other words, multiple conceptions of dexterity, depending on what scholars and teachers find reasonable trade offs between inevitably competing educational purposes. In a perspective that values professional autonomy, teachers need not back down in the face of scholarly verification, but can instead argue back and, by making use of the knowledge about language that scholars share with them, justify the intelligence and suitability of their chosen course of action.

The image of the deliberating teacher, finally, does not exclude the possibility that teachers articulate strong, relatively monochrome views (cf. Billig 1996, 255). Both images are possible, depending on the context, audience, and the discursive room for articulating contrary views. Attitude questionnaires are generally less allowing of formulating contrary stances than interviews or teaching are. Teachers may make a greater show of severity to parents or researchers than they do to pupils in class. Nor does a focus on teachers’ deliberation clash with an analysis of how pupils approach competing values for language, learning, and teaching (cf. Jaspers 2011; Karrebæk 2013; Möller 2019; Nørreby & Madsen 2019). A more comprehensive analysis might show how and when pupils and teachers share the same sets of contrary values, on some occasions aligning themselves with each other, on other occasions taking up oppositional perspectives.

**Overview of the issue**

The first paper in this issue, by Jürgen Jaspers and Kirsten Rosiers, investigates how teachers in a Dutch-medium secondary school in Brussels implement a severe monolingual policy in a friendly way. Faced with the massive influx of pupils with limited competence in Dutch, teachers had
intensified punitive measures in favour of Dutch, but in actual fact were drawn to an approach which merely prefigured the possibility of sanctions – although teachers did not wish to abandon the option of punishing pupils for linguistic reasons. Rather than seeing teachers as faithful supporters of a monolingual ideology or gradual adopters of a true rather than false consciousness, the authors argue they must be seen as struggling with contrary ideological views of language, teaching, and learning.

Sue Goossens in her paper shows that teachers’ responses in such a context are not preset, and that they can take a different route. She discusses how another Dutch-medium school in Brussels has decided to embrace multilingualism and to brand itself as tolerant of other languages than Dutch. Thus, although the school maintained a Dutch-medium curriculum, it made CLIL courses in French and English obligatory, offered optional courses in Mandarin Chinese and Spanish, and allowed pupils to speak other languages than Dutch in the corridors and playground. Yet teachers also problematised multilingualism when they disapproved of pupils’ inability to separate languages and of their limited skills in Dutch, since this would complicate their future access to higher education and jobs. New tensions between different types of multilingualism thus emerged at the same time as older ones between monolingualism and multilingualism were being attenuated.

Line Møller Daugaard’s article demonstrates that singular languages themselves can be the site where ideological tensions play out that teachers have to address. Reporting on mother tongue teaching (Arabic, Dari, Pashto, Somali) at a Danish public primary school in Western Denmark, she shows that competing agendas are at play: teachers open up complex sociolinguistic horizons in the mother tongue, but equally impose clear-cut boundaries around what counts as the ‘real’ mother tongue, a ‘genuine’ mother tongue learner, or a more ‘modern’, globalised, version of the ‘old’ heritage language. Daugaard illustrates that these agendas are tied in with pedagogical concerns around having enough time, differentiating in class, paying equal attention to all learners, and keeping them motivated in an extra class they usually did not self-select, and to institutional interests where a sizeable number of mother tongue learners is needed to maintain the school’s multicultural image. Far from showing a monochromatic palette, the mother tongue teaching class here emerges as a colourful site where teacher and learners constantly blur and emphasise the linguistic lines to accommodate a range of pedagogical, institutional, intergenerational, and diasporic tensions.

Eva Codó in her turn highlights how an English CLIL programme in a secondary school near Barcelona invited a range of dilemmas. Focusing on a scarcely studied setting, i.e. an institution where CLIL is implemented experimentally rather than wholeheartedly, she shows, among other things, that local policymakers were uneasy about teachers’ levels in English but saw CLIL as crucial for offering quality education to working class pupils, and therefore advanced its implementation. Teachers also avoided strictly imposing English to students, knowing that the latter found the language remote and were uncomfortable speaking it because of their limited proficiency. They thus tended to allow L1 use in class and hoped gradually to increase the use of English. This approach made students believe, however, that English was not actually required, and it invited teachers to maintain the semblance of CLIL-teaching by reminding pupils of the instruction language, ignoring L1 replies, or simply allowing all questions in the L1, eventually leading to a translingual compromise which disadvantaged recently arrived English-dominant pupils. Teachers’ concern with pupils’ well-being thus ended up in a relative lack of English abilities, contravening their ambition to improve pupils’ opportunities through that language.

I conclude with regret that this issue should have included one more paper. Alexandra Jaffe had agreed to prepare a paper based on her presentation at a colloquium dedicated to the topic of this special issue at the 22nd Sociolinguistics Symposium in Auckland, June 2018, but she sadly passed away before she was able to submit her manuscript. I cannot in the limited space available here pay due tribute to the insightfulness of her work and the generosity with which she shared her insights, also with novice scholars. But I believe the theme of this issue would have allowed her to demonstrate with great acumen how conflicting parties in linguistic debate can share the same ideological presuppositions, and how contradictory values for language can produce chronic ambiguity and ambivalence in class. I would like to dedicate this issue to her work.
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ORCID

Jürgen Jaspers http://orcid.org/0000-0002-5823-0576

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